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Impact Of Flexible and Hybrid Work Practices on Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction: Evidence from the Indian It Sector

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ABSTRACT: The transformation of the traditional workplaces has led to faster adoption of flexible and hybrid working practices, particularly in the knowledge-intensive Indian IT sector. However, the current research has been conducted on flexible, remote, and hybrid work separately, with limited integrated evidence on their influence on employee engagement and job satisfaction. Thus, the present study explores the impact of FWP and HWP on EE and JS with the mediating role of employee engagement. A cross-sectional and explanatory research design was used. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire on a five point Likert scale from 400 employees of Indian IT/ITeS organisations. The suggested relationships were tested using reliability and validity assessment, confirmatory factor analysis, structural model analysis and mediation analysis. The results indicate that FWP has a significant positive effect on EE ($\beta = 0.393$) and JS ($\beta = 0.259$), while HWP has a significant positive effect on EE ($\beta = 0.268$) and JS ($\beta = 0.293$). EE also has a significant positive effect on JS ($\beta = 0.451$). The results of mediation also confirm that EE significantly mediates the relationships of FWP and JS ($\beta = 0.086$, $p = 0.018$) and HWP and JS ($\beta = 0.095$, $p = 0.003$). The findings contribute to the Job Demands–Resources perspective theoretically by showing how flexibility, autonomy and work–life integration operate as job resources that foster engagement and satisfaction. Practically, the study suggests Indian IT organisations to develop employee-centred, role-based flexible and hybrid work policies. The present study is novel in the sense that it integrates FWP, HWP, EE and JS within a single empirical framework with specific reference to Indian IT sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world of work today is being fundamentally transformed from traditional forms of employment based on fixed working hours, centralised work locations and continuous physical supervision to digitally enabled and more employee-centric forms of work organization. The fast diffusion of information and communication technologies, changing workforce expectations and increasing feasibility of performing knowledge-intensive activities independent of a particular physical location have challenged the traditional assumption that productive work must occur within organisational premises. This transformation was brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced organisations across industries to adopt work-from-home arrangements on an unprecedented scale. What began as an emergency response became a more permanent reconsideration of when, where and how work should be done. Recent evidence suggests that the transition has not simply been a replacement of office work with remote employment, but rather organisations are experimenting with a mix of remote, office-based and flexible arrangements that provide employees with more discretion, but at the same time seek to preserve collaboration and organisational effectiveness. For example, Bloom et al. (2022) demonstrated that a structured hybrid arrangement among technology-sector employees increased job satisfaction and significantly reduced employee attrition. The study provides

empirical evidence that hybrid work can turn out to be a sustainable organisational arrangement rather than just a pandemic-related response. In the same vein, de Klerk et al. (2021) contended that the pandemic accelerated rethinking traditional workplace structures and brought to light both the opportunities and challenges of working from home.

The rise of flexible and hybrid working has therefore shifted the definition of workplace flexibility. Flexible work practices can be the flexibility of working hours, remote or hybrid working, flexibility of location, compressed or alternative schedules and increased employee autonomy on the organization of work. Remote employment is primarily about where employees work from, flexible work is about when and what time employees work, and hybrid work is about working both remotely and in the office. These arrangements are particularly important as flexibility can influence employees' perceptions of control, autonomy, work-life balance and organisational trust. However, flexibility does not have a universally positive effect. Its effects are dependent on the extent of real autonomy for employees, technological resources, managerial support and clear organisational expectations. Research in hybrid and virtual work environments has demonstrated that perceived organisational support, work-family conflict and technostress may have a major effect on employee engagement and that flexible working can act as a job resource and a potential work-related demand (Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2023). In a similar vein, recent literature on telecommuting suggests that working remotely can, on one hand, lead to greater engagement through augmented job autonomy, but in contrast, it can also decrease engagement when it generates work-family conflict, with supervisor support moderating these conflicting mechanisms (Lu et al., 2023). Hence, the current debate has shifted from whether organisations should permit flexible work to the more nuanced question of how different forms of flexibility affect employee experience and organisational outcomes.

These developments are best understood within the framework of the Indian Information Technology (IT) industry. The IT sector is by its very nature knowledge intensive, digitally mediated and often project based, which means a large share of its activities can be performed on cloud platforms, which include virtual communication systems, collaborative software and remote access technologies. Software developers, programmers, analysts, consultants, technical support professionals, project managers and other IT-enabled employees are often able to do their core work without a constant physical presence in a traditional office. Therefore, the sector was among the occupational settings best positioned to transition rapidly to remote and then to hybrid work. Work-from-home arrangements have been shown to positively impact the work-life balance of Indian IT employees but also raise questions regarding job satisfaction and the challenges of workplace transformation (Aithal et al., 2022). In addition, research has explored the multidimensional consequences of remote employment, not only its benefits, such as the links between remote employment and occupational stress, job satisfaction, motivation and performance of IT-enabled industry employees in Hyderabad.

The importance of flexibility has only increased as Indian IT employees weigh up job opportunities not just on remuneration and career progression but also on autonomy, work-life balance, organisational culture, employee support and quality of work environment. Recent evidence from the IT sector in India confirms that employee satisfaction remains a strategically important organisational outcome and is influenced by wider organisational practices and employee experiences (Sharma et al., 2025). In this context, flexible working hours are particularly pertinent, as they allow employees to adapt their professional obligations with personal and family commitments, while location flexibility diminishes the hardship of commuting and gives employees control over their working environment. Hybrid working can offer the advantages of remote employment and still allow for opportunities for face-to-face interaction, organisational identification, collaboration and social connection. Recent Indian studies on IT employees also revealed that hybrid working arrangements have significant relationships with employee well-being and job satisfaction. Flexible working hours, work environment, communication, and technology were found to be important components of hybrid working experience (Babu & Suhasini, 2024).

Employee engagement is one of the most important psychological outcomes through which the consequences of flexible and hybrid work can be understood. Engagement is not just employee satisfaction or organisational commitment; it is the degree to which employees bring energy, attention and psychological involvement to their work. The construct is traditionally characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption whereby engaged employees demonstrate high levels of energy and resilience, perceive their work as meaningful and significant, and become deeply concentrated in their tasks. Engagement is especially important in flexible and hybrid settings, as employees may have more discretion and autonomy, but also may have less face-to-face interaction, more technological demands, and more blurred boundaries between work and non-work domains. Research from India shows that work-from-home autonomy, convenience and psychosocial safety can contribute to employee

engagement (Mehta, 2021). Research in virtual and hybrid environments shows that organisational support can help mitigate the negative consequences of technostress and work–family conflict (Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2023). Recent evidence from the IT-sector in India also reports a positive relationship between flexible working time and employee engagement. This reinforces the relevance of flexibility, autonomy, organisational culture and development opportunities in shaping employees' connection with their work (Nandani & Doshi, 2025).

Job satisfaction is a second important outcome, as the success of flexible and hybrid work cannot be assessed solely on productivity or engagement. Job satisfaction is an overall positive evaluation that employees make about their employment and may include satisfaction with the work itself, working conditions, autonomy, organisational support, interpersonal relationships and work–life balance. If flexible arrangements give employees more control over where and when they work, reduce commuting time and help them better combine work and personal responsibilities, then satisfaction may increase. By contrast, poorly designed hybrid working arrangements can lead to communication problems, isolation, increased surveillance, work intensification or uncertainty as to organisational expectations. Recent evidence in telework settings indicates that employee well-being is positively related to job satisfaction, implying that the psychological consequences of flexible work are crucial in understanding employee attitudes toward contemporary work arrangements (Kautish et al., 2025). Likewise, studies on Indian IT employees suggest that hybrid work arrangements can increase job satisfaction through flexibility, autonomy and better work–life balance (Kaur & Chowdhry, 2024). These findings suggest that job satisfaction is a key outcome for evaluating whether flexible and hybrid arrangements do in fact enhance quality of working life for employees.

Despite the growing number of studies, a big research problem remains. Previous research has often studied traditional teleworking, telework, flexible work, or hybrid work as separate phenomena, thus limiting understanding of their relative and combined effects. Although the importance of flexibility is increasingly recognised in studies, relatively few empirical investigations simultaneously differentiate between flexible work practices and hybrid work practices and their effects on multiple employee outcomes. This is an important distinction, because flexibility in working time or location does not necessarily imply hybridisation, while hybrid work may involve organisationally prescribed office attendance rather than genuine employee choice. Moreover, employee engagement and job satisfaction are frequently examined as separate outcomes, not as interconnected aspects of the employee experience. This leaves little understanding of whether engagement is a mechanism through which flexible and hybrid practices subsequently affect job satisfaction. Recent research shows that autonomy is positively related to engagement and that organisational support can influence the link between work demands and engagement, further emphasising the significance of considering the psychological and organisational context of flexible work (Selander & Alasoini, 2026).

