

Hybrid Work Models and Their Impact on Burnout and Employee Autonomy

Samuel Mihalčín¹, Zuzana Joniaková²

Abstract: Employee burnout has become a global issue with significant implications for both individuals and organizations. With the emergence of new work arrangements, the question of how these new work models and increased levels of employee autonomy affect burnout rates has become a focal point for businesses. Understanding the relationships between these factors is essential for developing effective strategies to prevent burnout, promote well-being, and enhance job performance. This paper provides a systematic review of the literature on the impact of hybrid work arrangements and the degree of autonomy among employees working in these arrangements on burnout. Based on a systematic review of the literature, we identified and examined three main areas of current research: (1) the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout, (2) the impact of autonomy in performing employee tasks on their burnout, and (3) methods and tools to reduce employee burnout rates. This systematic literature review provides a framework for future research in this area and identifies gaps that require further attention, such as examining the direct impacts of autonomy in multiple areas on employee burnout, as this area has not been sufficiently explored.

Keywords: burnout, autonomy, hybrid work models, employee satisfaction.

JEL Classification: I31, M12, J28

1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, triggered by the coronavirus, has had a profound and widespread impact on the global economy and society (ManpowerGroup, 2020). Its adverse effects have been felt across the board, from developed to developing nations. (Siddiquei & Khan, 2020; Besenyő & Kármán, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted companies' focus towards remote work (outside the office) (Orsini & Rodrigues, 2020). To overcome the various obstacles caused by COVID-19, most companies had to adopt a form of remote work protocol. This was done to ensure continued productivity and minimize the risk of infection and virus spread (Chong et al., 2020). Several studies confirm that countries, regions, industries, and companies that shifted a higher proportion of their employees from office work to remote work reported significantly lower infection rates (Alon et al. 2020, Dingel and Neiman, 2020, Hasan et al., 2021). The widespread use of remote work has also brought about significant changes in organizational work procedures and the means of carrying them out (Donnelly & Johns, 2021). Currently, so-called hybrid work arrangements, which combine working from home with working from the office, are becoming increasingly prominent (Yang et al., 2023). Several authors in their publications have found that hybrid work arrangements have a positive impact on employee work-life balance and firm performance (Rohit et al., 2023, Nugroho, A., Desiana, P., 2024, Siddika, 2024).

Based on these findings, the use of hybrid work models is becoming increasingly popular, also due to the reduction of company costs (Peggy et al., 2022). In connection with the implementation of hybrid work arrangements, the question now arises as to how this new work model and the increased level of employee autonomy affect the level of employee burnout (Höcker et al., 2024, Safira, N., Hanami, Y., & Batubara, M. 2023, Horváthová et al. 2024). It is therefore necessary to consider which jobs will be performed using a hybrid work model and what rules will need to be set so that the hybrid work model is effective for both employees and businesses.

¹ University of Economics in Bratislava, Faculty of Business Management, Dolnozemská cesta 1/b, 852 35 Bratislava 5, Slovak Republic, samuel.mihalcin@euba.sk

² University of Economics in Bratislava, Faculty of Business Management, Dolnozemská cesta 1/b, 852 35 Bratislava 5, Slovak Republic, zuzana.joniakova@euba.sk

2 Methods

In this study, we will conduct a systematic literature review following the established framework of Senyo et al. (2019) (further detailed in Table 1)

Table 1 Systematic literature review process

Step 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for literature review	Classification: Articles from peer-reviewed journals on the topic of work arrangements	Exclusion: books, book reviews, case studies
Step 2: Literature review	Web of science, Google scholar, Scopus databases	Terms: „Work arrangements“, „Employee well-being“, „Employee burnout“, „Employee autonomy“
Step 3: Refinement of the choice of literary studies	Analysis of articles, excluding studies that did not analyze the impact of work regimes or employee autonomy on the level of employee burnout.	Final sample of articles: 8
Step 4: Analysis of selected articles	Summary of each article, including the goal, concepts, methods, and results.	Article categorization, the impact of hybrid work arrangements and autonomy on employee burnout rates.
Step 5: Presentation of findings	Presentation of a set of articles	Comparative analysis and determining the research gap

Source: Own processing based on Senyo et al. (2019)

The chosen procedure enabled us to extract relevant information from the analyzed articles, revealing existing similarities and differences between them. A systematic literature review proved to be an effective approach for comprehensively mapping and structuring current pressing research areas.

