



THEY WANT IT ALL - MILLENNIA'S PREFERENCE FOR HYBRID WORK MODE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Ms. Ashwini R H* Dr. Aparna J Varma**

*Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, GSSSIETW, Mysore, Karnataka, India.

**Associate Professor, Department of MBA, GSSSIETW, Mysore, Karnataka, India.

Abstract

Post Covid 19 as workplaces are reopening, employers have discovered that their employees are not ready to give up remote work. Due to COVID-19 employees who started working remotely now support it and want to continue doing so. With an ongoing global pandemic, organizations cannot ask the workforce to return to office full time and they cannot say yes to remote working too. In such situations when companies decide to return to office spaces, a Hybrid work model works the best. Organizations around the world have adopted the Hybrid Work Model. This paper aims to identify the preferences of millennial employees with Hybrid work model and what implications it has on their overall wellbeing. The implications and conclusions arrived at are based on previous research studies and results of surveys conducted by various organizations.

Keywords: Hybrid Work, Millennial, COVID-19.

Introduction

Prior to COVID-19 Outbreak, almost 52% of the employees globally worked from office once in a week at least and 68% employees opted WFH once per month, After the Pandemic declaration, 88% of organizations have enabled employees to work from home [2]. Hybrid work appeared as the most feasible work arrangement during the pandemic. Where organizations transitioned to remote work using virtual collaboration tools in order to remain productive. Although organizations had opted for remote workers pre-pandemic, such working arrangements accelerated overnight post-COVID -19 outbreak as social distancing became mandatory and in person meeting to virtual collaboration.[6]. Hybrid work mode is a flexible approach which allows the employees to divide their time between working at office and working from home, A hybrid work model incorporates a combination of in-office and remote work in an employee's schedule. Occasionally employees get the chance to pick and choose when they come in to the office and when they work from home. There is no standard Hybrid Model that fits the entire organization. Each organization has to develop a hybrid model based on the company's and individual employee needs [22].

Objective of the Study

1. To Discuss the Popular Hybrid Work Model Structures.
2. To Understand Millennial's preference towards Hybrid Work Model.
3. To Understand the Impact of Hybrid Work model on overall well being of Millennial employees.

There are variations of Hybrid Model; it varies in flexibility.

Hybrid at-will: Employees can choose which day(s) to come into the office

Hybrid split-week: The company assigns specific days for on-site and remote work by team or function

Hybrid manager-scheduling: Managers choose which day(s) their team comes into the office

Hybrid mix: A combo of all three options

Theoretical Conception

The hybrid structures used by organizations have changed in the last two years. Popular Hybrid Work Model Structures

1. Remote First: Many Organizations are choosing to go remote-first, where in the company operations will be carried out remotely. Most of such organization will keep their office spaces for employees to work



collaboratively or solo occasionally. Examples of such organizations would be drop box and quora which have completely shifted to Remote-first space. In this approach, employees can even relocate away from the office, but organization will keep the office space for employees who value it. Remote-first doesn't not imply that teammates will never meet again. Fully remote organizations conduct annual retreats or community collaborative work where employees living in the same city can choose to co-work together.

2. Office Occasional: Some organizations which are still not sold on remote work and don't want to lose the money on unused office space are eager to get back to office. Such organizations may set up a hybrid work model which can be described as Office- occasional. [22]. In this approach employees come in to the office few times a week. Unlike remote-first approach where office spaces are used for collaboration, this model uses the office space to blend solo work and in-person collaboration depending on the company's needs. In this model the organization doesn't go fully remote, instead they keep their office space open for employees to spend some time in it. In this case the workforce will be mostly local as they have to come to office occasionally [22].

3. Office First, Remote Allowed: This model focuses on keeping both the remote and office work but designate office as the primary workplace. This arrangement was common prior to COVID-19, where most of the work force worked from office and a very small percentage of employees worked remotely. If the leadership works from office, then this approach is likely to be used. The company tends to become office-centered by default as the leadership team will have in-person conversations and collaborations with the workforce except the remote workers. In this approach, organization offers a remote work policy and hence have some employees scattered. but those who work in-office get better connections and opportunities compared to those who work remotely, because they work closely with the leadership team [22]. After realizing the benefits and challenges of remote work, Organizations are now adopting a hybrid work model that best suits their workforce to encompass greater flexibility in work culture while maintaining in-person interactions which are crucial for the organization culture [17].