The context gap is equally significant. Much of the influential evidence on hybrid and flexible work has been developed within the framework of Western economies and particular occupations. These findings cannot be automatically generalised to India's IT workforce. The Indian IT sector is characterised by a specific set of organisational, technological and cultural conditions. These include geographically distributed teams, international client relationships, extended working schedules, high dependence on technology, and rapidly changing expectations about workplace autonomy. Existing Indian studies have provided useful evidence on work-from-home, hybrid work, work–life balance and job satisfaction, but the literature remains fragmented across individual dimensions and geographical contexts. Studies have examined separately work from home and work–life balance among Indian IT employees, hybrid work and job satisfaction, and flexible work timing and engagement. Thus, an integrated empirical model is needed that jointly considers flexible work practices and hybrid work practices and investigates their impact on both employee engagement and job satisfaction. This framework is especially relevant because the organisational support and the autonomy of employees may determine whether flexibility is experienced as a valuable job resource or as an additional source of uncertainty, isolation and work-family conflict. Therefore, the current research seeks to investigate the impact of flexible and hybrid work practices on employee engagement and job satisfaction of employees working in the Indian IT sector. The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the effect of flexible work practices on employee engagement among employees in the Indian IT sector.
2. To examine the effect of hybrid work practices on employee engagement.
3. To assess the effect of flexible work practices on job satisfaction.
4. To determine the effect of hybrid work practices on job satisfaction.
5. To examine the relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction.

6. To investigate whether employee engagement mediates the relationship between flexible/hybrid work practices and job satisfaction.

Corresponding to these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

- Q1** Do flexible work practices significantly influence employee engagement?
- Q2** Do hybrid work practices significantly influence employee engagement?
- Q3** Do flexible work practices significantly influence job satisfaction?
- Q4** Do hybrid work practices significantly influence job satisfaction?
- Q5** Does employee engagement influence job satisfaction?
- Q6** Does employee engagement mediate these relationships?

The study contributes both theoretical and practical contributions to the emerging literature on the future of work. Theoretically, it moves beyond a simple remote-versus-office dichotomy by conceptualising flexible work practices and hybrid work practices as related but analytically distinguishable organisational arrangements. It further contributes by placing employee engagement as a possible mediating mechanism connecting modern work practices with job satisfaction. This approach acknowledges that the effects of flexibility may not be direct, but may work through employees' psychological energy, dedication, absorption and involvement in their work. Empirically, the study builds on existing evidence by focusing specifically on the Indian IT sector, where flexible and hybrid arrangements are particularly prominent due to digitalisation and knowledge intensive work. Practically, the results can help HR managers and organisational decision-makers to decide whether to incorporate flexible schedules, remote employment, hybrid arrangements and employee autonomy in long-term workforce strategies and under what organisational conditions they are more likely to achieve positive employee outcomes. The study thus addresses the emerging need for evidence-based flexible-work policies that balance organisational requirements with employees' expectations for autonomy, engagement, satisfaction and sustainable work–life integration.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed traditional working arrangements, accelerating the adoption of flexible and hybrid work practices in knowledge-intensive industries. These arrangements have been well received by the Indian Information Technology (IT) sector because much of its work is digitally enabled, project based and geographically distributed. Flexible work practices are arrangements that give employees more control over when and/or where work is done, whereas hybrid work is a more specific arrangement that combines office-based and remote employment. Recent research suggests that such arrangements can improve autonomy, work–life balance, employee engagement and job satisfaction, although not all effects are positive. Flexibility may be offset by isolation, communication barriers, technology-related demands, weakened organisational identification and blurred work–non-work boundaries.

The study is primarily theoretically based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, with contributions from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET). From a JD-R perspective flexibility and hybrid working can be job resources, i.e. they can increase control, autonomy and access to alternative work environments and thus stimulate motivation and engagement. However, job demands can be remote communication, technological overload, coordination requirements, and boundary-management difficulties. Results from telework studies suggest that increased job control can mediate the positive relationship between telework and work engagement while work–family conflict can generate an opposite effect. While SDT also states that autonomy and competence can foster positive work motivation, SET expands on how supportive and trusting organisational practices can elicit positive employee attitudes in return. Thus, flexible and hybrid practices may influence job satisfaction directly and indirectly through employee engagement.

2.1 Concept of Flexible Work Practices

Flexible work practices are defined as employment arrangements that allow employees to make choices about the timing, scheduling, duration or location of work, subject to organisational requirements. In this way, we should not treat them as equivalent to remote employment. Flexible scheduling refers to the variations in the working schedules of the employees. Flex time in particular allows the employees to vary their starting and finishing times within limits set by the organization. Remote employment is the work performed outside the traditional organisational workplace through the use of digital technologies. Work-location flexibility is a broader construct that relates to the ability of the employee to choose from permissible work locations. Employee autonomy is the extent to which employees have discretion in determining how, when or where work is

performed. These alternatives are part of the broader organisational system of flexible working arrangements (FWAs). Weideman and Hofmeyr (2020) found a positive relationship between FWAs and employee engagement mediated by employee well-being and self-management.

Fundamentally, flexibility is multidimensional. Research comparing flex time and flexplace suggests that combinations of flexibility in time and location may produce stronger employee outcomes than arrangements that provide only one dimension. For example, Chung and van Oorschot (2020) found that flex time and combined flexitime–flexplace arrangements were associated with greater job satisfaction and work–life balance, whereas simply permitting work from home without discretion over timing did not necessarily produce equivalent benefits. This distinction becomes particularly relevant in the Indian IT industry where employees may technically work remotely but are still subjected to rigid schedules, constant digital availability and high-performance expectations.

2.2 Concept of Hybrid Work Practices

Hybrid work is a work structure in an organization where employees alternate between working remotely and in the office, instead of working only in one place. Recent conceptual work suggests that hybrid work should be understood by its modality, location and temporality, recognising that employees may move between different work modes individually or in line with collectively decided organisational schedules. Hybrid work can include scheduled arrangements, such as fixed office days and remote days, or employee-choice arrangements, where employees decide when they come to the office within organisational parameters.

The accomplishment of hybrid work is not so much about the amount of time employees spend in the office as it is about the level of coordination, communication and boundary management. Scheduled hybrid arrangements can facilitate face-to-face collaboration, social interaction and team cohesion, while remote days can provide focus, commute efficiencies and increased personal control. Conversely, poorly coordinated schedules may result in situations where team members are distributed across locations which decreases the value of meetings and informal knowledge sharing. Thus, internal communication is vital for the sustenance of emotional connection and organisational commitment in the case of physically separated employees. Hybrid work should thus be viewed as a work-system design, not simply a numerical ratio of office to remote days.

2.3 Flexible Work Practices and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. Flexible work practices can enhance engagement by giving employees more autonomy and control over their work. Thus the proposed mechanism can be written as:

Flexibility → Autonomy → Work–life balance → Employee engagement

when employees are able to align their working hours and location with their personal responsibilities, they may experience greater control over their working lives and less work–family conflict. Kaltiainen and Hakanen (2023) found that higher levels of telework were associated with higher well-being and work engagement via higher job control. In a similar vein, Lee et al. (2024) found a positive association between workplace flexibility and employee engagement among young workers. This shows the growing importance of flexible arrangements in today's employment. Indian evidence also points to this relationship. George and Vijayan (2021) found that remote-working conditions were positively associated with work engagement among IT employees, but prolonged remote employment was also associated with feelings of isolation and neglect.

However, literature has a double-edged effect. Ma et al. (2023) used the JD-R perspective and found that telecommuting could increase job autonomy, thus improving engagement, but could also decrease engagement through work–family conflict. Communication problems, social isolation, less identification with the organization and diffuse boundaries can also erode engagement. Digital ostracism research indicates that virtual isolation, ineffective communication, and blurred work–life boundaries may be mechanisms linking difficulties with remote employment to lower engagement and well-being. Hence flexibility is unlikely to automatically increase engagement; its effects are contingent on organisational support, quality of communication and employees' ability to regulate work–non-work boundaries.

