



HYBRID WORK REGIMES AS A RESULT OF COMPANIES LEARNING FROM THE CRISIS

PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

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Department of Management, Faculty of Business Management,
Bratislava University of Economics and Business

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Hybrid work regimes as a result of companies learning from the crisis

Department of Management

Faculty of Business Management

Bratislava University of Economics and Business

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Foreword

This collection of scientific papers provides a comprehensive analysis of the workplace transformation accelerated by global crises and subsequent organizational learning. Hybrid work regimes have emerged as a dominant model, redefining the employer-employee relationship through digitalization and increased flexibility.

The studies presented in the proceedings summarize several years of research on hybrid work regimes. The findings from them are summarized in the following lines.

A primary aspect of hybrid work is its strong link to advanced HRM digitalization. Research indicates that companies with more intensive hybrid work models invest significantly more in digital infrastructure, such as employee and manager HR portals, which serve as foundational tools for dispersed teams. Furthermore, while the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in HRM delivers documented operational gains—such as a 42% reduction in hiring costs and a 90% improvement in cycle times—there remains a persistent deficit in investment-grade financial evidence to fully justify these expenditures in a strategic context.

The shift in workplace location has fundamentally altered performance appraisal systems. Traditional monitoring of office presence and physical check-ins are being replaced by sophisticated, results-oriented approaches and multi-source feedback. Interestingly, research suggests that employees often achieve higher performance and concentration levels at home compared to the traditional office environment, provided they have adequate space and discipline.

However, hybrid work is frequently characterized as a "double-edged sword" for employee well-being. While it enhances individual autonomy and work-life balance, it introduces critical psychosocial risks like digital fatigue, social isolation, and the blurring of boundaries between professional and private life. These factors manifest differently across generations; younger workers, particularly from Gen Z, view flexibility as a baseline requirement for mental health and independence. Conversely, older "Baby Boomers" may place a higher premium on personal contact and stability, though they increasingly accept hybrid models for late-career health and knowledge-sharing benefits.

From a management perspective, environmental turbulence has forced a shift from reactive to proactive strategies that build long-term resilience. Effective leadership in a hybrid world requires a move away from rigid hierarchies and direct control toward adaptive and empowering leadership styles. Success in these scenarios hinges on building trust, fostering employee agility, and maintaining transparent, empathetic communication channels to bridge geographical distances.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of hybrid work regimes depends on an organization's ability to tailor its HR policies to the diverse needs of a multigenerational workforce while simultaneously developing the digital competencies of its leaders. This document offers deep insights into how organizations have adapted to this "new normal" and the complex challenges that define the future of work.

Autors

A Study on the Interplay Between Hybrid Work and Advanced Digitalisation of Human Resources Management

Jana Blštáková
Soňa Ďurišová

Abstract

This paper examines hybrid work arrangements in the context of HRM digitalisation, seeking to shed light on hybrid work regimes as organisational arrangements and to clarify their relationship with the digitalisation of HRM, specifically the use of employee and manager HR portals, HR analytics, and algorithm-based HR processes. The study employed a survey-based methodology conducted in 2025 among companies operating in Slovakia with more than one hundred employees. Data were collected via a questionnaire targeted at HR managers. One-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation analysis were used to examine differences across groups and the relationship between hybrid work intensity and HRM digitalisation. Findings have shown that companies with more developed hybrid work regimes use digital HRM tools more extensively. The strongest relationship was observed with employee HR portals, suggesting their role as foundational digital infrastructure for hybrid work. Theoretically, the study demonstrates that hybrid work regimes should be analysed not only through the lens of flexibility and productivity but also through the lens of innovations in HRM and digital organisational infrastructure. Practically, organisations developing hybrid work invest in digital HR infrastructure, support the autonomy of employees and the leadership of managers, and shift to strategic HRM.

JEL classification: M54, O33, J24

Keywords: Hybrid workplaces, Human Resources Management, HR Data Analytics, Digitalization

1 Introduction

Digitalized human resources management (HRM) has shifted human resources (HR) professionals' routine tasks to more strategic, data-driven work, boosting organizational efficiency. Digital tools are changing the availability of data in the form of self-service HR systems for employees and managers, growing usage of HR analytics thanks to massive data collection and implementation of big-data procedures (Mahmoud et al., 2025). It is the way in which companies handle data obtained about employees, applicants, external environment, and the HR functions that can advance to a higher and more strategic level of HR work with the advent of innovative HR tools (Georgescu et al., 2024; Sarangdevot & Rathore, 2024).

The hybrid work regime, i.e., allowing employees to work from home on a regular basis, is a modern trend demanded by employees as a benefit (Ishak et al., 2025; Khatimah, 2022) and provided by organizations for more reasons, such as the reduction of carbon footprint, increased competitiveness of jobs in the labour market, or adaptation of work to the individual requirements of employees (Kumari et al., 2024). One of the main tasks of the current HRM is to support the internal environment of organizations, enabling a hybrid work regime of employees in a sustainable form for the efficiency of management, employees, and the smooth operation of organizations (Eng et al., 2024; Kunisch et al., 2021).

Our research aimed to identify key changes in the internal environment of organizations with the introduction of hybrid work regimes. Digitization in the form of self-service HR tools in hybrid work modes is partly natural with the growing remote work (Syed et al., 2025), but

the interconnection with the usage of advanced HR digitization procedures, such as HR data analytics and algorithmic HR processes, can be the answer to the success of HRM in hybrid organizations. The aim of this paper is to examine hybrid work arrangements in the context of HRM digitalisation. In doing so, the study seeks to shed light on hybrid work regimes as organisational arrangements and to clarify their relationship with the digitalisation of HRM.

2 Literature review

The impact of hybrid work arrangements on organizational efficiency can be examined through several perspectives. One of them is the relationship to employee productivity, the other is the compromise between individualizing work and maintaining corporate culture through a hybrid model. Organizational support for hybrid work modes, creating the backbone for increasing digitalization, can be a stimulus for the future growth of organizations.

a) Impact of hybrid work arrangements on employees' performance

The relationship between hybrid work and employee productivity has been explored several times by many researchers. Meanwhile, Barrero (2023) argued that the hybrid work regime has no reason to affect employee productivity, taking into account the equal rate of work and private work interruptions in both environments, specifics of the job itself that make comparisons impossible, as well as the specifics of productivity, which cannot be easily measured in different environments (Barrero et al., 2023). Lucius and Damberg (2022) explain that the office is not just a place for work, but also a touchpoint for social and creative gatherings. The workplace design is to be perceived as inspiring by employees and conducive to creativity; the knowledge exchange can be emphasized to facilitate creativity and innovation. These effects companies can't reach with remote employees (Lucius & Damberg, 2024). The study of Khatimah et al. (2022) proves that hybrid work arrangements improve the work performance, while a full remote regime decreases the work performance in a statistically significant way (Khatimah, 2022).

On the contrary, some authors argue that by saving time for commuting, fewer sick days, supporting the individual regime of employees, and increasing autonomy and trust, the productivity of employees in hybrid work arrangements increases (Choudhury et al., 2021).

The work-from-anywhere flexibility of employment explored by Choudhury (2021) has spurred growth in productivity and employee satisfaction by promoting what is key to engagement, i.e. autonomy, accountability, and connection (Choudhury et al., 2021). Authors Sauermann and Cohen (2008) explain that providing an employee with flexibility, the ability to work from an environment that suits them better than the office, will support their productivity-enhancing effort, and thus productive behavior (Sauermann & Cohen, 2008). If an employee is satisfied in the workplace for a long time, feels long-term happiness at the workplace, it increases and maintains the organization's high productivity (Wesarat et al., 2025).

The fact that working in isolated conditions significantly reduces connectivity and collaboration also speaks to the support of hybrid work regimes. In full remote work regimes, the sense of isolation in combination with high work ambiguity can create helplessness in employees (Wong et al., 2022). Therefore, a hybrid regime combining the benefit of flexibility, but also tying employees to cooperation, can encourage productive employee behavior and engagement (Eng et al., 2024).

b) Digitalization of HRM is changing work towards strategic management

Author Sarangdevot (2024) explains the digitization of HR functions as a basic process of rebuilding organizations to more efficient ones, with increased productivity or reduced costs: “Digitization in HR services is of utmost importance to an organization. It is a critical and strategic function that aims to optimize the workforce to meet business goals. Digitization is one such phenomenon that has recently transformed HR practices by bringing greater efficiency and productivity at lower costs.” (Sarangdevot & Rathore, 2024).

The impact of digitization of HR processes on organizational resilience was examined by the authors Ahmić and Cosić (2025), with the result that digital HRM practices exert a significant and favourable influence on organizational resilience in its three component areas: anticipation capabilities, coping capabilities, and adaptation capabilities. Therefore, embracing digital HRM practices is key to building organizational resilience, allowing for swift adaptation and smarter, data-driven decisions in times of disruption (Ahmić & Ćosić, 2025).

Increased efficiency of HR processes affects the entire organization through improved and targeted HRM performance. An example can be improved performance management, where the data from performance management systems can assist in identifying high performers and assigning them to crucial projects (Pulungan et al., 2025). With digitalized tools, we can reach quick and targeted processes, avoiding biases.

Strategic HRM practices not only improve organizational performance but can also strengthen an organization’s ability to cope with changes and challenges sustainably (Georgescu et al., 2024). Implementing HR practices and policies that support the continuous development of employees, promote collaboration, and improve customer relationships can strengthen organizational resilience and ensure its long-term success in a competitive organizational environment (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

The digitization of HR processes allows managers to shift their efforts from administrative tasks to more strategic work, which is becoming increasingly important. The authors Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2018) named these activities talent development, leadership building, and employee experience management, and according to them, these are the ones whose importance in remote work is growing (Upadhyay & Khandelwal, 2018). It is the digitization of processes that enables the support of strategic HRM management through data-based decisions, predictive analytics, and decision-making based on a combination of data from HR processes and the external environment of organizations. Increasing digitalization supports the collection and use of data for strategic HRM.

c) Organizational enablers of hybrid work arrangements foster digitization

The connection between hybrid work arrangements and organizations' digitization efforts is driven by the need to improve organizational efficiency. Digitalization is an entry into organizational efficiency, thanks to the augmentation of decision-making processes (Jayesh & Omer, 2024). Its importance is increasing with the use of hybrid work modes.

Studies capturing the organizational support of hybrid work modes focus on several input conditions that enable working from home. In part, these are the IT support and support of technological efficiency of employees, the support of the communication flow in the organization, the trust of the organization, and the trust of managers (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021). Leadership support and trust building are the factors that, according to Vyas (2021), later influenced the success of remote work arrangements the most.

The organizational enablers defined by Lauring and Jonasson (2025) are in three groups. The leadership itself, as leadership empowerment, and leadership communication, and the organizational support (Lauring & Jonasson, 2025).

The author Dara et al. (2025) investigated the connection between the JD-R model, the POS model and Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology, with the result that a hybrid work regime must be supported by organizational preparation in three forms (1) institutions should establish clear and consistent policies regarding working hours and performance evaluation to mitigate ambiguity and ensure fairness, (2) the provision of inclusive and equitable technological infrastructure is essential to enable all employees, regardless of rank or location, to participate fully in hybrid work, (3) organizations must implement reliable mechanisms for support; such as digital tools, connectivity and allowances (Dara et al., 2025).

Based on the literature review, hybrid work arrangements can be understood not only as a form of workplace flexibility, but also as an organisational arrangement that requires appropriate digital support. The coordination of employees working partly outside the traditional workplace increases the need for accessible HR information, digital communication channels, employee and manager self-service tools, and data-based HR decision-making. In this context, HRM digitalisation may represent an important organisational condition supporting the effective functioning of hybrid work regimes. Therefore, it can be expected that companies with a higher intensity of hybrid work arrangements will also demonstrate a higher level of HR digitalisation, including the use of HR self-service tools, HR analytics, and algorithm-based HR processes.

On this basis, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the extent of hybrid work regimes and the level of HRM digitalisation, measured by the use of HR self-service tools, HR analytics, and algorithm-based HR processes.

3 Research design and Methodology

Our research aims to demonstrate how an organization's work environment changes with the introduction of hybrid work arrangements in four dimensions of HR process digitization, the use of data analytics, and algorithmized HR processes.

For the research, we developed a questionnaire capturing the status of hybrid work arrangements in companies, alongside monitoring the performance of HR functions within those organizations. The survey was conducted in 2025 among 121 companies operating in Slovakia with more than 100 employees. Data collection took place via an electronic questionnaire and was targeted at HR managers in companies. Companies of various sizes, regional operations, and sectors participated in the research.

To validate our research objectives, the questionnaire included questions measuring company demographics (number of employees, sector, industry, region of operation), followed by questions on the extent of hybrid work arrangements, such as the number of remote work days provided to employees per week, and questions mapping the extent of digital tool usage in the companies' HR environments. The subject of the study was whether companies exhibit similar or different characteristics of their internal organizational environment based on the extent of remote work utilization. The questionnaire items are described in more detail in Table 1.

Variable	Data type	Description
Usage of hybrid work arrangements	Cardinal (event. Ordinal)	Companies were asked about the Number of Days they provide employees ability to work remotely (home-office).
Demography – Number of employees	Cardinal	Variable describing size of company based on number of employees
Demography – Sector, Industry	Nominal	Variables splitting companies into groups (Private / Public and Non-profit Sector) and by 19 different types of Industries
Digitalization – HR portal for Managers	Ordinal	Companies were asked to indicate the extent to which they use the HR portal for managers, providing HR information and automatic HR tools for operational management
Digitalization – HR portal for employees	Ordinal	Companies were asked to indicate the extent to which they use HR portal for employees, providing HR information and self-service tools for employees (Mahmoud et al., 2025)
Digitalization – Algorithm based HR processes	Ordinal	Companies were asked to indicate the extent to which they use algorithm-based HR processes supported by automation, digitization, and AI (Sarangdevot & Rathore, 2024)
Digitalization – HR Analytics for data-based decisions	Ordinal	Companies were asked to indicate the extent to which they use HR analytics for data-based decision-making (Sarangdevot & Rathore, 2024)

Tab.1. The research variables, data type, and description

Source: Author's own evaluation

Based on the level of use of hybrid work, we divided companies into research groups with the intention to evaluate their internal environment. The groups were as follows: (1) Companies not using HO at all, (2) Companies providing HO little (1-2 days), (3) Companies using hybrid mode more intensively (3-4) days a week, and (4) Compounds working in a fully remote work arrangement (5 days per week). Subsequently, we used the One-way ANOVA (Welch's) method, which quantifies the existence of a difference between groups, and, at the same time, quantifies the proportion of the difference, meaning the average use of digital tools across groups (Kenton, 2025).

For digitization questions, respondents answered on a scale of 1-6 about the degree of use of the given tools. We used a 6-point Likert scale for the answers due to the use of forced division (Chomeya, 2010). Each tool was also described in more detail by the respondents to avoid misunderstandings and distortions.

To capture the relationship between variables, we used a correlation matrix that quantifies the degree of the relationship between the occurrence of two variables at a statistically significant level. In order to confirm the observed relationship and to refute (or measure) possible other factors acting on the measured parameter, we also performed an additional measurement of the effect of isolated factors through linear regression.

4 Results

An analysis of the sample of companies participating in the survey shows that the largest group consisted of private-sector companies (109), followed by public-sector companies (11), and one company from a nonprofit organization. The basic demographic data indicate that the use of a hybrid work model is predominantly a feature of private-sector companies. More than 95% of private-sector companies use a hybrid work arrangement, most commonly in the form of 1–2 days of remote work per week. A very large group of companies, 33%, offers a more

intensive hybrid remote work arrangement to employees, where they work remotely 3–4 days per week. Of the companies that have a fully remote work arrangement, we had only 7 in the sample. On the other hand, it is evident that public sector companies do not utilize a hybrid arrangement. As many as 64% of companies reported that employees are not permitted to work from home in any form. Correlation coefficient for sector and remote work: $\chi^2 = 39.1078$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$. More detailed data on the sample can be found in Table 2.

Descriptives						Contingency Tables			
	Intensity of HYBRID	N	Mean	Median	SD	Sektor	Allowing HO>0 days		
							No	Yes	Total
Number of employees	0 - Office	12	1355.6667	298.5000	3095.6143	Non-profit organization	0	1	1
	1-2	62	979.6935	490.0000	1516.8212	Private	5	104	109
	3-4	40	1473.4000	650.0000	2070.5123	Public	7	4	11
	5-Full HO	7	563.1429	150.0000	874.7014	Total	12	109	121

Tab.2. Research sample: Companies by size split by intensity of hybrid work arrangements
Source: Author's own evaluation

For the research study, we divided companies into groups based on the extent to which HR is integrated into their internal policies. Based on the results of a one-way ANOVA, it can be confirmed that there is a statistically significant difference in the use of digitalization tools in companies that have extensively implemented a hybrid work model, and these elements of digitalization are more prevalent as the intensity of hybrid models increases.

The results in Table 3 show that with more intensive implementation of the hybrid work model, the use of self-service HR portals increases for managers (Mean 2.5 up to 4.82) and employees (Mean 2.16 up to 4.97), which is, of course, expected. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that digitalization in these companies is proceeding more intensively in the HR area, and we also see a difference in the use of HR tools in algorithm-based HR processes (Mean 2.08 up to 3.92) and HR analytics (Mean 2.08 up to 4.12). The p-value for the one-way ANOVA is <0.001 in all four measured areas. The group of companies with fully remote work arrangements is small in number, so the standard deviation in this group is high and the conclusions are not entirely representative. For the other groups of companies, however, we confirm that digitalization tools are being used more intensively as the use of hybrid work arrangements grows. The results are shown in Table 3.

One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)				
	F	df1	df2	p
HR portal for Managers	10.2563	3	21.4229	<.001
HR portal for Employees	29.4096	3	23.2465	<.001
Algorithm Based HR processes	7.5773	3	21.0666	0.001
HR Data Analytics for Data-Based Decisions	8.8687	3	21.7975	<.001

Intensity of HYBRID (Days per week)	N	HR portal for Managers		HR portal for Employees		Algorithm based HR processes		HR Data Analytics for data-Based Decisions	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
0	12	2,5000	1,24	2,1667	0,72	2,0833	1,31	2,0833	1,08
1-2	62	3,8871	1,81	3,6774	1,85	2,5323	1,51	3,4677	1,59
3-4	40	4,8250	1,41	4,9750	1,31	3,9250	1,64	4,1250	1,50

5	7	3,1429	1,95	4,4286	1,90	2,5714	1,81	2,7143	1,70
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Tab.3. Description of groups – Usage of HR Data Tools Mean and Standard Deviation

Source: Author’s own evaluation

Figures 1 through 4 illustrate the results of a comparison of companies’ internal HR environments regarding the implementation of hybrid work arrangements in the context of digitalization. The graphs show the average use of digital tools in relation to the extent of hybrid work arrangements. The correlation is strong, and the standard deviation is smaller than the difference between the groups. For the group of companies operating in a fully remote-work mode, a high degree of variation in responses is observable due to the small sample size (7 companies).

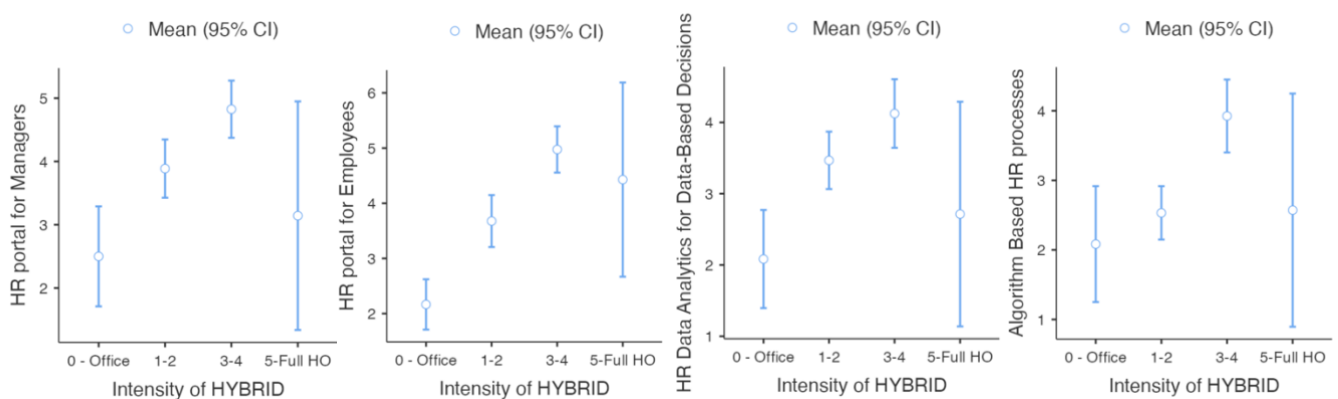


Figure 1-4. One-way ANOVA – groups of companies and usage of HR Data Tools, Plot Charts

Source: Author’s own evaluation

To capture the phenomenon in greater detail, we also calculated the basic correlation matrix; for all four characteristics of digitalization, a positive correlation with the intensity of hybrid work arrangements can be observed at a statistical significance level ranging from $p < 0.001$ to $p = 0.017$, which is a statistically significant result. The correlation coefficient is moderately strong, ranging from $B = 0.2161$ (HR data analytics) to $B = 0.4290$ (HR portal for employees). The results are presented in Table 4.

Correlation matrix		HR portal for Managers	HR portal for Employees	Algorithm Based HR Processes	HR Data Analytics for Data-Based Decisions
Number of HO Days	Pearson’s r	0,2677	0,4290	0,3126	0,2161
	Df	119	119	119	119
	p-value	0,003	<0,001	<0,001	0,017

Tab.4. Correlation matrix illustrates the relationship between usage of hybrid work arrangements and usage of digital tools in organizations

Source: Author’s own evaluation

To confirm the relationship, an additional analysis was conducted using linear regression to determine whether the observed relationship could be explained by the effect of companies' size or the specific characteristics of the sector in which the companies operate. Company size is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) for all four measured variables of HR digitization - namely, the use of an HR portal for managers, an HR portal for employees, algorithmized HR processes, and HR data analytics—but its effect size is $B = 0.0002$. Thus, it can be argued that company size influences the use of tools, but only to a very small extent. The sector - private, public, or nonprofit - did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect ($p < 0.05$) on the use of digitalization tools.

5 Discussion

The aim of this paper is to examine hybrid work arrangements in the context of HRM digitalisation. In doing so, the study seeks to shed light on hybrid work regimes as organisational arrangements and to clarify their relationship with the digitalisation of HRM. Specifically, the research investigates the extent to which hybrid work intensity relates to the adoption of digital HRM tools, including employee and manager self-service HR portals, algorithm-based HR processes, and HR data analytics for data-driven decision-making. The findings contribute to a growing body of literature that positions hybrid work not merely as a flexible work arrangement but as an organisational phenomenon embedded within broader digital transformation processes (John et al., 2024; Luring & Jonasson, 2025). While prior research has examined hybrid work primarily through the lenses of flexibility, work-life balance, and productivity (Eng et al., 2024; Choudhury et al., 2021; Barrero et al., 2023), this study extends the conceptual scope by empirically revealing the digital infrastructure context in which hybrid work regimes operate.