Many surveys and research reveal the factors that drive the hybrid work:

According to McKinsey Remote work has proven to be successful, as majority of the executives have observed notable improvements in terms of individual productivity, diversity and inclusion [19].

According to dimensional re-search 57% of employees would consider quitting their current job if the employer demands to return to office full-time. Employees demand greater flexibility [4].

As per a study conducted by Fortune, 74% of CEO's consider Hybrid mode as an opportunity to reduce the real estate cost and travel cost. They even expect to reduce their office space [20].

The major advantage being the Sustainability: During COVID-19 pandemic daily global CO2 emissions decreased by 19% because of reduced transportation (reduced commutes and business travel) and reduce electricity usage in office spaces due to hybrid work mode [4].

Millennia's Employees

Millennia's are the largest share of the workforce comprising 75% of the global workforce by 2025. Millennial are people born between 1980-2000 who grew up with access to internet and digital technology. In the last couple of years, the workforce has begun changing dramatically due to covid-19 Pandemic and digitization and automation of services [17]. Millennia's are perceived to be impatient, disloyal and self-important [12]. Millennia's are assumed to be less career oriented than other generation cohorts and emphasize more on flexible career paths as compared to previous generation cohorts.[13] Flexibility and autonomy are the key factors Millennia's look for while choosing their employer.

Do Millennia's Prefer Hybrid Mode?

53% of Millennial Hybrid workers are most likely to change the job if their current employers [18]

49% of millennia's rather not take the exasperating commute to the office and live stress-free lives [18]



73% of Millennials are reported that hybrid work environment has benefited their career growth [16]
 Majority of Millennial employees expect more than 10% raise pay to compensate for the change [16]
 Deloitte in their study found that 67% of Indian Millennials rather hybrid work mode and view it as an opportunity to improve work life balance.

Why Millennials Prefer Hybrid Working Mode?

1. Finance: Over 80% of Millennials in a survey revealed that hybrid work mode has helped them to have secondary paying jobs and follow their passion while they are able to pay comfortable for all their expenses [17].

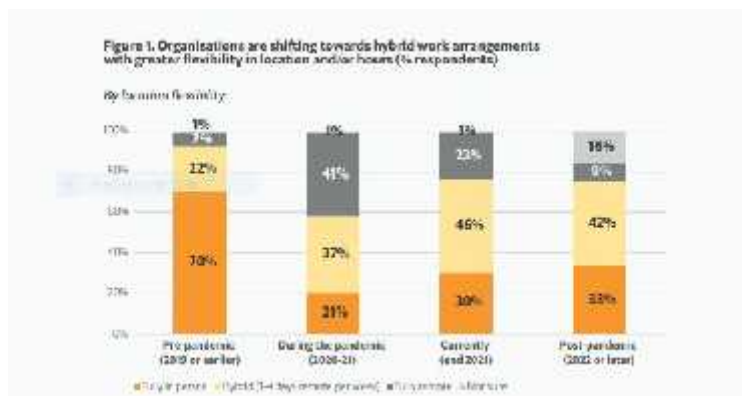
2. Work Life Balance: Gen Z and Gen Y agree that good learning opportunities, positive work culture and great work-life balance are the top motives while choosing a new workplace [18]. Additionally, they also prefer hybrid work mode, given that it helps them save money, and also enables them to spend more time with their family, and also follow their passion or side hustle. About 23 % of Millennials 19% of Gen Z and said that if they were in command, they would provide employees the flexibility of choosing working hours and place to improve the work-life balance [19].

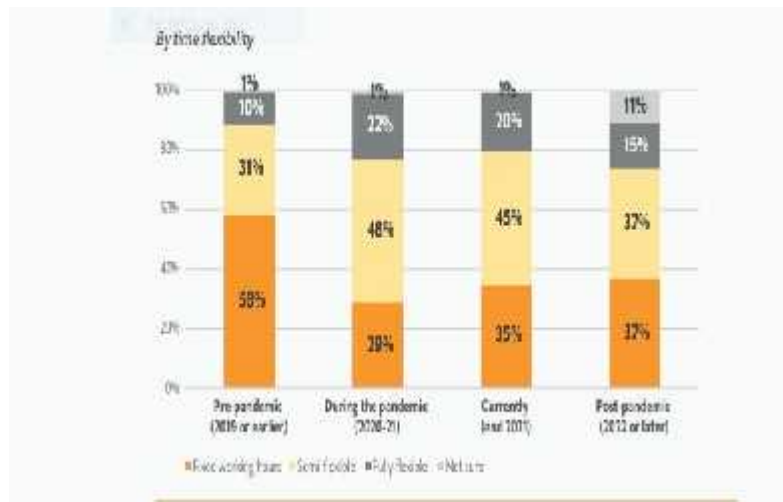
3. Environment: The survey also revealed that 95% of Indian Gen Y and Gen Z ers are trying to curtail their individual impact on the environment. It was also found that Indian Gen z & Gen Y ers want their organizations to invest in projects and ideas such as banning single-use plastic, providing training and awareness on such subjects and giving incentives to employees who adopt green practices and eco-friendly choices. The survey results revealed that the major concerns for Gen Z and Gen Y were concerned about education, training, skills and unemployment& mental health [15]. As per most surveys and researches conducted there seems to be a correlation between Hybrid work and overall wellbeing of employees. The hybrid work mode has had a positive impact on wellbeing of employees of all generations [14]