2.4 Hybrid Work Practices and Employee Engagement

Hybrid work might enhance engagement by blending the independence of remote employment with the relational and collaborative benefits of working in an office. Employees might have more say over where they do different types of tasks, choosing remote settings for focused work and office settings for collaboration, social interaction and problem-solving. A recent Indian IT-sector study by Kavya et al. (2025) identified that hybrid work practices, encompassing work flexibility, work focus, conventional workplace setups, and communication, had a positive correlation with work–life integration and work engagement.

Hybrid work could therefore provide a balance between autonomy and connectedness. But its effectiveness is a function of coordination. Inconsistent attendance patterns can cause a reduction in spontaneous interactions and communication asymmetries between remote and office-based employees. There is also evidence to suggest that emotional connection and organisational commitment require intentional communication practices when employees work apart. The Indian IT context is of particular relevance as project teams often rely on real-time digital coordination, knowledge sharing and interdependent tasks. Thus, hybrid work may strengthen engagement when employees have meaningful choice and sufficient communication infrastructure, but weaken belonging when physical and virtual participation are poorly integrated.

2.5 Flexible Work Practices and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a positive evaluation of an employee's job and work situation. Flexible work practices may affect satisfaction by increasing autonomy, control and work–life balance, reducing commuting burdens, and allowing employees to organise work around personal responsibilities. Evidence from IT employees in India indicates that work from home has a significant positive effect on work–life balance and is positively related to the employees' work and family experiences. Similarly, Lu and Zhuang (2023) found that telework can improve job satisfaction and mental health, which is an important factor in this relationship.

However, flexibility can also mean more work and less clear boundaries between work and home. Bellmann and Hübler (2021) show that the impact of working from home on job satisfaction and work–life balance is heterogeneous and not uniformly positive. More recent evidence suggests that work from home can increase job satisfaction as a consequence of improved productivity, interesting work and flexible hours, while poorer work-life balance and more difficult interactions with colleagues and supervisors can decrease satisfaction. Thus, organisational trust and managerial support are important conditions. The positive experience of flexibility by employees is more likely when autonomy is a real discretion and not an expectation of constant availability.

2.6 Hybrid Work Practices and Job Satisfaction

Hybrid work can lead to job satisfaction through flexibility, convenience, reduced commuting, and greater control of the work environment. Employees are able to choose environments suitable for various tasks and may be able to sidestep fatigue and the financial costs of daily commuting. Indian evidence confirms this proposition. Babu and Suhasini (2024) found that hybrid work arrangements were significantly related to employee well-being and job satisfaction among IT employees, highlighting work environment, flexible hours, communication and technology as important dimensions. Similarly, Kaur and Chowdhry (2024) found that hybrid work in the NCR IT sector was associated with greater workplace happiness and job satisfaction through flexibility, autonomy and work–life balance.

Satisfaction may depend upon the quality of the hybrid environment. To help employees deal with changing work locations and expectations, there is a need for adequate technology infrastructure to enable uninterrupted collaboration and managerial support. Another important factor is social interaction, which means that less contact in person can lead to a loss of belonging and organisational identification. Hence, the hybrid workplace presents a trade-off between convenience and social connection. Studies of workplace satisfaction in hybrid settings suggest that employees' views of how well the home and office environments support concentration and collaboration can affect location preferences and perceived productivity.

2.7 Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Conceptually, employee engagement and job satisfaction are related but distinct constructs. Satisfaction is primarily about how employees feel about their jobs, while engagement is about the energy, involvement and psychological commitment they bring to their work. Current studies show a strong relation between both. Shuck et al. (2021) were explicitly investigating the “chicken-and-egg” relationship and presented evidence for job satisfaction as an antecedent to employee engagement. They also pointed out the importance of both SET and JD-R perspectives. In contrast, engagement may explain pathways to job satisfaction as

per other studies. For example, Côté et al. (2021) found that work engagement mediated the relation between presenteeism and job satisfaction, and that perceived organisational support influenced the engagement–satisfaction association. The Indian IT evidence also supports a significant relationship between engagement and satisfaction. Partial mediation with emotional intelligence has been reported by Das et al. (2022) with 714 Indian IT professionals. The results suggest that it is important to study the two constructs together, rather than treating them as interchangeable.

2.8 Employee Engagement as a Mediating Mechanism

This study suggests that employee engagement may be a psychological mechanism by which flexible and hybrid work practices affect job satisfaction:

Flexible/Hybrid Work Practices → Employee Engagement → Job Satisfaction

The reasoning is that positive work arrangements provide resources such as autonomy, flexibility, control and improved work-life integration first. Such resources can stimulate vigour, dedication and absorption which in turn contribute to more favourable evaluations of the job. This proposition is aligned with the JD-R model, which states that job resources trigger motivational processes and result in positive employee outcomes. Empirical data also shows that engagement and satisfaction mediate. Work engagement has been shown to be a mediator in relationships with job resources and job satisfaction. Studies of organisational conditions show that engagement can convert positive workplace experiences into positive employee attitudes. With employees in the Indian IT sector working increasingly on flexible schedules, from remote locations and in hybrid collaboration, engagement may therefore be the mechanism that converts the availability of flexible work into experienced job satisfaction.

2.9 Research Gap

The literature on remote, flexible and hybrid work has grown since 2020, but there are still several gaps. First, the bulk of the early literature was concerned with pandemic-induced compulsory working from home, which is not conceptually equivalent to employee-selected flexible and hybrid arrangements in the post-pandemic period. Second, the current studies often focus on the outcomes of employee engagement, job satisfaction or well-being separately, limiting the understanding of how these outcomes function together. Third, there is mixed evidence in the literature: flexibility can create autonomy and work-life benefits but can also create isolation, communication difficulties, technology demands and boundary blurring. Fourth, although there is some recent work in India on hybrid work among IT employees, most of it is geographically concentrated in specific cities or organisations in the NCR, and relatively few combine flexible work practices, hybrid work practices, employee engagement and job satisfaction in a single explanatory model. The recent Indian evidence is also predominantly cross-sectional, pointing to the need for more empirical investigation.

Therefore, the study fills the gap by proposing an integrated model of the Indian IT industry where flexible and hybrid work practices are considered as antecedent work resources, employee engagement as a motivational mechanism and job satisfaction as an attitudinal outcome. The framework also acknowledges the contingent nature of flexible work by including autonomy, work-life integration, communication, social interaction, managerial support, technology and boundary management as relevant explanatory conditions. This approach offers a more holistic view of whether current work flexibility practices do indeed enhance employee experience or simply translate traditional workplace expectations into digitally mediated contexts.

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

The study conceptualises Flexible Work Practices (FWP), Hybrid Work Practices (HWP), Employee Engagement (EE) and Job Satisfaction (JS) to explain the effects of modern work arrangements on employee outcomes in the Indian IT industry. The framework is primarily based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that job resources such as autonomy, flexibility, organisational support and control stimulate employee motivation and engagement. Flexible and hybrid work arrangements can give employees more control over when and where they work, which can boost their sense of autonomy and work-life balance. These favourable conditions are expected to improve employee engagement and in turn job satisfaction. At the same time, the framework acknowledges that the effectiveness of flexible work may depend on communication, managerial support, technological infrastructure and employees' ability to manage work–non-work boundaries.

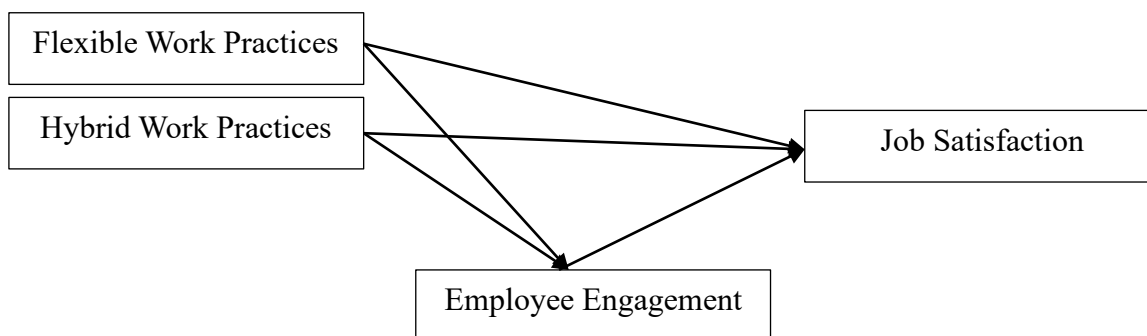


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Employee Engagement and Flexible Work Arrangements Flexible scheduling, flex time, remote employment, and location flexibility increase employees' control over their work, facilitate work–life integration and reduce commuting demands. Employees may invest more psychological resources at work with increased autonomy. Therefore, the study suggests:

H1: Flexible work practices have a significant positive effect on employee engagement among employees in the Indian IT sector.