The central finding of this study is that a statistically significant, moderately strong positive relationship exists between the intensity of hybrid work arrangements and the level of HRM digitalisation. Companies with more developed hybrid work regimes use digital HRM tools more extensively across all four dimensions examined. This finding confirms and extends the argument of Vyas and Butakhieo (2021), who identified IT support and communication flow as key enablers of hybrid work success. While Vyas and Butakhieo (2021) conceptually emphasised the importance of technological infrastructure, the current study empirically demonstrates this relationship at the HRM system level, showing that hybrid work intensity is systematically associated with higher adoption of employee HR portals, manager HR portals, algorithm-based HR processes, and HR data analytics. This pattern aligns with recent evidence that digital embeddedness in hybrid work involves reciprocal reconfiguration of technology and work practices, rather than simple technology adoption (John et al., 2024). Furthermore, the findings add empirical support to Dara et al. (2025), who argued that organisational support for hybrid work requires digital tools and technological infrastructure. The present study demonstrates that this relationship is not merely theoretical but is observable and measurable across organisations with varying hybrid work intensities.

Among the four dimensions of HRM digitalisation examined, the strongest relationship was observed with employee HR portals. This finding underscores the critical role of employee self-service digital infrastructure in enabling hybrid work arrangements. Employee HR portals provide digital communication channels, facilitate bottom-up communication, grant employees direct access to HR information, and enable self-service functions such as leave requests, payroll queries, and benefits management (Mahmoud et al., 2025; Ogbe & Uchechukwu, 2024). In hybrid work environments, where employees are physically dispersed and face-to-face HR interactions are reduced, such portals become essential for maintaining continuity of HR service

delivery and supporting employee autonomy. This interpretation confirms and extends the findings of Choudhury et al. (2021), who demonstrated that work-from-anywhere arrangements promote productivity and autonomy. The current study adds the organisational digitalisation dimension by showing that employee HR portals constitute the foundational digital HR infrastructure that enables such autonomy and flexibility in hybrid contexts. The prominence of employee HR portals in this study suggests that they are not merely supplementary tools but rather essential elements of the digital HR infrastructure required to sustain hybrid work regimes, a conclusion consistent with research indicating that cloud-based HRIS solutions and employee self-service platforms are among the most frequently deployed digital HR tools in organisations transitioning to hybrid models (Ogbe & Uchechukwu, 2024; Bhardwaj & Pandita, 2025).

The findings also suggest that hybrid work regimes and HRM digitalisation develop in parallel, as part of a broader organisational digital transformation. The positive relationships observed for manager HR portals, algorithm-based HR processes, and HR data analytics indicate that hybrid work intensity is associated not only with employee-facing digital tools but also with more advanced, strategic forms of HRM digitalisation. Algorithm-based HR processes involve automation, artificial intelligence, and digitisation of routine HR tasks, enabling greater efficiency and consistency (Sarangdevot & Rathore, 2024; Upadhyay & Khandelwal, 2018). HR data analytics supports data-driven decision-making, workforce planning, and predictive insights (Mahmoud et al., 2025). This finding extends the work of Sarangdevot and Rathore (2024), who described the digitisation of HR as a fundamental process of rebuilding organisations for efficiency. The current study demonstrates that this rebuilding is especially pronounced in hybrid work contexts, where digital tools are not optional enhancements but necessary components of organisational functioning. The findings equally confirm the argument of Mahmoud et al. (2025) regarding the impact of digital HRM systems on HR efficiency, showing that this impact is particularly evident in organisations with higher hybrid work intensity. This pattern is consistent with the notion that hybrid work and digital transformation are mutually reinforcing processes (John et al., 2024; Bhardwaj & Pandita, 2025), and provides empirical grounding for the conceptual argument of Kunisch et al. (2021) that organisations must adapt to complex times through structural and technological change. The present study offers empirical evidence that digital HRM represents one such organisational response, particularly in the context of hybrid work arrangements.

A carefully framed interpretation of the findings is that hybrid work regimes may indicate a more mature organisational HR environment, characterised by strategic HRM, due to the greater efficiency of data-driven HRM practices and developed leadership, supported by autonomy-enhancing self-service portals. Companies that have successfully implemented hybrid work arrangements at higher intensity levels demonstrate substantially higher usage of digital HRM tools across all four dimensions. This pattern may reflect organisational readiness, leadership support, and strategic investment in digital HR infrastructure (Dara et al., 2025; Lauring & Jonasson, 2025). This interpretation builds on the work of Georgescu et al. (2024), who demonstrated that strategic HRM practices enhance organisational resilience, and adds hybrid work as a contextual factor that may be associated with such strategic HRM environments. The findings further add a digital infrastructure dimension to the framework of Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011), who argued that strategic HRM capacity is essential for organisational resilience, suggesting that digital HRM infrastructure may be one component of such strategic capacity in hybrid work contexts.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in empirically revealing an additional context of hybrid work regimes. Barrero et al. (2023) argued that hybrid work has no inherent reason to affect productivity, focusing on the balance of work and private interruptions across

environments. The current study moves beyond the productivity debate to examine the digital infrastructure context in which hybrid work operates, demonstrating that hybrid work regimes are systematically associated with higher levels of HRM digitalisation. While Eng et al. (2024) showed that hybrid work promotes effectiveness, engagement, and work-life balance, the present study adds the organisational digitalisation dimension, revealing that these outcomes may be supported by underlying digital HR infrastructure. The findings also provide empirical evidence for the conceptual clarity called for by Lauring and Jonasson (2025), who emphasised the need to understand hybrid work and its organisational consequences more precisely. By situating hybrid work within the context of HRM digitalisation, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of hybrid work as an organisational arrangement that requires and stimulates digital HR infrastructure. The findings further confirm the argument of Jayesh and Omer (2024) that digitalisation is an entry into organisational efficiency, and add empirical support to Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2018) by demonstrating that algorithm-based HR processes are more prevalent in organisations with higher hybrid work intensity.

The practical contribution of this study is that companies developing hybrid work arrangements should strengthen HRM digitalisation in parallel. Organisations should invest in employee and manager HR portals, HR data analytics capabilities, and algorithm-based HR processes to support the coordination, communication, and data-driven decision-making required in hybrid environments (Mahmoud et al., 2025; Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021). The findings suggest that hybrid work development may stimulate digital HRM development, thereby strengthening organisational efficiency and strategic people management (Georgescu et al., 2024; Jayesh & Omer, 2024). HR professionals and organisational leaders should view hybrid work not as an isolated policy but as part of a broader digital transformation agenda that encompasses digital HR infrastructure, leadership development, and strategic HRM capacity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Dara et al., 2025). This practical implication extends the recommendations of Sarangdevot and Rathore (2024) and supports the argument of Ahmić and Ćosić (2025) that digital HRM practices enhance organisational resilience, suggesting that organisations implementing hybrid work should prioritise digital HRM investments to build such resilience.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The sample of fully remote companies was small and results for this group are not representative. Also, the study was conducted in Slovakia among companies with one hundred or more employees, which may limit generalisability to other national contexts or smaller organisations. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine causal mechanisms and the temporal dynamics of hybrid work and HRM digitalisation. Qualitative methods, including case studies and interviews, would provide deeper insights into organisational processes, leadership decisions, and the role of organisational culture. Additionally, future studies should investigate the moderating or mediating roles of leadership style, organisational culture, sector characteristics, company size, and digital maturity in the relationship between hybrid work and HRM digitalisation (Melo & Machado, 2021; Bhardwaj & Pandita, 2025). Such research would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the conditions under which hybrid work and HRM digitalisation mutually reinforce organisational effectiveness.

6 Conclusion

This paper aimed to examine the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and HRM digitalisation, treating hybrid work regimes as organisational arrangements and investigating their association with the adoption of digital HRM tools. The study contributes to the growing body of literature that positions hybrid work not merely as a flexible work arrangement but as

an organisational phenomenon embedded within broader digital transformation processes (Lauring & Jonasson, 2025). The findings reveal a statistically significant, moderately strong positive relationship between hybrid work intensity and HRM digitalisation. Companies with more developed hybrid work regimes use digital HRM tools more extensively across all four dimensions examined: employee HR portals, manager HR portals, algorithm-based HR processes, and HR data analytics. This pattern suggests that hybrid work and HRM digitalisation develop in parallel, as mutually reinforcing components of organisational digital transformation. Among the four dimensions, the strongest association was observed with employee HR portals, underscoring their role as foundational digital infrastructure for hybrid work. Employee self-service portals provide essential communication channels, facilitate access to HR information, and enable autonomy in dispersed work environments (Mahmoud et al., 2025). This finding confirms that employee-oriented digital HR infrastructure is not a supplementary tool but a critical enabler of hybrid work regimes, supporting coordination, communication, and continuity of HR service delivery when physical presence is reduced.

The broader implication of these findings is that hybrid work and HRM digitalisation should be understood as interconnected organisational phenomena rather than separate initiatives. Hybrid work is not only a flexible arrangement responding to employee preferences or external pressures but part of a wider digital transformation that encompasses digital HR infrastructure, data-driven decision-making, and strategic HRM capacity (Georgescu et al., 2024; Dara et al., 2025). The co-occurrence of hybrid work intensity with higher adoption of manager HR portals, algorithm-based HR processes, and HR data analytics suggests that organisations implementing hybrid arrangements are simultaneously investing in advanced digital HRM practices that enhance autonomy, efficiency and strategic HRM. This interpretation aligns with recent evidence that digital embeddedness in hybrid work involves reciprocal reconfiguration of technology and work practices, rather than simple technology adoption (John et al., 2024). The theoretical contribution of this study lies in empirically revealing HRM digitalisation as an additional context of hybrid work regimes. While prior research has examined hybrid work primarily through the lenses of flexibility, productivity, and work-life balance (Eng et al., 2024; Choudhury et al., 2021), this study extends the conceptual scope by demonstrating that hybrid work regimes are systematically associated with higher levels of digital HR infrastructure. This finding adds to the literature by situating hybrid work within the organisational digitalisation context, thereby contributing to the conceptual clarity called for by Lauring and Jonasson (2025) and providing empirical grounding for understanding hybrid work as an organisational arrangement that requires and stimulates digital HRM.

The practical contribution of this study is that organisations developing hybrid work arrangements should invest in digital HR infrastructure in parallel. Specifically, HR professionals and organisational leaders should strengthen employee and manager HR portals, HR data analytics capabilities, and algorithm-based HR processes to support the coordination, communication, and data-driven decision-making required in hybrid environments (Mahmoud et al., 2025). The findings suggest that hybrid work development may stimulate digital HRM development, thereby strengthening organisational efficiency and strategic HRM. Organisations should view hybrid work not as an isolated policy but as part of a broader digital transformation agenda that encompasses digital HR infrastructure, leadership development, and strategic HRM capacity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Dara et al., 2025). Several limitations should be acknowledged. The sample of fully remote companies was small and not representative, limiting conclusions for this group. Additionally, the study was conducted in Slovakia among companies with one hundred or more employees, which may limit generalisability to other national contexts or smaller organisations. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine causal mechanisms and the temporal dynamics of

hybrid work and HRM digitalisation. Qualitative methods, including case studies and interviews, would provide deeper insights into organisational processes, leadership decisions, and the role of organisational culture. Hybrid work and HRM digitalisation represent interconnected organisational phenomena that require integrated research and practice, and future scholarship should continue to explore their co-evolution and mutual reinforcement in shaping organisational effectiveness and resilience.

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The Evolution of Performance Appraisals in Hybrid Work Environments

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Abstract

Hybrid work has fundamentally changed the way organizations manage and evaluate employee performance. This study examines the relationship between the intensity of hybrid work arrangements and the complexity of formal performance evaluation systems. The aim was to determine whether organizations that allow more remote work develop more sophisticated approaches to performance evaluation. The analysis is based on quantitative data collected in 2025 from 121 Slovak organizations with more than 100 employees. Three dimensions of formal performance evaluation were examined: the number of performance areas evaluated, the number of information sources used, and the extent to which evaluation results are utilized in personnel decision-making. The statistical methods used included correlation analysis, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and linear regression. The results show a statistically significant positive relationship between the number of days of remote work allowed and the complexity of the performance appraisal system across all three dimensions examined. Differences between groups of organizations classified by the intensity of hybrid work were also confirmed using ANOVA. Regression analysis also showed that these relationships remain statistically significant even after controlling for organization size and sector. This suggests that the main factor influencing the sophistication of performance evaluation systems is managerial decisions regarding work organization, not the structural characteristics of the organization. Another finding is that public sector organizations lag significantly behind the private sector in implementing hybrid work, with 64% of them not allowing remote work. The findings support and extend the model proposed by Lauring and Jonasson (2025) and contribute to research on the adaptation of human resource management in a hybrid work environment. The study highlights the need for organizations implementing hybrid work to simultaneously reevaluate their performance management systems, particularly by strengthening multi-source feedback and performance-based metrics.

JEL classification: M54, J24, M50

Keywords: Hybrid work environment, Performance appraisal, Human resources management, Organizational productivity

1 Introduction

The hybrid work model, which combines on-site and remote work, has become the dominant model of work organization in recent years and is fundamentally changing the nature of work system management in organizations (Bloom et al., 2024; Choudhury, 2020). This development is part of a broader transformation of the labour market toward flexible and digitally mediated forms of work that are redefining how work performance is coordinated, monitored, and evaluated.

From a human resources management perspective, the hybrid work environment challenges traditional approaches to performance evaluation. Historically, performance management was based on monitoring the work process, physical presence, and hierarchical control. Currently, there is a shift toward systems focused on results and the achievement of strategic goals, where what matters is not when an employee arrived at the office, but what they actually accomplished (Aguinis, 2019; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

In the HRM literature, the view is gaining increasing traction that performance management in a hybrid environment is no longer merely an evaluation tool but is becoming a key mechanism that keeps distributed teams aligned with the organization's goals (Mabaso & Manuel, 2024; Newman & Ford, 2021). However, this shift also creates new challenges, particularly regarding the consistency of evaluation, the availability of relevant performance information, and ensuring the perceived fairness of evaluation processes (Bertola et al., 2026; Mabaso & Manuel, 2024).

Despite growing interest in this issue, research remains fragmented and lacks a unified theoretical foundation. Existing studies indicate that hybrid work constitutes a complex socio-technical system in which organizational, technological, social, and managerial factors are intertwined (Kniffin et al., 2021; Allen et al., 2021). Performance in hybrid conditions therefore cannot be understood as an isolated individual output, but as the result of the interaction of multiple levels of organizational functioning.

At the same time, the introduction of a hybrid work model complicates traditional performance evaluation. Limited observability of work and altered access to information for managers create pressure to reassess which data and tools can meaningfully capture the performance of an employee whose work they cannot directly observe.

In this context, hybrid work is increasingly understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses the spatial, temporal, technological, and social dimensions of work, as well as their interconnections (Lauring & Jonasson, 2025). Within this framework, performance management is viewed as an integrated management system that must coordinate the technical, communicative, and behavioral aspects of work organization simultaneously.

Lauring and Jonasson's (2025) model shows that the successful implementation of hybrid work depends on an organization's ability to integrate technological infrastructure, communication norms, clearly defined performance expectations, and HR support into a single functional whole. This perspective reflects a broader shift in management literature toward data-driven and strategically integrated performance management (Snell & Morris 2021, Aguinis 2019).

Building on this theoretical foundation, this article aims to analyse how formal employee performance evaluation is changing in organizations with a hybrid work model. The study focuses on three questions: which dimensions of performance are included in evaluation systems, what data sources are used in the evaluation, and how the evaluation results are subsequently applied in HR and managerial decisions. In this way, the paper contributes to understanding the adaptation of performance management systems in hybrid work settings as part of the transformation of modern HRM.

2 Literature review

The hybrid work environment has fundamentally transformed traditional approaches to performance evaluation and created a need to redefine the criteria, resources, and purposes of performance management systems. In the broader literature, performance management is understood as a continuous cycle, from goal setting, through measurement and evaluation, to employee development, the purpose of which is to align individual performance with the direction of the entire organization (Neeley, 2021; Murphy 2019; Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Despite this strategic importance, research has long highlighted the limitations of traditional systems: they are overly administrative, rigid, and insufficiently adapted to what work actually looks like (Murphy, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2019).

In the context of hybrid work, these limitations are further exacerbated. Employee performance is no longer directly observable, and organizations are forced to shift from attendance monitoring to management based on results, outputs, and trust. Research clearly shows, however, that the effectiveness of hybrid work does not primarily depend on technology but is often determined by the quality of HR practices and managerial approaches (Allen et al., 2015; Kniffin et al., 2021).

An important conceptual shift is understanding hybrid work not as a binary choice between the office and the home office, but as a continuum. The degree of remote work gradually influences organizational processes. The higher the intensity of the hybrid model, the greater the distance between managers and employees, and the more sophisticated coordination and evaluation mechanisms must be (Choudhury, 2020; Bloom et al., 2024; Kniffin et al., 2021).

A key theoretical framework in this area is Luring and Jonasson's (2025) model of organizational prerequisites for hybrid work, which emphasizes the need to integrate technological solutions, communication norms, clearly defined performance expectations, and HR support. This approach reflects a broader shift in HRM literature toward so-called "performance orientation." The emphasis is on performance systems based on data, transparent goals, and digital performance management tools (e.g., OKRs, performance dashboards). Organizations operating in a hybrid mode are thus gradually shifting from input-based evaluation (e.g., attendance) to output-based evaluation, which more accurately captures an employee's contribution (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021).

This development is accompanied by the growing "datafication" of performance management. Organizations are increasingly using digital and behavioral data to evaluate employees. HR analytics and data-driven decision-making thus enable a transition to multidimensional evaluation systems that integrate multiple sources of performance information simultaneously (Snell & Morris, 2021; Marler & Boudreau, 2017).

From an HRM perspective, the hybrid work environment places increased demands on the quality of managerial decisions and the consistency of evaluation processes. Insufficiently standardized performance evaluation systems can lead to subjectivity, unequal expectations between remote and office-based employees, and a perception of unfairness (Wang et al., 2021).

Research also suggests that the sophistication of HRM systems is not primarily a matter of company size or sector, but rather of internal organizational strategies and approaches to work management. This suggests that the structural characteristics of an organization play a secondary role compared to managerial decisions and the design of HR systems (Wright & Nishii, 2013; Jiang et al., 2012).

Formal employee evaluation is currently understood as a multidimensional HRM tool that encompasses not only performance indicators but also behavioral, social, and competency dimensions (Pulakos et al., 2015). This shift reflects a broader trend in strategic HRM, where performance is no longer viewed solely as individual output but as the result of the interaction between individual competencies, team dynamics, and organizational conditions. Purely KPI-based systems simply cannot capture the complexity of performance in a hybrid environment, particularly in areas such as collaboration, digital communication, and self-management (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Pulakos et al., 2019).

One response to these limitations is multisource feedback (360-degree evaluation), which involves multiple stakeholders in the evaluation process, including supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, and customers (Bracken, Rose & Church, 2016). This approach is regarded in the literature as a tool for enhancing objectivity and employee development, as it allows for capturing diverse perspectives on performance. At the same time, however, HR research

highlights the risks associated with inconsistencies in evaluations among different groups of evaluators, which can reduce the system's reliability, particularly in environments with limited face-to-face interaction (Bracken & Rose, 2011).

Current HRM literature further emphasizes that performance management in hybrid organizations plays an increasingly broader role. It is not merely an evaluation tool but an integral part of talent management and strategic human resource management (Claus, 2019). Their role is expanding to include supporting employee development, career planning, and the optimization of organizational processes. Empirical studies in this regard show that work effectiveness in hybrid and remote environments also depends on how teams use digital tools for coordination and collaboration (Waizenegger et al., 2020). At the same time, it has been demonstrated that linking performance evaluation with developmental feedback increases organizational adaptability and performance (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021).

Despite the growing number of studies, there is no unified consensus in this field regarding which performance dimensions are most relevant in a hybrid environment and how to ensure the objectivity of evaluations with limited in-person contact. There is also a lack of long-term empirical studies focusing on the impacts of hybrid performance management on organizational culture, motivation, and employees' work identity. There is also a lack of long-term empirical studies examining the impacts of hybrid performance management on organizational culture, motivation, and employees' work identity. Hybrid performance management is an area where many new questions are emerging, and this is precisely what makes it a field ripe for further interdisciplinary research.

3 Research design and Methodology

The research focused on the hybrid work environment aimed to examine how the internal environment of the organization changes with the introduction of hybrid work regimes. It explains in more detail how the organization of HRM changes in the presence of HO to confirm the basic organizational supports for the successful implementation of HO. The work was based on the model according to Lauring (2025), who, after a systematic literature review, proposed a definition of a hybrid work regime and set out the organizational prerequisites that are a necessary condition for the introduction of hybrids. To confirm his model, he proposed quantitative research, which is presented on a partial scale by this study (Lauring & Jonasson, 2025).

To confirm the model, we chose quantitative data collection through a questionnaire survey in the environment of the Slovak Republic, which took place in 2025. The research involved 121 organizations with more than 100 employees from various sectors. An overview of the research sample can be found in Table 1.

Descriptives						Contingency Tables			
	Companies by size	N	Mean	Median	SD	Sektor	Allowing HO>0 days		Total
Number of employees					No		Yes		
	100-250	38	165.3158	169.0000	46.1678	Non-profit organization	0	1	1
	251-500	26	357.9615	350.0000	78.4569	Private	5	104	109
	501-1000	22	769.8182	758.0000	159.6746	Public	7	4	11
	1001-5000	32	2323.8125	2100.0000	1042.3240	Total	12	109	121
	5001 and more	3	11000.0000	11000.0000	500.0000				

Tab 1 Research sample by number of employees and sector-specific usage of HO

Source: Authors' own evaluation

The data were then processed in the statistical program Jamovi (R Core Team, 2024, The Jamovi project, 2024), by delimiting missing values, preparing computed values for a more accurate statistical definition, as well as by creating groups of enterprises based on the intensity of the use of hybrid modes enabling us to measure differences between groups. For an overview of the variables, see Table 2.

Data variable	Measure type	Description
Number of employees	Cardinal	
Sector	Nominal	Non-profit / Public or Private sector
Number of HO days allowed to employees per week	Cardinal (prop.Nominal)	Based on this question, we split the respondents into homogeneous groups, allowing us to measure one-way ANOVA
Performance appraisals – Area of appraisal	Computed value - Nominal	Respondents were asked to mark dimensions that are covered by their formal appraisal process by choosing Yes/No to possibilities: Performance, KPI / Work behaviour / Social Behaviour / Competences (Kharub et al., 2024). The variable was computed by creating a score of how many dimensions are covered by formal appraisals.
Performance appraisals – Inputs into the performance appraisal process	Computed value - Nominal	Respondents were asked to mark what the inputs are into their formal appraisal process by choosing Yes/No to possibilities: Self-appraisal, Manager, Sub-ordinates, Colleagues, External or internal customers, where applicable (Moreno et al., 2021). The variable was computed by creating a score of how many inputs are included in the formal appraisals.
Performance appraisals – Usage of the performance appraisal data	Computed value - Nominal	Respondents were asked to mark where the data gained by the performance appraisal process is later used by choosing Yes/No to possibilities: Remuneration, Learning and development, Career planning, organizational improvements (Chen et al., 2024). The variable was computed by creating a score of the number of areas where the data are used.

Tab 2 Characteristics of selected variables with sources

Source: Authors' own evaluation

Calculations for the study of variables were based on a correlation matrix with the calculation of Pearson coefficients was used. At the same time, it was used to verify the absence of multicollinearity before subsequent regression analysis. Subsequently, we processed a one-way ANOVA for variables, where we looked for different values in defined groups of companies according to the intensity of HO use in the working sample (Kenton, 2025). To confirm our calculations, we additionally calculated linear regression, which allows us to define the influence of the variable excluding other variables (Sladekova et al., 2025). The aim was to express whether the observed phenomenon could be due to a sectoral specificity or a parameter of the size of the company. Neither of these effects was confirmed for the measured model.

