

# Impact of Hybrid Work on Employee's Performance in Small Businesses

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## Abstract

The transition toward hybrid work models has become a defining characteristic of the modern corporate landscape, significantly impacting how organizational success is measured through employee performance. This dissertation investigates the impact of hybrid work environments on the productivity of employees within small businesses, where operational efficiency and resource management are critical. A healthy hybrid workplace is defined as a setting that provides physical comfort, mental security, and social support across both remote and in-office dimensions. Utilizing a descriptive research design and a mixed-method approach—incorporating structured questionnaires and informal discussions—this study examines key performance drivers such as leadership support, digital communication systems, and work-life balance policies. The research analyzes employee perceptions of flexibility and workplace stress to determine how these factors influence task completion and service quality. Ultimately, the study concludes that small businesses that invest in supportive leadership and clear communication channels are better positioned to reduce operational errors and enhance long-term organizational success.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Traditionally, organizational behavior and workplace management have focused on a single, centralized physical location. For decades, the standard nine-to-five office structure dictated not just the timeframe of work, but the psychological contract between employer and employee. Within this ordinary framework, Human Resource (HR) practices looked very hard at how well an employee did and measured it closely to the idea of presenteeism, at that point in which the actual presence of an employee physically showed at work. Yet the combination of rapid developments in cloud computing technologies coupled with the unprecedented global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic brought about an irrevocable change. Out of this era of mandatory remote work is the “hybrid work model,” an evolving, non-traditional form of hybrid working, where employees decide to have their working hours split between an offline (center) office and a home. But as multinational corporations quickly adopted this architecture, being able to allocate massive amounts of capital to the implementation of enterprise-grade digital infrastructure, this model has left small businesses attempting to make a more complicated transition. Small businesses are the backbone of Lucknow, one of the major economic developing commercial centers, and have their own set of structural limitations on which they build businesses. They work with small resource pools, flatter and better-organized organization chains, high adaptability to multi-tasking, and a largely informal and face-to-face-style communication style to innovate and solve problems so quickly.

### **1.2 Industry Profile- The Small Business Ecosystem in Lucknow**

To assess how hybrid working affects small business and small enterprises it is important to set up the context in which they are situated. Lucknow, a longtime hub of administrative and cultural legacy, has developed quickly into an emerging tier-2 economy town. In particular, an increase in small to medium enterprises (SMEs) have entered the burgeoning city, operating in the IT services, digital marketing, local logistics and boutique consulting sectors. Unlike largest IT parks in tier-1 cities, small businesses in Lucknow are frequently situated in tight commercial area or co-working hubs localized for individual enterprises. For such organizations, hybrid working was primarily a way to survive the pandemic, but has become more of strategic retention. More and more local talent will be asking for better work-life balance, along with flexibility around spatial arrangements. Therefore, small business owners are pushed to hybridize their business models not only to reduce overheads associated with real estate but in order to compete for talent. But building in a city where localized-driven and relational ties of business relationships are highly regarded to hybridize an approach creates an interesting polar opposite and merits careful scholarly exploration.

### **1.3 Human Resources Implications: Revisiting Job Analysis and Performance**

The move to a hybridization of work model is changing the fundamental concept of Human Resource framework and job systems with respect to job analysis and performance management in particular, which has resulted in the disruption of the traditional Human Resource framework. The competencies needed to do a role successfully will shift as the business moves from an office first to a hybrid model. In a hybrid environment, job analysis means that HR needs to adjust the tasks for location dependent based assignments. Synchronous collaborative roles, for instance, get set aside for office days while asynchronous, focus-heavy tasks are left for remote days. Moreover, the methods of assessing “employee performance” need to change. Even with remote employees, this shift toward output-based Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) may be too much for smaller stores, which have managers who are not conditioned to oversee them visually. The challenge is teaching small business managers to assess the quality of a deliverable instead of the hours spent logging someone’s work — a transition that can be met with heavy cultural resistance.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Despite a worldwide appetite for flexible work arrangements, a significant academic gap remains with regard to how flexible work might affect smaller organizations in a local context. While large enterprises use highly sophisticated employee monitoring software and unified software platforms (such as enterprise Microsoft Teams or Slack) for communication and coordination for example, small businesses often manage hybrid employees through fragmented consumer-grade communication tools like WhatsApp or basic email and traditional managers attitudes. This structural mismatch is the key issue. This friction creates problems with digital communication and digital success, as well as the inability to accurately assess productivity, and creates "information silos," and can even make culture break down. Hence there is a need to investigate in a practical context to understand the effect of changing into a hybrid work model which in particular affects productivity, communication friction, and performance levels in small businesses' unique and resource-limited economy.

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

In order to resolve the problem point systematically, this dissertation is driven by the following concentrated research aims:

1. To evaluate how spatial and temporal flexibility will affect employee productivity on an individual

level in small businesses that work with a hybrid business model.

2. This paper aims to identify, categorize and analyze the primary communication bottlenecks and technological challenges faced by hybrid workers in small scale organizational settings.
3. To assess the extent to which there is a general relationship between hybrid work implementation and employees' job performance, taking into account factors such as job satisfaction and technostress.
4. To make actionable, HR-specific suggestions to small business owners to maximize performance management and to reformulate job roles for a hybrid workforce.

### 1.6 Hypotheses of the Study

Drawing on early literature reviews and visible patterns in the market, the following hypotheses have been formulated upon preliminary data:

- \$H\_1\$: The spatial-temporal flexibility potential of hybrid work is positively correlated with self-reported employee productivity.
- \$H\_2\$: Inefficient digital communication infrastructure within small businesses is a major detriment to team collaborative efficiency.