H2: Hybrid work practices have a significant positive effect on employee engagement among employees in the Indian IT sector.

H3: Flexible work practices have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction among employees in the Indian IT sector.

H4: Hybrid work practices have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction among employees in the Indian IT sector.

H5: Employee engagement has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction among employees in the Indian IT sector.

H6: Employee engagement significantly mediates the relationship between flexible work practices and job satisfaction.

H7: Employee engagement significantly mediates the relationship between hybrid work practices and job satisfaction.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional and explanatory/predictive research design to examine the impact of flexible and hybrid work practices on employee engagement and job satisfaction in the Indian IT sector. Quantitative methodology is appropriate because the study intends to measure predefined constructs with structured survey items and to statistically test the hypothesised relationships between the constructs. We adopt a cross-sectional design because data are collected from respondents at one point in time, providing a contemporary evaluation of employee perceptions of flexible and hybrid working arrangements. The explanatory orientation is justified by the objective of investigating whether differences in workplace flexibility and hybrid work practices explain variations in employee engagement and job satisfaction. Similarly, past empirical work on Indian employees has also employed questionnaire-based quantitative designs to study remote employment, engagement and satisfaction outcomes (Mehta, 2021; George & Vijayan, 2021). Mehta (2021) found that the autonomy, convenience, and psychosocial safety associated with working from home contributed significantly to work engagement.

4.2 Study Context

The Indian IT sector is chosen because it is a knowledge intensive and digitally enabled employment environment where work activities can often be done across physical and virtual locations. The study covers employees in IT services, software development, IT-enabled services (ITeS), technology consulting and business-process technology services. These activities are heavily dependent on digital communication, cloud platforms and collaborative technologies, making the sector very appropriate for the study of flexible and hybrid working arrangements. Remote employment has a major impact on work engagement, work-life balance and job satisfaction as reported by Indian IT employees (George & Vijayan, 2021; Shabadi et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies on the Indian IT sector have found positive links between hybrid work arrangements, employee

well-being and job satisfaction (Babu & Suhasini, 2024). Thus, the sector offers a suitable empirical setting for testing how flexibility and hybridisation affect employee experiences.

4.3 Population and Sampling

The target population is employees of Indian IT organisations that have flexible, remote or hybrid working arrangements. The geographical coverage embraces major Indian IT employment centres and technology clusters, allowing for responses from employees working in different organisational and regional contexts. Eligibility of Respondents: The respondents should be of 18 years of age or above, working in an IT/ITeS related organization, should have sufficient experience on their organisation's flexible or hybrid work arrangement and should give voluntary consent to participate. Excludes employees not directly experiencing flexible or hybrid work practices.

The purposive sampling technique is suggested as the respondents must meet specific employment and work arrangement criteria. The research targets a final sample of 400 valid responses, which provides an adequate empirical basis for estimating the proposed relationships with covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM). The sample size is also in line with recent empirical studies on outcomes of hybrid and remote employment; however, the study intends to provide wider evidence across the Indian IT sector and not a single organization. For example, Bloom et al. (2024) studied hybrid working using a large-scale experimental design among technology employees and found gains in job satisfaction and retention without declines in performance.

4.4 Questionnaire Design

Primary data were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire begins with an informed consent statement and screening questions followed by demographic questions and construct-specific measurement items. All substantive items were rated using the five-point Likert scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. Established and previously validated measures are adapted to the Indian IT context instead of developing new scales. A pilot test can be conducted prior to the administration of the instrument to all respondents in an effort to identify ambiguous wording and improve the clarity of the questionnaire.

4.5 Measurement of Variables

The main constructs are operationalised based on their conceptual dimensions without adopting or claiming the use of any specific standardised measurement scale. The questionnaire items are based on conceptual definitions and dimensions identified from the recent literature on flexible work, hybrid work, employee engagement and job satisfaction. This approach allows to contextualise the measures in terms of the specific features of the Indian IT sector, while keeping the conceptual consistency with the previous research.

Construct	Possible Dimensions
Flexible Work Practices	Schedule flexibility, location flexibility, autonomy
Hybrid Work Practices	Remote-office balance, choice, coordination
Employee Engagement	Vigour, dedication, absorption
Job Satisfaction	Satisfaction with job, work environment, autonomy, working conditions

Flexible Work Practices are measured in terms of employees' perceptions of the extent to which they have flexibility in determining their work schedules, choosing where work is performed and exercising autonomy in organising work-related activities. Hybrid Work Practices are evaluated based on employees' perceptions of the balance between remote and office work, the extent to which employees have a choice in where they work and the effectiveness of coordination between remote and physical work settings. These dimensions are particularly relevant to the Indian IT sector because technology-enabled work allows employees to carry out many job responsibilities across different locations and schedules (Kaur & Dharamveer, 2024).

Employee Engagement is conceptualised by three behavioural and psychological dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour is the energy and willingness of employees to put effort into their work, dedication is the enthusiasm, involvement and sense of significance that an employee feels about their work, and absorption is being very concentrated and

engrossed in one's work activities. These dimensions are consistent with current conceptualisations of employee engagement and have been widely researched in the literature on changing work arrangements (Tran et al., 2020).

Job Satisfaction is defined as the employees' general positive evaluation of the employment experience. It includes satisfaction with the job itself, the working environment, autonomy and existing working conditions. In the present study these dimensions are explored in terms of employees' experiences of flexible and hybrid working, rather than through the use of a pre-existing job satisfaction scale. So, questionnaire statements developed by the researcher based on their theoretically defined dimensions and recent relevant literature are used to measure all four constructs. Items are rated on a five-point Likert response format (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). This measurement method not only provides a theoretical base to the constructs but it also enables the instrument to capture the specifics of flexible and hybrid employment in the Indian IT sector.

4.6 Data Collection Procedure

The collected data via a combination of on-line and, when possible, off-line distribution of questionnaires to eligible IT employees. Online distribution can be through professional networks, organisational contacts and appropriate digital platforms. Offline administration can supplement the sample where organisational access is available. Prior to participation respondents are informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation and confidentiality. Informed consent is obtained prior to filling the questionnaire. Anonymity of respondents is assured as no personally identifying information is requested. Screening questions will be used to confirm that participants are working in the IT sector and have experience with flexible or hybrid work. Responses are then checked for completeness, duplicate submissions, excessive missing values and patterned or invalid responses before statistical analysis.

4.7 Common Method Bias

Procedural and statistical remedies are used to reduce the risk of common method bias (CMB) as the predictor and outcome variables are obtained using one self-report questionnaire. Anonymity is procedurally guaranteed, construct instructions are clearly distinguished, items are neutrally phrased and respondents are told that there are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire also conceptually separates distinct constructs to minimise the tendency of respondents to infer the expected relationships. Statistical assessment may begin with Harman's single-factor test, but a more robust assessment should be considered when appropriate. Baumgartner et al. (2021) warn that the Harman one-factor approach should not be taken as sufficient evidence in itself as common method variance is more complex than the test suggests. Thus, the study should interpret the Harman test together with CFA-based or other appropriate diagnostic procedures.

4.8 Data Analysis

The collected data are analysed using IBM SPSS and AMOS, following data screening and coding.

4.8.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis includes frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and the distribution of responses across study variables.

4.8.2 Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is used to test the measurement model. The reliability and validity of the indicators are measured by item factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity is then examined to see if the constructs are empirically distinct. Psychometric assessment of UWES-9 demonstrated high internal consistency and supports the appropriateness of validated engagement measurement for empirical research (Tran et al., 2020).

4.8.3 Structural Model

The measurement model is established and the structural model is tested with AMOS. The analysis examines collinearity diagnostics, standardised path coefficients (β), t-statistics, p-values and confidence intervals. Direct relationships between flexible work practices, hybrid work practices, employee engagement and job satisfaction are hypothesised and tested at an appropriate significance level, typically $p < 0.05$. Additionally, fitting indices are presented to establish the adequacy of the proposed structural model.