4 Results

The research survey involved 121 companies with more than 100 employees from the Slovak Republic. According to the size of the enterprise, we managed to capture small enterprises with 100-250 employees (31.4% of the sample), followed by large enterprises in the group of 1000-5000 employees (26.4% of the sample), medium-sized enterprises with 251-500 employees (21.4% of the sample), the sample also included three enterprises with more than 5000 employees. By sector, we sampled 90% of private sector enterprises, one enterprise from the non-profit sector, and 10% of enterprises from the public sector. Already in the first breakdown, according to allowing employees to work at least partially from home, i.e., having the number of days of HO more than zero, we can see that the hybrid work regime is significantly a matter for the private sector. Only 4 out of 11 public sector enterprises allow 1 or more days a week of HO, 64% of enterprises do not allow it at all. A pivot matrix (X^2 39.11, $p < 0.001$, $N=121$) was used for this calculation; the results are shown in Table 1.

Through the basic correlation matrix, we see a significant concurrence of the phenomena of the use of hybrid work regimes and the more intensive use of the formal employee evaluation process with a positive correlation, where we can observe that the more days of HO the organization provides, the more complex the employee evaluation process is with different inputs, different areas of evaluation and a more significant subsequent use of data from the employee evaluation process (Table 2).

Number of days of HO is directly positively correlated with the number of measurement areas of the formal employee evaluation process (0.2902, p -value < 0.002), it is also directly positively correlated with the number of inputs to the employee evaluation process (0.1831, p -value < 0.048), and it also positively correlates with the number of areas in which employee evaluation data is directly used (0.3340, p -value < 0.001).

Correlation Matrix					Group Descriptives					
		PA_Areas of PA	PA_Inputs into PA	PA_Usage of PA		Intensity of HYBRID	N	Mean	SD	SE
PA_Areas of PA	Pearson's r	—			PA_Areas of PA	0 - Office	12	1.7500	1.1382	0.3286
	df	—				1-2	59	2.7797	1.0839	0.1411
	p-value	—				3-4	39	2.9487	1.0247	0.1641
PA_Inputs into PA	Pearson's r	0.3477	—		PA_Inputs into PA	5-Full HO	7	3.0000	1.0000	0.3780
	df	115	—			0 - Office	12	1.5000	0.7977	0.2303
	p-value	< 0.001	—			1-2	59	2.2712	1.1115	0.1447
PA_Usage of PA	Pearson's r	0.4238	0.4270	—	PA_Usage of PA	3-4	39	2.2308	0.9308	0.1490
	df	115	115	—		5-Full HO	7	2.5714	0.7868	0.2974
	p-value	< 0.001	< 0.001	—		0 - Office	12	1.5833	0.9962	0.2876
Number of HO days	Pearson's r	0.2902	0.1831	0.3340		1-2	59	2.7627	0.8971	0.1168
	df	115	115	115		3-4	39	2.9487	0.9162	0.1467
	p-value	0.002	0.048	< 0.001		5-Full HO	7	3.1429	0.8997	0.3401

Tab 3 Correlation matrix of PA_Areas, inputs, and usage; ANOVA by intensity of HO

Source: Authors' own evaluation

Subsequently, we also verified the results through one-way ANOVA to see if there is a statistically demonstrable difference between the number of evaluated areas, the number of inputs to the employee evaluation and the number of areas where the data from the employee evaluation are further used in groups of enterprises divided according to the degree of intensity of the use of the hybrid work regime (Table 3). For all three areas and all four groups of enterprises, we see a statistically demonstrable difference with p -values < 0.033 , < 0.034 , and < 0.004 . The results are shown in Figure 1.

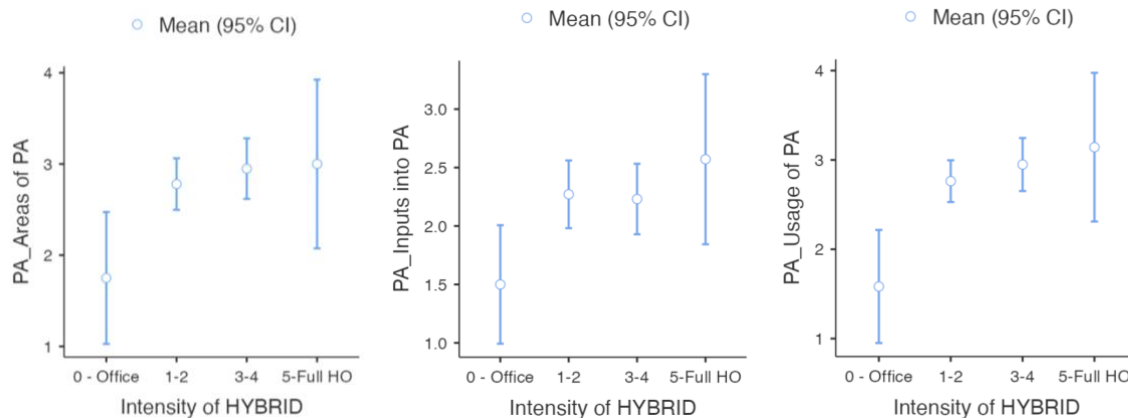


Figure 1 Plot charts illustrating results one-way ANOVA explaining that there is a statistically significant difference between formal appraisal areas/inputs/usage and the intensity of usage of hybrid work arrangements.

Source: Authors' own evaluation

To complement and refine our calculations, we have also prepared a linear regression, taking into account the three measured areas and their mutual relationship with the company size parameter, according to the number of employees and the sector of the company, where we tried to find a link. For all three measured areas, i.e. the areas of employee appraisal, inputs to employee appraisal and the areas of application of formal employee appraisal, no relationship with the size of the enterprise or the sector of operation of the enterprise was demonstrated.

Model Coefficients - PA_Areas of PA				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept ^a	3.0053	1.0840	2.7725	0.007
Sektor:				
Private – Non-profit organization	-0.1189	1.0906	-0.1090	0.913
Public – Non-profit organization	-1.0194	1.1347	-0.8984	0.371
Number of employees	-0.0000	0.0001	-0.9439	0.347

Model Coefficients - PA_Inputs into PA				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept ^a	2.0013	0.9753	2.0521	0.042
Sektor:				
Private – Non-profit organization	0.3273	0.9811	0.3336	0.739
Public – Non-profit organization	-0.8913	1.0209	-0.8731	0.384
Number of employees	-0.0000	0.0000	-0.2609	0.795

Model Coefficients - PA_Usage of PA				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept ^a	3.0063	0.9655	3.1136	0.002
Sektor:				
Private – Non-profit organization	-0.1380	0.9714	-0.1421	0.887
Public – Non-profit organization	-0.9156	1.0107	-0.9059	0.367
Number of employees	-0.0001	0.0000	-1.2503	0.214

Tab 4 Linear regression of measured areas with effects of Sector and Company size
Source: Authors' own evaluation

5 Discussion

The results of this study provide empirical evidence of the relationship between the intensity of a hybrid work model and the complexity of formal employee evaluation systems, while also revealing a relatively clear pattern: the more intensively an organization utilizes a hybrid work model, the more sophisticated its employee evaluation systems are. The observed positive correlation between the number of days worked from home and three key dimensions of the evaluation process (the number of evaluated areas, the number of inputs into the evaluation, and the breadth of application of evaluation data) confirms the study's basic hypothesis and is fully consistent with the theoretical framework of Lauring and Jonasson (2025). These authors argue that hybrid work, as a multidimensional organizational phenomenon, requires proportionally more sophisticated management and evaluation mechanisms. Our results empirically confirm this assumption in the Slovak organizational context.

An interesting finding is the strength of the correlation between the intensity of the hybrid work arrangement and the breadth of application of assessment data ($r = 0.334$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that organizations with a higher degree of hybrid work not only conduct more comprehensive evaluations but also more systematically incorporate evaluation results into further HR and managerial decisions, including compensation, training, and career planning. This pattern is consistent with the conclusions of Aguinis and Burgi-Tian (2021), according to whom performance management serves not only to evaluate individual performance but also to collect data for strategic organizational decision-making, including compensation, development, and career advancement. The finding also confirms that the transition to a hybrid work model is not merely a logistical change in the location of work but an impetus for a more systematic transformation of the entire performance management cycle.

The results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirm statistically significant differences in all three measured dimensions between groups of organizations categorized by the intensity of their hybrid work model ($p < 0.033$; $p < 0.034$; $p < 0.004$). This finding is consistent with the empirical research by Bloom, Han, and Liang (2024), who demonstrated in a randomized experiment that organizations with a hybrid work model exhibit qualitatively different performance evaluation dynamics than organizations with full on-site attendance. Their research also showed that a model involving two days of remote work per week did not have a negative impact on productivity and was associated with a significant decrease in employee turnover. Our results extend this conclusion. They show that a higher intensity of hybrid work is associated with progressively more complex evaluation systems, not just a binary distinction between on-site and hybrid models.

One of the study's most important findings is the absence of a statistically significant relationship between firm size or sector and the observed dimensions of evaluation (linear regression). The result is also noteworthy because existing HRM literature traditionally assumes that structural characteristics of the organization—size, sector, availability of resources—are the primary determinants of the sophistication of HR systems (Wright & Nishii, 2013; Jiang et al., 2012). Our data do not generally challenge this assumption; however, in the context of hybrid performance management, they suggest that the decisive factor is not the organization's structural capacity, but rather the managerial decision regarding the degree of implementation of the hybrid work model. In other words, even small and medium-sized organizations that have opted for a more intensive hybrid model exhibit a comparable complexity of evaluation systems to that of large corporations. This conclusion resonates with the argument by Wrighton and Nishii (2013) that the design of HR systems is primarily the result of strategic managerial decisions, not passive adaptation to organizational constraints.

The finding that the adoption rate of hybrid work is significantly lower in the public sector (64% of public sector organizations in the sample do not offer a hybrid work arrangement at all) is consistent with the international research literature. Hill and Plimmer (2024) explain this through a combination of factors: stricter legal frameworks, lower managerial autonomy, and a culture based on hierarchy and physical presence collectively hinder public organizations' willingness to experiment with flexible forms of work. Similarly, Park and Cho (2022) found that managers in the public sector exhibit lower self-confidence in their ability to manage remote workers, which may be one of the reasons for the slower adoption of the hybrid model. These findings suggest that any future implementation of hybrid work in the public sector will require not only legislative support but, above all, targeted investment in managerial competencies and performance management tools.

Methodologically, it is important to emphasize that the cross-sectional design of the study allows for the identification of associations, not causal relationships. It remains an open question whether the hybrid model leads organizations to more sophisticated evaluation, or whether organizations with developed HR systems are more inclined to adopt the hybrid work model. This limitation is typical of cross-sectional quantitative research and points to the need for longitudinal studies. Nevertheless, the consistency of the findings across three different statistical methods (Pearson's correlation coefficient, one-way ANOVA, and linear regression) enhances the credibility of the identified relationships.

6 Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and formal employee performance appraisal systems in organizations within the Slovak business sector. Based on quantitative research conducted in 121 organizations with more than 100 employees, we present three key empirical findings. First, the intensity of the hybrid work arrangement, measured by the number of days worked from home, positively correlates with the complexity of appraisal systems across all three measured dimensions: the number of performance areas evaluated, the number of sources included in the appraisal, and the breadth of application of appraisal data in other HR processes. Second, these differences are statistically significant and confirmed across groups of organizations with varying intensities of the hybrid work arrangement. Third, the observed pattern is not determined by the size of the organization or the sector in which it operates, suggesting that the decisive factor is the managerial choice of work arrangement, not the structural characteristics of the organization.

These findings have important implications for both HRM theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, they confirm and empirically extend the model by Lauring and Jonasson (2025), according to which hybrid work does not merely represent a change in the location of work but also drives systemic changes in employee evaluation processes. The results also suggest that this transformation is taking place gradually, which supports the understanding of hybrid work as a continuum rather than a simple binary state (Choudhury, 2020; Kniffin et al., 2021).

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that organizations implementing or expanding a hybrid work model should simultaneously reassess and develop their performance management systems. This is not merely about increasing the objectivity of evaluations but also about responding to the decreasing level of direct managerial oversight of employees' work. More comprehensive evaluation systems thus emerge as one of the ways in which organizations adapt their management processes to the conditions of hybrid work.

In practice, organizations should pay particular attention to multisource feedback and work-outcome-oriented indicators, as these approaches are capable of capturing aspects of performance that are less visible to supervisors in a distributed work environment (Moreno et al., 2021; Bloom et al., 2024). At the same time, it is important to consider the risk of proximity bias when linking performance evaluations to compensation and career development, as improperly set metrics can systematically disadvantage employees working primarily remotely (Aggarwal & Hoang, 2025). Furthermore, the low adoption rate of hybrid work in the public sector suggests a need for broader systemic measures at both the legislative and managerial levels that would enable public organizations to respond more actively to the ongoing transformation of the labor market.

The research has several limitations that open the door to further investigation. The cross-sectional design of the study does not allow for causal conclusions. Longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of evaluation systems during the transition to a hybrid model could provide deeper insight into the mechanisms of the identified relationships. The geographical focus on Slovak organizations limits the generalizability of the findings; comparative studies across Central and Eastern European countries could reveal the role of institutional and cultural contexts. The inclusion of qualitative data, for example through case studies, would further enable a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which the hybrid regime actually changes evaluation systems. Despite the aforementioned limitations, the study contributes to research on how human resource management systems are changing in the context of hybrid work and, at the same time, provides an empirical basis for further research in this area.

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Hybrid Work Regime – Wish or Needs of Many Employees

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Abstract

The aim of the paper and the empirical research is to characterize working from home and working at the workplace based on the opinions of the respondents who do not use work from home on a regular basis and experienced the hybrid work regime during the pandemic. The respondent sample consisted of 187 respondents – employees and managers – from the Slovak Republic. The research was conducted in two sections, namely C – Manufacture (division 10 – Manufacture of food products and division 11 – Manufacture of beverages and section E – Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (division 38 – Waste collection, treatment and disposal services; materials recovery services) according to the Statistical classification of economic activities, SK NACE Rev. 2, 2007. Data were collected by means of questionnaire survey. Two hypotheses were formulated. Results of research are processed by means of the combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses, using Excel and Jamovi programs. Based on the results of questionnaire replies and calculations of correlation coefficients, it can be concluded the respondent's age is in a statistically significant relationship with the respondent's work from home performance, and also this variable is in a statistically significant relationship with the stress from work at the workplace.

JEL classification: M 53, L 85, L2.

Keywords: remote work, work from home, work from office

1 Introduction

Work regimes are subject to their own evolution (Barrero, 2023); they adapt to the needs of work performance and the preferences of individual employees. It is important for an employer to have a work regime that reduces costs, increases labour productivity, flexibility, and employee satisfaction. The Covid-19 pandemic experience lead to the introduction of working hybrid work regimes (Bloom, et al., 2024; Farliana et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2021). There are three basic work models: in-office work regimes, remote work regimes and hybrid work regimes. In the first one, employees work in the office every day, except for some exceptions, for example visits of doctors or childcare. In the case of remote work regimes, there is no physical office, but remote employees may meet in person a few times a year for team events or off-site meetings. This kind of remote work model can be described as “fully remote” (Barrero et al., 2023). The number of hybrid work models vary, ranging from three to six (Energie, 2023). The hybrid work regime is a blend of the two models; on some days employees work from home and on other days at the workplace. Hybrid work model is a concept that denotes a situation when an employee has to face the necessity of working sometimes from home and some other time from their office. Its structure is not fixed. For some employees it may mean 75% of remote work, while for others having to work in the office in the morning and working from home in the afternoon. When dividing one's work into home and office work, not only the nature of the work performed but also the employees' individual needs have to be considered. In addition to work performance, staff training is often considered as part of the work schedule.

Organizing work from home may not be easy, especially if employees do not have their own workroom at home. Apart from an inadequate work space, a frequent reason for returning

to office may be distractions and a lack of adequate work equipment. Disturbing factors of home setting and poor household work equipment influence employees' decision to work from office (Claned, 2024; Davis et al., 2020). On the other hand, some employees may feel overworked, since they find it difficult to completely break away from work obligations after their office hours. The office environment enables them to socialize with colleagues during breaks and join discussions and educational groups.

The aim of this article is to characterize working from home and working at the workplace based on the opinions of respondents. Another objective is to examine the psychological impact of both hybrid regimes on employees. For our research, we selected those sectors of the national economy where working from home was used for certain job positions only during the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to the selected variables used to characterize working from home and working at the workplace, other opinions from domestic and foreign sources that take into account not only the economic aspects but also the psychological aspects of hybrid work are presented in this research study.

2 Current State of the Solved Problem at Home and Abroad

Working from home (referred to as home office) has been with us for a long time. (Barrero, 2023). However, the number of people working from home, in professions which make it possible, recorded a considerable increase during the pandemic, although it was mainly due to social distancing and closed offices rather than by people's choice. Over time, many employers found that work from home had some advantages for them, too, namely employees' higher flexibility, higher productivity resulting from their satisfaction with better work-life balance, lower costs of office operation, and the like (Abendroth, & Lükemann, 2023; Candra and Sabtohadhi, 2025; Krajčičik et al., 2023; Santillan et al., 2023).

Another bonus for employers are fewer sick days; other advantages are for instance lower operating costs, elimination of the checks-on sitting at the desk, increase in the dynamics of work performance, and attracting and recruiting talented workforce. Working from home saves organizations money and energies and other expenses connected with office operation. A lot of organizations had to move to smaller premises and instal the job rotation system. Likewise, other savings are from savings on fuels and travel tickets as they need not commute.

Some changes occurred in measuring employee performance. Physical checks on an employee's desk sitting were replaced with virtual check-ins on an timely and quality fulfilment of work assignments (McCanny, 2025). This type of work monitoring focused on the output rather than on employee behaviour concerning staying in offices, sitting at desks, etc. The job classification that enables working from home affects the criteria of recruiting new employees. This way companies can recruit employees in terms of expertise and their interest preferences, which also means that employers are able to open job positions for candidates who require flexibility, for example, those who need flexible office hours because of the care for small children or other family members, or other commitments. The remote work option enables to eliminate various limitations and obstacles.

Work from home imposed on employees during the Covid-19 pandemic meant the possibility of working from home even to those employees who either did not have this option nor considered this option for various reasons. It was also owing to the improvement in work-life balance while maintaining the productivity of labour in a high percentage of employees whose organizations have introduced or are seriously considering a permanent introduction of the hybrid work regime. (Savić, & Dobrijević, 2021).

On the other hand, remote workers may experience isolation resulting from social distancing conditions (Baumann and Sander, 2021; Krajčičik et al., 2023; Santillan et al., 2023). Contemporary preference for online training and studying throughout the day may result in overworking. The possibility of using various educational platforms may prevent a lot of people

from stopping to study; some people are simply unable to switch off and relax. Hybrid work regimes in connection with various models of education encourage certain types of individuals to work and study continuously. Some people may try to work much harder in fear that in comparison with those who always work from office they will be viewed as less productive (compare e.g. Rathi, 2024). Feelings of fear, guilt and stress may accumulate, leading to burnout or even psychic and physical disorders. Other work-from-home related health problems are reported, for instance social isolation and loneliness, boundaries between personal and professional life, and poor ergonomics (Denys, 2025). Other researchers, frequently psychologists, mention depression, social fatigue or even digital fatigue (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007; Spivack and Rubin, 2021; Subramanian, 2025) in this context. The task of supervisors is to cultivate a healthy corporate hybrid culture and consider their employees' mental health (Sarangi, 2022). Dhadiwal and Londhe (2025) explore the hybrid work settings in IT companies and conclude that the success of the hybrid work depends on the right balance of the company tools of technology and the company social practices, for instance collaboration and team dynamics (p.145). To prepare employees to cope with pitfalls of the hybrid work regime, employers are advised to clearly inform their employees what exactly is expected from them during home office and provide them employees specific training. If employees are properly trained in strategies of the hybrid work environment, they are better equipped for an efficient management of their time and tasks, which leads to an increased productivity and subsequently to better company outputs (Surekha, et al., 2026).

Development of hybrid work models is considered a contemporary trend (Farliana et al., 2023; Krajčik et al., 2023). Hybrid workplace however, is not a simple pattern or a panacea for all workplace challenges. More research is needed in the benefits and limitations of hybrid work culture, as suggested by Bhauryal (2024). Present-day hybrid workplace has to be equipped with the modern, strategically applied HR technologies, which enable interaction, cooperation, and engagement of employees.

3 Research Design

The focus of empirical research was on work from home and work from office. Data were collected by means of the survey, which contained two groups of questions. The first one related to respondent demographics, while the second one was about the model of variables developed, based on which it will be possible to describe work from home and work from office.

Participants of the research were employees and managers working in sections of the statistical classification of occupations, where in-office work dominates. Respondents were selected so that their job description also allows working from home. This was verified during Corona pandemic. Even now, these employees could work in hybrid working modes, while the mode is determined by the human resources management department.

In the empirical research, we worked mainly with nominal and ordinal variables. Cardinal variables were used in the case of the respondent's age. The focus of empirical research was on the characteristics of working from home and working at the workplace. The data were collected using a questionnaire survey, containing two types of questions. The first group characterized the respondent themselves, and the second group of questions concerned the created model of variables, based on which working from home and working at the workplace are described.

Mainly with nominal and ordinal variables were used in the empirical research. Cardinal variables were applied in the case of the respondent' age. The research was conducted in two sections, namely C – Manufacture (division 10 – Manufacture of food products and Division 11 – Manufacture of beverages and section E – Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (division 38 – Waste collection, treatment and disposal services;

materials recovery services) according to the Statistical classification of economic activities, SK NACE Rev. 2, 2007. The research was implemented from November to December 2025, and the research sample included 187 respondents. (EUROSTAT, 2008, p. 47). Respondents' profile is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Research sample profile

	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
Slovak Republic	105	82	187
Sections according to SK NACE			
Section C	26	33	59
Section E	79	49	128
Total	105	82	187

Source: results of empirical research

Description of respondents' profile by age and gender is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Respondents' profile by age and gender

Respondent's age in intervals	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
18 – 30	2	-	2
31 – 40	15	11	26
41 – 50	52	43	95
51 – 60	23	21	44
61 – 70	13	7	20
70+	-	-	-
Total	105	82	187
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.631	0.631	
Shapiro-Wilk p	<.001	<.001	

Source: results of empirical research

Results of Shapiro-Wilk p indicate that the date distribution is not normal and nonparametric tests have to be used for further analyses.

Table 3 Description of respondents by section and job classification

Job classification	Sections by statistical classification of economic activities		Total
	C – Manufacture	E – Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	
Managers	32	35	67
Administrative staff	27	93	120
Total	59	128	187

Source: results of empirical research

The focus of the empirical analysis was to determine respondents' opinions on working from home and work from office/workplace and develop a corresponding characteristics of both work regimes. For the purposes of this analysis, we used latent variables: working from home and work from office/workplace. Since these variables could not be measured directly, the following model of manifest variables was developed:

Table 4 Model of manifest variables and latent variables

Latent variables \ Manifest variables	Work from home	Work from office
Well-being and comfort at work	Well-being and comfort at work	Well-being and comfort at work
Distractions and concentration	Distractions and concentration	Distractions and concentration
Stress	Stress	Stress
Organization of work during the day, flexibility	Organization of work during the day, flexibility	Organization of work during the day, flexibility
Possibility to take care of family members and own body (rational diet, fluid intake, and physical exercise)	Possibility to take care of family members and own body (rational diet, fluid intake, and physical exercise)	Possibility to take care of family members and own body (rational diet, fluid intake, and physical exercise)
Performance	Performance	Performance
Costs of commuting to workplace and clothing costs	Costs of commuting to workplace and clothing costs	Costs of commuting to workplace and clothing costs
Development of social contacts	Development of social contacts	Development of social contacts
Team work, cooperation at work	Team work, cooperation at work	Team work, cooperation at work
Employer's costs	Employer's costs	Employer's costs
Work controllability	Work controllability	Work controllability

Source: preparation of empirical analysis

Within the broadly treated subject matter, we focused only on selected issues and contexts that we considered crucial.

