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Working-From-Home and Hybrid Arrangements: A Review of Working Patterns, Attitudes, And Perceptions of Work by Employees Post-COVID-19 In A Public Entity in South Africa

Xolani Ngonini

Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA), South Africa

Abstract

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations have had to make significant adjustments to their employment practices and working arrangements. To comply with strict restrictions and social distancing guidelines, many public and private entities implemented a work-from-home policy or a hybrid model that integrates remote work with office-based work. In this context, companies embraced advanced technology and tools for better collaboration between remote and in-office workers.

Research suggests that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, only a small proportion of workers in South Africa (8%) had the option of working remotely full-time, whereas approximately 33% had access to a flexible hybrid working arrangement. These data highlight the limited availability of remote work opportunities in the country before the pandemic. Although the phrase "remote" or "hybrid" work is prevalent in many industries, it has taken on different meanings and is not a new concept in some regions of the world. Hybrid and remote models have gained traction in Europe, America and Asia over the past four decades, but their implementation remains somewhat restricted. Given the foregoing, there is limited knowledge of how hybrid work setups affect governmental organisations in South Africa. This study focuses on the thoughts and emotions of state water sector employees who now have hybrid work arrangements because of the pandemic. The study gathered quantitative data from 93 employees within TCTA, comprising 22 line managers and 71 subordinates. In addition to the quantitative data, the study included in-depth open-ended questions. The results revealed varying opinions among managers regarding productivity in a hybrid work environment. Interestingly, non-managers expressed feeling more productive.



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In a hybrid context, the study discovered a marked perception of increased subordinate productivity, emphasizing the crucial role of teamwork throughout the organization. The study offers insights into rethinking industrial relations and workspace concepts in the African public sector, specifically focusing on remote work arrangements and their effect on office design, organizational performance, and culture. The research offers insights into how hybrid work styles are adapted in countries and organizations with limited work-from-home arrangements.

Keywords: Hybrid work arrangements, team dynamics and management, leadership and organisational culture, TCTA, South Africa

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