4.8.4 Mediation Analysis

Bootstrapping is used to assess indirect effects where theoretically hypothesised. In particular, the analysis can test whether employee engagement mediates the relationship between flexible/hybrid work practices and job satisfaction. The indirect effect is assessed using bootstrap confidence intervals. Mediation is deemed statistically supported when the confidence interval for the indirect effect does not include zero. The approach is aligned with recent research investigating the mechanisms by which hybrid working arrangements impact employee outcomes. For example, Kaur and Chowdhry (2024) studied the mediating effect of hybrid work on the association between workplace happiness and job satisfaction among IT personnel in the NCR.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S No.	Demographic Characteristics	Category	N	%
1	Gender	Female	155	38.8
		Male	241	60.3
		Other	4	1.0
2	Age	Below 25 years	66	16.5
		25–34 years	142	35.5
		35–44 years	114	28.5
		45–54 years	58	14.5
		55 years and above	20	5.0
3	Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	126	31.5
		Postgraduate	214	53.5
		M.Phil./Ph.D.	24	6.0
		Other	36	9.0
4	Total Work Experience	Less than 2 years	56	14.0
		2–5 years	136	34.0
		6–10 years	102	25.5
		11–15 years	76	19.0
		More than 15 years	30	7.5
5	Job Position	Entry-level/Junior	118	29.5
		Middle level	162	40.5
		Senior level	120	30.0
6	Organisation Type	Business-Process Technology Services	24	6.0
		IT Services	114	28.5
		IT-Enabled Services (ITeS)	68	17.0

		Software Development	88	22.0
		Technology Consulting	80	20.0
		Other	26	6.5
7	Current Work Arrangement	Flexible arrangement	72	18.0
		Fully office-based	84	21.0
		Fully remote	60	15.0
		Hybrid	184	46.0
8	Frequency of Remote Working	1–2 days per week	140	35.0
		3–4 days per week	86	21.5
		Fully remote	58	14.5
		Less than once a week	50	12.5
		Never	66	16.5
9	Organisation Size	Less than 100	74	18.5
		100–499	68	17.0
		500–999	94	23.5
		1,000–4,999	86	21.5
		5,000 or more	78	19.5

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the 400 respondents included in the study. The sample is mostly male (60.3%) with 38.8% females and 1.0% other respondents. Regarding the age distribution, the highest category is 25–34 years (35.5%), followed by 35–44 years (28.5%), which implies that the sample is mainly composed of employees in the active working age population. 53.5% are postgraduates and 31.5% are undergraduates in terms of educational qualifications which shows the relatively high educational qualifications of the IT sector. The largest percentage of people have 2–5 years of work experience (34.0%), followed by 6–10 years (25.5%). According to the data of job positions, 40.5% of the total are middle level positions. 30.0% and 29.5% are senior level and entry level employees, respectively. The largest organisational category is IT Services (28.5%) followed by Software Development (22.0%) and Technology Consulting (20.0%). Most importantly, hybrid working is the most common arrangement, accounting for 46.0% of respondents with 18.0% saying they have flexible arrangements. Remote employment is also fairly common, with 35.0% working remotely 1–2 days per week and 21.5% for 3–4 days. Finally, respondents are distributed across organisations of different sizes with the largest representation from organisations with 500–999 employees (23.5%). The profile, as a whole, represents a diverse set of Indian IT employees in terms of demographic, professional, organisational, and work arrangement characteristics and thus provides an appropriate basis to examine the impact of flexible and hybrid work practices on employee engagement and job satisfaction.

5.2 Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire

Table 2: Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.933	37

As shown in Table 2, the 37-item questionnaire has good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.933). Values > 0.90 are considered excellent in terms of reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, the result confirms the items are reliable in measuring the underlying constructs of flexible work practices, hybrid work practices, employee engagement, and job

satisfaction. Recent methodological research has endorsed the use of Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency assessment but emphasises the importance of careful interpretation in the light of other reliability evidence (Ellis, 2021; García-García et al., 2025). Thus, the questionnaire can be considered as sufficiently reliable for the subsequent statistical analyses in this study.

5.3 Descriptive Statistics and Data Normality

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Data Normality

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Flexible Work Practices	400	28.4175	4.72854	-.225	.122	-.126	.243
Hybrid Work Practices	400	31.6000	4.67060	-.065	.122	-.529	.243
Employee Engagement	400	35.1750	5.07482	-.329	.122	.260	.243
Job Satisfaction	400	34.8700	5.04249	-.048	.122	-.293	.243

Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics and normality test of the four constructs of the study for 400 respondents. The average scores suggest relatively positive perceptions of flexible work practices ($M = 28.42$, $SD = 4.73$) and hybrid work practices ($M = 31.60$, $SD = 4.67$). Employee engagement ($M = 35.18$, $SD = 5.07$) and job satisfaction ($M = 34.87$, $SD = 5.04$) also show relatively high levels. The skewness values range from -0.329 to -0.048 and the kurtosis from -0.529 to 0.260 which suggests that the variables are approximately normally distributed and suitable for further parametric analysis. This trend aligns with recent evidence suggesting that flexible and hybrid arrangements can positively contribute to employee engagement, autonomy and job satisfaction, especially within IT-oriented work environments (Babu & Suhasini, 2024; Kaur & Dharamveer, 2024; Chidambaram et al., 2024).

5.4 Common Method Bias (CMB)

Table 4: Common Method Bias (CMB)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.014	29.768	29.768	11.014	29.768	29.768
2	2.680	7.244	37.013			
3	2.141	5.785	42.798			
4	1.781	4.813	47.611			
5	.908	2.453	50.063			
6	.889	2.402	52.466			
7	.882	2.384	54.850			
8	.843	2.278	57.128			
9	.810	2.188	59.316			
10	.783	2.116	61.432			
11	.762	2.061	63.493			

12	.730	1.973	65.466			
13	.718	1.940	67.406			
14	.698	1.887	69.293			
15	.684	1.848	71.141			
16	.673	1.819	72.959			
17	.651	1.761	74.720			
18	.636	1.719	76.440			
19	.603	1.631	78.071			
20	.581	1.569	79.640			
21	.562	1.520	81.160			
22	.553	1.494	82.654			
23	.526	1.422	84.076			
24	.522	1.411	85.487			
25	.510	1.378	86.865			
26	.494	1.335	88.201			
27	.474	1.282	89.483			
28	.467	1.261	90.744			
29	.445	1.203	91.946			
30	.430	1.162	93.109			
31	.413	1.115	94.224			
32	.392	1.060	95.284			
33	.381	1.029	96.313			
34	.363	.980	97.293			
35	.351	.948	98.241			
36	.344	.930	99.171			
37	.307	.829	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

The Harman's single factor test for potential common method bias (CMB) is presented in Table 4. From the principal components analysis, the first component explains 29.768% of the total variance, which is significantly lower than the accepted threshold of 50%. Therefore, no single factor explains the variance, suggesting that CMB is unlikely to substantially affect the relationships between flexible work practices, hybrid work practices, employee engagement and job satisfaction. This finding offers initial evidence for the appropriateness of the dataset for additional analysis. However, recent methodological literature cautions that Harman's test alone has limited sensitivity and should not be treated as conclusive evidence that CMB is absent (Baumgartner et al., 2021; Podsakoff et al., 2024). The result should therefore be interpreted with the adequate procedural and statistical remedies.