### 1.7 Scope of the Study

- Topical Scope: The scope of this study will only consist of evaluating employee performance parameters (productivity, communications, flexibility) as measured by example of a structured "hybrid model." Under the research scope, this study does not include fully-remote or gig-economy workers.
- Geographical Scope: The research, sampling, and data collection are based solely on small businesses within the city boundaries of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- Demographic Scope: Full-time working employees in both general and small-scale enterprises in India, including full employees at all levels in offices of 10-50 employees.

### 1.8 Limitations of the Study

It has been observed that although strict methodological rigour has been applied at all times to the study, the study has the following limitations:

- Sample size limitation: Because of high time and resource restrictions applied in academic semester projects, the sample size was limited to 20 individuals, which may limit statistical generalisability of the findings to the state or national level.
- Self-reported Bias: Employee performance measures in this study are exclusively based on self-information from questionnaires. This subjective information might not be representative of objective, management-based performance reviews.
- Dynamic Subject Matter: The technological landscape and workplace culture in regards to hybrid work is advancing faster than any other. The findings show a particular localized snapshot in time and are not immune to sudden change.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction.

The basic content of any rigorous academic inquiry is provided by a thorough examination of the existing literature. It offers an appropriate conceptual scaffolding to support primary studies, places the research problem in the context of general academic debate, and outlines important research gaps which this dissertation sets out to address. The chapter critically analyses the multi-dimensional notion of employee performance as a foundation of work models which have evolved with time, as well as transitioning into

the modern hybrid work paradigm. In addition, it lays the theoretical foundation of this dissertation by leveraging the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and examining its application to a specific business context (the small business ecosystem).

## 2.2 Background History:

**The Development of Telecommuting.** An analysis of the hybrid model has two factors that precede it. Historically, the study of organizational behaviour has been inextricably linked with that of co-location. The “nine-to-five” office structure was consolidated during the industrial age, most of all because the physical implements of production and administrative coordination were immovable. In the late 20th century, terminology like “telecommuting” and “telework” came to the fore, driven in great measure by the rise of personal computers and early internet connections. However, for example, early literature framed telecommuting (e.g., Nilles, 1988), which was seen as a niche arrangement rather than the strategic operational model that it might be. Previous studies from the pre-2020 era frequently emphasized the marginalization of remote workers, noting the “out of sight, out of mind” phenomenon (where telecommuters often lost promotions and valuable informal organizational knowledge). For instance, remote employment was one of them, it was dependent on the discretion of the individual manager rather than set corporate policy.

## 2.3 The Engine of Global Disruption and the Hybrid Work Paradigm.

The global disruption prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a first-ever catalyst, with a forced, mass migration of millions of people moving to remote work. This ‘crisis-accommodated remote work era’ had a dramatic effect on HR literature direction. After 2020, research pivoted gears from considering remote work as a weirdo, to assessing it as a structural condition of the future. As more restrictions were relaxed, there became a growing agreement in contemporary management literature that for all organizations either a total return to the traditional office or an entirely remote approach was not the best choice. So the “hybrid work model” evolved into a discrete, formalized form of organization. The hybrid model is a strategic balancing act in comparison to pure remote work. There is literature that makes a case for hybrid arrangements requiring a revised approach to job analysis. Instead, an increasing number of HR scholars theorize the physical office as not a mandated daily workspace for independent tasks, but a “cultural hub” for synchronous, collaborative, and high-value interpersonal interactions.

## 2.4 Re-imagination of Employee Performance in the Digital Era.

Essentially, employee performance is a measure for the effectiveness and efficiency of worker output and other such performance indicators; if done right it will help us to meet larger organizational goals and goals are achieved. In the typical environment, managers often could simply (albeit sometimes incorrectly) observe these metrics through visual monitoring, confusing so-called “presenteeism” (i.e., being at your desk) with actual productivity. The factors that govern performance change substantially in a hybrid setting. KPIs are time-based metrics that the literature points to a need to make an evolution from a KPI to the output-based measures. And some of the new hallmarks of strong performance in hybrid setting are:

- Digital Fluency: The ability to operate cloud-based collaboration software and to switch between synchronous and asynchronous work using it with relative ease.
- Intrinsic Motivation and Autonomy: The mental self-restraint required to output in the presence of people in charge but not physically under a supervisor’s direct supervision.
- Agile Task Management: The capacity to compartmentalize tasks; to carve out time away from your regular day of work, such as for deep tasks, which rely on focus, and group brainstorming for in-office time.

## **2.5 The effect of spatial and temporal flexibility (Job Resources).**

A large literature on the contemporary HR field establishes a statistically significant positive relationship with spatial-temporal flexibility regarding individual productivity. By doing away with the daily commute for workers, which often results in a high level of pre-work fatigue as their days are cut off, they reclaim time and reduce cognitive fatigue, and as a result workers are more engaged when they work. The freedom of time-framing of one's day with the option to tailor multi-step tasks to one's particular circadian times of effectiveness is a bonus for workers in many ways. Scholars, like Bloom et al. (2015) in a seminal investigation about remote work have found that workers with spatial independence worked extended, more concentrated hours, with fewer distractions than they would in a packed, open-plan office.

