

The Impact of Remote Work on Employee Engagement and Productivity: A Systematic Review

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Abstract- Remote work proliferated all over the world since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and thus has fundamentally changed the way organizations work, collaborate, and measure performance. This is a systematic review that summarized studies on the effects of remote work on employee engagement and productivity. In accordance with the PRISMA guidelines, ten peer-reviewed studies were discussed in a variety of settings, such as hybrid or remote workplaces. Results indicate that remote employment supports the aspects of flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance-significant facilitators of engagement and performance-and opens up issues of social isolation, boundary blur, and inefficiency in communications. The moderation factors that were found to play significant roles were leadership style, digital infrastructure, and employee self-regulations. On the whole, there is an indication that remote working can be engaging and productive with the presence of inclusive leadership, good digital communication system, and organizational support systems.

Index Terms- Remote work, Employee engagement, Productivity, Systematic review, Hybrid work.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Remote work, commonly referred to as telecommuting or flexible work, has changed in the last ten years into a niche to a common organizational policy. The recent rapid increase in the pace of the digital transformation, as well as the disruption by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in the long-term change towards hybrid and fully remote working environments (Anakpo et al., 2023). With organizations going through this transition, the importance of exploring the impact of remote work on employee engagement and productivity has gained greater importance in organizational success.

The emotional and cognitive bond that employees receive towards their job and company is commonly known as employee engagement which is broadly

considered as a performance, innovation, and retention determinant (Choudhary and Jain, 2025). Productivity is the efficiency and effectiveness of achievement of the objectives by employees. Both constructs are mutually reinforcing-engaged employees tend to be more productive and increasing productivity might strengthen engagement. Nonetheless, the connection between remote employment, interaction, and efficiency is nevertheless complicated and situational (Fatima et al., 2024).

1.2 Significance of the Study

Remote work is not just a shift in the logistics, but an additional major one in the organizational culture and psychological contract. To human-resource professionals, it is important to understand this change to create a lasting engagement and prevent disengagement, which may kill productivity and innovativeness. Moderators that affect employee adaptation to a remote environment are leadership communication quality, digital literacy, and organizational support (Kim et al., 2025).

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions.

This systemic review will attempt to:

1. Generalize the empirical results of remote working on employee engagement and productivity.
2. Establish contextual and moderating variables of these outcomes.
3. Create a theoretical map that provides the routes between remote work, engagement, and productivity.

Research Questions:

- What is the effect of remote work on the level of employee engagement?

- How do engagement and productivity relate in the remote situation?
- What are the organizational and personal moderation factors of these effects?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This review is based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). The model suggests that, when job resources (autonomy, support, communication) surpass job demands (stress, isolation, workload), engagement is the result. Remote work is the only to disturb such balance and increase the resources and the needs. The knowledge of the way organizations can strengthen resources by reducing demands offers a basis of sustainable participation in distributed environments.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The given research is based on a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, which is elaborated on the principles of Preferred Reporting Items of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA, 2020). A systematic review guarantees reproducibility, transparency as well as objectivity by establishing, examining, and generalizing empirical data through all the published studies on a specific subject. This research design is especially appropriate when it comes to generalizing the varying results on the impact of remote work on engagement and productivity within a specific period of time (2015-2025).

The SLR technique included four major steps:

1. Locating the pertinent literature.
2. Inclusion and exclusion screening.
3. Evaluation of the methodological quality.
4. Thematic analysis and synthesis.

2.2 Search Strategy

The four databases that were searched included Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Emerald Insight. The key words and operator methods were used to guarantee that the topic was covered throughout. The search terms were as below: (“remote work” OR “telecommuting” OR “hybrid work”) AND (“employee engagement” OR

“motivation” OR “commitment”) AND (“productivity” OR “performance”).

All peer-reviewed studies in English language that were published in the years 2015-25 were limited. Reference lists and other relevant review articles were also searched manually, in order to find more sources that were not identified by database. We will use inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify the participants who will be recruited to complete the questionnaire.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion

Inclusion criteria:

- Research conducted explicitly on engagement or productivity of employees working remotely or in a hybrid setting.
- Papers in peer-reviewed journals, which are either empirical, theoretical, or review-based papers.
- The studies that will be included are those published in 2015-2025.