5.5 Measurement Model Assessment

Table 5: Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Items	Standardized loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Flexible Work Practices (FWP)	FWP1	0.642	0.859	0.859	0.658
	FWP2	0.715			
	FWP3	0.658			
	FWP4	0.638			
	FWP5	0.630			
	FWP6	0.647			
	FWP7	0.635			
	FWP8	0.695			
Hybrid Work Practices (HWP)	HWP1	0.624	0.850	0.819	0.554
	HWP2	0.653			
	HWP3	0.620			
	HWP4	0.599			
	HWP5	0.647			
	HWP6	0.631			
	HWP7	0.627			
	HWP8	0.586			
	HWP9	0.611			
Employee Engagement (EE)	EE1	0.643	0.875	0.886	0.641
	EE2	0.599			
	EE3	0.698			
	EE4	0.621			
	EE5	0.613			
	EE6	0.657			
	EE7	0.676			
	EE8	0.616			
	EE9	0.649			

	EE10	0.638			
Job Satisfaction (JS)	JS1	0.594	0.871	0.871	0.635
	JS2	0.714			
	JS3	0.628			
	JS4	0.648			
	JS5	0.642			
	JS6	0.626			
	JS7	0.633			
	JS8	0.628			
	JS9	0.617			
	JS10	0.615			

The measurement model has acceptable internal consistency reliability and convergent validity for all four constructs (see Table 5). The standardised factor loadings are between 0.586 and 0.715, suggesting that most of the indicators are good representations of their respective constructs. While some loadings are below the preferred threshold of 0.708, they are above 0.40 and can be kept if composite reliability and AVE are greater than the required criteria, especially to maintain content validity (Hair et al., 2021; Hair & Alamer, 2022). The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.850 in case of Hybrid Work Practices (HWP) to 0.875 in case of Employee Engagement (EE). These values were above the recommended threshold value of 0.70, thus confirming strong internal consistency. The composite reliability values ranged from 0.819 to 0.886, indicating adequate construct reliability. The values of AVE range from 0.554 for HWP to 0.658 for Flexible Work Practices (FWP) which are above the minimum value of 0.50 thus establishing convergent validity. These results suggest that the indicators together account for a large proportion of variance in their respective latent constructs. Overall, the measurement model shows adequate reliability and convergent validity and is therefore appropriate for the subsequent analysis of the structural model (Sarstedt et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2024).

Table 5: Discriminant Validity of Construct

	FWP	HWP	EE	JS
FWP	0.811			
HWP	0.515	0.744		
EE	0.596	0.504	0.801	
JS	0.643	0.495	0.705	0.797

The Fornell–Larcker criterion is used to show the discriminant validity of the constructs in Table 5. The diagonal values, representing the square root of AVE, are higher than the respective inter-construct correlations, suggesting that each construct is empirically different from the others. Specifically, the FWP (0.811), HWP (0.744), EE (0.801), and JS (0.797) are higher than their respective correlations with other constructs. The strongest correlation is found between Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction (0.705), while the correlations between FWP, HWP, EE, and JS are less than their diagonal values. These results show acceptable discriminant validity and suggest that the constructs represent conceptually distinct dimensions, thus providing evidence for the suitability of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Table 6: Goodness Model Fit

The goodness of model Fitness Index	CMIN/Df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
Calculated Value	1.041	0.921	0.911	0.010
Required Value	<i>Less than 5</i>	<i>More than 0.9</i>	<i>More than 0.90</i>	<i>Less than 0.08</i>

The goodness-of-fit results in Table 6 indicate the proposed structural model has an excellent overall fit with the observed data. The CMIN/DF value of 1.041 is substantially lower than the suggested threshold of 5, suggesting minimal disparity between the theorised and observed covariance structures. Moreover, the GFI (0.921) and AGFI (0.911) are above the suggested level of 0.90, indicating a good fit of the absolute model. The RMSEA value of 0.010 is far below the cutoff of 0.08 and indicates a very good fit of the model to the population data. Recent research on SEM uses the same criteria (Stone, 2021; Groskurth et al., 2024). The model thus fits sufficiently well to allow for hypothesis testing.

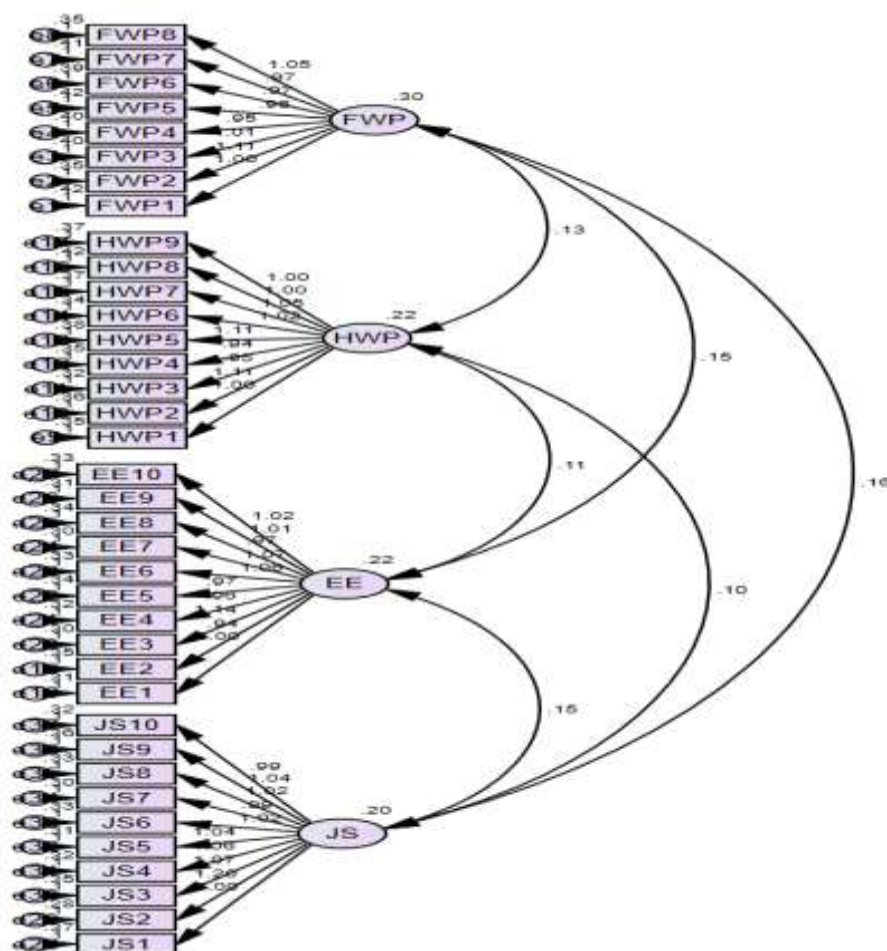


Figure 2: Measurement Model

5.6 Regression Analysis

The results of regression analysis undertaken to validate the proposed relationships among Flexible Work Practices (FWP), Hybrid Work Practices (HWP), Employee Engagement (EE) and Job Satisfaction (JS) of employees of Indian IT sector are presented in Table 7. The findings show all five hypotheses proposed are statistically supported with a positive standardised estimate and statistically significant p-value of .000 ($p < 0.001$) for each relationship. This means that flexible and hybrid work

arrangements are significantly positively correlated with employee engagement and employee job satisfaction. Also, employee engagement is significantly correlated with employee job satisfaction.

For H1, the results indicate that Flexible Work Practices positively and significantly impact Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.393$, $t = 6.482$, $p < 0.001$). The relatively strong standardised estimate indicates that the higher the levels of employee engagement, the more flexibility in working arrangements. This means that practices such as flexibility in working hours, work location and employee autonomy may give IT employees more control over their work which may, in turn, reinforce their involvement, dedication and absorption toward their work. Hence H1 is supported. H2 also indicates a significant positive relationship of Hybrid Work Practices with the Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.268$, $t = 4.225$, $p < 0.001$). The significant coefficient, although not as large as the effect of flexible work practices, implies that the appropriate choice and coordination of remote and office-based work and their effective integration, have a positive effect on employee engagement. Hence, H2 is supported.

H3 indicates that Flexible Work Practices significantly and positively affect Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.259$, $t = 4.709$, $p < 0.001$) in terms of job satisfaction. Thus, the results imply that the more flexible the employees feel, the better they perceive their job and working environment. H3 is therefore supported. H4 also indicates an important positive influence of Hybrid Work Practices on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.293$, $t = 4.753$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient shows that hybrid arrangements can boost employees' satisfaction by balancing remote and workplace-based activities, depending on individual preferences and work requirements. Thus, H4 is supported.

Finally, H5 ascertains the strongest relationship in the model, indicating that Employee Engagement is a significant and positive predictor of Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.451$, $t = 6.424$, $p < 0.001$). This means that the more energetic, committed and psychologically absorbed employees are in their work, the more satisfied they are with their jobs. Overall, the results suggest that both flexible and hybrid work are important predictors of positive employee outcomes, with flexible work having a stronger association with engagement and hybrid work having a slightly stronger association with job satisfaction. The findings further emphasise the importance of employee engagement as a predictor of job satisfaction in the Indian IT sector.