## **2.6 Communication Friction and Digital Exhaustion (Job Demands).**

Conversely, although personal productivity often tends to skyrocket, collaborative efficiency becomes painfully difficult. Digital friction is a common detriment of decentralised work mentioned in the literature. Communication, in a mixed or hybrid configuration, must constantly evolve from on the spot and face to face to asynchronous and digital. Organizations that don't have clear digital communication guidelines can end up with information silos and slow decision taking. Moreover, the convergence between personal life and professional life is a common point as well. It is the "always-on" digital culture, in the age of a mobile communication tool that is a major psychological stressor. Workers could suffer from "technostress" or digital burnout, which, in turn, can lead to a mental overload that results in longer and more extended career weariness and performance decrements. Theoretical Background: The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model. To systematically assess the multifaceted, dual nature of hybrid work as a performance stimulant, this article is firmly grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model that Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli first developed in 2001. The JD-R model is a well-known framework for occupational stress and motivation, that suggests all working conditions can be classified into two primary categories (Demands and Resources).

### **2.6.1 Job Demands in a Hybrid Context Job demands:**

They are the aspects of the job that are physically, psychologically, socially or organizationally demanding and require constant cognitive and emotional effort that come with physiological and psychological costs. The specific demands of hybrid small businesses, for example: Insufficient digital tools, peer isolation, the increasing need for self-management, use of fragmented communication tools (e.g., WhatsApp), and the blurring of work-life boundaries.

### **2.6.2 Job Resources in A Hybrid Context Job**

These resources refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational facets of the job that are useful in pursuing work goals, lowering job demands, and increasing internal growth, learning, and development. • For hybrid SMEs, these resources include: Spatial autonomy, flexible work hours, less commuting stress, and greater trust from management.

### **2.6.3 Application of the JD-R Model to the Present Study**

According to the JD-R model high job resources (e.g., flexibility) are correlated with considerable motivation and performance (the motivational process). But if job demands (bad communication tools, for example) overshadow resources, it leads to worker burnout and lower output (the health impairment process). This study uses this framework to propose that to optimize hybrid work for small businesses, their own inherent resource (flexibility) needs be strategically tapped and the demands (tech friction) actively mitigated.

## 2.7 The Research Gap:

The Ecosystem of Small Businesses. Indeed, a recent systematic evaluation of relevant literature reveals an open question: on the ground level, most hybrid work studies, frameworks, and case studies have adopted a highly focus on large multi-national companies as a case. These massive enterprises have the necessary level of capital to have enterprise-grade digital infrastructure, IT support as well as specialized HR business partners from the best of the best, with highly performance monitoring software to support them at scale and ensure a fully IT support system. Translating corporate hybrid work theory to micro-enterprises is simply to some extent the wrong way of working. Small businesses are run on tighter budgets and flatter hierarchies and depend more on speed, informal, personal interaction in order to survive. There is hardly a way that a small-business can emulate a big corporation's remote work policy. This dissertation directly responds to this academic void as it isolates the small business variable and analyzes how the hybrid work models' success or failure tends to be determined by the specific resource constraints and informal culture.

## 2.9 Conclusion of the Literature Review.

It is well established from the literature that hybrid work is a complex, multi-variable shift in structure, not just an HR policy revision. While the theoretical advantages of flexibility are well-documented, the literature also warns of deep collaborative and psychological disadvantages if not managed correctly. This study is particularly well-placed to test how these conflicting forces manifest in the under-researched field of small businesses using the JD-R model.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction to the Methodology

The research methodology refers to the systematic, theoretical investigation of the methods related to a domain of study. It includes the theoretical review of a set of the relevant methods/principles relevant to the field of knowledge. The methodology represents the architectural plan for the entire dissertation in the sense that under this dissertation. It describes by a chain of logical steps the sequence of process from formulation of the research problem to collection and analysis. In order to evaluate the effect of the hybrid work model on employee performance appropriately and accurately within Lucknow's small-business and resource-limited context, the methodology needs to be sound and strong academically to explain the outcome. The chapter explains the selected research philosophy, major research design, sampling methods used, data collection instruments, and statistical analysis. Moreover, it supports the academic rationale for the selectivity of these specific methods when compared to the alternatives, safeguarding the findings' validity and reliability.

#### 3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

Research philosophy is concerned with the construction of knowledge and with its character. A positivist research philosophy of research is used in this study as there is a belief that real information is objective and that can be quantitatively measured. This philosophy is especially well-suited to HR-based performance studies, where measurable—at least specific indicators are required (e.g., Likert scale agreements for productivity) to test known theories (e.g., the Job Demands-Resources model). This study takes the deductive research route as per positivism. In contrast to an inductive approach (which derives theory from observations), a deductive approach starts with established theories and literature, creates particular hypotheses based on that literature, and eventually collects data to either confirm or reject those

hypotheses. In this dissertation, we made inferences on spatial flexibility (H<sub>1</sub>) and communication friction (H<sub>2</sub>) from existing post-COVID hybrid work literature; the following methodology is only done to test them on real-life data from Lucknow's SMEs.

### 3.3 Research Design

**Research Design:** This is defined as a framework or plan to the study that helps the researchers understand how to collect and organize their data. This dissertation has a Descriptive Research Design.

**Rationale for Descriptive Methods:**

An interview is descriptive one if the aim is to systematically, reliably show or describe characteristics of a certain phenomenon, event or group. Very good in answering "what, where and how" questions. In that framework, the architecture affords the quantification of the employee perceptions of their productivity, their communication difficulties and their capacity for flexibility in a hybrid structure.

**Why not Exploratory Design?** It may be exploratory when a problem is mostly undefined. But the idea of hybrid work is known throughout the world; the gap is in what type of hybrid business appears in local small businesses.

**Why not Causal Design?** A purely causal (experimental) design would mean that, in order to measure output, the researcher would have to actively manipulate the variables (e.g., coercing employees into separate work models). In this regard it is not ethical or feasible in the operating parameters of active small business. The descriptive model such as the observation of the variables as they can be observed is thus the most academically and practically feasible choice.