The study was limited to peer-reviewed articles in the field of human resources and management. The procedure followed the recommendations of Watson and Webster (2020) and therefore excluded case studies, book reviews, and books. The key terms used in the literature search included „work arrangements“, „employee well-being“, „employee burnout“, „employee autonomy“, and „job satisfaction.“

In the second phase of the research, articles were screened in databases including Web of Science and Google Scholar. The search criteria were based on the presence of specific keywords in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the articles. This literature search was undertaken in October 2024.

In the third step, 30 unique articles were identified based on the article title and keywords. In the next step, the abstracts of the selected articles were analyzed to determine whether all articles were relevant and related to the topic of work arrangements and whether the articles examined measures of employee burnout..

To understand and categorize multiple articles, it was necessary to analyze the entire texts contained in the articles. In the first phase, 20 articles were excluded. These articles did not sufficiently analyze the problem under study according to the criteria selected in section 3. Results.

In addition to the articles mentioned above, there were doubts in some cases as to whether they discussed the required facts within the scope of the research problem. Following consultation with a peer researcher, a final set of 8 articles was selected based on a consensus regarding their alignment with the established criteria.

In the penultimate phase, all articles were summarized according to their identification, objective, concept, methods, consequences, and proposals for future research. The literature analysis subsequently resulted in a comprehensive mapping of existing research focused on the impact of work arrangements and autonomy on employee burnout. It allowed

us to conduct a thematic analysis that identified three main research areas: (1) the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout, (2) the impact of employee autonomy in completing tasks on their burnout, and (3) methods and tools for reducing employee burnout.

The next step involved conducting a thematic analysis of the literature and coding the main themes explored in the 8 articles. The themes focused on the main areas and empirical objects described in these articles. Each set of articles dealt with areas such as: (a) the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout, (b) methods and tools for reducing employee burnout, (c) the impact of work arrangements on well-being. An analysis of the available research revealed that only two studies examined the impact of employee autonomy on their burnout level.

A comparative analysis of the three main groups will be conducted following a detailed examination of the selected articles. The research will summarize the findings on the impact of hybrid work arrangements and autonomy on employee burnout and identify potential interventions. This analysis has revealed several avenues for future research. The primary findings of the systematic literature review are presented in the subsequent section, and the implications for future research are discussed in the following chapter.

3 Research results

3.1 A review of research on the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout rates in the company

This research focused on the impact of emerging hybrid work arrangements on employee burnout. The specific work arrangements employees adopt significantly influence their productivity, job satisfaction, and ultimately, their level of burnout. The results indicated that employees working in a hybrid model exhibited lower levels of burnout and higher levels of well-being and performance. These findings suggest that hybrid work arrangements appear to be the most sensible choice for retaining satisfied and high-performing employees, which will lead to long-term organizational success and sustainability

Table 2 Review of literature results

author	the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout	methods and tools for reducing employee burnout
1. Safira et al., 2023	The absence of real social interaction with colleagues contributes to higher burnout rates among remote workers.	Companies must consider which work will be performed in a hybrid model and which remotely, as job positions based on this research directly impact employee well-being and the level of employee burnout.
2. Azizan et al., 2024	Hybrid work models have been most effective in reducing burnout among educators.	Teachers should be given the flexibility to choose their work arrangements. However, it is important to recognize that demographics play a significant role in work arrangement choice and burnout levels.
3. Höcker et al., 2024	Remote work and job autonomy have a negative impact on perceived employee burnout. The impact of remote work on perceived burnout is partially mediated by job autonomy.	The implementation of hybrid work has an overall effect on reducing burnout rates, as job autonomy is distributed.
4. Horváthová et al., 2024	Work arrangements have a direct impact on the level of employee burnout in the public sector.	Hybrid work arrangements helped to reduce burnout levels during the pandemic and continue to reduce burnout rates post-pandemic.