Exclusion criteria:

- Non-peer-reviewed materials (e.g. blogs, editorials, conference papers).
- Articles not in English.
- Research that solely looked at the external or customer performance but not the employees.

2.4 Screening Process

Database searches identified 312 records. Upon removal of duplicates, 267 unique studies were left to be screened by title and abstract screening. Among them, 51 articles were assessed in terms of the full-text, and 10 studies passed all the inclusion criteria. This process involves the PRISMA flow diagram, the summary of which is presented in the text of figure 1.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

- Identification: 312 records were found using database searches, and 12 were found using other sources.
- Screening: 267 records screened after elimination of duplicates.
- Inclusion criterion: 51 full-text articles were considered to be relevant and of high quality.

- Inclusion: 10 studies were included that fitted the inclusion criteria and offered to the final synthesis.

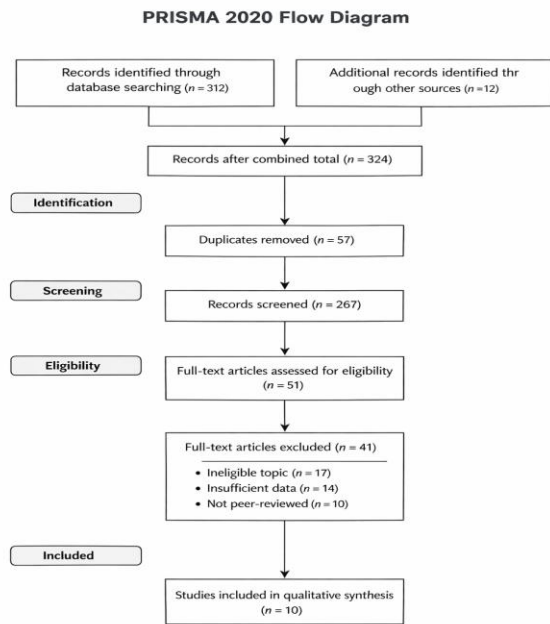


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

2.5 Data extraction and synthesis

Data are extracted and synthesized to establish the correlation between five factors and the ability to conceal ISK activities. A standard data extraction form was constructed to capture major study attributes including authorship, year, country, methodology and major findings. Extracted data were put in a matrix to cross-compared. Thematic synthesis was subsequently performed where qualitative coding was done to determine patterns and shared concepts across studies. These were then divided into main themes and subthemes which summed up drivers of engagement, productivity determinants and moderating factors.

2.6 Quality Assessment

A methodological quality assessment of all the included studies was done by the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist. The articles were rated on the basis of clarity of research purpose, research rigour, ethical issues, analysis of data and final validity. There were nine studies out of ten with a quality score of 8/10 or more which means a high degree of reliability.

III. FINDINGS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The last ten papers, which were included in this review, gave a broad understanding of the impact of remote work on employee engagement and productivity in various organization and cultural settings. Four broad themes were identified through thematic synthesis and include:

1. Engagement Drivers
2. Productivity Outcomes
3. Mediating and Moderating Factors.
4. Challenges and Barriers

On the whole, the results indicate remote work as a factor that increases flexibility, autonomy, and well-being and introduces some new challenges connected with communication, technology, and work-life boundaries.

3.1 Summary of the Included Studies.

Table 1:

Author(s)	Year	Country	Design/Method	Key Findings
Fatima et al.	2024	Pakistan	Systematic Review	Autonomy and trust-based leadership enhance engagement and output.
Choudhary & Jain	2025	India	Systematic Review	Leadership empathy and communication increase motivation.
Anakpo et al.	2023	South Africa	Meta-analysis	Productivity rises under autonomy and reduced supervision.
Arif & Sherwani	2025	India	Bibliometric	Flexibility improves engagement; overwork reduces well-being.
Kim et al.	2025	USA	Systematic Review	Transformational leadership strengthens

Author(s)	Year	Country	Design/Method	Key Findings
Raghaw	2024	Global	Mixed Methods	engagement. Isolation and technostress reduce motivation and focus. Fatigue and digital overload weaken long-term engagement.
Andrić et al.	2023	Croatia	Systematic Review	Recognition and inclusion boost morale and engagement. Leadership and culture moderate engagement outcomes.
Hajjami & Crocco	2024	USA	Comparative	Engagement directly drives productivity and retention.
Ferdous et al.	2025	Global	Theoretical Framework	
Adriyanto	2023	Indonesia	Quantitative	

increases output in the situation when there is access to technology, understanding of goals, and trustful management. On the other hand, Raghaw (2024) noted that productivity reduces in cases of poor communication and high isolation among employees.