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing (Regression Analysis)

S No.	Hypothesis testing	Standardized Estimates	t-value	p-value	Results
H1	FWP $\rightarrow$ EE	0.393	6.482	.000	Supported
H2	HWP $\rightarrow$ EE	0.268	4.225	.000	Supported
H3	FWP $\rightarrow$ JS	0.259	4.709	.000	Supported
H4	HWP $\rightarrow$ JS	0.293	4.753	.000	Supported
H5	EE $\rightarrow$ JS	0.451	6.424	.000	Supported

5.7 Mediation Analysis

Table 8 shows the mediation analysis to see if Employee Engagement (EE) mediates the relationship between Flexible Work Practices (FWP), Hybrid Work Practices (HWP) and Job Satisfaction (JS) of employees working in Indian IT sector. The results show that employee engagement is an important intervening mechanism in explaining the effect of flexible and hybrid work practices on job satisfaction.

For H6 (FWP $\rightarrow$ EE $\rightarrow$ JS), the standardised indirect effect is 0.086, with a t-value of 2.360 and p-value of 0.018. The indirect effect is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The positive coefficient indicates that flexible work practices have a positive effect on job satisfaction through employee engagement. This means that practices such as more flexible work schedules, work locations, and employee autonomy may increase employee involvement and psychological connection to their work, consequently enhancing their job satisfaction. Therefore, H6 is accepted that employee engagement mediates the relationship between flexible work practices and job satisfaction.

Likewise, the H7 (HWP → EE → JS) also has a significant positive mediation effect with standardised estimate of 0.095, $t = 2.937$, and $p = 0.003$. The p -value is statistically significant, which indicates that hybrid work practices have an indirect effect on job satisfaction via employee engagement. The slightly higher indirect effect compared to FWP suggests that an effective mix of remote and office-based work arrangements may in particular contribute to engagement, which in turn increases job satisfaction. H7 is thus supported. The study findings show that employee engagement is a significant process of link between modern flexible and hybrid work arrangements and favourable employee outcomes in the Indian IT industry.

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing (Mediation Analysis)

S No.	Hypothesis testing	Standardized Estimates	t-value	p-value	Results
H6	FWP → EE → JS	0.086	2.360	0.018	Supported
H7	HWP → EE → JS	0.095	2.937	0.003	Supported

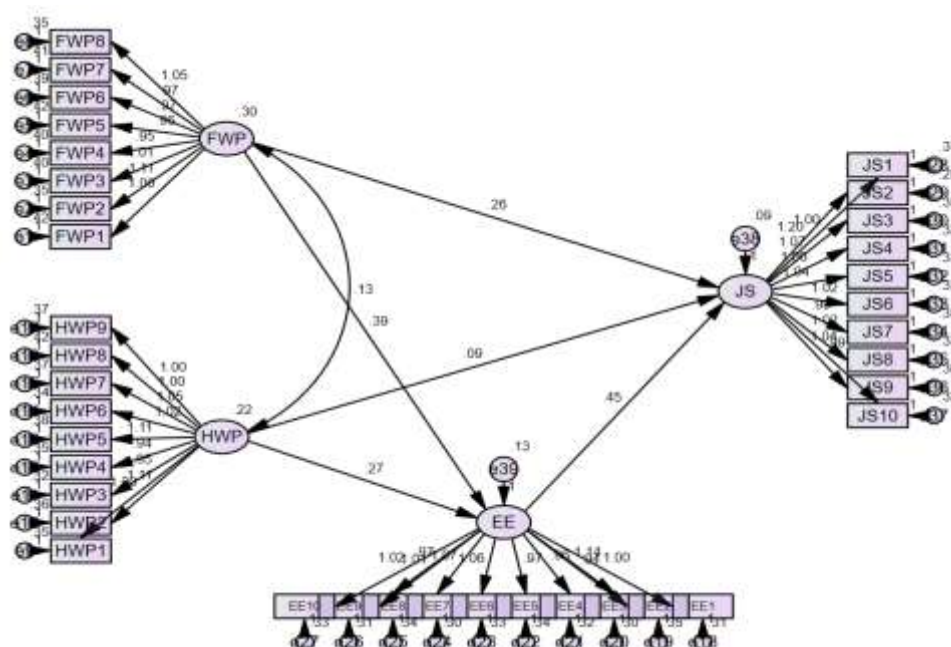


Figure 3: Structural Model

6. Discussion

The study's findings provide a holistic understanding of the impact of flexible and hybrid work practices on employee outcomes within the Indian IT sector. Our findings suggest that the effectiveness of flexible and hybrid working depends on the impact these practices have on employees' autonomy, control, work-life integration, engagement and connection with the organization, rather than on alternative locations or scheduling arrangements. All seven hypotheses were supported, indicating both direct and indirect paths between modern work practices and job satisfaction. In the discussion below these relationships are interpreted in relation to the existing literature and the JD-R perspective, paying particular attention to the motivational role of employee engagement.

6.1 Flexible Work Practices → Employee Engagement

The support for H1 implies that flexible work practices can serve as an important job resource that enhances employee engagement in the Indian IT sector. Flexibility in work schedules, location and work organization appears to not only bring convenience but also increase employees' perceived control over how they perform their responsibilities. This interpretation is in line with the JD-R perspective followed in this study, where job resources trigger motivational processes and promote

employees' higher energy and psychological involvement in their work. This is also in line with the open-access study by Lee et al. (2024) who found that workplace flexibility was positively associated with employee engagement among young workers. It is essential to point out that the present finding should not be interpreted as evidence for the always beneficial role of flexibility. Telecommuting can increase engagement through greater job autonomy but also decrease it through work-family conflict (Ma et al., 2023). Hence, the positive association observed here may be cases where Indian IT employees experience flexibility as actual discretion rather than as an expectation of constant availability. This is an important distinction because flexibility is motivational when employees have adequate control, managerial support, and technological resources to use it effectively.

6.2 Hybrid Work Practices → Employee Engagement

The support for H2 suggests hybrid work may foster engagement by offering the benefits of remote employment autonomy along with the interpersonal and collaborative benefits of office work. Hybrid arrangements give employees the choice of environments relative to the work they are doing, perhaps leveraging remote environments for focus and office environments for collaboration, problem solving and socialisation. The current study thus broadens the interpretation of flexibility by proposing that the link of the employee is not necessarily reduced when the physical and virtual work are intentionally blended. The same is true for the Indian IT sector, which relies heavily on digital communication and knowledge sharing across geographically distributed project teams. Key ingredients for effective hybrid work identified in the literature include communication, work flexibility and work focus. Recent research with hybrid workers also suggests work engagement and work-life balance as outcomes impacted by the quality of hybrid arrangements (Enga et al., 2024). At the same time, hybrid work is about more than dividing working days between home and office. Poor coordination can lead to asymmetries in communication, diminished informal interaction and weakened employees' sense of connection to the organization. The present finding therefore suggests that autonomy and flexibility need to be accompanied by effective communication systems and opportunities for meaningful team interaction.

6.3 Flexible Work Practices → Job Satisfaction

Supporting H3 indicates that flexible work practices affect job satisfaction through changing employees' perceptions of autonomy, work-life balance and personal control. Employees who can adjust their work time or location may find it easier to accommodate family responsibilities, personal activities and individual productivity preferences without necessarily compromising work requirements. This flexibility can thus improve the overall evaluation of the job rather than having an effect on day-to-day convenience. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that flexible working arrangements can increase satisfaction when employees are given meaningful control over when and where they undertake work. However, Bellmann and Hübler (2021) warn that the relationship between working from home, job satisfaction and work-life balance is heterogeneous, implying that flexibility alone is not sufficient for positive outcomes. Thus, the distinction between autonomy and constant availability is crucial. If flexibility leads to longer hours, blurred boundaries or increased workload its beneficial effect may be diminished. Recent research also shows that work-life conflict can be a major obstacle in technology-enabled telework environments (Weinert & Weitzel, 2023). The positive relationship found in the present study, therefore, appears to reflect flexibility that gives employees meaningful control rather than simply moving work outside the traditional office.