author	the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout	methods and tools for reducing employee burnout
5. Perry, 2024	There were no significant differences in job satisfaction or burnout levels across different work arrangements, and no relationships were found based on the other variables included in the study.	By expressing appreciation and increasing the interest of the work, it may be possible to reduce the rate of employee burnout.
6. Raghida et al., 2023	Remote-only workers reported higher levels of burnout than those who combined remote and in-office work.	A hybrid work model has the potential to decrease burnout levels in the humanitarian workforce..
7. Lee et al., 2024	Factors contributing to burnout include: lack of autonomy, frequent work interruptions, repetitive work, and the demand for completing assessments outside of regular working hours.	A hybrid work model will reduce burnout rates because employees will not be under constant pressure. By increasing autonomy, it will be possible to separate employees from the stress caused by the nature of their work.
8. Mucharraz et al., 2024	Burnout levels were higher among remote-working mothers (in leadership positions) compared to office-working mothers.	The hybrid work model, combining remote and in-office work, has been shown to decrease burnout rates among working mothers, while also providing theoretical and empirical insights into burnout levels among women in leadership positions.

Source: Own processing based on the authors'

4 Conclusions

Studies on job burnout, which is not a recent phenomenon, have intensified since COVID-19 forced most people to work from home. With most companies now adopting hybrid work arrangements, the unpreparedness for remote work has pushed many employees to their physical and mental limits, ultimately leading to higher burnout rates among remote-only workers..

Systematic literature review on the topic has revealed a direct correlation between work arrangements and employee burnout rates across various sectors. Remote work has been identified as a primary contributor to increased burnout levels, as employees often postpone their duties until they reach a point of no return. Consequently, most researchers in this field advocate for hybrid work arrangements as a means to reduce burnout rates. These arrangements allow employees to negotiate with their employers the proportion of time spent working remotely and in the office. This is based on the finding that employees require in-person interaction with colleagues, which positively impacts burnout levels. However, author Perry (2024) argues that work arrangements do not influence burnout rates and suggests that recognition and job enrichment are more effective strategies for reducing burnout.

An analysis of data from available research indicates that only Höcker et al. (2024) and Lee et al. (2024) explored the impact of employee autonomy. However, their perspectives on the influence of autonomy on employee burnout diverge. Höcker et al. (2024) argue in their publication that job autonomy has a negative impact on employee burnout, suggesting that the higher the degree of autonomy, the higher the level of burnout. In contrast, Lee et al. (2024) propose that lack of autonomy is one of the factors contributing to increased rates of employee burnout.

Based on these findings, we can conclude that implementing hybrid work arrangements should contribute to improved mental health among employees. However, it is essential to consider which job roles are suitable for hybrid work and which generations of employees would benefit most from such arrangements.

4.1 Suggestions for further research

The emergence of hybrid work arrangements is a relatively recent phenomenon (since the outbreak of the pandemic). There is currently a limited amount of research examining the impact of work arrangements and employee autonomy on burnout levels. Currently, no research has been conducted in Slovakia to address this issue. Therefore, it would be justified to focus on the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout rates in Slovakia."

A review of the literature revealed only two studies that examined the relationship between employee autonomy and burnout. Given the contradictory findings of these studies, there is a clear need for further research to address this gap in the literature.

Now that hybrid working arrangements are becoming part of companies' working regimes, it might be a good direction to also focus on how new working regimes can influence the change of managerial functions in companies in the long run.

We believe that the findings of this study will shed light on the impact of work arrangements on employee burnout rates and help to develop proactive measures that employers can implement to ensure effective job performance without compromising employees' mental health. This research will be valuable not only for the arts, humanities, and social sciences but also for other fields, particularly human resources and psychology, as they strive to develop new designs to create a balanced work and personal life.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by VEGA 1/0188/24 Hybrid work arrangements as a result of corporate learning from the crisis and the consequences of their implementation for people management.