Table 2
 Summary of Findings on Engagement and Productivity Thematic.

Theme	Sub-Themes	Key Insights	Supporting Studies
Engagement Drivers	Autonomy, Trust, Flexibility	Empowering environments enhance motivation.	Fatima et al. (2024); Choudhary & Jain (2025)
Productivity Determinants	Tech support, Self-management	Readiness and clarity boost performance.	Anakpo et al. (2023); Arif & Sherwani (2025)
Moderating Factors	Leadership, Communication, Culture	Empathy and inclusion drive resilience.	Kim et al. (2025); Ferdous et al. (2025)
Barriers	Isolation, Overload, Burnout	Disconnection reduces engagement.	Raghaw (2024); Andrić et al. (2023)

3.2 Remote Work employee engagement drivers.
 Autonomy, quality of leadership, communication, and trust are some of the major determinants of remote work engagement. Fatima et al. (2024) mentioned autonomy as one of the driving factors, as employees who are able to self-regulate are more focused and owned. On the same note, Choudhary and Jain (2025) have discovered that psychological safety and engagement are promoted with the help of empathetic leadership and open communication. The other significant driver of engagement was flexibility. Arif and Sherwani (2025) found that remote workers who were able to work flexible schedules indicated that they had better morale, creativity, and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the same studies cautioned that over flexibility will lead to the blurring of work-life boundaries and may result in burnout.

3.3 Productivity Outcomes
 It has been shown that remote work improves and slows down productivity based on organizational support structures. Anakpo et al. (2023) and Adriyanto (2023) have shown that remote work

3.4 Moderating and Mediating Facts.
Leadership as a Moderator
 In all studies, leadership has always become the strongest moderating variable. Both engagement and performance in remote settings are improved through transformational and servant leadership styles with such defining features as empathy, empowerment, and trust (Kim et al., 2025). Conversely, micromanagement and digital surveillance destroy psychological safety and reduce commitment (Fatima et al., 2024).

Technology and Infrastructure.
 Availability, usability, and integration of technology have a great influence on productivity. According to Arif and Sherwani (2025), digital infrastructure intermediates performance results. Proper tools

encourage both teamwork and productivity whereas poor systems lead to frustration and mental exhaustion.

Organizational Culture and Inclusion.

Hajjami and Crocco (2024) noted that companies that focus on digital recognition platforms, inclusive values, and social connectivity maintain better engagement. The same idea was suggested by Ferdous et al. (2025), who suggested that an inclusive and value-based culture helps reduce isolation and strengthen the sense of purpose.

3.5 Challenges and Barriers

Although it has numerous benefits, remote work presents certain obstacles that may negatively affect involvement and efficiency:

1. **Social Isolation:** Remote workers tend to lose the feeling of belonging and personal interactions (Raghaw, 2024).
2. **Work-Life Imbalance:** Flexibility may cause overworking and the inability to get separated with work activities (Andrić et al., 2023).
3. **Digital Fatigue:** Excessive use of communication devices on the web leads to mental burnout.
4. **Digital Access Disparities:** Inequalities arise due to lack of access to digital resources and ergonomics.
5. **Limitations in the leadership:** Supervisors might find it difficult to recognize indicators of disengagement when working online.

Figure 2. Remote Work, Engagement, and Productivity Conceptual Framework.

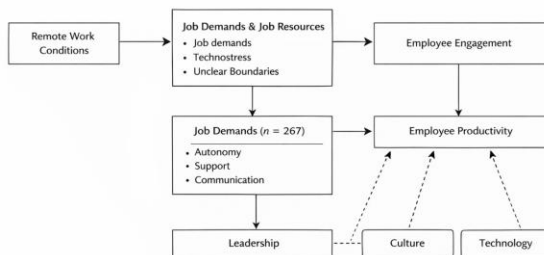


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Remote Work, Engagement, and Productivity

IV. DISCUSSION

This systematic review aimed to provide a synthesis of evidence on the topic of the effect of remote work compared to working on employee engagement and productivity in the last ten years (2015-2025). The results are a complex interplay between autonomy, leadership and technology- indicating that remote work is not necessarily a positive or negative phenomenon, but rather it depends on the organizational conditions and the quality of management.