Discussions

This rapid review aimed to identify the preference of millennial employees about Hybridwork mode and how it impacts them. As COVID-19 is not severe in India as earlier but the 4th wave is expected, in this regard organizations are encouraging their employees to return to office while still keeping hybrid mode as an option [7]. Hybrid work mode will be the preferred work mode by organizations that wants to manage social distancing to prevent further COVID-19 outbreaks [2]. It’s clear that both the employer and employees see value in the hybrid work. A 77% of organizations have already gone hybrid [18] and 56% of the company are empowering employees [18]by allowing them to decide when and how often they wish to work from the office. A Wakefield Survey shows that 47% of millennial employees would change their jobif their employer didn’t offer hybrid work model [16]. 63% of the employees say that flexibility makes millennia’s feel more empowered. And this is the key reason why millennia’s are attracted to the Hybrid model.[16]

Figure: Respondents Preference for Flexibility with respect to Location and Time.





It wouldn't be fair to assume that working from home could be productive and fulfilling for all the millennial employees. Many employees lack the right conditions and environment at home to feel productive every day. (Surroundings, kids, noise etc) [14]. While there are many studies that have revealed the millennial's preference for the Hybrid Work System, there are also studies that reveal a different impact Hybrid Work Mode has on Millennials. It's been observed that Spatial Hybridity changes the nature of work, work organization and management of work in different spaces and it results in different practices and experiences in office and home settings [3]. Workers in hybrid workspace seem to maintain 2 different styles of work-practices in terms of what they do and how they do it in workspace [13].

When people work from home, they feel that they have got something to prove because nobody can see them working and this feeling is stronger among the female employees, since their tasks are split into two streams: an office stream and a home stream [12]. As the world is shifting to hybrid work mode, Gen Y who are in the age bracket of 26 to 40 have a different set of issues to deal with, they have a duty towards their family. Many millennial workers will have children and they live with their aged parents and most Millennials are primary caretakers of their ailing parents. In most families, Millennials are also the major breadwinners of their family. So they will be burdened with family commitments and work responsibilities at the same time. Female employees who were also mothers found it hard to manage the work and household activities and felt guilty that they couldn't spend quality time with their children nor they were able to give their best at work [13]. Experts believe that Millennials are the ones who are struggling with work stress and a heavy workload [14].

The dilemma of being at home, which is the comfort zone of individuals, and working from home has also impacted the mental health of many employees, both male and female. Work from home has also led to confusion, anxiety, and depression among employees. Due to social isolation and lesser in-person communication, organizations found it challenging to motivate employees and engage them all the time. The convenience of work from home depends on the workload, clear task structure, and well-established formal authority, and of course, the IT infrastructure [12]. The impact of work from home has had both positive and negative impacts on employees' physical and mental health, depending on different moderators such as: conducive home environment, extent of organizational support, and social connections other than work. Employees also faced work-family conflict (WFC) when demands of work overtook family commitments [3]. The most relevant pitfall of Hybrid work mode is that remote employees may end up feeling like second-class citizens since there is little face-to-face interaction with the leadership team. They are offered fewer career opportunities as compared to in-office workers. Such a situation is bad for employee productivity, engagement, and retention [9].