On the basis of analyses, the following two hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Respondent's age affects work from home performance.

H0: Respondent's age is not in a statistically significant relationship with the respondent's work from home performance.

H1: Respondent's age is in a statistically significant relationship with the respondent's work from home performance.

Hypothesis 2: Respondent's age and stress at work from office are in a statistically significant relationship.

H0: Respondent's age is not in a statistically significant relationship with the stress resulting from the work from office.

H1: Respondent's age is in a statistically significant relationship with the stress resulting from the work from office.

Results of research are processed using quantitative and qualitative analyses, using Excel and Jamovi programs. Given the extensive nature of the analyses, only selected results in the are presented in the results section.

4 Research Results

The research we conducted aimed to find out the respondents' opinions on working from home and working from office. Based on the situation and the issue at hand, as mentioned in the research methodology section, the model of latent and manifest variables was developed. Respondents rated the individual manifest variables on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means the variable is at a low level, and 5 means the variable is at a high level.

Characteristic of the first latent variable, i.e. work from home is presented in Table 5 and the second variable, i.e. work from office is in Table 6. Results of respondents' attitudes to working from home and in-office work are summarized in tables 5 and 6, using the mode (modus).

Table 5 Mode values in manifest variables at work from home

Manifest variables	Work from home	Mode
Well-being and comfort at work		5
Distractions and concentration		4
Stress		2
Organization of work during the day, flexibility		3
Possibility to take care of family members and own body (rational diet, fluid intake, and physical exercise)		5
Performance		4
Costs of commuting to workplace and clothing costs		2
Development of social relationships		2
Team work, cooperation at work employer's costs		1
Employer's costs		1
Work controllability		4

Source: preparation of empirical analysis

Table 6 Mode values in manifest variables during work from office/in-office work

Manifest variables	Work from office	Mode
Well-being and comfort at work		1
Distractions and concentration		5
Stress		5
Organization of work during the day, flexibility		4
Possibility to take care of family members and own body (rational diet, fluid intake, and physical exercise)		1
Performance		2
Costs of commuting to workplace and clothing costs		2
Development of social contacts		3
Team work, cooperation at work		5

Employer's costs	3
Work controllability	5

Source: preparation of empirical analysis

Modus as an expression denoting the most frequently occurring value, it can denote essential differences in the scale of 1-5. A large difference occurs in the evaluation of well-being and comfort at work: when working from home, the modus value is 5, when working from office, the modus value is 1. The following basic differences in respondents' evaluation can be detected when comparing table 5 and table 6: for an employer it is the performance that is most important. When working from home (WfH), performance is evaluated by means of the modus value 4; while in working from office (WfO), it is evaluated by modus value 2. It is interesting to compare the work controllability: in WfH the modus value is indicated by number 4, in WfO when evaluating the work controllability, the modus value is 5. When comparing these two significant variables, namely performance and work controllability, we find that the work performance is rated substantially higher in WfH than in WfO, and work controllability is comparable: in WfH it is rated 4 and in WfO the modus value is 5.

Testing hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

H0: Respondent's age is not in a statistically significant relationship with the respondent's work from home performance.

H1: Respondent's age is in a statistically significant relationship with the respondent's work from home performance.

Table 7 Calculation of correlation coefficient (respondent's age and performance)

Indicator	Coefficient	Respondent's age
Performance	Spearman's rho	-0.325
	p-value	<.001
	Kendall's Tau B	-0.293
	p-value	<.001

Source: results of empirical research

Based on the calculation of p-value, it can be stated, there is a statistically significant relationship between the respondent's age and their work from home performance. The Spearman coefficient as well as Kendall's Tau B values indicate there is a medium strong dependence between the given variables, of an indirect nature. The results of the calculation allow us to accept the alternative hypothesis *H1: Respondent's age is in a statistically significant relationship with the respondent's work from home performance.*

Hypothesis 2:

H0: Respondent's age is not in a statistically significant relationship with the stress resulting from the work from office.

H1: Respondent's age is in a statistically significant relationship with the stress resulting from the work from office.

Table 8 Calculation of correlation coefficient (respondent's age and stress at the workplace)

Indicator	Coefficient	Respondent's age
Stress at work at the workplace	Spearman's rho	0.229
	p-value	0.002
	Kendall's Tau B	0.200

	p-value	0.002
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Source: results of empirical research

The p-value calculation is lower than 0,05, which means there is a statistically significant relationship between the respondent's age and the stress they experience when working at the workplace. The values of the calculated Spearman's coefficient and Kendall's Tau B allow us to conclude that there is a small dependence. The positivity of the coefficient means that there is a direct proportional relationship, i.e. the higher the age, the higher is the stress experienced by the employee working at the workplace. The alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted: Respondent's age is in a statistically significant relationship with the stress resulting from the working at workplace.

Since the research was participated both by employees and managers, it can be stated the work from home does not result in a lower performance, and it does not involve space for relaxation and entertainment of employees. If task assignment and communication with managers and colleagues are handled correctly, working from home and developing hybrid working arrangements could become an important part of employment contracts in the future.

5 Discussion

Labour legislation contains provisions whereby an employer may order home office despite an employee's refusal. When applying hybrid working arrangements, it is recommended to agree in writing with the employer on the exact rules for working from home, if these are not specified in the employment contract. For many employees, working from home is becoming an expected adjustment to working hours in the future. In addition to saving on travel costs, losing time commuting to work, creating comfort at work, ensuring physical and emotional health, etc., employees are aware that working from home does not affect the actual time during which employees will work. Presenting these arguments to employers is not enough to allow certain groups of employees to work from home.

Working from home needs to be addressed comprehensively and should always be accompanied by a written request, unless the employer decides on the possibility of a hybrid work regime on their own. A list of tasks and daily activities must be provided. It has to be very clearly specified which tasks and activities can also be performed outside the workplace. Issues such as high-speed internet, the ability to communicate with colleagues, and communication with line managers must be addressed.

However, remote work is not for everyone. It is a serious decision that requires independence and discipline. An employee working from home ought to have sufficient space to work and a quiet environment to concentrate on their performance. Moreover, this type of work has to be accepted by family members. Eliminating stress and creating a harmonious working environment will enable employees to achieve high productivity. Often, there are various distractions at the workplace, and a lot of time is wasted on unnecessary conversations between coworkers.

Managers' opinions of working outside the workplace differ considerably, ranging from negative attitudes to the idea that working from home can result in better employee performance to the company, cost reduction, and gaining a competitive advantage. Information and communication technologies enable regular contacts with colleagues and company management and also enable teamwork owing to communication platforms. Reducing absenteeism and creating a favourable work-life balance can often be beneficial for a company as it can ensure employee loyalty and commitment to the company.

Significant differences between perceiving WfH between men and women, as well as between older employees (60+) and young employees up to the age of thirty are reported by

other researchers (Kim, et al., 2021; Scheibe, & Hommelhoff, 2024). According to Scheibe and Hommelhoff (2024), the future of work will be influenced by the aging employees and remote work. Based on an extensive research, they state the older workers are better prepared for remote (including hybrid) work and adapted to remote settings owing to their strong-self-regulation and motivation. Kim et al. (2021) consider the family – workplace interaction an important factor in particular during WfH. Personality type is another factor influencing perception of social distance connected with WfH: while WfH works with individuals with a strong self-discipline and introverts, extroverts may experience loneliness; this variable is not considered in the present research paper. Another variable, namely differences in experiencing “work loneliness” between newly recruited workers and more experienced workers, was observed by Mäkelä et al. (2024). These authors are the first to compare the situation before the Covid-19 pandemic with the post-pandemic period, and this way their research contributes to organizational socialization literature (Mäkelä et al. 2024, abstract).

The shift from in-office working to hybrid regime is sometimes described as a “double-edged sword” on employee well-being (Urrila et al., 2025; Dong et al., 2025); on the one hand, it brings flexibility, on the other hand, it can lead to social isolation or blurred boundaries between work and family. Investigation into this effect of the shift to hybrid working can contribute to better designing hybrid work policy by organizations and improving work and family life by employees.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Human resources departments in cooperation with managers should be fully responsible for securing the conditions and rules for hybrid work for specific groups of employees performing work activities that are compatible with the possibility of performing their work outside the workplace.

Based on the results of the questionnaire survey completed by both employees and managers and related calculations, it can be stated the respondent’s age does not affect in the employee’s work from home performance, while when working from office (at the workplace), the respondent’s age can affect the respondent’s stress. If task assignment and communication with managers and colleagues are handled correctly, working from home and hybrid working arrangements could contribute to better corporate hybrid culture and become an important part of employment contracts in the future.

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Dynamics of Change in Managerial Work During Turbulence: Theoretical Synthesis and Perspectives

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Abstract

The growing frequency of global disruptions has fundamentally transformed how managers perform their core functions during crises. This study examines the key changes in managerial work and synthesizes how planning, organizing, leading, and staffing adapt when organizations face unexpected shocks. A five-phase systematic literature review was conducted in March 2026 using the Web of Science and Scopus databases, resulting in an initial set of 586 articles. After applying strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, 15 relevant studies published between 2019 and 2026 were selected for detailed analysis. The results show that crises significantly reshape selected managerial functions, with planning emerging as the most emphasized due to rapidly changing external conditions such as government regulations and public health measures. Organizing shifts toward adaptive structures supported by digital tools, employee well-being initiatives, and flexible work arrangements. Leadership in turbulent environments requires greater improvisation, transparency, decisiveness, and resilience, while human resource management increasingly focuses on modernized policies, hybrid work models, and maintaining employee engagement despite elevated uncertainty. The review further reveals that employee resistance intensifies with the scale of organizational change but can be mitigated through strong identification with the organization. Notably, no empirical studies were found that directly investigate the impact of crises on the managerial function of control, representing a significant gap in the literature. Overall, this study provides an integrated overview of how crises alter managerial functions and highlights several directions for future research, including the need to explore the control function, cross-cultural comparisons, and technological influences on managerial adaptation.

JEL classification: O15, M10, M12

Keywords: adaptation, management, managerial functions, manager performance.

1 Introduction

Current era of volatility and unpredictability, modern organizations are perpetually confronted with diverse challenges that jeopardize their operational stability and long-term prosperity (Moreno et al., 2024). Disruptions – whether they stem from economic shifts, financial instability, political movements, social changes, environmental issues, or global health emergencies – are happening more frequently and are having a more profound effect on how organizations operate (Ciravegna et al., 2023). Such crises typically produce a climate of deep uncertainty and internal turmoil. As a result, the majority of enterprises find themselves compelled to implement novel strategic measures due to the demands of various stakeholders, new state mandates, and changing buyer habits (Oehmen et al., 2020). At present, there is a lack of comprehensive research focusing on this specific area, and the data currently available is limited and often conflicting. Consequently, a systematic literature review represents a highly suitable method for consolidating the most critical insights on this under-explored topic, as it minimizes the bias often found in single-study analyses (Mueller et al., 2018).

The goal of this research is to pinpoint and assess the primary modifications managers introduce during crisis events and to observe the way managerial functions transform and adjust when faced with unexpected shocks. This investigation is of high importance because many companies remain ill-equipped for major disruptions and have yet to prove their resilience against crisis impacts. The findings of this research are intended to assist corporate leaders in bolstering their organizational strength and improving their management of current or future crises. Additionally, this paper serves to highlight areas where further academic investigation is required.

2 Data and methods

Within this research, a five-phase systematic review of the literature is performed, utilizing the structural approach defined by Senyo et al. (2019) (See Table 1).

Table 1

Procedure for conducting a systematic literature review

Step 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for literature review	Inclusion criteria: restricted to papers published in peer-reviewed academic journals specifically addressing the field of "change management"	Exclusion: dissertations, books, book reviews, case studies
Step 2: Literature review	Databases: Web of science, Scopus (March 2026): 448 unique articles	Terms: "changes in management", "crisis", "managerial functions", and "adaptation"
Step 3: Refining the selection of literature	Analysis of articles excluding those that did not focus on business management	Final sample of articles: 15
Step 4: Analysis of selected articles	A summary of each article, including the methods and results of the paper	Categorizing articles into five groups based on which management function the article addresses
Step 5: Presentation of findings	Presentation of a set of articles that synthesizes the findings from the articles for each management function	Analysis of results and identification of research gaps

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

By utilizing this specific methodology, we were able to extract pertinent insights from the reviewed papers, highlighting both commonalities and divergent findings among them. The application of a systematic literature review served as an efficient strategy for thoroughly delineating and organizing contemporary, high-priority research domains.

2.1 Definition of criteria for literary inclusion and exclusion

The study was limited to published articles in the field of management. The procedure followed the recommendations of Watson and Webster (2020) and therefore excluded dissertations, case studies, book reviews, and books. Key terms used in the literature search included "change management," "crisis," "managerial functions," and "adaptation".

2.2 Literature review

In the first step, articles were searched in the Web of Science databases and subsequently in the Scopus database. The search criteria were based on the presence of specific selected terms in the titles, abstracts and keywords of the articles. The literature search was conducted in March

2026. During the search, 382 articles were retrieved from the Web of Science and 204 articles from the Scopus database, for a total of 586 articles.

2.3 Refining the selection of literature

Following the initial search, the results from both databases were integrated, and overlapping publications were removed. This process resulted in a total of 428 distinct papers. During the preliminary screening phase, 324 articles were excluded because they were published more than six years ago. We then conducted a detailed examination of the remaining titles and abstracts to ensure they specifically addressed how crises affect managerial functions. In this phase, studies primarily focused on general crisis management protocols rather than the adaptation of managerial functions were also discarded. Ultimately, 15 highly relevant articles that fulfilled all established criteria were identified for the final sample. These selected works formed the basis for the subsequent comparative analysis and synthesis in this research.

2.4 Analysis of selected literature

In this section, we summarized the results, objectives, methods, and research gap of each article. After reading each article, we divided the articles into 5 groups based on the findings of the articles. We proceeded as follows: the first article was assigned to one of the groups and was compared with the articles in that group. We proceeded in this way for all 15 articles from our research sample.

The literature analysis subsequently resulted in a comprehensive mapping of existing research focused on the impact of crises on managerial functions. It allowed us to conduct a thematic analysis that identified five main areas of research: the impact of crises on managerial functions (1) planning, (2) organizing, (3) human resource management (4) leading, and (5) controlling.

2.5. Presentation of results

Upon completing the evaluation of each individual category, the findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive overview. This research synthesized the data regarding how crises influence the execution of managerial functions and highlighted possible strategic interventions. Furthermore, the analysis brought to light several voids in current academic knowledge, suggesting fresh pathways for subsequent investigations. The detailed outcomes of this systematic review are outlined in Chapter 3, while specific proposals for future scholarly work are detailed in Section 4.1.

3 Research results

This research focuses on the impact of crises that limit the performance of managerial functions. The results showed that managerial functions are reshaped during crises. Table 2 presents the main findings from the most relevant articles.

Table 2
Review of literature results

Author	Key findings
1. Noskova et al., 2024	During the COVID-19 pandemic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most frequently performed managerial function was planning and leadership - The managerial function organizing was less important - Most of the constraints affecting managerial work came from the external environment (government regulations, hygiene measures...) - Increased need to improve crisis management strategies

2. Garcia et al., 2022	<p>Venezuelan Economic Crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shift from individual to group decision making - New adaptation tools in the managerial function of human resource management
3. Baah, 2025	<p>During crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater adaptability and decisiveness in the managerial function leadership - Managerial functions prioritize crisis management strategies
4. Boiral et al., 2021	<p>During the COVID-19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A significant shift has been noted across all management functions in the area of health and environmental responsibility - New approaches and challenges affecting managers in assessing corporate social responsibility have been revealed
5. Tabesh et al., 2020	<p>During crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ability to improvise is key to making quick and effective decisions - Top management expertise improves the ability to improvise, and it is important to balance complex and intuitive decision-making to improve the quality of decisions.
6. Veselovská et al., 2023	<p>During the COVID-19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater focus on managerial functions of planning and organizing - Reduction in time devoted to people management - Increased delegation of decision-making tasks to lower levels
7. AlMazrouei et al., 2022	<p>During the COVID-19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shift to supportive management approaches - Increased emphasis on employee well-being while maintaining productivity - Changes in communication and decision-making strategies - Adoption of multiple technology platforms to improve organizational communication
8. Kumar et al., 2021	<p>During the COVID-19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased use of modernized HR policies with an emphasis on online opportunities, such as hybrid approaches and people-centered working styles, to enhance employee well-being and efficiency
9. Ranjan et al., 2024	<p>During crises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crises bring a reassessment of priorities, strengthening team resilience, and increasing transparency - Effective leaders adapt their strategies to minimize damage and facilitate recovery, emphasizing the importance of timely decisions and strong leadership qualities
10. Kremer et al., 2025	<p>During crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing adaptive teams is extremely challenging, requiring new competencies in resilience and adaptability from leaders - Leaders must move from traditional approaches to adaptive leadership that includes flexibility, empathy, innovation, and a long-term vision - Managers must navigate organizational factors, such as culture and structure, that can either facilitate or hinder this transition, and adapt their roles and responsibilities to the current situation
11. Thumiki et al., 2019	<p>During the economic crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employee benefits and recreation costs are drastically reduced - Knowledge management activities are increasing - Managing employees is easier than managing other resources. - HR strategies lead to increased employee engagement and improved corporate image - Smaller organizations are engaging in workplace transformation
12. Al-Kahlot et al., 2024	<p>During the COVID-19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A company's success is directly related to its ability to manage internal and external crises - The importance of advance planning and developing crisis management strategies to protect companies from risks reinforces the necessity of these strategies in achieving organizational resilience
13. Wunderlich et al., 2024	<p>During crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive HR managers make more intensive use of HR practices requiring significant investment, such as information sharing and employee engagement - Strong support from top management reduces the need for proactive HR actions during a crisis

14. Zaharcu et al., 2024	<p>Crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They fundamentally affect governance, creating instability and vulnerability in the global economy - They require measures for financial and economic recovery, with organizational leadership playing a key role in mitigating their effects and adapting through innovative management practices - They require a shift towards a flexible organizational culture that allows businesses to cope with challenges, minimize economic and social costs, and ensure social cohesion.
15. Tu et al., 2024	<p>During crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of uncertainty and concerns about job loss significantly influence employees' attitudes towards organizational change - The greater the organizational change, the greater the employee resistance - Stronger employee identification with the organization reduces their resistance to change

Source: own processing based on the authors

In Table 3, we show more clearly the focus of the analyzed articles based on managerial functions.

Table 3
Research focus of the analyzed articles

	Planning	Organizing	Leading	HRM	Controlling
Veselovská et al., 2023	x	x	x	-	-
Baah, 2025	-	-	x	-	-
Boiral, 2021	x	x	x	x	-
Garcia et al., 2022	-	-	-	x	-
Noskova et al., 2024	x	x	x	-	-
AlMazrouei et al., 2022	-	x	-	x	-
Wunderlich et al., 2024	-	-	x	x	-
Ranjan et al., 2024	-	-	x	-	-
Kremer et al., 2025	-	x	x	-	-
Tu et al., 2024	-	x	-	x	-
Zaharcu et al., 2024	-	-	x	-	-
Al-Kahlot et al., 2024	x	-	-	-	-
Kumar et al., 2021	-	x	-	x	-
Thumiki et al., 2019	-	-	-	x	-
Tabesh et al., 2020	-	-	x	x	-

Source: own processing based on the authors

4 Discussion

The influence of crisis events on the execution of managerial tasks is diverse, significantly altering how decisions are made, how strategies are managed, and how resilient an organization becomes. Such disruptions necessitate swift adjustments and spontaneous responses, often testing the limits of conventional leadership roles and established frameworks. To navigate these periods successfully, leaders are frequently forced to find an equilibrium between analytical complexity and intuitive judgment. This is best exemplified by the improvisational decision-making model, which integrates both perspectives to bolster the effectiveness of choices made under pressure. In this fluid and high-stakes setting, it is essential for managers to employ a broad spectrum of techniques and instruments to lessen the negative impacts of the crisis on their company.

The influence of disruptive events, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly altered the role of planning, elevating it to the primary focus for economic managers, especially within firms experiencing revenue declines. In such environments, planning has evolved into the most critical and frequently utilized managerial activity, proving to be a cornerstone of effective crisis response. During these periods, the fundamental character of planning shifts, necessitating the deployment of specialized crisis management strategies to shield the organization from threats and maintain operational flow. The creation of proactive, comprehensive crisis frameworks and forward-looking plans is now vital for navigating both

internal and external disruptions. Research indicates that the majority of obstacles encountered during the planning process originate from the external landscape, such as shifting state regulations and public health protocols. This reality emphasizes the critical need for managers to maintain high levels of flexibility, allowing them to rapidly adjust their strategic maps in response to a volatile environment. Ultimately, the ability to pivot and reformulate plans in the face of the unknown reinforces planning as a decisive element in successful crisis management.

Regarding the managerial function of organizing, economic leaders—particularly those in organizations facing financial decline—found it necessary to intensify their focus on organizational tasks in tandem with planning. The global health crisis mandated the swift adoption of creative protocols in health safety, personnel management, and emergency response, necessitating a transition toward novel work arrangements centered on corporate social responsibility. Because the pandemic disrupted all business sectors at once, it triggered a radical transformation of managerial duties and expectations.

During such volatile periods, the formation of resilient, adaptive teams presents a significant hurdle, requiring a departure from conventional management in favor of adaptive leadership characterized by compassion, flexibility, original thinking, and a strategic future-oriented perspective. In this transition, internal factors like the existing company culture and hierarchy can either support or obstruct progress. External pressures remained a primary constraint, forcing a move toward more supportive management styles that prioritize the health and well-being of staff, transparent communication, and the integration of digital tools.

Human resource professionals encountered difficulties in preserving staff commitment, leading to a push for policy modernization that emphasizes digital and remote opportunities. Observations suggest that as the scale of organizational restructuring increases, so does the likelihood of staff pushback; however, a deep sense of employee alignment with the company's identity can mitigate this resistance. Ultimately, navigating a crisis demands that managers remain versatile in their organizational approach, placing a heavy premium on employee welfare, technological adoption, and open lines of communication.