4.1 Integration of Findings

The studied papers invariably show that the ability to engage and increase productivity by promoting autonomy, trust-based leadership, and technological support can be very successful with the appropriate alignment. The authors have found that giving employees the power to manage themselves enhances intrinsic motivation and decreases emotional exhaustion (Fatima et al., 2024; Choudhary and Jain, 2025). In contrast, micromanagement and over-monitoring fail to foster engagement and the employees become disengaged at a thought process although their output may be superficially high. The engagement-productivity correlation is symbiotic. Engaged staff have increased concentration, perseverance and flexibility, which can be quantified in the form of performance increase. This phenomenon could be in line with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), according to which engagement mediates the relationship that exists between job resources and performance results. Telecommuting increases the autonomy and flexibility (core resources) on both ends of the equation but increases isolation and online fatigue (demands). The net effect would be on whether the balance is in favour of resources or demands. The level of engagement is not declined, or it is enhanced in the organization where the leaders are trained in terms of communication platforms, digital ergonomics, etc. Conversely, when the environment is poorly coordinated and socially isolated, disengagement and burnout are likely to occur (Andrić et al., 2023).

4.2. Pre- and Post-Pandemic Comparison

One of the most important observations made in the course of this review is the change in the motivation and engagement trends of remote work before and after the pandemic. In the years preceding 2020, remote work used to be voluntary and was only accessible to those professionals who had a well-established routine and were digitally competent. Research at the time, including Anakpo et al. (2023), reported increased satisfaction and productivity because of self-selection. However, since the year 2020, remote work has been an organizational requirement and not an option. The imposed migration revealed structural dissimilarities- like technological preparedness, quality of workspace, and resourcefulness of the administration. The level of engagement was high and low at the same time during this phase, as many employees reported having digital burnout and social disconnection (Ferdous et al., 2025). Hybrid work has since looked into a solution to balance between the flexibility of remote work and the social adaptability of office teamwork. The results indicate that agency in both contexts by enabling employees to decide on the mode of work and the maintenance of a fair balance of support by the organizations maximize engagement and productivity.

4.3. Theoretical Implications

The present review helps to fill in the gaps in the literature by applying the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model to the digital setting. In particular, it shows digital infrastructure, level of communication, and organizational culture as the recent job resources that can help maintain engagement in remote work. Moreover, it identifies technostress- defined as strain caused by constant use of technology- as a new job requirement that can have opposite effects to engagement benefits. The model also explains that there is an aspect in which the leadership is a resource and a moderator. Transformational leaders also provide positive emotional settings that mitigate the impact of digital fatigue, whereas transactional or authoritarian leaders increase demands. This underscores the necessity of enhancing the theoretical leadership to suit virtual dynamics and emotional control of dispersed teams. Theoretically, the combination of engagement, technology and leadership in the JD-R framework provides a more

comprehensive view of the remote working experience that fills the gaps between organizational psychology information systems and management science.

4.4 Managerial Implications

The practical sense of these results is important in organizations who are traversing long-term distance and hybrid set ups. The following strategies can be used by the managers and HR leaders to maintain engagement and productivity:

1. Build Trust and Autonomy: Replace outcome-based evaluation with digital micromanagement. Those employees who feel trusted have a higher level of engagement and responsibility.
2. Digital Literacy and Access: Train and resource to achieve equal access to technological competency within the teams.
3. Encourage Social Interaction: Implement formal virtual meetings- team huddles, recognition programs, and mentorship programs- to prevent isolation.
4. Work-Life Boundaries: Motivate workers to define schedules and observe the asynchronous communication standards.
5. Reward Hard Work: Digital reward systems can mimic the inspirational impact of literal praise rituals.

Finally, empathy of leaders is the fundamental block of successful remote interaction. Authentic and psychologically safe communication through managers leads to greater team cohesion and long-term productivity as Kim et al. (2025) argue.