6.4 Hybrid Work Practices → Job Satisfaction

Support for H4 suggests hybrid work arrangements can enhance job satisfaction when they successfully blend organisational connection, social interaction and commuting reduction with flexibility. The relationship is particularly relevant in the Indian IT setting where commute can be a major investment of time and energy while office presence can still provide opportunities for collaboration and interpersonal contact. Hybrid work allows employees to come to the office on remote days but still access organisational resources and colleagues when physical interaction is valuable. The interpretation is well supported by Indian evidence. Babu and Suhasini (2024) identified significant relationships between hybrid work and employee well-being and job satisfaction among IT employees, with work environment, flexible hours, communication and technology as significant attributes of the hybrid experience. Likewise, Kaur and Chowdhry (2024) found that hybrid working in the NCR IT sector was associated with workplace happiness and job satisfaction through flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance. The conclusion here is that hybrid work is most valuable when remote and office environments are complementary, rather than competing, alternatives. This interpretation is also consistent with Bloom et al. (2024) who found that hybrid working improved retention without harming performance, reinforcing the sustainability of well-designed hybrid arrangements.

6.5 Employee Engagement → Job Satisfaction

The support for H5 illustrates employee engagement as a key motivational pathway underlying positive job attitudes. Engagement is the psychological energy, dedication and absorption of the employees in their work. It is when the employees find their work meaningful and are willing to commit sustained effort to their work, the employees' overall assessment of their employment is likely to be more positive. Therefore, the present study suggests that job satisfaction may not only be a passive reaction to favourable working conditions but also the result of an active motivational experience at work. This is consistent with Côté et al. (2021), who showed the importance of work engagement in explaining job satisfaction and recognised the part of organisational support in this relationship. The relatively strong association reported in the present study is particularly relevant to IT employees, as knowledge intensive work often requires concentration, initiative and sustained psychological investment. Consequently, organisations seeking to increase satisfaction should not be focusing solely on workplace policies, but rather on creating conditions that motivate employees to be energetic, involved and psychologically committed to their work. The relationship also supports the study's distinction between engagement and satisfaction. Satisfaction is employees' evaluation of their employment, while engagement is the quality and intensity of their involvement in work.

6.6 Mediation

The importance of the mediation results extends beyond the direct relationships, as both H6 and H7 were supported. Employee engagement thus is a psychological process in which flexible and hybrid work practices can contribute to job satisfaction. The indirect relationship suggests that positive work arrangements do not increase satisfaction simply because employees appreciate the greater convenience or reduced commuting. Rather, they may initially increase autonomy, control and work-life integration that promote increased vigour, dedication and absorption, and these motivational experiences then lead to more positive job evaluations. This finding is consistent with the JD-R model, where job resources activate motivational processes leading to positive employee outcomes. It also adds to Ma et al. (2023) who found that job autonomy mediates the positive pathway from telecommuting to engagement, whereas work-family conflict may mediate in the opposite direction. In this study, the stronger indirect effect of hybrid work than flexible work may suggest that the combination of remote autonomy and office-based interaction offers multiple pathways to building engagement. Overall, the results of the mediation suggest that organisations should view flexible and hybrid working as not just benefits to employees, but also as mechanisms for designing motivating work environments. Ultimately, the success of these arrangements depends upon whether they deliver real autonomy, sustained engagement, effective communication and a real connection with the organization.

7. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory by showing that flexible and hybrid work practices can be valuable job resources in the Indian IT sector. The significant effects of Flexible Work Practices on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.393$), Hybrid Work Practices on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.268$), and Employee Engagement on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.451$) suggest a motivational path, in which positive work arrangements enhance employees' psychological involvement and then improve their satisfaction. This is consistent with the current development of JD-R theory, which highlights autonomy and other job resources as predictors of employee engagement and positive work outcomes (Bakker et al., 2023). The study thus applies JD-R theory to digitally enabled Indian IT work by conceptualising autonomy, control, flexibility and work-life integration as resources embedded in contemporary work arrangements. This theoretical contribution is further supported by the significant mediation effects: Flexible work practices → Job Satisfaction → Employee Engagement. Hybrid work practices → Job Satisfaction → Employee Engagement. This study shows that work resources have not only a direct effect on satisfaction but also a triggering effect on a motivational process whereby employees become more vigorous, dedicated and absorbed at work. This is also in line with evidence linking autonomy and work-life balance with employee engagement. Moreover, the study contributes to the conceptualisation of flexible and hybrid work as related but distinct arrangements, in line with recent scholarship arguing that hybrid work should be understood through its modality, location and temporal dimensions rather than simply as a fixed remote-office ratio (Lauring & Jonasson, 2025).

7.2 Managerial Implications

The findings offer some actionable implications for Indian IT organisations and HR managers. "First, organisations should develop hybrid work policies that are role-based rather than require the same level of attendance for all employees because

different tasks have different needs for collaboration, concentration and physical presence. Second, the provision of reasonable scheduling autonomy to employees, so that they can balance work responsibilities with personal commitments and still meet team requirements. Recent Indian research, for example, highlights autonomy as a significant aspect of hybrid work, highlighting the need for autonomy practices that are contextually fitting (Datta et al., 2025). Third, organisations should set out expectations about office attendance, for example the purpose of office days, requirements for coordination and norms for communication. Fourth, a key investment is in reliable digital collaboration systems so that remote and office-based employees can participate on an equal footing. Fifth, managers should be trained in hybrid-team leadership, especially communication, trust building, performance management and inclusion. Sixth, HR teams need to be on top of workload, digital overload and burnout risk on an ongoing basis. Hybrid arrangements can pile on extra demands at the same time they are bringing resource benefits. Nagori and Lawton (2024) also stress the importance of appropriate flexibility, communication, collaboration, task distribution and intervention for technostress and burnout in the design of hybrid work. Seventh, performance evaluation should be based on outcomes, deliverables and contribution, not physical presence. Finally, organisations should consciously keep opportunities for team interaction, knowledge sharing and organisational belonging so that flexibility does not lead to social isolation. These recommendations are especially important because the current study shows that engagement is an important pathway through which flexible and hybrid arrangements translate into higher job satisfaction.

8. CONCLUSION

The study finds Flexible and hybrid work practices have a significant positive effect on employee engagement and job satisfaction among employees working in Indian IT sector. The empirical results support all seven hypotheses. Flexible Work Practices have more positive effect on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.393$). Hybrid Work Practices also have significant effect on increasing employee engagement ($\beta = 0.268$). Flexible Work Practices ($\beta=0.259$) and Hybrid Work Practices ($\beta=0.293$) positively influence Job Satisfaction. The strongest predictor of Job Satisfaction is Employee Engagement ($\beta=0.451$). The mediation results also show that Employee Engagement significantly mediates the relationships between Flexible Work Practices and Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.086, p = 0.018$) and between Hybrid Work Practices and Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.095, p = 0.003$). Thus, the results imply that flexibility and hybridisation have positive effects on employees, not only directly, but also by increasing their psychological engagement in work.

The study contributes to the literature of flexible and hybrid work by differentiating Flexible Work Practices from Hybrid Work Practices as opposed to using the terms interchangeably to refer to remote employment. It also extends the Job Demands–Resources perspective by demonstrating that autonomy, control, flexibility and work–life integration may serve as valuable job resources that motivate employee engagement and subsequently lead to job satisfaction. The inclusion of engagement as a mediating mechanism makes the effect of contemporary work arrangements on employee outcomes in the Indian IT context more complete.

The results suggest from a managerial perspective that Indian IT organisations need to go beyond generic work-from-home policies and develop role-based flexible and hybrid work systems. Organisations can offer reasonable autonomy around scheduling, set clear expectations around attendance in the office, strengthen digital collaboration infrastructure and train managers to lead effectively teams across geographies. Meanwhile, organisations should monitor workload and burnout risks and measure employees mainly on outcomes, not presence. Opportunities for social interaction and organisational belonging are also important to maintain engagement and satisfaction in hybrid environments.

However, there are a few limitations to the study. The cross-sectional design captures employee perceptions at one point in time and thus limits the ability to draw strong longitudinal or causal conclusions. Self-reported questionnaire data can also be biased due to factors related to the response itself. In addition, the use of purposive sampling limits the degree to which the findings can be generalised to respondents other than those sampled. The research is focused on the Indian IT industry, and so the findings may not directly translate to other industries or country contexts.

Longitudinal research designs are needed to better understand how employee responses to flexible and hybrid work change over time. Comparisons across countries and sectors may reveal whether the observed relationships differ across institutional, cultural and occupational settings. Multilevel research might further investigate the organisational and team-level influences. Future models might include organisational support and leadership style as moderators. Further research is needed to examine

work-life balance, employee wellbeing and generational differences to get a deeper understanding of when and for whom flexible and hybrid work arrangements lead to sustainable employee benefits.

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