### 3.4 Target Population and Sampling Strategy

Identifying the precise population, and choosing a representative sample of those, is essential for maintaining the credibility of the core data and minimising statistical bias.

#### 3.4.1 The Target Population

The universe that serves as the population for this research is made up of active full-time employees who work in small-scale enterprises in the geography of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. For the research purposes, a "small business" denotes an organization whose workforce includes 10 to 50 people. Moreover, the target population has been defined as employees whose organizations have actively adopted an official hybrid work approach (a compulsory combination of telecommuting and in-office days) for at least six months, demonstrating performance above and beyond the first stage of transition.

#### 3.4.2 Sampling Technique

The method used in this study is Convenience Sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling. Based on this approach, we choose participants based on their availability, proximity to the researcher, and openness to participate in the academic research.

**Rationale for Convenience Sampling:** Although the use of probability sampling (as in the case of stratified random sampling), can improve the generalizability of the findings in a wide range of studies, it requires having access to a full-scale database (one that is missing from the public domain) representing all small business hybrid workers in Lucknow. Since one must therefore work with limited time, schedule and funds, as is often the case in an BBA semester thesis, convenience sampling ensures an effective selection of extensive, deeply qualitative data taken from open and readily available local enterprise networks.

#### 3.4.3 Sample Size Justification

The sample size of the study is 20 respondents. Sample is generally preferred in large-scale quantitative HR research. Yet, in the context of a specialty BBA thesis on a very local phenomenon (small businesses

in a particular tier-2 urban sphere), a sample of 20 serves the purpose of an intensive, in-depth investigation. It is a sufficient number available to conduct percentage analysis, and it provides a granular insight inside the respondent's company-specific context.

### 3.5 Data sources of data collection.

For a robust analysis and to triangulate findings, the study draws on primary and secondary sources of data streams:

- Primary Sources: Primary data sources based on first hand, empirical data gathered directly with the 20 sampled employees. These observations represent original, and original sources, specifically of relevant concern to the problem statement of this dissertation.
- Secondary Data: The background and theory context were developed from secondary data sources. Examples of this could be peer-reviewed HRM journals, industry white papers on post-pandemic trends around remote work, academic textbooks on organizational behavior, or published academic literature that was cited extensively in Chapter 2.

### 3.6 Research Instrument:

Questionnaire Development. Primary data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. A standardized questionnaire will enable all respondents to answer precisely the same questions in an identical order, thus facilitating both the data collection process and eliminating interviewer bias. Here is a questionnaire which employs a 5-point Likert scale. This psychometric scale (the standard measure of attitudes, perceptions, and opinions in academia). It enables respondents to assess the degree to which they agree or disagree with a range of specifically constructed statements about their hybrid work experience.

- Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Structural mapping of the instrument:

The questionnaire was intentionally divided into sections that were aligned with the variables and hypotheses underpinning the study:

1. Section A (Demographics): Gathers basic classification information (Age and Gender) to describe the demographic profile of the sample.
2. Section B, Part 1 (Flexibility & Productivity): These expressions serve as the yardstick for the "Job Resources" which is a component of JD-R approach. They empirically test Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>) and find out how autonomy affects output.
3. Section B, Part 2 (Communication & Collaboration): They serve as the measure of the "Job Demands." They test Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>2</sub>) directly by measuring the operational friction of technology limitations in a micro business.
4. Section B, Part 3 (Performances in sum): Measures overall performance of work in job satisfaction system and thus becomes the final DV.

**3.7 Data processing and analytic tools.** Following the main data capture process, the initial responses from 20 participants were gathered, codified, analysed, and written up (quantified) for statistical analysis.

- Software: Microsoft Excel was used to be the main data entry software, performing systematic tabulation, and generating visualizations (charts and graphs).
- Statistical Methodology: Percentage Analysis was main methodology used quantitative methodologically. That basic statistical method computes the frequency of individual Likert scale responses and computes their percent.

Rationale for Percentage Analysis: Due to the study's descriptive design and 20 of its sample size, complex inferential statistics (such as ANOVA and multiple regression analysis) can present statistically trivial or deceptive margins of error. The percentage analysis gives the interpretive insight into employee sentiment in a more specific, straightforward and comparative way, precisely what is needed to answer the research questions.

**3.8 Research Ethics.** Academic research involves rigorous ethical guidelines that need to be followed in order to protect the rights and dignity of the participants. During the data collection process, the following ethical protocols were maintained:

1. **Informed Consent:** All 20 respondents had adequate background information about the academic content and purposes of the dissertation before their participation. They participated voluntarily.
2. **Anonymity and confidentiality:** Participants were guaranteed full anonymity. The questionnaire didn't have to say what the names were, the specific job titles they held, or the exact names of the small businesses they worked for. This allowed employees to answer their employer's technological limitations or its management practices honestly, free from the threat of organizational retribution.
3. **Data protection:** The collected data is securely held and intended only for an academic analysis and to fulfil the BBA degree requirements at Amity University.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