4.5 Policy and Organizational Design Implications

Companies should not perceive remote work as a process of making short-term modifications but as a workplace remodel. Institutionalization of hybrid models that focus on flexibility, inclusiveness, and well-being should be institutionalized by the policymakers and leaders. Employee burnout can be avoided by ensuring that there is a clear set of rules regarding the frequency of communication via digital media, privacy of the data and the ergonomics of the workspace. Moreover, the engagement metrics need to be incorporated into the performance management

systems, and engagement needs to be defined and taken as an essential KPI (Key Performance Indicator), rather than an HR trend.

V. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS.

Although remote work remains an underdeveloped yet popular phenomenon in the employment paradigm, this review has revealed important areas requiring further research in developing the theory and practice.

5.1 Longitudinal Study of Sustained Engagement.

Most of the studies incorporated in this survey are based on cross-sectional research which provided a brief view of involvement and productivity. Future studies need to utilize longitudinal methodologies by monitoring engagement patterns over longer periods of time. With the help of longitudinal data, it will be possible to understand the way employees adjust to and maintain or lose motivation over time when working remotely as the remote work environment advances.

5.2 Cross-Cultural Comparisons

The culture has a great impact on the attitudes of employees regarding autonomy, leadership, and cooperation. The study on engagement and productivity needs to be compared between individualistic (i.e., the United States, United Kingdom) and collectivist (i.e., India, Indonesia, South Africa) cultures. This would guide organizations to be able to localize engagement strategies, as well as, creating culturally responsive management models.

5.3 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools Integration

The psychographic effects of AI-powered analytics and automation tools on motivation and psychological safety should be investigated in future research as they become increasingly prevalent in monitoring performance and managing tasks. Although AI can shorten the workflow and decrease the workload, it can also create new types of digital surveillance stress. The duality of AI as a productivity enhancer and possibly as a stressor requires urgency of research.

5.4 Remote Environments and Equity and Inclusion

Digital inequity is a concept that has not been fully explored. Access to high-speed internet, ergonomic equipment, and quiet working environments affect the experiences of employees on the engagement and productivity levels. Future studies should combine intersectional models to consider the interaction of gender, socioeconomic status and geography with digital resource availability, which can influence the outcome of engagement of employees.

5.5 Frameworks of Standardization of Measurement

The absence of standard measures of engagement and productivity when working remotely is one of the ongoing shortcomings of the reviewed literature. Measurement tools that capture current working conditions should also be created and tested by researchers, and they should include the variables of digital communication frequency, technology fatigue, and hybrid collaboration. This will make future findings more comparative and generalizable.

Table 3

Conclusion of the Study Backs and Recommendations.

Research Area	Proposed Approach	Rationale
Longitudinal Studies	Multi-wave, time-series designs	Track engagement evolution
Cross-Cultural Comparisons	Comparative case studies	Examine cultural differences
AI Integration	Experimental/observational designs	Assess automation's dual effects
Equity & Inclusion	Intersectional methods	Address digital inequities
Measurement Frameworks	Psychometric validation	Create standardized metrics

5.6 Limitations of the Review

Even though the present review followed PRISMA and CASP guidelines, there were a number of limitations, which should be considered:

1. The sample was restricted to publications in English language which might have missed other studies in other languages.
2. Grey literature (organizational reports, dissertations, preprints) was filtered out to make sure there is peer-reviewed rigor.
3. The fast-changing digital work technologies imply that the findings can be soon updated because of the maturing of the hybrid systems.

To address these limitations, future studies can focus on including more people, incorporating grey literature, and performing meta-analyses in order to obtain quantitative measures of effect sizes in different settings.

VI. CONCLUSION

This systematic review concludes that remote work exerts a dual influence on employee engagement and productivity. When supported by autonomy, trust, and adequate technological infrastructure, remote work can significantly enhance motivation and performance. However, without proper management of isolation, work-life balance, and digital fatigue, these gains are at risk.

The findings reinforce the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework: engagement mediates the relationship between job resources and outcomes, while leadership, technology, and culture serve as moderators. Effective remote work management thus requires balancing autonomy with accountability, flexibility with structure, and connection with independence.

Organizations that invest in inclusive leadership, digital equity, and psychological well-being can transform remote work into a strategic advantage rather than a logistical compromise.

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