During periods of significant disruption, the role of leadership undergoes a substantial transformation, shifting from conventional management to a more dynamic and responsive approach. Leaders are increasingly pressured to demonstrate high levels of decisiveness and adaptability, often needing to synthesize diverse viewpoints under extreme time constraints. Interestingly, research suggests that during these times, the proportion of time dedicated to direct personnel management may actually decrease as the necessity for strategic planning intensifies. The transition toward adaptive leadership is essential, moving away from rigid, traditional hierarchies toward a model defined by the following characteristics: Empathy and Vision: Incorporating a long-term perspective while maintaining a compassionate understanding of the workforce. Innovation and Flexibility: The ability to pivot strategies and embrace creative solutions to unprecedented problems. Resilience and Transparency: Prioritizing the psychological strength of the team through open, honest, and frequent communication. Effective leaders must skillfully navigate the stress and ambiguity inherent in crises, continuously re-evaluating priorities to minimize organizational damage and accelerate the recovery process. Success in these scenarios often hinges on the speed of decision-making and the strength of the leader's personal qualities. Furthermore, proactive managers tend to lean more heavily on resource-intensive human resource practices—especially during moderate crises—though the necessity for such individual proactivity may lessen if there is robust support from the highest levels of the organization. Ultimately, surviving a crisis requires a combination of a versatile organizational culture, cutting-edge management techniques, and a refined capacity for improvisation. The quality of these spontaneous decisions is significantly bolstered when top-level management possesses deep domain expertise and crisis experience.

The recent global pandemic forced a rapid transition to remote work environments, presenting HR managers with the difficult task of preserving employee discipline and engagement from a distance. This shift necessitated the modernization of corporate policies, with a particular focus on leveraging digital and online opportunities. Research indicates that when HR strategies are specifically tailored to address crisis conditions, they can actually lead to higher levels of employee commitment and an enhanced corporate reputation. Furthermore, the specialized knowledge and expertise of top-level management play a crucial role in improving the quality of spontaneous, improvisational decisions during these high-pressure periods.

It is important to note that throughout this systematic review, no existing studies were identified that specifically or directly examined the impact of crisis events on the managerial function of control. This lack of coverage may be due to the operational nature of the control function, which is less explicitly discussed in crisis-oriented research. This represents a significant gap in the current academic literature, suggesting that how monitoring, evaluation, and corrective processes adapt during a crisis remains an area in need of future empirical investigation.

The transformation of managerial functions under crisis conditions is not driven solely by external shocks, but increasingly also by the dynamic development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence tools. This aspect is reflected rather implicitly in the analyzed studies (e.g., in relation to the use of digital tools or hybrid work arrangements), yet its significance for individual managerial functions is substantial.

In line with the previously discussed dominant role of planning, it can be argued that AI-based tools expand the possibilities of scenario planning and environmental forecasting through the analysis of large volumes of real-time data. In doing so, they strengthen data-driven decision-making under conditions of uncertainty (Górka et al., 2025).

With respect to the managerial function of organizing, there is a growing shift toward flexible and technology-enabled organizational structures that facilitate more effective coordination of activities within hybrid and geographically dispersed teams. This development simultaneously supports the integration of human and technological decision-making and enhances the adaptive capacity of organizations.

In the area of leadership, the importance of managers' ability to work with outputs generated by digital systems is increasing, as well as their capacity to combine these outputs with intuitive judgment, which has been identified as critical in crisis situations (Tabesh & Vera, 2020).

The most significant impacts of technological transformation are observed in the field of human resource management, where artificial intelligence influences recruitment processes, performance evaluation, and talent management, thereby contributing to the shift toward data-driven workforce management. At the same time, these approaches raise important concerns related to ethics, transparency, and their implications for diversity and inclusion, which must also be considered in the context of crisis management (Naoum et al., 2026).

4.1 Suggestions for future research

Based on the themes identified in this study, the following directions for future academic inquiry are proposed:

1. *Prioritizing the human element:* Future research should delve deeper into the psychological aspects of crisis management, focusing on emotional intelligence, individual resilience, and stress regulation. It is vital to determine how organizations can better support employee mental health while sustaining motivation and engagement during high-pressure periods.

2. *Investigating the control function during crises:* A significant finding of our 6-year literature review is the total absence of research concerning the managerial function of control in a crisis context. Future studies should prioritize how monitoring, evaluation, and corrective processes are maintained or adapted during disruptions.
3. *Exploring emerging crisis scenarios:* There are several ongoing global challenges that have yet to be thoroughly analyzed regarding their effect on managerial functions. These include the long-term geopolitical implications of the invasion of Ukraine, the escalating instability in the Middle East involving Iran, the persistent refugee crisis, and the pressures of systemic inflation. Furthermore, managers must now navigate the complexities of the global energy transition, the disruptive rise of generative AI, and the growing threat of large-scale cyber warfare, all of which fundamentally redefine traditional strategic planning and organizational resilience.
4. *Cross-cultural managerial responses:* Our analysis revealed a lack of comparative research on how different global cultures and management styles react to the same type of crisis. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for globalized business operations.
5. *Technological integration in crisis frameworks:* Future research should examine in greater detail the role of modern technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and advanced digital tools, in strengthening organizational resilience and transforming managerial functions in crisis situations. In the area of planning, attention should be given to the shift toward predictive and scenario-based planning, while in organizing, the impact of digital platforms and hybrid structures on coordination and work management should be explored. In leadership, it is relevant to analyze the transformation of decision-making processes and the relationship between human judgment and data-driven decision-making. In human resource management, future research should focus on the impact of technologies on recruitment, performance evaluation, and employee development, including issues related to transparency and privacy. Overall, technologies should be viewed not only as a supporting tool, but also as a factor fundamentally transforming the nature of managerial work in times of crisis.
6. *Longitudinal and comparative methodology:* To understand the enduring effects of crises on performance and managerial evolution, future studies should employ longitudinal designs. Additionally, comparative research across different industries and nations could help identify "best practices" for crisis navigation.
7. *Ethical decision-making under pressure:* It is crucial to investigate how leaders maintain ethical standards and stay true to organizational values when faced with the rapid, high-stakes decision-making required by a crisis.

4.2 Research Limits

The following constraints were identified as the primary limitations of this research:

Restrictions on article selection criteria:

- *Subjective bias in selection:* The established parameters for including or excluding studies may involve a degree of subjectivity, potentially resulting in the omission of certain pertinent publications.
- *Temporal constraints of the search:* The analysis was restricted to works published from 2019 onwards. This timeframe might have limited the breadth of the literature reviewed and could have excluded significant historical crises that might recur in similar patterns today.

- *Resource accessibility*: A selection of potentially relevant papers could not be included because they were published in journals or databases beyond our available institutional access.

Methodological limitations:

- *Database constraints*: This study relied exclusively on two primary academic repositories—Web of Science and Scopus. While these are among the most comprehensive databases, they may not encompass the entire body of existing research or all relevant publications globally available on this subject.
- *Search term specificity*: The specific combination of keywords utilized during the data collection phase may have impacted the breadth and detail of the literature identified, potentially narrowing the overall scope of the analysis.

5 Conclusion

A structured analysis of the existing literature confirms that crisis events exert a direct and significant influence on key managerial functions, particularly planning, organizing, leadership, and human resource management. Crises do not act merely as external constraints, but as situations that fundamentally reshape the way managerial functions are performed. In particular, planning, along with adaptive forms of organizing and leadership, emerges as critical under conditions of high uncertainty and dynamic change. Managerial work is increasingly characterized by flexibility, improvisation, and the ability to respond rapidly.

The findings of this study further suggest that the current state of knowledge is strongly shaped by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, which represents the dominant empirical context of the analyzed studies. Although this context provides valuable insights, it also indicates that other types of crises—such as inflationary pressures, energy instability, geopolitical conflicts, or technological disruptions—remain relatively underexplored in relation to managerial functions. Therefore, caution is required when generalizing these findings across different types of crisis situations.

The study is based on the classical framework of five managerial functions, namely planning, organizing, leading, human resource management, and controlling. At the same time, it implicitly suggests that managerial work in crisis conditions extends beyond this traditional categorization. Additional managerial functions, such as communication, decision-making, and the implementation of change, play a crucial role in shaping organizational responses. Future research may therefore benefit from a broader and more integrated conceptualization of managerial activities. A particularly important finding of this review is the absence of empirical studies focusing on the managerial function of control in crisis environments. This gap represents a significant opportunity for future research, especially in understanding how monitoring, evaluation, and corrective processes evolve under conditions of disruption.

Overall, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how crises transform managerial functions. It emphasizes that crisis situations not only place strain on existing management approaches, but also redefine the very nature of managerial work in an environment of increasing complexity and uncertainty. It can be argued that, through the adaptation of managerial functions, organizations actively develop their resilience, which subsequently becomes a key prerequisite for their long-term stability and their ability to cope with future disruptions.

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Generational differences in hybrid work

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Abstract

Hybrid work arrangements have become key elements of the modern workplace between 2021 and 2026. This article focuses primarily on analyzing the specific preferences, motivations, and challenges of four different generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers) in the context of working from home and in the office. The aim of the article is to identify, through a systematic literature review, how the approaches of individual generations to autonomy, digital collaboration, and mentoring differ. The findings suggest that, on the one hand, Generation Z prefers flexibility, while on the other hand, Millennials report a higher level of satisfaction with the integration of work and personal life. Generation X perceives hybrid work as a tool that supports efficiency. Those belonging to the older “Baby Boomer” generation emphasize the need for personal contact. The article also strongly highlights the necessity of adapting HR processes, particularly in the areas of transformational leadership and personalized benefits. Despite the existence of significant generational differences, it is important for organizations to avoid stereotyping and focus on an inclusive corporate culture that supports intergenerational collaboration.

JEL classification: O 15, I 31

Keywords: generational differences, hybrid work, remote work preferences, Gen Z

1 Introduction

The hybrid work environment has become dominant, particularly between 2021 and 2026. This global shift represents a fundamental change in the dynamics of the workplace, especially in terms of a multigenerational workforce. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, companies around the world have fundamentally reevaluated their approach to physical presence in the workplace and the flexibility of remote work. The literature increasingly points out that generational differences significantly influence how employees perceive, experience, and perform in hybrid work environments. Through a systematic literature review, we synthesize findings from 32 primary and secondary sources. The aim of this article is to examine how different generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers) perceive the hybrid work environment and what organizational changes are necessary to effectively support a multigenerational workforce.

2 Current State of the Solved Problem at Home and Abroad

A model combining working from home and remote work, also known as a hybrid work model, is characteristic of the period from 2021 to 2026 (Suganya et al., 2024). This significant shift occurred during the Fourth Industrial Revolution, in which digital innovations and organizational volatility redefined the psychological contract between employees and employers (Salvadorinho et al., 2025; Bulińska-Stangrecka et al., 2021). Since 2026, it has been common practice for companies to strive to manage up to five generations simultaneously, each with distinct preferences that influence their approach to hybrid work models (Westover, 2025; Roos, 2025). Although the hybrid work environment offers clear and undeniable benefits related to work flexibility and a reduction in work monotony (Syafani et al., 2025), they also

carry significant risks in the form of a loss of knowledge gained through experience and a potential increase in alienation from work among younger generations (Salvadorinho et al., 2025; Mahmoud et al., 2023). When implementing hybrid work arrangements, companies often overlook important generational preferences and challenges that directly impact employee engagement, retention, and productivity. This article addresses two main research questions: (RQ1) How do different generations perceive and prefer hybrid work environments, including their specific motivations and challenges? And (RQ2) How must HR policies and leadership styles adapt to effectively manage these intergenerational differences?

The literature indicates that although individual generations share common needs (fair compensation or professional growth), their respective attitudes toward the hybrid work environment are significantly influenced by their life stage and the values that have shaped them (Barazani, 2025; Mileva, 2025).

Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is often characterized as one of the strongest advocates of hybrid work environments, flexibility, and independence (Shahid et al., 2025). Their distinct preferences were shaped by growing up in a highly digitalized environment. Generation Z prioritizes flexibility over most other aspects of employment, with flexibility serving as the primary motivator for hybrid work models (Roy et al., 2025). This generation emphasizes work-life balance and mental health protection. They view hybrid work not merely as a perk, but as an essential component of mental well-being. A significant portion of Generation Z expresses a need for fully remote or highly flexible work arrangements, spending three or fewer days in the office during the workweek—a proportion significantly higher than among other generations (Albrychiewicz-Slocinska, 2022). Generation Z seeks intrinsic motivation in meaningful work (Nakash, 2024; Rotich et al., 2025). However, the literature identifies a paradox of isolation: despite Gen Z's demand for flexible work options, they also exhibit higher levels of social isolation and greater concerns about career growth compared to older generations. They often view in-person work as more motivating in terms of social interaction. If interactions via digital technologies fail to provide mentorship or career growth in the long term, this generation will face alienation from work (Bulińska-Stangrecka et al., 2021; Mahmoud et al., 2023). Such tension creates specific organizational challenges. Generation Z demands flexibility but also requires extensive support systems for social integration and career growth. Key values include a clear sense of purpose in work, inclusivity, and technological sophistication (Hatoum & Nassereddine, 2025).

The millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1996, exhibits a more consistent profile of preferences compared to Generation Z. The literature identifies remote work as a source of motivation and considers three days in the office and two days of remote work to be the optimal balance (Chaudhary et al., 2025). We consider the integration of work and private life to be one of the main motivations (Ojha, 2024). This is a generation shaped by the 2008 financial crisis and possessing extensive experience working in both traditional and remote environments. They exhibit a pragmatic approach to their work location and are often described as patient multitaskers. Increased productivity and career advancement are among the main motivators for the millennial generation, and they view hybrid work as a key aspect for achieving professional goals and personal life satisfaction (Mileva, 2025; Parihar & Singh, 2025). Although this generation shows less concern about social isolation than Generation Z, they experience greater anxiety about the blurring of boundaries between work and private life. There is a tendency for remote work to significantly encroach on this generation's personal time (Dong et al., 2025).

Generation X occupies a particularly noteworthy position in the academic literature regarding hybrid work. For companies, it is one of the key generations in the workplace, yet its specific preferences and experiences have not been thoroughly explored. Born between 1965

and 1980, this generation serves as a bridge between traditional and digital native generations. According to many studies, employees of this generation are surprisingly satisfied with remote work; nevertheless, compared to younger generations, they tend to prefer a more traditional form of work. At the same time, however, they report that remote work allows them to work more effectively and with greater focus, free from the distractions of office life (Kaur, 2025).

Baby boomers are the group with the widest range of opinions when it comes to preferences regarding hybrid work. Although a significant number of them prefer working in the office, research points to considerable differences in individual factors, including technological proficiency, job requirements, and health status. The literature has identified significant resistance to remote work among this generation; however, later in their careers, baby boomers value these hybrid work arrangements, particularly in terms of accessibility, health care, and work-life balance (Wharton et al., 2023). Those who value working from home highlight several specific benefits: reduced stress associated with commuting, maintaining social connections, and staying relevant through knowledge-sharing tasks (Adegoke et al., 2025).

The blanket application of uniform rules in a hybrid work environment is currently not feasible, particularly when it comes to intergenerational diversity (Gupta & Sharma, 2025; Annosi et al., 2023). Modern companies are transitioning to flexible structures that provide employees with greater freedom and choice within clearly defined parameters (Singh et al., 2025). The cornerstone of this transition is adapting the technological infrastructure to the needs of individual generations (Annosi et al., 2023). While younger generations require intuitive platforms and rapid adoption of innovations, older generations value simpler interfaces and on-site support (Murphy & Johnson, 2024; Gupta & Sharma, 2025). Leading such diverse teams remotely necessitates a shift from directive management toward adaptive and transformational leadership (Singh et al., 2025; Annosi et al., 2023). Traditional forms of leadership in organizations that require a physical presence in the workplace tend to disadvantage employees working in a hybrid format (Gupta & Sharma, 2025). The literature therefore recommends a shift toward transparent leadership and the diversification of career paths (Singh et al., 2025). In other words, a shift from micromanagement to mentoring (Murphy & Johnson, 2024). Preventing the breakdown of a uniformly shared corporate culture in a hybrid work environment requires very specifically targeted practices, such as intentional intergenerational mixing or reverse mentoring (Gupta & Sharma, 2025; Singh et al., 2025). The degree of personalization plays an important role in this. Research suggests that voluntary forms of interaction are a more effective approach than mandatory social activities (Gupta & Sharma, 2025). The same principle applies to compensation. Successful companies are gradually replacing blanket benefits with flexible packages. These packages allow employees to tailor their benefits to their current stage of life (Singh et al., 2025; Gupta & Sharma, 2025).

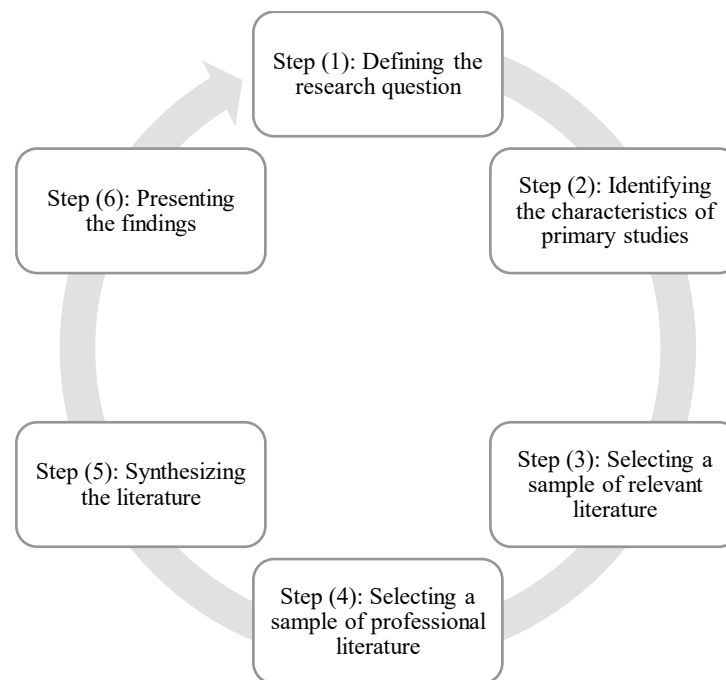
There is a consensus in the academic literature that professional growth and salary are relatively key priorities for all the generations mentioned. When it comes to the extent of generational differences, there is a noticeable discrepancy in preferences. Many studies highlight the distinctive traits of individual generations; however, critical perspectives, such as those of Westover (2025), have found that the magnitude of the impact of these differences is often negligible. These findings suggest that “generation” may merely be a proxy for an individual’s life stage or years of tenure in a job position.

3 Research Methodology and Methods

The methodological framework for a systematic literature review by Sauer & Seuring (2023) was used to prepare this article. The methodological framework consists of six steps: (1) defining the research question, (2) determining the characteristics of primary studies, (3)

selecting a sample of relevant professional literature, (4) screening the sample of professional literature, (5) synthesizing the literature, and (6) presenting the findings. This systematic approach allowed us to map the existing professional literature in the field of study in detail. Based on a systematic literature review, we identified two research areas: (1) How do different generations perceive and prefer hybrid work environments, including their specific motivations and challenges? And (2) How must HR policies and leadership styles adapt to effectively manage these intergenerational differences? We supplemented the findings with selected statistical data from renowned international databases, such as Statista, Gallup, and Deloitte, thereby providing support for the interpretation of the findings and recommendations for practice.

Figure 1 A six-step process for conducting a systematic literature review



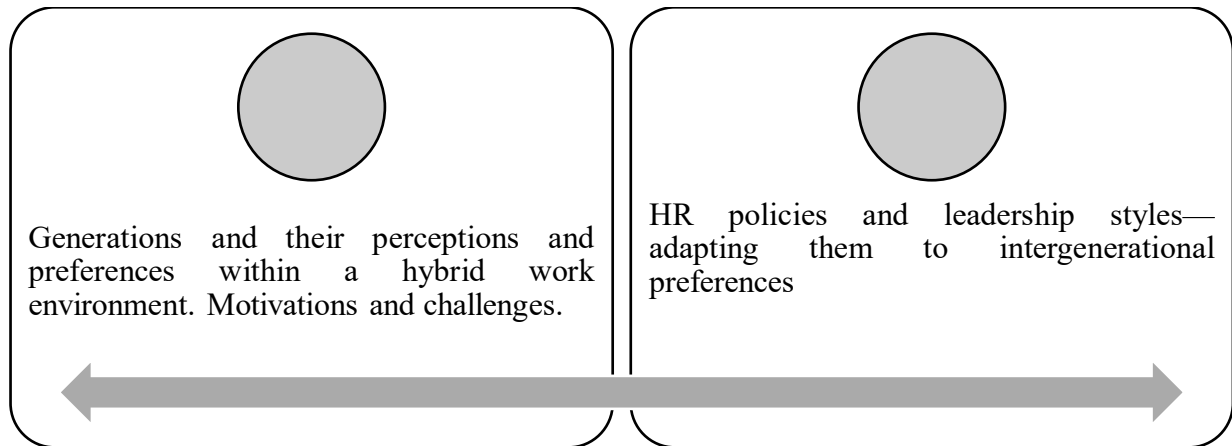
Source: own elaboration according to Sauer & Seuring (2023). Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-023-00668-3>

As the first step in preparing a systematic literature review, we conducted a search of the Web of Science and Scopus scientific databases. Among the criteria for selecting the literature, we included the publication period 2020–2026 to ensure that the literature review was as up-to-date as possible. We also included scholarly literature that provided literature reviews, empirical research, or meta-analyses. We removed duplicate entries from the created database of academic literature, as well as sources in languages other than Slovak and English, to ensure a final sample of selected literature that explicitly focuses on the issue of generational differences in the perception of hybrid work arrangements, their preferences and motivations, as well as the challenges and risks, and from the perspective of implications for adapting HR policies and leadership styles necessary for effectively managing intergenerational differences. We paid particular attention to the identification and analysis of four generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers).

Based on this analysis, we have identified two key areas of research: (1) How different generations perceive and prefer hybrid work environments, including their specific motivations and challenges; and (2) How HR policies and leadership styles need to adapt to effectively

manage intergenerational differences. The key research areas are illustrated in the following diagram:

Figure 2 Key research areas



Source: own elaboration

The article also includes statistical data from reputable statistical databases, such as Statista, Deloitte, and Gallup, which provide a quantitative perspective on the scope and impacts of the issue under examination. This approach has enabled us to identify new avenues for research.

4 Result of the Paper

Based on a systematic literature review, we analyzed 32 academic studies and reports published between 2021 and 2026. We identified key trends in how different generations approach remote work. We supported our findings with a thematic synthesis. To ensure clarity and a logical structure of the findings, we organized the results into two main research areas. These areas directly address the research question of our article.

The first section (Table 1) focuses on the employee level. It summarizes how the generations we have selected (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers) perceive and prefer hybrid work environments. In the table, we identify their specific motivations and most common challenges. The second section (Table 2) focuses on the organizational level. It contains data and insights that companies should incorporate into their HR policies and leadership styles. Through these insights, they can effectively manage these diverse intergenerational relationships. For better contextualization, both of these areas are supplemented with statistical data from global surveys focused on the labor market.

Table 2 Generations and their perceptions and preferences in a hybrid work environment. Motivations and challenges.