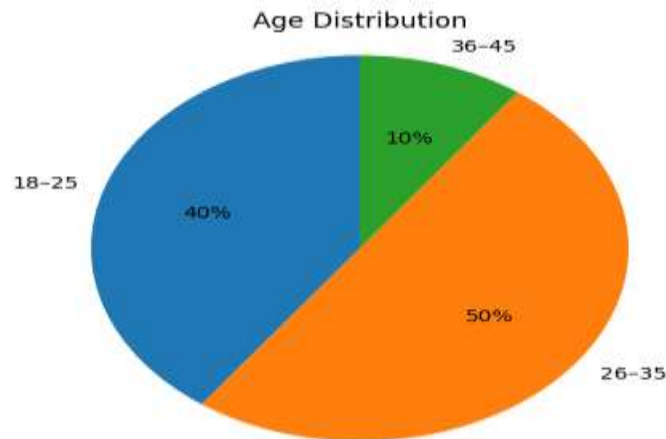
Data analysis is the systematic process of applying statistical and logical techniques to describe, illustrate, condense, recap, and evaluate data. It helps to draw on, map, and interpret the data. According to Kothari (2019), research data must be processed and analyzed according to the structured outline laid down for the purpose at the time of forming the research plan. This chapter forms the empirical core of the dissertation. The main data obtained in this structured questionnaire was administered to a special sample of 20 employees working in small scale hybrid enterprises in Lucknow and has been systematically cataloged. This data is quantitatively analyzed using percentage analysis and qualitatively interpreted to make some meaningful conclusions about the research objectives. Structurally, the analysis entails demographic profiling and the core variable analysis that directly tests the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 1.

#### 4.1 Section A: Demographics Profile Breakdown

10. Familiarity with the sample demography is significant – and not just a numbers checkout – it gives some critical context. Different segments of the population experience the behavioral and technological demands of hybrid work in diverse ways, and such a profile is crucial for reliable interpretations.

**Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age Group	Frequency (N=20)	Percentage (%)
18 - 25 Years	8	40%
26 - 35 Years	10	50%
36 - 45 Years	2	10%
Above 45 Years	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

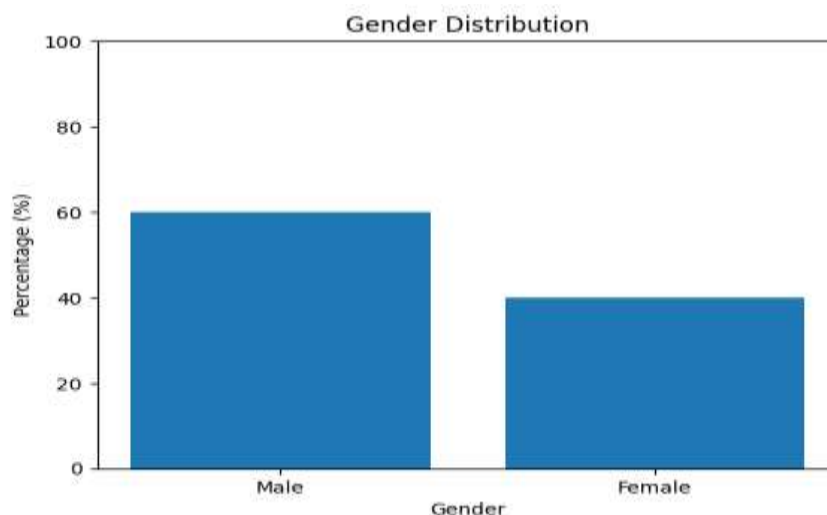


**Interpretation and HR Analysis:**

15. This is quite evident as the sample in this study is 90% as the majority of the minority of this survey's small business personnel are less than 35 years old. This high number of Millennial and Gen Z talent is a telling sign of the changing demographic landscape in tier-2 commercial hubs, such as Lucknow, which is dominated by young talent for small startups and service-based agencies. Especially for an HR perspective, this demographic discrepancy is crucial to the hybrid one. Younger cohorts are typically thought of as being “digitally native.” Their baseline level of digital fluency is also greater; thus making it much easier to adapt to cloud-based collaboration tools or move to asynchronous communication. But this also means that these results in this study are mainly biased toward early-to-mid career professional experience. This suggests that these customers may appreciate the spatial freedom more than older cohorts who could depend more on the established routine and physical mentorship that is present at a traditional office.

**Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency (N=20)	Percentage (%)
Male	12	60%
Female	8	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Interpretations & HR Analysis:**

The sample is male and female 60-40 split. This distribution is quite balanced so that the results from work-life boundaries, working hours on the road stress, and operational flexibility are not significantly dominated by a single demographic. Within the hybrid work literature, gender may subtly but heavily influence perceptions of "Job Demands" (specifically in regard to distancing professional and everyday tasks while working from home). The balanced sample also reduces the risk of deducing general job satisfaction on the basis of gender bias.

**4.3 Section B: Analysis of Core Variable and Hypothesis Testing.**

This section focuses on the primary research objectives by examining the responses assessed through the 5-point Likert Scale instrument. The findings align with that of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theoretical framework.

**4.3.1 Section 1:**

**Flexibility and Productivity (Testing Hypothesis 1). \$H\_1\$:**

There is a significant positive relationship between the flexibility of hybrid work hours and an increase in self-reported employee productivity.

**Table 4.3: Effects of Flexible Work Hours on Daily Productivity. (Stat: “The flexibility of choosing my work hours positively impacts my daily productivity.”).**

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	11	55%
Agree (4)	6	30%
Neutral (3)	2	10%
Disagree (2)	1	5%
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation & Theoretical Link:**

31. A large majority of respondents (85%) (Strongly Agree and Agree), explicitly associate the time flexibility with higher daily productivity. Under a typical nine-to-five structure, productivity comes under the strictest circadian rhythms prescribed by the employer. The hybrid model breaks that constraint.