Conclusion

Millennia's are currently the largest working population, who are of the age 26 to 41, implies that many are getting in to leadership roles and have more authority and responsibility in the organization. They are authorized to make decisions about how their employees can work, which can include the hybrid work model [14]. The Hybrid work model works best for the millennial employees as it helps to strike balance between working at physical office spaces and having an option to work from home when they please [18]. Millennia's are digital natives and are well-versed with technology and digital communication. But millennia's are aware of how tasks were carried out prior to technology entered and changed our lives. They realize the value of in-person interaction which comes from working in the office. In fact, as per MORI POLL- more than 50% Gen Z and GEN Y ers preferred a work week that is hybrid in nature, with three days of WFH and two days in person [17].

How to Adopt a Hybrid Work Model

To adopt a hybrid model, an organization needs right people, right process & technology. Organizations need to communicate with and survey their workforce to understand their needs. Organizations must involve employees to design a tailor-made hybrid model that suits their employees and company needs. Organizations should create a work model which helps their employees to embrace the change and motivates them to do their best [20].

References

- 1 Costa, C., Teodoro, M., Mento, C., Giambò, F., Vitello, C., Italia, S., &Fenga, C. (2022). *Work performance, mood and sleep alterations in home office workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(4), 1990.
- 2 Sokolic, D. (2022). *Remote work and hybrid work organizations. Economic and social development: Book of proceedings*, 202-213.
- 3 Bencivenga, M., &Camocini, B. (2022). 5. *Post-pandemic scenarios of office workplace: new purposes of the physical spaces to enhance social and individual well-being. DESIGNING BEHAVIOURS FOR WELL-BEING SPACES*.
- 4 Appel-Meulenbroek, R., Kemperman, A., van de Water, A., Weijs-Perrée, M., &Verhaegh, J. (2022). *How to attract employees back to the office? A stated choice study on hybrid working preferences. Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 81, 101784.
- 5 Choudhury, P., Foroughi, C., & Larson, B. (2021). *Work-from-anywhere: The productivity effects of geographic flexibility. Strategic Management Journal*, 42(4), 655-683.
- 6 Bloom, N. (2020). *How working from home works out. Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR). Policy Brief June*.
- 7 Oakman, J., Kinsman, N., Stuckey, R., Graham, M., & Weale, V. (2020). *A rapid review of mental and physical health effects of working at home: how do we optimise health?. BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 1-13.
- 8 Sowmyanarayan, S., Venkat, J., Coden, M., & Elbert, V. (2020). *Return to business asunusual: Workplace of the future*.
- 9 Rubin, O., Nikolaeva, A., Nello-Deakin, S., &teBrömmelstroet, M. (2020). *What can we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic about how people experience working from home and commuting. Centre for Urban Studies, University of Amsterdam*, 1(9).
- 10 Christie, B. (2020). *Crisis Management: A Look at the Return to the Workplace*.
- 11 Mustajab, D., Bauw, A., Rasyid, A., Irawan, A., Akbar, M. A., & Hamid, M. A. (2020). *Working from home phenomenon as an effort to prevent COVID-19 attacks and its impacts on work productivity. TIJAB (The International Journal of Applied Business)*, 4(1), 13-21.
- 12 Ismail Nooraddini, Anh-Thu Ton, Bohdana Sherehiy (2017) "Millennial work Engagement: AnUnmetDesire" retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/34194277/Millennial_Work_Engagement_An_Unmet_Desire
- 13 Ritu Raina (2012) "Engaging Indian Millennials at workplace" retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/shrm-india/Documents/EMAW8.pdf>.
- 14 Halford, S. (2005). *Hybrid workspace: Re-spatialisations of work, organisation andmanagement. New Technology, Work and Employment*, 20(1), 19-33.



- 15 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2022/06/07/what-different-generations-think-work/?sh=edab18348906> about-hybrid-
- 16 <https://www.outlookindia.com/business/genzs-and-millennials-in-india-prefer-hybrid-working-reveals-deloitte-study-news-197450>
- 17 <https://www.kgopm.com/gen-z-and-millennials-thrive-in-the-hybrid-workforce>
- 18 <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/coronavirus-leading-through-the-crisis/charting-the-path-to-the-next-normal/hopes-and-fears-for-the-hybrid-future>
- 19 <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/what-employees-are-saying-about-the-future-of-remote-work>
- 20 https://impact.economist.com/projects/make-hybrid-human/pdfs/EI_GoogleWorkspace_2021SurveyReport.pdf
- 21 <https://www.namanhr.com/blog/hybrid-world-multi-generational-perspective/>
- 22 <https://builtin.com/remote-work/hybrid-work-model>.
- 23 [Envoy.com](https://www.envoy.com).