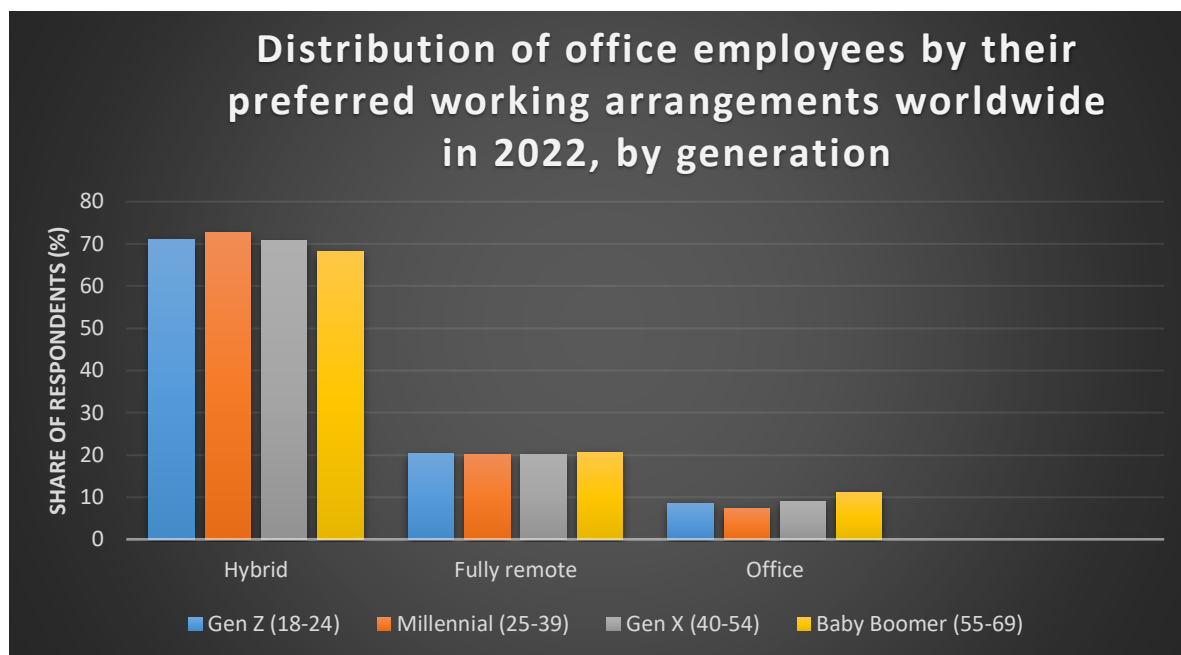
Generation	Key Preferences and Motivations	Main Challenges	Authors / Source
Gen Z	Flexibility, autonomy, digital connectivity, mental health and work-life	The paradox of isolation and weak social ties, and the increased need for	Kaur (2025), Roy et al., (2025), Syafani et al., (2025)

	balance, meaningful work	social integration and mentoring	
Millennials	A pragmatic approach, increased productivity, and autonomy combined with transparent rules	The blurring of boundaries between work and private life, the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities, and the need to define standards and expectations	Roy et al., (2025), Westover (2025), Chaudhary et al., (2025)
Gen X	Maximum adaptability, the role of mediator in intergenerational communication	Concerns about the demands of adopting new technologies, a preference for a predictable structure over complete fluidity	Roy et al., (2025), Kaur (2025)
Baby Boomer	Stability, health, sharing expertise	Technostress, loss of tacit knowledge	Wharton et al., 2023, Adegoke et al., 2025

Source: own elaboration

The results suggest that younger generations view hybrid work as the standard and as a means of gaining greater freedom. In contrast, older generations—particularly Generation X—view this form of work more pragmatically, specifically as a way to increase their own productivity. Among baby boomers, there is a shift from rejecting hybrid work to accepting it as a tool for maintaining mental health in the later stages of their careers. A common thread across all generations, despite their differing perspectives, remains the importance of striking a balance between work and personal life, the necessity of high-quality technological infrastructure in society, and the need for explicit communication of expectations. The absence of these preferences can cause stress, regardless of generational specifics.

Picture 1 Preferred work environment by generation



Source: own elaboration according to: Statista Research Department, 2025 [Work preferences of office employees worldwide 2022](#) | [Statista](#)

According to the results of a survey conducted in 2022 among 28,000 full-time employees across 27 labor markets worldwide, we can see that office workers of all generations overwhelmingly preferred a hybrid work model. Baby Boomers are only slightly more inclined toward full-time office work, but even so, only about 11% of respondents chose this option, compared to 68.3% who preferred hybrid work. Meanwhile, 20% of respondents prefer working exclusively remotely. The youngest generation, Generation Z, was one of the least inclined to work in an office.

These data align with our findings from the academic literature and underscore the fact that while for older generations, working in an office remains the center of social interaction and stability, for the incoming workforce—Generation Z—remote work is becoming one of the key requirements when choosing an employer.

Tabuľka 3 Personálne politiky a štýly vedenia – ich prispôsobenie medzigeneračným preferenciám

Scope of adaptation	Strategies and Approaches to Management	Target audience	Authors / Source
Work Models and Flexibility	A shorter workweek, predictable work schedules with guaranteed time for personal needs	Gen Z / Millennials – a preference for autonomy and a 4-day workweek Gen X / Boomers – a need for routine	Parihar & Singh (2025); Lardizabal, C.C (2025)

Technology Infrastructure	Intuitive platforms with AI integration and automation Streamlined interfaces and ongoing technical support	Gen Z – Quick to pick up new technologies Baby Boomers – Need for sufficient training beyond initial onboarding	Lardizabal, C.C (2025)
Management Style	The shift from directive management to adaptive management A transformational approach Mentoring, coaching	Gen Z – Feedback Millennials – Clear work-life balance boundaries, a leader as a coach Gen X / Boomers – Respect for autonomy	Venkatesh & Prasath (2025); Lardizabal, C.C (2025)
Benefits	Competency models Development of alternative career paths Flexible benefits packages	Gen Z / Millennials – rapid growth, mental health, public recognition Gen X – support for a career change Boomers – formal recognition of expertise	Sarbhoj & Sharma (2024); Venkatesh & Prasath (2025)
Inclusion	Intergenerational mixing, reverse mentoring Voluntary forms of social interaction Forming groups based on interests, not demographics	A shift away from mandatory team-building activities, particularly among younger generations Leaders must make it clear that diversity does not mean less loyalty	Saxena et al., (2024); Venkatesh & Prasath (2025); Lardizabal, C.C (2025)

Source: own elaboration

The findings from a review of the professional literature highlight the importance of gradually implementing hyper-personalized HR policies. These conclusions align with global findings from the field. According to a Deloitte study (2023), organizations that have implemented a “radical flexibility” model—which includes not only the ability to choose where to work but also the volume of work, aligning with the needs of Gen Z and Millennials—have seen an increase in the proportion of high-performing employees. On the other hand, respondents struggle to disconnect from work—23% of Gen Z members and 30% of millennials report that they respond to work emails outside of regular working hours at least five days a week. These workplace pressures may also be a cause of the increased incidence of burnout. Social media also affects their mental well-being, causing approximately four in ten Gen Zers

and millennials to feel lonely and inadequate. Conversely, a study from the Harvard Business Review (2022) highlighted that transitioning to aligned communication and competency-based evaluations is key to retaining older-generation employees. The findings suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach for different generations is no longer sustainable. Successful companies are shifting to highly personalized HR policies that reflect employees' life stages. A key factor essential for success is the transformation of the leader from a controller to a coach who will be able to bridge the digital proficiency of younger generations with the expertise of older employees. Results from Gallup surveys (2023) point to a consistent increase in stress levels among employees working in a hybrid work environment. Some find working from home more suitable and conducive to concentration, while others concentrate better in the office. Employees in a fully remote work environment experience stress at a rate of 43%, while employees in a hybrid environment experience stress at a rate of 45% and office-based employees at a rate of 38%. This is also one of the reasons why team leaders should be formally trained in the specific management and evaluation of team performance in a hybrid work environment.

5 Discussion

Findings from the professional literature confirm the theoretical premises. The blanket application of uniform rules in a hybrid work environment is not currently sustainable in the long term, given intergenerational differences (Westover, 2025; Gupta & Sharma, 2025). While younger generations perceive hybrid work as a standard and a tool for gaining greater freedom, older generations approach it more pragmatically with the aim of increasing their own productivity (Singh et al., 2025). We identified a fundamental difference among the younger generation. Although Generation Z appears to be the strongest advocate for flexibility and mental health protection, they face the paradox of social isolation. This generation has an increased need for social integration and mentoring (Kaur, 2025; Annosi et al., 2023). Generation X acts as a mediator between the generations. They prefer a predictable structure. Baby Boomers, on the other hand, appreciate hybrid work arrangements, particularly from the perspective of maintaining health and sharing expertise, although they constantly struggle with technostress (Singh et al., 2025).

These differing intergenerational preferences highlight a significant need to change HR policies and leadership styles. Organizations must shift from directive management to adaptive and transformational leadership (Annosi et al., 2023). While Generation Z and Millennials prefer a shorter workweek, rapid growth, and a leader who acts as a coach, older generations—Generation X and Baby Boomers—tend to value respect for autonomy, predictability, and formal recognition of their expertise (Gupta & Sharma, 2025; Singh et al., 2025).

Despite clear differences, there is also strong consensus across generations. The common denominator remains the importance of achieving a balance between work and private life—also known as work-life balance—the necessity of high-quality technological infrastructure, and the need to communicate expectations (Annosi et al., 2023). Equally important for these generations is avoiding stereotyping. However, many of the differences may in fact be merely a proxy for individuals' current stage of life. This assertion underscores the necessity of implementing flexible and highly personalized benefit packages (Singh et al., 2025).

6 Conclusion

The shift to hybrid work is not merely a temporary response to external changes. It is a lasting transformation of the entire work environment. Our article confirmed that while there

are significant differences in expectations across different generations and this model faces various specific challenges, they are united by a shared need for time flexibility and work-life balance.

While younger generations need a high degree of autonomy and modern technologies, yet at the same time suffer from the paradox of social isolation, older generations value the hybrid work environment primarily as a tool for increasing concentration and maintaining health in the later stages of their careers. Success in such a work arrangement is therefore not determined by blanket regulations, but by companies' ability to tailor and adapt their approaches to the specific requirements of individual generations.

It is clear that traditional, top-down, and one-size-fits-all approaches are no longer sustainable in multigenerational teams. The future, therefore, lies in empathetic, transformational leadership and the personalization of working conditions. One of the most important takeaways, however, remains that organizations should avoid generational stereotypes. Many differences that seem obvious at first glance do not stem from the year of birth itself, but from the employee's current stage of life. Creating an inclusive work environment that respects individual needs and actively supports knowledge sharing is the sustainable key to long-term success in the era of hybrid work.

Acknowledgement

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The Impact of Hybrid Work Arrangements on Employee Well-being

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Abstract

The transition to a hybrid work environment between 2021 and 2026 has brought about significant changes in employees' mental health and well-being. The aim of this article is to identify the main benefits and risks of hybrid work for well-being through a systematic literature review and to analyze HR strategies aimed at mitigating its negative impacts. The analysis includes relevant scientific studies from the Web of Science and Scopus databases, as well as leading global reports and statistics focused on the labor market. The results suggest that hybrid work increases employees' individual well-being but also carries critical risks such as digital fatigue, social isolation, or the blurring of boundaries between work and private life. In this article, we identified key intervention mechanisms at the human resources management level. In the conclusion, we synthesized the findings into practical recommendations, emphasizing that sustainable well-being in a hybrid work environment requires systemic support and psychological safety.

JEL classification: O 15, I 31

Keywords: well-being, hybridné pracovné prostredie, personálne politiky

1 Introduction

In recent years, we have observed significant changes in working conditions and work organization. This transformation is gradually altering traditional work patterns and replacing them with more flexible forms of work (Nagori & Lawton, 2024). These changes are driven by several factors, with the most frequently cited being the development of information technology (Dong et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2025) and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly accelerated this process (Costin et al., 2023; Kesenheimer et al., 2025; Ruvimova et al., 2025).

During the COVID-19 crisis, it was necessary to limit social contact due to lockdowns, which forced many organizations to adopt remote work (Ruvimova et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2025). This forced transition created space for the emergence of a hybrid work model that combines on-site work and work from home (Dong et al., 2025; Eng et al., 2024). Several authors point out that perceptions of hybrid work differ between employers and employees (Eng et al., 2024; Nagori & Lawton, 2024; Trevino Garcia & Christensen, 2025). Employers often express concerns regarding productivity, work control, or organizational culture (Dong et al., 2025; Mateen et al., 2025), while employees particularly value flexibility, a better work-life balance, and more efficient use of time (Candra & Sabtohadhi, 2025; Schweitzer et al., 2025). The authors Dong et al. (2025) therefore describe hybrid work as a “double-edged sword” that brings significant benefits but also new challenges, such as social isolation, digital fatigue, and the blurring of boundaries between work and private life. At the same time, a return to exclusively traditional forms of work—or to the pre-pandemic status quo—seems unlikely, underscoring the need for systematic research into the impacts of the hybrid work model (Schweitzer et al., 2025).

That is why this study aims to identify the key benefits and risks of hybrid work for employee well-being and to analyze HR strategies aimed at mitigating its negative impacts and promoting psychological safety.

2 Current State of the Solved Problem at Home and Abroad

With the rapid development of information technology, significant changes are taking place in the workplace, which are also reflected in adjustments to work arrangements. Events related to the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly accelerated this process, as many organizations were forced to adapt their operations to new conditions and shift work to the home environment (Ruvimova et al., 2025; Schweitzer et al., 2025). This transition has led to a significant expansion of remote work, which is becoming the new standard (Kesenheimer et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2025)

These new work arrangements have become so well-established that a return to the exclusively traditional pre-pandemic arrangements is highly unlikely (Schweitzer et al., 2025). In the current literature, several terms are used to describe these new forms of work, which are often confused, such as remote work, hybrid work, working from home, or telework (Kesenheimer et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2025; Wells et al., 2023). A common feature of these concepts is that work is performed partially or entirely outside the traditional workplace. In practice, these work arrangements take various forms: ranging from a fully remote model to a hybrid arrangement that combines working from home and working in the office (Candra & Sabtohadhi, 2025; Dong et al., 2025; Kesenheimer et al., 2025).

As noted, hybrid work models can be viewed as a double-edged phenomenon that offers significant benefits but also poses risks to employee well-being (Dong et al., 2025). Among the main benefits are, in particular, increased autonomy and flexibility, which allow employees greater control over the time and place of work (Sharma et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2025). This flexibility leads to better adaptation of working conditions to individual needs, which manifests in higher satisfaction and mental well-being (Dong et al., 2025; Mateen et al., 2025). Dale et al. (2024) argue that an appropriate degree of autonomy is associated with lower stress levels and better overall employee health.

Hybrid work also promotes a better work-life balance, particularly due to the elimination of commuting, which saves time and energy that can be devoted to family or personal activities (Costin et al., 2023; Dale et al., 2024; Eng et al., 2024). On the other hand, however, this flexibility also presents several challenges. One significant risk is social isolation, which arises from limited face-to-face interactions and can lead to feelings of loneliness, weakened team cohesion, and deteriorating work relationships (Costin et al., 2023; Dong et al., 2025; Nagori & Lawton, 2024). Another issue is the blurring of boundaries between work and private life, as work encroaches on the home environment and employees struggle to separate their professional and personal roles. This phenomenon is often referred to in the literature as “work–family conflict” and can negatively affect both work performance and employees’ mental well-being (Dong et al., 2025; Nagori & Lawton, 2024).

Changes in work arrangements also affect employees’ physical health. Working from home is often associated with increased sedentary behavior and lower levels of physical activity, as employees do not have to commute to work or move between workspaces. A home workspace that is not ergonomically adapted can lead to physical problems such as back and neck pain or muscle tension (Dale et al., 2024; Eng et al., 2024). In addition to physical aspects, new forms of stress are emerging in connection with hybrid work, such as technostress, which is associated with excessive use of information technology, information overload, and frustration from technical problems (Costin et al., 2023; Kesenheimer et al., 2025; Ruvimova et al., 2025).

Despite these risks, however, hybrid work can positively influence employee motivation and engagement, particularly when employers demonstrate trust and support the development

of their employees' competencies (Eng et al., 2024; Ruvimova et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2025). It should be emphasized, however, that the perception of these benefits and risks is individual and depends on employees' personality traits, their work environment, and the level of organizational support (Ruvimova et al., 2025). From an organizational perspective, it is therefore crucial not only to identify these positives and negatives but also to actively implement measures to mitigate the negative impacts of hybrid work. This requires a shift away from traditional approaches to employee management toward models based on trust, empathy, and a results-oriented mindset. Performance evaluation should not be tied to physical presence in the workplace, but rather to clearly defined goals, performance metrics, and adherence to deadlines (Eng et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2025).

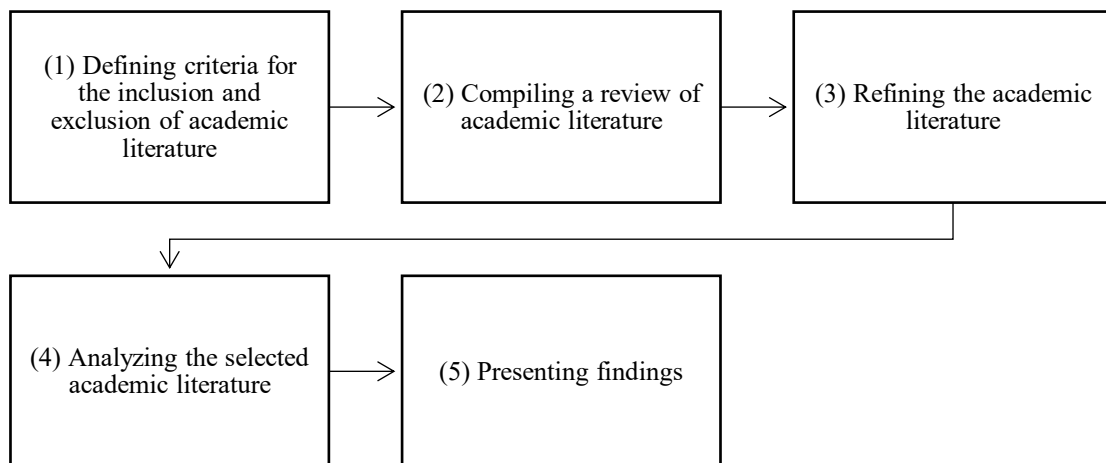
Another important aspect is the method of delegating tasks and building trust between managers and employees; this approach is referred to in the literature as psychological reinforcement, which increases the sense of engagement and fosters intrinsic motivation (Eng et al., 2024). To reduce stress, including technostress, it is essential to develop employees' digital competencies as well as their self-management and time management skills (Eng et al., 2024; Kesenheimer et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2025). At the same time, organizations should implement measures to prevent burnout, such as introducing breaks from working with digital technologies, scheduling "offline" time, or supporting work-life balance (Costin et al., 2023; Dale et al., 2024; Mateen et al., 2025; Ruvimova et al., 2025; Wyatt, 2023).

An integral part of effective hybrid work management is clearly defining the boundaries of work availability, which allows employees to separate work and personal time and prevent excessive workload (Dale et al., 2024; Eng et al., 2024). The sustainability of the hybrid work model thus depends on organizations' ability to create a supportive environment that takes employees' needs into account while promoting their long-term well-being and work performance (Kumari, 2023).

3 Research Design

In conducting this systematic literature review, we utilized a five-step process adapted from Senyo et al. (2019), which follows these steps: (1) Defining inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature, (2) Compiling a list of relevant literature, (3) Refining the literature, (4) Analyzing the selected literature, (5) Presenting the findings (Wegner et al., 2023). This procedure enabled us to obtain sufficient information from the available scientific literature, through which we were able to formulate the main research questions: (1) What are the main benefits and risks of the hybrid work model for employees' mental health and well-being? And (2) What specific HR policies and intervention strategies are effective in mitigating the negative impacts of hybrid work on employee well-being? We supplemented the systematic literature review with statistical data related to the topic under investigation from relevant sources such as WHO, or Eurostat. To enhance the clarity of the systematic literature review process, we have illustrated the individual steps using the following graphic representation:

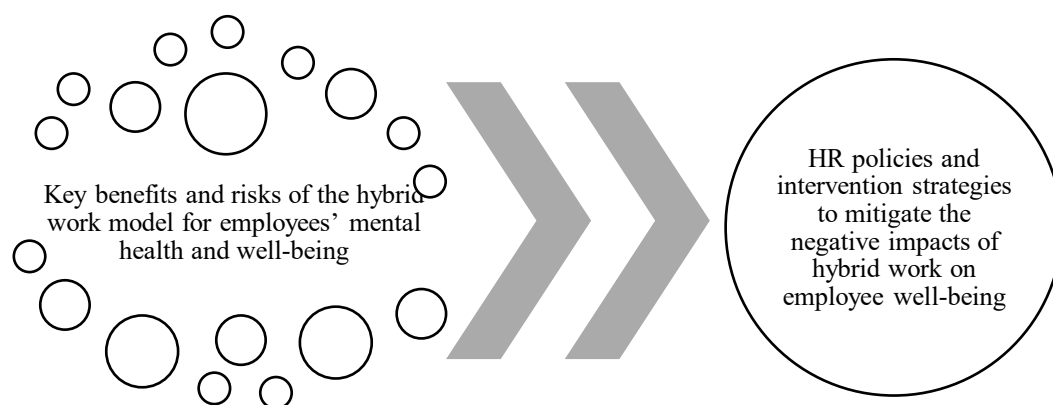
Figure 2 Steps in the process of creating a systematic literature review



Source: own elaboration according to Wegner et al., 2023. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-023-00695-0>

In the first step, we conducted a systematic review of the scientific databases WoS, Scopus, and PubMed. As part of the criteria for selecting relevant literature, we set a time frame from 2021 to 2026 to ensure that the available data was up-to-date. We further excluded theses from the types of studies and retained others, such as systematic literature reviews, meta-analyses, and empirical studies. We then combined the databases and identified unique articles focused on the issue we were examining—the effects of the hybrid work model on employee well-being—divided into two areas of inquiry: (1) The main benefits and risks of the hybrid work model for employees’ mental health and well-being, and (2) HR policies and intervention strategies supporting the mitigation of the negative impacts of hybrid work on employee well-being. As part of the thematic analysis, we identified two key research areas, which we have illustrated graphically below for clarity:

Figure 3 Key research areas



Source: own elaboration

This analysis also drew on statistical data from sources such as Eurostat, WHO, Statista, Gallup, Deloitte, and others, which provided us with a quantitative perspective on the scope and impacts of the issue under examination. This approach enabled us to identify new directions in research. We presented the main results of the systematic literature review in the “Results” chapter, which we organized into two clear tables.

4 Result of the Paper

The results presented here are the outcome of a systematic review of the literature and secondary data focusing on the relationship between the hybrid work model and employees’ mental health. The data synthesis includes 27 scientific publications and expert reports published between 2021 and 2026 that addressed workplace dynamics and employee well-being. To ensure clarity and practical applicability, we have structured the findings into two complementary areas that address the defined research questions.

The first part of the research is presented in Table 1, which focuses on the benefits and risks of the hybrid work model for mental health and well-being. It highlights that this model can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it generates significant benefits for autonomy and flexibility, but on the other hand, it introduces new psychosocial risks that, if not properly regulated, can lead to burnout and social isolation.

The second part of the research is presented in Table 2 and focuses on HR policies and intervention strategies aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of hybrid work on employee well-being. It summarizes which specific HR policies and mechanisms appear to be most effective in mitigating the negative impacts of remote work. The overall overview thus not only provides a description of the current state of affairs but also serves as a strategic framework for the creation of modern support mechanisms to promote mental health.