32. This data shows that “Autonomy” operates in a powerful Job Resource when using the JD-R model as seen in our data. In small businesses where employees are often asked to transition between work schedules quickly, the option of modifying working hours to accommodate personal peak operating windows becomes a key motivational lever. With a 5% disagreement that means modern workers consider such rigid, synchronous scheduling as relatively obsolete, and detrimental to their careers.

Concentration: In Remote versus Office Environments —

**Table 4.4. (Commentary: “I find it easier to focus on complex, individual tasks when working remotely compared to the busy office environment.”).**

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	9	45%
Agree (4)	7	35%
Neutral (3)	3	15%
Disagree (2)	1	5%
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation & Theoretical Connection:**

80% of all employees surveyed consider remote environments to be far more appropriate for complex, individual tasks. It reveals a deep defect in older designs of SME offices. Open-plan office layouts are commonly employed by small businesses to promote an egalitarian culture and limit the cost of real estate. However, the literature indicates that open-plan spaces always make micro-interruptions. The data supports that the remote part of the hybrid model works effectively to shield employees from this operational noise and encourage “deep work.” The physical office, then, is not seen as a focal point of individual productivity, but instead as the point of distraction when operating in isolation.

**Table 4.5 The productivity effect of reducing commuting is as follows:** (Note: “The time saved from daily commuting allows me to be more energized for my core work tasks.”).

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	12	60%
Agree (4)	6	30%
Neutral (3)	2	10%
Disagree (2)	0	0%
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

43. The removal of the daily commute was cited by a staggering 90% of participants as one of the primary sources of their core work energy. Commuting is well acknowledged in HR literature as a stressor that does not create value, sucking up an employee’s cognitive bandwidth even before work starts. Translating commute time to a Job Resource (time for either rest or for personal purposes), the hybrid model by its nature raises the baseline energy levels of the workforce in a manner that corresponds with the high productivity measures in Table 4.3.

. \$H\_1\$ Conclusion: From the strong data shown in Tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, employees have expressed higher productivity, focus and energy management performance according to their spatial and temporal flexibility. Thus, \$H\_1\$ is completely accepted.

**4.3.2 Part 2: Communication & Collaboration (Testing Hypothesis 2).**

\$H\_2\$: Ineffective digital communication infrastructure in small businesses has a significant negative impact on team collaboration and overall employee output.

**Table 4.6: Adequacy of Digital Communication Tools (Statement: “Inadequate digital communication tools provided by my company hinder my ability to collaborate seamlessly with my team.”).**

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	6	30%
Agree (4)	8	40%
Neutral (3)	4	20%
Disagree (2)	2	10%
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpret & connect theory:**

52. Individual productivity runs strong (as demonstrated above) and collaborative efficiency breaks down. About 70% of respondents agreed that poor digital tools act to impede teamwork. This is the crux of the structural shortcoming in tier-2 city small businesses. Unlike corporate enterprises that implement enterprise-grade ecosystems (e.g., Microsoft 365 or Slack Enterprise), small businesses often find themselves using fragmented, freemium or consumer-grade communication apps (such as standard WhatsApp groups or basic email) to reduce cost.

53. This information illustrates the severe “Job Demand” within the JD-R framework. The digital friction created by insufficient tools, therefore, acts as an operational bottleneck, offsetting the productivity gains made available through flexibility.

54.

**Table 4.7: Information Silos and Informal Communication.** (Explanation: "I frequently miss out on important informal information or quick management decisions when working remotely.").

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	5	25%
Agree (4)	7	35%
Neutral (3)	5	25%
Disagree (2)	3	15%
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation & Theoretical Link:**

60% of the sample feel they miss out on critical informal information while working remotely. Small firms, because they have flat hierarchies, also rely strongly on quick, verbal communications on the floor. Decisions are frequently made organically and without any kind of corporate memos at all.

When some members of the workforce are remote, they find themselves inadvertently marginalized from this informal communication loop. This leads to a state of "information silos" and internal lack of alignment; small businesses have seen a poor culture at every level as they have moved from synchronous (face-to-face) to asynchronous (digital) communication.

**Table 4.8: Asynchronous Response Times**

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	4	20%
Agree (4)	9	45%
Neutral (3)	3	15%
Disagree (2)	4	20%
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Implication & Theoretical Connotations:**

Sixty-five percent of workers report poor communication times while working remotely. Without a mere stroll to a colleague’s desk, employees are at the mercy of their peers’ digital responsiveness. In small businesses without robust Service Level Agreements (SLAs) on internal communication, this latency delays projects directly, and creates frustration.

Conclusion for Hypothesis 2: The complete data in the tables 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 confirms, that insufficient digital infrastructure and informal communication gap and digital latency severely hampers teamwork. Consequently,  $H_2$  is accepted.

**Part 3: Overall Performance & Well-being.**

**4.3.3 Section 3: Overall Performance & Well-being — 4.3.**

**Table 4.9: Work-Life Boundary and Technostress.** (Statement: “I have a hard time ‘switching off’ from work and getting my personal life and professional responsibility in check while working remotely.”)

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	3	15%
Agree (4)	5	25%
Neutral (3)	4	20%
Disagree (2)	6	30%
Strongly Disagree (1)	2	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretations & Theoretical Connection:**

This is an extremely polarized metric. If 40% of employees live with "technostress" (failing to digitally disconnect from systems), an equal 40% do not struggle with this boundary. This polarization implies that work-life boundary management in hybrid arrangements is largely a function of personal discipline and the living arrangements of the individual, not structure of organisational policies and procedure.

73.