References

- Alon T, Doepke M, Rumsey J-O, Tertilt M (2020) The impact of COVID-19 on gender equality. In: NBER Working Papers 26947. Inc, National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Ayu Safira, N., Hanami, Y., & Batubara, M. (2023). Multidimensional Well-Being of Remote Workers: A Qualitative Comparison Between Full-Remote and Hybrid Workers. *Analitika: Jurnal Magister Psikologi UMA*, 15(2), 89–100. doi:10.31289/analitika.v15i2.10211.
- Azizan, M., Shafie, H., Mohd Jaafar, N., Komarudin, N. E., & Samud, N. N. (2024). Burnout in the hybrid workplace: examining the struggle of language lecturers in malaysia. *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)*, 9(2), 577-602. doi:10.24200/jonus, 9(2), 577-602.
- Donnelly, R., & Johns, J. (2021). Recontextualising remote working and its HRM in the digital economy: An integrated framework for theory and practice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(1), 84-105. doi: 10.1080/09585192.2020.1737834.
- Höcker, M.C., Bachtal, Y., Voll, K. and Pfnür, A. (2024). Healthy, healthier, hybrid work: the burnout-reducing potential of remote work and the mediating effect of work autonomy, *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 17(4), 319-334. doi:10.1108/IJWHM-02-2024-0036.
- Horváthová, P.; Mokrá, K.; Stanovská, K.; Poláková, G. 2024. The impact of remote and hybrid work on the perception of burnout syndrome: a case study, *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* 11(4): 91-104. doi:10.9770/jesi.2024.11.4(6).
- Chong, S., Huang, Y., & Chang, C.-H. (D.). (2020). Supporting interdependent telework employees: A moderated-mediation model linking daily COVID-19 task setbacks to next-day work withdrawal. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(12), 1408–1422. doi:10.1037/apl0000843.
- Lee ECH, Hou W, Karande GY, Chan LP, Lai KY. (2024). Survey of radiologists on work from home: Using the results to plan a hybrid work model. *Proceedings of Singapore Healthcare*. 33. doi:10.1177/20101058241257266.
- ManpowerGroup. (2020). Impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on business. <https://www.manpowergroup.cz/dopad-epidemie-covid-19-na-business/>.
- Mucharraz y Cano, Y., Davila Ruiz, D. and Cuilty Esquivel, K. (2023). Burnout effect on working mothers in leadership positions during the COVID-19 lockdown", *Gender in Management*, 38(7), 962-977. doi:10.1108/GM-03-2022-0085.
- Nugroho, A., & Desiana, P. (2024). The Effect of Implementing Hybrid Work on Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Wellbeing. *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IIJSE)*, 7(3), 6659-6680. doi:10.31538/ijse.v7i3.5399.

- Orsini, C., & Rodrigues, V. (2020). Supporting motivation in teams working remotely: The role of basic psychological needs. *Medical teacher*, 42(7), 828-829. doi:10.1080/0142159X.2020.1758305.
- Peggy et al. (2022). Remote work as a new normal? The technology-organization-environment (TOE) context. *Technology in Society*, 70, 102022. doi:10.1016/j.techsoc.2022.102022.
- Perry, Mariah, (2024). Investigating the relationship between hybrid work, job burnout, and job satisfaction in higher education. *Masters Theses and Doctoral Dissertations*. <https://scholar.utc.edu/theses/852>.
- Raghida, M., A. (2023). Relationship Between Trait Emotional Intelligence & Burnout Among Workers in the Humanitarian Sector, *Journal Academy of Management*. doi:10.5465/AMPROC.2023.149bp.
- Rohit et al. (2023). The study of remote working outcome and its influence on firm performance. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 8(1), 100528. doi:10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100528.
- Senyo P.K., and et al. (2019). Digital business ecosystem: Literature review and a framework for future research, *International Journal of information management*, 47, 52-64. doi: 10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.01.002.
- Siddika, B. A. (2024). Hybrid Working, Well-being and Gender: A Study on a Public Sector Organization During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Asian Journal of Social Science Studies*. doi: 10.20849/ajsss.v8i2.1345.
- Siddiquei, M. I., & Khan, W. (2020). Economic implications of coronavirus. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 20(4), e2169. doi:10.1002/pa.2169.
- Watson, R. and Webster, J. (2020). Analysing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review a roadmap for release 2.0, *Journal of Decision Systems*, 29(3), 129-147. doi: 10.1080/12460125.2020.1798591.
- Yang, E., Kim, Y. and Hong, S. (2023). Does working from home work? Experience of working from home and the value of hybrid workplace post-COVID-19, *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, 25(1), 50-76. doi: 10.1108/JCRE-04-2021-0015.