Table 4 The benefits and risks of the hybrid work model for mental health and well-being

Category	Factor/element	Impact on mental health	Source
Benefits (+)	Autonomy and flexibility	Less commuting stress, greater control over your own time	Candra & Sabtohadhi (2025); Kumari (2023)
Benefits (+)	Work-Life balance	Greater satisfaction thanks to spending time with family	Candra & Sabtohadhi (2025); Kumari (2023)
Benefits (+)	Customizing the environment	Less sensory overload (quiet at home versus open-plan offices)	Ingela et al. (2024); Kumari (2023)
Risks (-)	Digital fatigue	Cognitive overload from constant video calls	Elbogen et al. (2022); Kumari (2023)
Risks (-)	Social isolation	A feeling of loneliness, a loss of	Candra & Sabtohadhi (2025); Shockley et al. (2025)

		organizational belonging	
Risks (-)	Workplace Inclusion	Fear of proximity bias (disadvantage to those who are at home)	Shockley et al. (2025); Kumari (2023)

Source: own elaboration

In their research, Candra & Sabtohadhi (2025) emphasize that autonomy and work-life balance reduce commuting stress and increase overall job satisfaction. However, without social support, too much flexibility can lead to isolation. Kumari (2023) adds to these findings by noting that personalizing the environment reduces the sensory load on the individual compared to open-plan offices. Digital fatigue, however, can cause cognitive overload (Elbogen et al., 2022). Shockley et al. (2025), in turn, identify proximity bias as a key risk, where employees working from home feel a greater sense of disadvantage. Sharma et al. (2025) confirm the flexibility paradox: benefits for employee satisfaction, but also risks of loneliness. The severity of these risks is further underscored by extensive data from Eurofound (2025). These statistical data are based on a sample of 27,200 respondents from the EU-27 countries. The data indicate that overall mental well-being remains at a low level. The WHO-5 index score has worsened since 2020, and more than half of respondents (57%) are at risk of depression in 2025. These results suggest possible persistent stress at the societal and workplace levels.

Table 5 HR policies and intervention strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of hybrid work on employee well-being

Level of intervention	Specific measures, policies	Mitigation objective	Source
Technological	Right to Disconnect	Countering the "always-on" culture and burnout	Singh, (2024); Costin et al., (2023); Mateen et al., 2025
Organizational	No – meeting days	Reducing digital fatigue and promoting deep work	Eng et al., (2024); Sharma et al. (2025)
Psychosocial	Employee Support Programs	Providing anonymous online psychological support	Shockley et al. (2025); Singh, (2024); Mateen et al., 2025
Managerial	Empathetic Leadership Training	Increasing psychological safety within the team	Sharma et al. (2025); Singh, (2024)

Source: own elaboration

Singh (2024) recommends introducing a right to disconnect to improve work-life balance, which would help prevent burnout stemming from an “always-online” culture. On the other hand, Eng et al. (2024) confirm that “no-meeting days” reduce employees’ digital fatigue and promote deep work. Psychosocial programs that provide support, in turn, reduce technostress

(Shockley et al. 2025); Singh, 2024), while Sharma et al. (2025) emphasize the need for training to build empathetic leadership to strengthen employees' psychological safety in hybrid work models.

5 Discussion

The results of this study confirm that the hybrid work model is a complex phenomenon that has both positive and negative impacts on employee well-being, which is consistent with the findings of Dong et al. (2025), who describe hybrid work as a “double-edged sword.”

In terms of positive impacts, our results align with the findings of Candra & Sabtohadhi (2025) and Kumari (2023), who emphasize the importance of flexibility and autonomy for increasing employee satisfaction. Kesenheimer et al. (2025) even note that as the number of remote work hours increases, subjective well-being may also increase, particularly due to better alignment of the work schedule with individual needs.

On the other hand, however, Dong et al. (2025) argue that remote work can lead to burnout, particularly due to the blurring of boundaries between work and private life and the extension of working hours. This discrepancy among authors suggests that the impacts of hybrid work are not clear-cut but are conditioned by the individual needs and characteristics of employees.

Similarly, Eng et al. (2024) point to differing employer preferences, with some favoring the continuation of a hybrid work model, while others prefer the return of employees to the office.

HR policies and managerial approaches also play a significant role, as confirmed by the results presented in Table 2. These findings suggest that measures such as the right to disconnect, meeting-free days, and the promotion of empathetic leadership can significantly help mitigate the negative impacts of hybrid work. These findings are consistent with the recommendations of Eng et al. (2024) and Sharma et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of trust, effective delegation, and employee support in a hybrid work environment.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the hybrid work model does not have a universally positive or negative impact. Its effects depend primarily on management style, the level of organizational support, employees' individual preferences, and their ability to effectively set boundaries between work and personal life.

6 Conclusion

The shift to hybrid work models is no longer just a crisis measure. It is a permanent transformation of the work environment. This transformation has a long-term impact on employees' mental health. Our article confirmed that this model acts as a “double-edged sword.” On the one hand, it offers undeniable benefits in the form of greater autonomy, reduced commuting stress, increased flexibility, and a better work-life balance. On the other hand, however, this environment can generate new psychosocial risks, particularly digital fatigue, social isolation, proximity bias, or the blurring of boundaries between work and private life.

Universal, one-size-fits-all solutions will no longer suffice to mitigate these negative impacts. Organizations must implement targeted intervention mechanisms and HR policies. Respecting the right to disconnect, introducing meeting-free days, providing access to support programs, and transforming management toward empathetic leadership will play a key role.

This article also has methodological limitations. These limitations stem from the systematic literature review. Our findings are directly dependent on the availability, design, and quality of the primary studies analyzed from the period 2021–2026. Many of the studies rely on

respondents' subjective self-assessments and cross-sectional data. It is equally important to take geographical and cultural biases into account.

For future scientific research in this area, we recommend conducting long-term studies that would accurately measure the development of mental health and burnout rates in a hybrid work regime over the course of several consecutive years. Research focused on comparing different national and corporate cultures could also be an interesting area.

Acknowledgement

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Reactive or Proactive? Organizational Responses to Crises Across Different Company Contexts

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Abstract

Crises have become an inherent feature of organizational life, forcing companies to operate under conditions of heightened uncertainty and disruption. Existing research shows that companies respond to crises in diverse ways, ranging from short-term reactive adjustments to proactive and transformative strategies. However, empirical findings on organizational crisis responses remain fragmented across disciplines, contexts, and levels of analysis. The purpose of this article is to synthesize recent empirical research on organizational responses to crises and to identify dominant response patterns and underlying mechanisms shaping companies' behavior under severe disruption. Following the decision-oriented framework proposed by Sauer and Seuring (2023), this study applies a systematic literature review to analyze peer-reviewed journal articles published in the field of management. The review integrates empirical evidence from multiple organizational contexts, with a particular focus on differences in timing, strategic orientation, and learning processes. The findings indicate that organizational responses to crises are best understood along a continuum from reactive to proactive and transformative responses. While reactive measures support short-term stabilization, proactive and learning-oriented strategies are more strongly associated with long-term resilience and performance. Moreover, crisis responses often evolve over time, highlighting the dynamic nature of organizational adaptation and transformation. This review contributes to the crisis management literature by clarifying prevailing response patterns and identifying directions for future research.

JEL classification: M10, M19, D81

Keywords: organizational crisis response, proactive and reactive strategies, adaptation, management

1 Introduction

Crises have become a recurring feature of organizational life, exposing companies to extreme uncertainty and disruption. Financial crises, pandemics, and other systemic shocks not only threaten organizational survival but also challenge established routines, assumptions, and strategic orientations. As a result, organizations are required to respond rapidly and effectively, often under conditions of limited information and high time pressure.

Prior research indicates that organizational responses to crises vary considerably. Some companies adopt reactive responses, focusing on short-term stabilization and damage control, while others engage in proactive or anticipatory actions aimed at mitigating future risks and exploiting emerging opportunities. Crisis responses may involve operational adjustments, financial retrenchment, strategic reorientation, or longer-term transformation of organizational practices and capabilities. Learning processes often underpin these responses, but they do not necessarily lead to sustained change and may remain superficial or context-bound.

Despite growing scholarly attention, the literature on organizational responses to crises remains fragmented across disciplines, crisis contexts, and levels of analysis. Existing studies differ in how they conceptualize responses, emphasize company size and sector, and assess

short-term adaptation versus long-term transformation. Consequently, a systematic synthesis of empirical evidence is needed to clarify how companies respond to crises and which patterns of response dominate under different conditions. The purpose of this article is therefore to review and integrate recent empirical research on organizational responses to crises through a systematic literature review, identifying dominant response types, underlying mechanisms, and key patterns shaping companies' behavior during periods of severe disruption.

2 Data and methods

Within this research, a five-phase systematic review of the literature is performed, utilizing the structural approach defined by Sauer and Seuring (2023) (See Table 1).

Table 6

Procedure for conducting a systematic literature review (SLR)

SLR Step	Key decision	Description	Rationale	Outcome
Step 1: Defining the review scope	Decision 1: Inclusion criteria	Inclusion limited to peer-reviewed journal papers focusing on change management in business and management contexts.	Peer-reviewed journals ensure academic rigor and comparability of findings.	Initial corpus defined.
	Decision 2: Exclusion criteria	Exclusion of dissertations, books, book chapters, and case studies.	To maintain methodological consistency and avoid heterogeneity in evidence types.	Reduced conceptual noise.
Step 2: Identification of literature	Decision 3: Database selection	Use of Web of Science and Scopus.	These databases provide broad coverage of high-quality management journals.	448 unique records retrieved.
	Decision 4: Search string design	Keywords: "change management", "crisis", "management functions", "adaptation".	Keywords reflect core theoretical constructs in the field.	Search strategy defined.
Step 3: Selection and screening	Decision 5: Screening procedure	Title and abstract screening followed by full-text assessment.	Multi-stage screening increases validity and transparency.	Final sample of 15 papers
Step 4: Synthesis approach	Decision 6: Type of synthesis	Narrative and thematic synthesis.	Appropriate due to conceptual	Comparable categories generated.

			heterogeneity of studies.	
	Decision 7: Categorization logic	Papers classified according to management functions addressed.	Aligns synthesis with research question.	Five analytical categories.
Step 5: Reporting and contribution	Decision 8: Type of contribution	Identification of patterns, inconsistencies, and research gaps.	Ensures theory-building contribution rather than summary.	Research agenda proposed.

Source: own processing based on Sauer and Seuring (2023)

3 Research results

This research focuses on how companies respond to crises and how these responses differ in terms of timing, scope, and strategic orientation. The findings indicate that organizational responses range from short-term reactive adjustments to proactive and transformative approaches. Table 2 summarizes the main empirical findings from the most relevant recent studies.

Table 2

Review of literature results

Authors (Year)	Type of organizational response	Main findings
Broekema, van Kleef & Steen (2017)	Context-dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of a single organization across multiple crises. • Responses varied according to the type and phase of the crisis. • No universal response model exists ("one-size-fits-all" response model is non-existent). • Significant impact of organizational structure and culture.
Kyrdoda, Balzano & Marzi (2023)	Reactive vs. proactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMEs). • Reactive responses support short-term survival. • Proactive responses involve innovation and capability development. • Proactivity enhances long-term resilience.
Lefebvre & Osei-Tutu (2025)	Anticipatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of over 31,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). • Prior crisis experiences shaped organizational responses during COVID-19. • Anticipatory behavior instead of purely reactive measures. • Increasing personnel reserves as a key strategic tool.

Andres & Heo (2023)	Adaptive vs. transformative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations initially respond adaptively to immediate disruptions. • Adaptation stabilizes operations in the short term. • Strategic and collective learning emerges subsequently. • This process leads to transformative changes.
Klößner, Schmidt, Wagner & Swink (2023)	Tactical and strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five types of responses identified: operational, digitalization, financial, supportive, and organizational. • Companies responded independently or through collaboration. • Responses were oriented toward both risk mitigation and opportunity exploitation. • The majority of responses had a positive impact on market valuation.
Hu, Yun, Su & Xi (2022)	Capability-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational responses combined financial, cognitive, and behavioral capabilities. • Distinct response combinations varied by enterprise size. • Effective responses led to superior performance during the crisis.
Nava (2022)	Resilience-oriented vs. transformative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinction between response types: resilience, learning from crisis, and learning through crisis. • Learning "through crisis" leads to the expansion of new capabilities. • Crises act as a catalyst for transformative responses.
Liang, Oh & Rowley (2025)	Adaptive and innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprises responded through a combination of adaptive and innovative strategies. • Changes in business models, processes, and human resource management. • Resilience and learning were critical for post-pandemic survival.
Sanchez-Loor, Huynh & Chang (2026)	Reactive vs. proactive risk response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant shift from reactive to proactive responses following COVID-19. • Investments in dynamic risk management. • Responses were contingent on the risk orientation of management. • Proactivity enabled more flexible management of protracted crises.

Source: own processing based on the authors

4 Discussion

The results of the systematic literature review reveal that companies respond to crises in markedly heterogeneous ways, ranging from short-term reactive adjustments to proactive and

transformative responses. Rather than following a uniform pattern, organizational responses appear to be shaped by a combination of contextual factors, prior experience, strategic orientation, and organizational capabilities. The findings therefore challenge the notion of a universal crisis response model and instead support a contingent view of crisis management.

A dominant pattern across the reviewed studies is the distinction between reactive and proactive responses. Reactive responses are primarily oriented toward immediate stabilization and damage control. These responses are typically implemented under high time pressure and uncertainty and tend to focus on preserving existing structures and routines. While such approaches can support short-term survival, the reviewed evidence suggests that reactive responses alone are insufficient to ensure long-term resilience. In contrast, proactive responses aim to anticipate future disruptions, reduce vulnerability, and exploit emerging opportunities. Studies focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises as well as large publicly listed companies indicate that proactive and anticipatory actions—such as capability development, innovation, and strategic repositioning—are more strongly associated with sustained organizational resilience and performance.

Another important insight concerns the temporal dynamics of crisis responses. Several studies (Andres & Heo, 2023; Nava, 2022; Liang, Oh & Rowley, 2025) highlight that companies rarely adopt purely proactive or transformative strategies at the onset of a crisis. Instead, responses often evolve over time. Initial reactions tend to be adaptive and operational, addressing immediate disruptions to ensure continuity. As the crisis unfolds and uncertainty becomes more manageable, companies may shift toward more strategic and collective forms of response. This dynamic progression from adaptation to transformation suggests that crisis responses should be understood as processes rather than discrete actions. The capacity to transition from short-term adaptation to long-term transformation appears to distinguish organizations that merely survive crises from those that emerge stronger.

The findings also underscore the role of organizational capabilities and prior crisis experience in shaping crisis responses. Companies that have previously experienced crises tend to respond more decisively and anticipatorily in subsequent disruptions. Such experience influences managerial expectations, decision-making speed, and willingness to invest in preventive measures. Capability-based perspectives further highlight that effective responses often rely on combinations of financial, cognitive, and behavioral capabilities. Importantly, the reviewed studies indicate that different configurations of capabilities can lead to successful outcomes depending on company size and context, reinforcing the idea that crisis response effectiveness is highly situational.

In addition, the review points to the significance of organizational context and structure. Evidence from both private and public sector organizations demonstrates that responses vary not only across companies but also across different crises within the same organization. Factors such as organizational culture, structural flexibility, and governance arrangements influence how companies interpret crises and select response strategies. This finding further supports the argument that crisis responses are embedded in broader organizational systems and cannot be fully understood in isolation from their institutional and cultural environments.

Taken together, the findings suggest that organizational responses to crises are best conceptualized along a continuum from reactive to transformative. While reactive responses remain necessary, particularly in the early stages of a crisis, they provide limited long-term benefits if not complemented by proactive and learning-oriented actions. Companies that are able to combine short-term adaptability with longer-term strategic reorientation are more likely to build resilience and improve their capacity to cope with future disruptions. This synthesis

contributes to the literature by clarifying prevailing response patterns and highlighting the mechanisms through which companies navigate crises under varying conditions.

4.1 Suggestions for future research

Although recent research provides valuable insights into how companies respond to crises, the findings synthesized in this review also point to several promising directions for future research. First, while existing studies identify distinct response types—such as reactive, proactive, adaptive, and transformative responses—there is a lack of longitudinal research examining how these responses evolve over time within the same company. Future studies could therefore focus on tracking organizational responses across different phases of a crisis to better understand the dynamics and sequencing of response strategies.

Second, the reviewed literature highlights differences in crisis responses across company size and context, yet systematic comparative analyses remain limited. Future research could explicitly compare response patterns between small and medium-sized enterprises and large companies, as well as across sectors, to identify whether certain response strategies are more effective under specific structural or environmental conditions. Such comparative designs would help clarify whether observed response patterns are context-specific or generalizable across organizational settings.

Third, while several studies emphasize the role of organizational capabilities in shaping crisis responses, further research is needed to unpack how specific combinations of capabilities enable proactive or transformative behavior. Future work could investigate how financial, cognitive, and behavioral capabilities interact during crises, and whether these capability configurations differ between short-duration shocks and prolonged crises. This would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of capability-based responses to disruption.

Another important avenue for future research concerns the role of managerial decision-making and leadership characteristics. Although existing studies acknowledge that managerial orientation influences risk perception and response choice, empirical evidence on how leadership cognition, experience, and risk attitudes shape crisis responses remains fragmented. Future research could therefore explore how managerial factors influence the transition from reactive to proactive or transformative responses, particularly in conditions of high uncertainty.

Finally, most empirical studies reviewed in this article focus on major systemic shocks, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic. While this has generated valuable insights, future research should extend the analysis to other types of crises, such as geopolitical disruptions, climate-related events, or industry-specific shocks. Broadening the range of crisis contexts would allow researchers to assess whether identified response patterns persist across different forms of disruption or whether distinct crises provoke fundamentally different organizational responses.

5 Conclusion

This article synthesized recent empirical research on organizational crisis responses, identifying dominant patterns of behavior under conditions of severe disruption. The study yields three primary takeaways. First, organizational responses are not uniform but exist along a continuum ranging from short-term reactive stabilization to proactive and transformative adaptation. Second, crisis response is a dynamic process where initial operational adjustments often evolve into strategic and collective transformations over time. Third, the ability to respond proactively is heavily contingent on organizational context, including firm size, prior crisis experience, and the specific configuration of internal capabilities.

The theoretical contribution of this work lies in the integration of fragmented evidence into a coherent framework that replaces "one-size-fits-all" models with a contingent perspective emphasizing the situational nature of crisis management. A primary methodological limitation of this study is the relatively small final sample of 15 analyzed peer-reviewed articles, which resulted from strict inclusion criteria designed to ensure academic rigor and methodological consistency. For future research, this suggests a need for longitudinal studies to track the sequential evolution of response strategies and to verify their effectiveness across diverse crisis types beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Preferences and Drivers of Hybrid Work: A Study on the Young Generation's Demand for Flexibility

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Abstract

With the arrival of the younger generation on the labour market, the requirements for job offers are also changing, and companies must take this into account when recruiting new employees. While hybrid work arrangements were the exception in the past, they are becoming more of a necessity in today's changing times. The aim of our research was to examine the preferences and reasons for organisations to implement hybrid work models, with a focus on the younger generation and its need for flexibility in the workplace. The research results confirmed the findings of various studies focusing on work flexibility from the perspective of the younger generation, which indicate that the younger the employees, the greater the number of hybrid workdays required. This can serve as a basis for Human Resource Management when implementing measures that support employees' work-life balance and an employee-oriented organisational culture.

JEL classification: M54, J21

Keywords: Hybrid workplaces, Young generation, Human Resources Management,

1 Introduction

While just a few years ago, with older generations, working from home, known as Home Office (HO), was considered a perk rather than a foundational necessity. With the arrival of a younger generation of employees—primarily Gen Z and, to some extent, Gen Y—on the job market, HO is now seen as the norm, and young employees are choosing companies as potential employers based on the offered flexibility. Deloitte's 2023 Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey also revealed that 77% of Gen Z respondents currently in remote or hybrid roles would look for a new job if their employer called for a return to the office full-time (Team Deskpass, 2025).

On the other hand, companies have also had to adapt to the changing demands of job seekers and adopt hybrid work models. According to Gallup, companies that offer flexible work policies report higher productivity and greater retention. Organisations offering flexibility have a better position in the labour market to win the young talent. Those employers that have not adopted the flexible work models in their workplace culture are losing the competitive advantage and are currently struggling with a shortage of young and promising employees (Inc, 2025).

Given these changing employee expectations among the younger generation, we decided to examine the reasons why companies are adopting hybrid work models and how this is affecting the way job offers are tailored to the needs of young employees.

2 Literature review

Today's young employees place a strong emphasis on well-being and work-life balance, which is why they primarily seek flexibility from their employers that meets these needs (Talentnet, 2024). For this reason, we are seeing increased interest in hybrid or flexible work

models in the labour market. When we look at the definitions, we can see that most of the authors see hybrid work as a model where the individuals have the flexibility to work away from a company-based workplace (Giannakoudi et al., 2026), so they can better balance work and personal life (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Hildenbrand et al, 2025). By looking further into it, we can say that workplace flexibility is the capability of employees to decide on where, when, and how they exert control over their tasks (Rastogi et al., 2018). Based on Shahid et al. (2025), a stronger preference for flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid models, can be seen among Gen Z and Millennials, who demand greater flexibility and independence in their work schedules (Stein & Martin, 2015; Rubiano-Moreno et al., 2023) and work autonomy (Putri, 2026). Also, Santillan et al. (2023) point out that the younger generation requires HO or another form of flexible job models. The various reasons for remote work were defined according to the McCartney report from the CIBD survey (McCartney, 2025).

According to a study by the British Standards Institution (BSI) and think tank ResPublica, 37% of respondents preferred hybrid working, while only 16% wanted fully remote jobs and 27% favoured being entirely site-based. But also, 71% of these respondents said that fully onsite jobs should also offer added flexibility, such as core hours or compressed working weeks (Soliman, 2025). This is also an indicator of a changing labour market linked to the growing proportion of young people among the workforce, who desire meaningful work, financial security, and work-life balance. Research shows that 62% of Gen Z prioritise family and relationships, and 48% of Gen Z workers struggle to balance their professional and personal lives. Additionally, 14% prioritize travel and exploration, while 13% emphasize personal interests and hobbies. These expectations can be seen as the foundation for their remote work requirements. Confirmed also by various studies, nearly 45% of Gen Z workers now prefer a hybrid model, working from home 2-3 days per week (Talentnet, 2024), and 80% of employees say they want to work at least two days remotely per week (Smits, 2022). Based on these studies, many organisations are reevaluating their work models and adapting to the changing preferences of the younger generation—by offering flexible work hours, hybrid work models, and open communication—thereby fostering greater employee engagement, productivity, and loyalty. Another reason why they are changing their stance is that rigidity in the organisation removes talent in a free and growing labour market (Lee et al., 2024). They also use various approaches to hybrid work, for example, one day a week as a “Team Office Day” to encourage social interaction, with the other days set aside for focused work at home (Routhelo, 2024). Because the top priorities of younger generations are the flex time and four-day workweeks, which are highly attractive to them (Rahim 2025).

Research further indicates that 73 % of employees who benefit from flexible work arrangements report higher job satisfaction, translating into more than 20 % increase in organisational output (Buba et al., 2024). A Harvard Business School study found that employees with flexible hours reported a 30 % increase in job satisfaction and productivity (Psico-smart, 2024). Alotaibi (2023) mentions that a significant number of employees reported improved performance due to flexible work practices. Also, Bloom et al. (2024) indicate fewer distractions and the same productivity during remote work. Based on Alfalah et al. (2025), flexibility in work arrangements encourages autonomy, which fosters creativity and innovation. Employees who have greater control over their work processes are 40 % more likely to develop and implement innovative solutions (Ishaq et al., 2024; Ma et al., 2024). This indicates that HO can be seen as a benefit for organisations, as well as for employees (Ngoc & Peráček, 2023). A Gallup survey on the preferences of young employees shows that companies that don't offer remote work will pay the price, because on one side, remote work doesn't reduce productivity, and on the other hand, this is what employees demand (Inc, 2025).