**Table 4.10: Overall Impact of Hybrid Work (Statement: "Overall, the hybrid work model has improved my job performance, motivation, and job satisfaction.")**

Likert Scale Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (5)	8	40%
Agree (4)	9	45%
Neutral (3)	2	10%
Disagree (2)	1	5%
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation & Theoretical Link:**

This is the most important, summative parameter of the dissertation. An overwhelming 85% of the respondents claim that the hybrid model has improved their overall job performance and satisfaction despite their previous exposure to severe communication bottlenecks and information silos found in Table 4.6 and Table 4.7, respectively.

**CHAPTER 5**

**CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS.**

**5.1 Introduction to Final Chapter.**

The greatest fruit of a high-quality study is turning the raw data into something concrete and empirical. Chapter 4 acts as the capstone of this dissertation through a systematic integration of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, the methodological considerations described in Chapter 3, and the empirical data analyzed in Chapter 4. For instance, I will do more than simply restate the data, I will interpret its implications for Human Resource Management at the local level where Lucknow small business ecosystem is concerned. This part will describe the key results, provide an important verdict to the research hypotheses and then draw up a well-defined, strategic set of recommendations for small business owners and HR practitioners.

**5.2 Main Findings and Their Main Results.**

**Core Findings of the Data Collection and Analyze-At-a-Glance**

After collecting primary data, % of our 20 sampled employees was analyzed and crucial insights into the paradox of hybrid work were revealed. The results are classified in three broad dimensions: Productivity, Collaborative Friction, and General Organizational Impact.

**5.2.1 Spatial Flexibility and Productivity Results (Causation to \$H\_1\$).**

Data unequivocally shows that firm, traditional office hours are seen as an obstacle to personal productivity. An overwhelming 85% of respondents also claimed the power to determine the temporal and spatial of work influences the productivity of their work and its immediate influence could have a positive effect. In addition, 80% of respondents cited the remote aspect of the hybrid model as well as being significantly more efficient than the physical one in performing complex, high-focus tasks. And for small businesses — which often work from open-plan office layouts that generate noise and microinterruptions that are always there — the home environment provides a desperately required refuge for “deep work.” And 90% of employees pointed out that the removal of the daily commute was able to conserve their

cognitive bandwidth to do more on-the-job tasks. Accordingly, the first hypothesis ((H<sub>1</sub>) that was posited by the former that states there is a positive relationship between the flexibility of a single employee and productivity is obviously accepted.

### **5.2.2 Data on Communication Bottlenecks and Information Silos (Tying to \$H\_2\$).**

As the output of individuals swells, the data indicate a serious structural vulnerability of collaboration efficiency. Inadequate, consumer-grade digital communication tools actively hinder the ability of employees to work together, 70% of the small business work force acknowledged. Unlike big corporates with enterprise-grade IT infrastructure for business, small businesses often depend on fragmented means of communication between people resulting in significant technological friction. Additionally, 60% of the respondents noted they had faced "information silos." Since small businesses depend a great deal on quick casual decision-making in the office, remote workers are often left out of the majority of critical organizational updates. With 65% of the employees saying that they have significant delay in receiving replies from colleagues on a remote day, this involves synchronous physical communication, which generates operational latency. Thus, the second hypothesis (\$H\_2\$), that weak digital infrastructure stifles team collaboration, is firmly accepted.

### **5.2.3 Overall Job Satisfaction and the JD-R Model**

Notwithstanding the severe communication bottlenecks identified, an overwhelming 85% of respondents admit that the hybrid model ultimately improved their job performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. This outcome serves as an archetypal validation of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The hybrid model's psychological and operational "Resources" (autonomy, focus, removal of commute) are currently powerful enough to buffer and offset the negative effects of the "Job Demands" (technological friction and information asymmetry).

## **5.3 Conclusion.**

The shift to hybrid work is not an operational reset; it marks a paradigm shift — a behavioral change at the core of the organizations. The empirical evidence collected throughout this dissertation concludes that hybrid work models are indeed a double-edged sword for small businesses. On the one hand, they are a huge driver for productivity at the individual level and another key retention lever for a younger, digitally native workforce that wants to feel a little more free. But small businesses are left in an organisational structural contradiction it's found. They have introduced progressive, flexible work policies but are trying to implement them through traditional, office-first management attitudes and a lack of digital infrastructure. Without the active avoidance of "Job Demands" of communication friction for the small enterprises, the overall high job satisfaction already achieved will eventually become technostress and burnout. Small businesses must modernize their internal communication frameworks to synchronize with progressive remote-work policies to fully harness the hybrid model.

## **5.4 Strategic Suggestions and HR Recommendations.**

To address these identified structural disparities, the following actionable, logically organized guidance is recommended for HR managers and small business owners.

### **5.4.1 Mandate and Invest in Centralized Digital Infrastructure.**

Small businesses will have to ditch the splintered consumer apps (like the default WhatsApp groups) for official communication at once! This includes everything from investing in single project management applications (Slack, Microsoft Teams or Asana) to cloud-based project management solutions for

managing projects. And a single central platform means that all changes made, records, and managerial decisions are digitally tracked, so the kind of information silos that remote workers often experience are eliminated.

#### **5.4.2 Establish “Core Collaboration Hours” to Address Latency.**

To minimize communication delays and keep the digital culture of "always-on" from becoming an issue, HR should mandate overlap hours. For instance, saying that all employees from anywhere in the organization need to be online and very responsive from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM. The organization will also have to normalize asynchronous communication outside for employees to devote time to deep work by allowing them to work through long forms of work by being able to have a conversation when no immediate response is required.

#### **5.4.3 Redefine Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).**

For HR departments, this means that they have to overhaul formal performance appraisal systems. Assessing a hybrid worker for “hours logged” or “responsiveness” is an outdated standard. Performance reviews should instead shift to outcome-based KPIs only focused on delivering quality products and services, rates of project completion, and client satisfaction.

#### **5.4.4 Implement Managerial Training using the ADDIE Model.**

The major failure point especially in a hybrid is probably the "mid-level manager" that is new to leading a decentralized team. ADDIE instructional design framework small business professionals should use to fast-track the upskilling of management layer:

- Analysis: Discover the distinct areas of communication failure and technology challenge for managers who are operating while their teams are remote.
- Design: Develop a localized training module on leading with empathy, to identify outputs that yield a better outcome-value than presenting and even to learn to use digital collaboration tools.
- Development: Develop internal guides or conduct workshops on asynchronous conversation codes.
- Implementation: Train all team leads to make the switch from micromanagement to trustful leadership.
- Evaluation: The training will be continually evaluated with quarterly anonymous surveys of employees, modifying how the executive team operates based on the results.

#### **5.4.5 Restructure the Physical Office as a “Cultural Hub.”**

The physical office must no longer be just a place for the uninterrupted exercise of desk work. Required in-office days should be strategically curated by HR to be collaborative experiences. It allows for complex problem-solving, collaborative brainstorming, quarterly reviews and team-building exercises that enhance organizational culture within the physical space that should be reserved specifically for these types of activities.

### **5.5 Scope for Future Research.**

Although this dissertation contains a solid core examination of hybrid work in the context of small business owners, a rapidly changing workplace landscape offers a lot of academic potential in the future. The future studies could build on this analysis through following steps:

1. Running a follow-up study for several years over time, to examine if the elevated rates of job satisfaction observed in a hybrid model maintain over time or if digital fatigue prevails.
2. Expanding the sample size considerably and utilizing probability sampling across tier-2 cities to aim for a wider, macroeconomic view of SME ecosystem.

3. Conducting a comparative analysis focusing on particular industries (e.g., looking at the hybrid productivity of an IT company and a boutique marketing agency) to see whether or not the success of the model is essentially sector specific.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

**Research Topic:** Impact of Hybrid Work on Employee Performance in Small Businesses

**Target Demographic:** Employees of small businesses (10-50 employees) operating on a hybrid work model in Lucknow.

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

(Please tick [  ] the appropriate box)

1. Age Group:

18 - 25 Years

26 - 35 Years

36 - 45 Years

Above 45 Years

2. Gender:

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

### SECTION B: CORE VARIABLES (HYBRID WORK & PERFORMANCE)

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking the appropriate box based on the 5-point Likert Scale below.)

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

#### Part 1: Flexibility & Productivity

3. The flexibility of choosing my work hours positively impacts my daily productivity. [  1 ] [  2 ] [  3 ] [  4 ] [  5 ]

4. I find it easier to focus on complex, individual tasks when working remotely compared to the busy office environment. [  1 ] [  2 ] [  3 ] [  4 ] [  5 ]

5. The time saved from daily commuting allows me to be more energized for my core work tasks. [  1 ] [  2 ] [  3 ] [  4 ] [  5 ]

#### Part 2: Communication & Collaboration

6. Inadequate digital communication tools provided by my company hinder my ability to collaborate seamlessly with my team. [  1 ] [  2 ] [  3 ] [  4 ] [  5 ]

7. I frequently miss out on important informal information or quick management decisions when working remotely. [  1 ] [  2 ] [  3 ] [  4 ] [  5 ]

8. It takes significantly longer to get responses from colleagues or managers on remote working days. [  1 ] [  2 ] [  3 ] [  4 ] [  5 ]

#### Part 3: Work-Life Boundaries & Overall Satisfaction

9. I find it difficult to "switch off" from work and separate my personal life from professional duties when working remotely. [  1 ] [  2 ] [  3 ] [  4 ] [  5 ]

10. Overall, the hybrid work model has improved my job performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. [ 1 ][ 2 ][ 3 ][ 4 ][ 5 ]

**ANNEXURES**

**Annexure I: Raw Data Collection (Excel Sheet Representation)**

The following table represents the raw, coded data extracted from the completed questionnaires of the 20 respondents. This data was entered into Microsoft Excel to calculate the percentage frequencies presented in Chapter 4.

Coding Key: M=Male, F=Female. Likert Scale: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree.

Respondent ID	Age Group	Gender	Q3 (Productivity)	Q4 (Focus)	Q5 (Energy)	Q6 (Tools)	Q7 (Info Silos)	Q8 (Latency)	Q9 (Boundary)	Q10 (Satisfaction)
R01	26-35	M	5	5	5	4	4	4	2	5
R02	18-25	F	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
R03	26-35	M	5	4	5	4	4	5	3	5
R04	36-45	M	3	3	4	5	5	4	2	4
R05	18-25	M	5	5	5	3	3	4	5	5
R06	26-35	F	4	5	5	4	4	2	2	4
R07	18-25	F	5	4	4	2	2	2	3	4
R08	26-35	M	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	5
R09	26-35	F	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	4
R10	18-25	M	5	5	5	4	5	4	2	5
R11	36-45	F	2	2	3	5	5	5	1	3
R12	26-35	M	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	4
R13	18-25	M	5	5	5	2	2	3	4	5
R14	26-35	F	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4
R15	18-25	M	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
R16	26-35	M	5	4	4	4	3	4	2	4
R17	18-25	F	4	5	5	3	2	3	1	4
R18	26-35	M	4	5	5	4	5	4	3	5
R19	18-25	F	5	3	4	5	4	3	4	3
R20	26-35	M	3	4	5	3	4	2	2	2