However, research also shows that workplace flexibility may bring negative impacts to employees' well-being too (Lee et al., 2024). The line between work and personal life often becomes blurred (difficulties in managing work–family boundaries, such as personal space and workspace), leading to health issues (difficulties in disconnecting when working at home and a higher risk of stress/fatigue) and reduced productivity (difficulties with adapting to flexibility and a lack of schedule/oversight) (Petitta & Ghezzi, 2025). Various authors (Petitta et al., 2021; Wigert & White, 2022) also point out that remote work and physical distance often come with feelings of isolation and disconnectedness from one's workplace and organisation.

As various studies and research show, despite the drawbacks—such as social isolation or health issues like fatigue and increased stress resulting from flexible work—the benefits associated with such work models remain attractive to the younger generation. This is also reflected in the increased importance placed on these factors when choosing a future job or employer. This was also the reason for our study, where we researched the reasons why companies offer hybrid work arrangements.

3 Research design and Methodology

Our research aimed to examine the reasons that lead companies to introduce hybrid working arrangements and the impact these arrangements have in the context of the need to adapt jobs to the requirements of the younger generation of employees entering the labour market, as revealed by Gallup's 2025 survey. We verified the claims based on theoretical assumptions for drawing conclusions and observations.

The basic data collection took place in the form of a questionnaire survey in 2025 in companies operating in the Slovak Republic with more than 100 employees. The sample of companies with more than 100 employees was used to target companies that have standardised procedures for hiring employees and uniform approaches to people management, without, of course, excluding the trend toward individualisation. Companies with more than 100 employees also have an established organisational structure, often including an HR department and defined internal processes (Smerek & Vetráková, 2020). The respondents to our questionnaire survey were HR managers of companies or employees at the management level. A more detailed description of the sample of companies and the number of employees broken down by the degree of implementation of the hybrid work regime can be found in Table 1.

Descriptives				
	Days per week on HO	N	Mean	Median
Number of employees	0 - Office	11	1384.8182	260.0000
	1-2	62	979.6935	490.0000
	3-4	39	1484.4872	600.0000
	5 - Full HO	7	563.1429	150.0000

Table 1 Description of the research sample, number of employees, and usage of hybrid work
Source: Author's own evaluation, 2026

The questions prepared in the questionnaire were based on a theoretical determination of the benefits that a hybrid work regime brings to companies, where we verified the experience of companies with this work regime to confirm or refute the assumptions (McCartney, 2025). Respondents answered on a scale of 1-6, rating their level of agreement with a given statement. The rationale for using a Likert scale with a forced-choice scale with 6 grades defined by Chomeya (2010) was the need to avoid central tendency bias and increase the internal consistency of the dataset (Cronbach's alpha) (Chomeya, 2010). We compared the reasons for

introducing a hybrid work regime in companies that provide HO only 1-2 days a week with those that have opted for a more intensive form and introduced HO 3 or more days a week. When measuring the impacts of hybrid work regimes, we measured the difference between these companies and highlighted their real-life experience. We measured the differences by determining averages, calculating one-way ANOVA for the difference between groups, and then performing a Tukey Post-hoc test to measure the significance of the impact and create all-pairwise comparisons (Abdi & Williams, 2010). Companies that did not implement a hybrid work regime were excluded from the measurements to avoid data distortion.

To examine the preferences of the younger generation of employees, we included questions in the questionnaire examining the average age of the company's employees and compared this data with the degree of implementation of hybrid work regimes by companies based on the author's findings (Santillan et al., 2023). To calculate the significance of the difference, we used the methodological procedures of arithmetic mean and median, describing results, as well as a correlation matrix examining the average age of employees and the intensity of hybrids, as well as linear regression explaining the emerging difference between the intensity of hybrid work arrangements and the age of employees with the calculation of the statistical significance of the result and the weight of the model, taking into account the invariance of other variables (Gelman & Hill, 2006).

4 Results

A total of 121 companies with more than 100 employees from the non-profit sector (1), public sector (11), and private sector (109) participated in the research data collection. Of the total number, 11 companies responded that they do not use a hybrid work regime at all and do not allow employees to work from home. This response mainly concerned public sector companies (7). Private sector companies allow their employees to work from home to varying degrees, although the most common response was implementation 1-2 days a week, i.e., moderate intensity of use (51.4% of the total sample). Of the total group of companies, 32% use a hybrid work regime intensively, i.e., 3 to 4 days a week, with one "Team Office Day" dedicated to team cohesion and the remaining days to concentrated work in a home environment (Rouhelo, 2024). A small group of companies in the survey (6%) are fully in home office mode, i.e., it is no longer a hybrid work regime, but fully remote work arrangements. This group includes companies with fewer employees, where the median is 150 (See Tab 1).

Respondents agreed with the theoretical input and rated the reasons for introducing a hybrid work regime at an average of 3 points or more. We can therefore consider the theoretical claims to be confirmed. The most important reason for implementation is the support of an individual approach to employees' needs and the support of the work-life balance of employees. In these two answers, we do not find a significant difference between companies with weaker and more intensive implementation of hybrid work regimes. The third most important reason for the hybrid regime is the competitiveness of job offers on the labour market, where there is demand for the introduction of HO by employees. HO is becoming a benefit that employees demand (Ngoc & Peráček, 2023). However, it is interesting that the competitiveness of job offers is a stronger reason for companies that use HO less intensively. The hybrid work regime is therefore a benefit for employees, not the overall policy of the organisation in organising the work regime of employees (Jaß et al., 2024). One of the reasons for introducing HO is to reduce the employer's operating costs. Companies agree with this statement, and overall, this point received 3.5532 points. It is noteworthy that for companies with low intensity of hybrid work arrangements, this is not a reason for HO, but companies that make intensive use of HO consider

this reason important and have noted its effects. For a more detailed description of the reasons for HO see Table 2.

REASONS for Hybrid Work Arrangements	Companies using HO 1-2 days / week	Companies using HO 3 and more days / week	Difference based on INTENSITY of HO
Supporting employees' work-life balance	3,5968	4,2340	0,6372
Supporting an individual approach to employee needs	4,0323	4,5319	0,4996
Competitiveness of job offers on the labour market	3,9032	3,8936	-0,0096
The company's environmental goals and reducing emissions	2,8710	3,1915	0,3205
Reduction of the company's operating costs	2,9032	3,5532	0,6500
Increasing employee productivity in work requiring concentration	3,2742	3,5532	0,2790
Increased innovations and innovative behaviour of employees	3,1290	3,4681	0,3391
Reaching a broader labour market	3,5968	3,8511	0,2543

Table 2 Comparison of companies' reasons for hybrid work arrangements

Source: Author's own evaluation, 2026

By capturing the experiences of companies with the effects of hybrid working arrangements, we find several interesting findings. Here, companies with lower and higher intensities of HO use differ significantly, indicating different experiences. However, all the effects observed are more pronounced in companies with a higher intensity of HO use, thus confirming the claims based on theory. The most important impact of hybrid regimes is support of individual approach to employee needs (4.97) and support of work-life balance of employees (4.91). The intensity of agreement is significantly higher than in companies with a lower intensity of HO implementation by almost 1 point (diff 0.9633 and 0.7690), with a p-value of 0.001 and 0.01. The third most important effect is the strengthening of the competitiveness of job offers on the labour market (4.3617), which is a strong factor for both groups of companies (diff 0.42, p-value not significant). Another important effect of hybrid regimes is helping employees focus on work in a home environment, where fewer distractions are expected (Bloom et al., 2024), with a score of 4.1277. The significant difference between the groups of companies indicates a significantly higher positive experience (diff 0.7245, p-value 0.013). For more detailed results, see Table 3.

EFFECTS of Hybrid Work Arrangements	Companies using HO 1-2 days / week	Companies using HO >3 days / week	One Way ANOVA Tukey Post-Hoc Test		
			Mean Difference	p-value	Interpretation
Supporting employees' work-life balance	3,9516	4,9149	-0,9633	<0,001	Accepted
Supporting an individual approach to employee needs	4,2097	4,9787	-0,7690	0,010	Accepted
Competitiveness of job offers on the labour market	3,9355	4,3617	-0,4262	0,260	Not significant
The company's environmental goals and reducing emissions	3,1129	3,8936	-0,7807	0,013	Accepted
Reduction of the company's operating costs	3,0645	3,9362	-0,8717	0,007	Accepted
Increasing employee productivity in work requiring concentration	3,4032	4,1277	-0,7245	0,013	Accepted

Increased innovations and innovative behaviour of employees	3,2742	3,8936	-0,6194	0,052	Not significant
Reaching a broader labour market	3,6290	4,0213	-0,3923	0,413	Not significant

Table 3 Comparison of companies' experience with hybrid work arrangements and their effects
Source: Author's own evaluation, 2026

Aiming to capture the relationship between the age of employees and the introduction of HO in companies, the average age of employees in the company and the number of days allowing employees to take HO were compared. These two variables can be found in the descriptive statistics in Table 4. Companies that do not allow employees to use HO have an average employee age of 41.7 years, with a median of 41.72. Companies with an HO introduced one day a week have an average employee age of 42.23, with a median of 42.5, while other companies have younger employees (37.78-36.42 years). The basic correlation matrix shows us that there is a negative correlation between the age of employees and the intensity of HO use by companies, with a high value of -0.3613, p-value <0.001. Linear regression explains 18.59% of the sample (R^2), where the average age of employees is 41.7 in the companies in the sample, and the intensity of HO use decreases with a p-value of 0.025/0.003/0.034 for 2, 3, and 5 days. For 4 days of use, the p-value is 0.061, which can be defined as statistically insignificant but close to the target p-value of 0.05. When using HO 1 day a week, statistically significant values are not achieved, which cannot be interpreted. In the given research sample, we find a strong positive relationship between the age of employees and the introduction of HO in companies, with a negative correlation, i.e., the higher the number of HO days, the younger the employees work in the company, or young employees positively correlate with the number of HO days introduced in companies.

Descriptives					Model Fit Measures				
	Number of HO days per week	N	Mean	Median	Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	
Employees Average Age	0	12	41.7033	41.7200	1	0.4311	0.1859	0.1505	
	1	28	42.2393	42.5000	<i>Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=121</i>				
	2	34	37.7647	39.5000					
	3	32	36.4875	35.8000					
	4	8	37.2500	37.0000					
	5	7	36.4286	39.0000					
Correlation Matrix					Model Coefficients - Employees Average Age				
	Number of HO days per week				Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Number of HO days per week	Pearson's r	—			Intercept ^a	41.7033	1.4885	28.0168	<.001
	df	—			Number of HO days per week:				
	p-value	—			1 - 0	0.5360	1.7791	0.3012	0.764
Employees Average Age	Pearson's r	-0.3613			2 - 0	-3.9386	1.7314	-2.2748	0.025
	df	119			3 - 0	-5.2158	1.7454	-2.9883	0.003
	p-value	<.001			4 - 0	-4.4533	2.3535	-1.8922	0.061
					5 - 0	-5.2748	2.4523	-2.1509	0.034

^a Represents reference level

Table 4 Results of correlation matrix, linear regression, and model fit measures
Source: Author's own evaluation, 2026

5 Discussion

In conducting our study, we relied on opinion-based variables; in other words, our respondents' answers do not provide evidence in the form of data or numerical figures, which can be considered a limitation of the study. By ensuring a sufficiently large sample size, we were able to partially mitigate this shortcoming.

As can be seen from the results of the questionnaire survey we conducted in companies with more than 100 employees, the data collected confirm that HO is a benefit for both employees and companies. For businesses, HO is particularly beneficial in areas where HO activity is less intense, so they simply adapt to the labour market without changing their organisational structure. On the other hand, for employees, remote work is a benefit in terms of achieving a better work-life balance and reducing the stress associated with daily commuting to the workplace. This confirms theoretical principles as well as several studies that highlight these reasons for HO, particularly among the younger generation of employees.

This assumption was also confirmed by our research, which revealed a positive correlation between the increasing number of HO days and the age of employees. We observed that as the age of employees decreased, the number of HO days increased. This reaffirms existing findings regarding young employees and their preference for work flexibility. Meanwhile, the older generation of employees, who were accustomed to social contact and face-to-face communication, still prefer either full on-site work or are satisfied with just one day of HO.

Results reveal that the reasons for adopting hybrid work models by companies correspond with the earlier studies, which demonstrate a better focus on work in a home environment, with fewer distractions (Bloom et al., 2024), an individual approach to employee needs and support of work-life balance of employees (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Hildenbrand et al, 2025).

Findings also indicate that one of the reasons why companies offer flexible work arrangements is the strengthening of competitiveness in job offers on the labour market, which ensures the attraction of younger employees entering the labour market.

From a theoretical perspective, our findings extend the flexible work and young generation literature by illustrating its impact within the Slovak Republic context, thereby confirming its cross-cultural applicability. The results also contribute to remote work research by showing that flexibility, when aligned with institutional frameworks, can improve the position of companies in the labour market by attracting younger employees.

6 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into HO and how it is perceived by young employees, with a focus on the reasons why companies offer it in Slovakia. The study focuses on the reasons behind hybrid work arrangements by examining companies' experiences with these arrangements and their impacts, taking into account the average age of employees.

According to the findings, younger generations prefer a greater number of flexible workdays. This is confirmed by the results of our study, which found that companies with a younger average employee age offered a greater number of flexible workdays in response to their employees' desire for work-life balance.

In terms of practicality, companies which will attract the younger generation of workforce may use these findings to create more flexible work schedules and cultivate an employee-focused workplace culture. By strategically integrating flexible work models using available technological solutions, companies can improve employee engagement and satisfaction, as well as productivity and organisational competitiveness in the labour market.

In order to maintain the competitiveness of their job offers, organisations must take into account the changing demands of the young workforce and incorporate them into their portfolio, as the labour market is constantly evolving. Companies that fail to adapt to these changes will face labour shortages in the future. This is why it is important to realise that flexible work will

no longer be just a perk, but a basic requirement on the part of job seekers and companies need to take it into account.

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Beyond Efficiency: The Financial Measurement Deficit in AI-HRM A Systematic Review of Patterns, Causes, and a Research Agenda

Ing. Vitin SAWANT, MBA

Abstract

Artificial intelligence adoption in Human Resource Management (HRM) has expanded dramatically, yet a structural paradox characterises the field: organizations invest billions in AI-HRM solutions while the research community produces almost no financial evidence to justify those investments. Synthesizing evidence from four prior systematic literature reviews encompassing 469 empirical studies (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025; Sawant, Blstakova & Durisova, 2025; Sawant, 2025; Sawant & Blstakova, 2025), this paper documents and diagnoses a financial measurement deficit, defined as the systematic failure of AI-HRM research to translate documented operational gains into investment-grade financial evidence. Only 21% of empirical AI-HRM studies report any financial metric (Sawant, Blstakova & Durisova, 2025), despite consistent evidence of 42% hiring cost reductions (Kayusi, 2025; Nusair, 2025), 90% cycle time improvements (Nusair, 2025), and 8.8 percentage-point retention gains (Saha, 2020). The paper identifies five patterns in the deficit, including the finding that only 21% of AI-HRM studies report any financial metric despite documented gains across all HRM domains (Resourcing Practices, Employee Development, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Relations & Communication) studies based on the CRANET methodology. It diagnoses four structural causes of measurement failure — disciplinary orientation toward technical performance, absence of financial translation infrastructure, temporal misalignment between research design and value accrual, and systematic baseline data absence and proposes a prioritised, sequenced research agenda. The central conclusion is that the deficit is not a data problem but a structural design problem, one that requires deliberate methodological intervention rather than incremental improvement.

JEL classification: M12, M15, M51, O33

Keywords: AI-HRM, financial measurement and performance, CRANET HRM domains.

1 Introduction

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping Human Resource Management at a unprecedented scale. With the global AI-HRM market projected to grow from USD 6.05 billion in 2024 to USD 14.08 billion by 2029 at a 19.1% compound annual growth rate, and annual HR technology spending already exceeding \$40 billion, AI-HRM has become a major capital allocation decision for organisations worldwide (The Business Research Company, 2025; Spherical Insights & Consulting, 2024). AI systems now span every core HRM function, from automated recruitment and adaptive learning platforms to AI-driven compensation analytics and sentiment-based employee relations tools, delivering documented operational gains that include 42% hiring cost reductions (Kayusi, 2025; Nusair, 2025), 90% cycle time improvements (Nusair, 2025), and workforce analytics accuracy reaching 72% (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025). The scholarly literature has shown 229% increase in last three years (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025).

Yet beneath this growth lies a structural paradox that the field has acknowledged but never systematically addressed. Despite billions in organisational investment and hundreds of published studies documenting operational improvements, only 21% of empirical AI-HRM studies report any financial metric such as ROI, net present value, cost savings, or monetised

productivity gains (Sawant, Blstakova & Durisova, 2025). Theres and Strohmeier (2023) confirm this pattern in their meta-analysis of digital HRM performance consequences, finding that measurement heterogeneity spanning technical performance scores to Likert-scale perceptions precludes systematic financial synthesis. Prior calls for standardised financial measurement by Chaudhuri et al. (2024) have not produced change, suggesting the problem is structural rather than one of awareness. This paper addresses that structural problem by systematically documenting the financial measurement deficit, identifying its patterns across CRANET HRM domains, diagnosing its structural causes, and proposing a prioritised research agenda for resolving it.

1.1 Research question

This paper is guided by two research questions

RQ1: What patterns characterise the financial measurement deficit in AI-HRM research across HRM domains (Resourcing Practices, Employee Development, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Relations & Communication) and over time?

RQ2: What structural causes explain why AI-HRM research consistently fails to produce financial measurement evidence, and what does this mean for the field?

1.2 Positioning and Contribution

This paper makes three contributions. First, it is the first study to map the financial measurement gap across all four HRM domains (Resourcing Practices, Employee Development, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Relations & Communication) together, drawing on cross-validated data from four independent systematic reviews. While prior studies have noted this gap (Theres & Strohmeier, 2023; Indarapu et al., 2023; Chaudhuri et al., 2024), none has traced it systematically across all HRM domains. Second, it offers the first structured diagnosis of why this gap exists, identifying four distinct, evidence-based causes moving beyond simply observing that financial metrics are missing. Third, it proposes a sequenced research agenda built directly from these causes, specifying what needs to be done, in what order, and with what methods.

2 Current State of the Solved Problem at Home and Abroad

2.1 The Operational Evidence Base in AI-HRM

The AI-HRM literature has produced a substantial accumulation of operational evidence. In resourcing practices, which receives 66% of all research attention, documented gains include recruitment processing time reduction from six days to 2.4 minutes using AI Recruiting Models (Aleisa et al., 2023), Artificial Neural Networks achieving 99% accuracy in candidate evaluation (Amzile et al., 2022), cost-per-hire reduction of 42% from \$6,000 to \$3,500 (Kayusi, 2025; Nusair, 2025), and time-to-hire reduction of 90% (Nusair, 2025). In employee development, adaptive learning systems reduce time-to-competency by 25 to 35% (Sridar, 2023) and training costs by 40% (Adias, 2025). In compensation and benefits, AI-enabled payroll processing cuts processing cycles by 95% (Yabanci, 2023; Shet & Nair, 2022). In employee relations, AI-powered helpdesks reduce inquiry handling costs by 35 to 45% with engagement improvements of 30 to 35% documented (Majumder & Mondal, 2021; Weng & Nanda, 2024).

This evidence base is consistent and growing. However, as Becker and Huselid (1998) established, HR practices generate organisational value only when explicitly linked to broader performance outcomes through identifiable financial pathways. The documented operational gains above imply financial value but do not constitute financial evidence. A 42% reduction in cost-per-hire implies savings, but without documented baseline costs, total cost of ownership,

and longitudinal tracking, it cannot be converted into an ROI figure that a CFO or investment committee can evaluate.

2.2 The Financial Evidence Gap

Several systematic reviews have noted the absence of financial evidence in AI-HRM research without making it their primary focus. Theres and Strohmeier (2023) find that measurement heterogeneity across technical accuracy scores, operational efficiency indicators, and perceptual satisfaction measures prevents systematic synthesis of AI-HRM financial performance. Indarapu et al. (2023) document that AI-HRM machine learning research is predominantly oriented toward technical performance indicators. Pan and Froese (2022) confirm that the financial dimensions of AI-HRM adoption remain undertheorised.

The synthesis of 265 studies (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025) documented AI's operational transformation of all four HRM domains (Resourcing Practices, Employee Development, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Relations & Communication) but found no systematic examination of the financial frameworks organisations use to evaluate these investments. The synthesis of 72 studies (Sawant, Blstakova & Durisova, 2025) found that only 21% reported financial metrics and documented functional asymmetry in financial reporting rates across the domains studied. The synthesis of 62 studies spanning 2000 to 2025 (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025) found that measurement heterogeneity prevents meta-analytical synthesis and cross-organisational comparison. These reviews establish the deficit's existence, magnitude, and distribution, but they have not yet explained its causes or proposed a structured programme for addressing it.

2.3 Research Gap

No study has systematically mapped the financial measurement deficit across all four HRM domains (Resourcing Practices, Employee Development, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Relations & Communication), diagnosed its structural causes using a named typology, or proposed a sequenced research agenda derived from that typology. Existing reviews treat the deficit as a limitation or future research direction. This paper makes the deficit itself the subject of analysis. The distinction is consequential: treating the deficit as a limitation leads to generic recommendations, while treating it as an analytical subject leads to a structural diagnosis and a specific, actionable programme for resolution.

3 The Aim of the Paper, Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter presents the complete methodological architecture of the paper. It states the research aim and questions, explains the research design and its justification, describes the theoretical framework underpinning the analysis, characterises the research sample, specifies the methods of analysis, and defines the inclusion and exclusion criteria and scope boundaries that govern the evidence base.

3.1 Research Aim and Questions

This paper aims to systematically document and diagnose the financial measurement deficit in AI-HRM research by identifying cross-validated patterns across HRM domains (Resourcing Practices, Employee Development, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Relations & Communication) and determining the structural causes that explain why investment-grade financial evidence remains absent from the field. This paper employs systematic meta-synthesis methodology, a structured approach to synthesising findings across multiple completed systematic literature reviews in order to produce higher-order analytical conclusions (Noblit & Hare, 1988; Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). Unlike a primary Systematic Literature Review

(SLR), which identifies and analyses individual empirical studies, a meta-synthesis re-analyses the findings, patterns, and conclusions of completed reviews to identify cross-validated insights that no single review achieves in isolation. The design is appropriate here because the research questions concern patterns and structural causes visible only when multiple independent evidence corpora are compared. It is important to distinguish this meta-synthesis from a meta-analysis: rather than re-pooling raw statistical data to compute aggregate effect sizes, this paper synthesises the documented findings and explanatory conclusions of four completed reviews, grading evidential confidence by the degree of cross-review convergence. Findings consistent across all four reviews are presented with high confidence; findings from two or three reviews carry moderate confidence; findings from only one review are flagged as preliminary.

The four source reviews were selected on the basis of PRISMA-compliant methodology, explicit focus on AI-HRM outcomes relevant to financial measurement, consistent analytical framework application across all four, and complementary coverage spanning different time periods (2000 to 2025), different study populations (62 to 265 studies), and different analytical foci including transformative HRM impact, economic outcomes, financial decision-making, and microeconomic impacts. Together they provide a cross-validated empirical foundation of 469 empirical studies.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The analytical architecture of this paper integrates two established theoretical frameworks, each used diagnostically rather than prescriptively. The HR Value Chain, developed by Becker and Huselid (1998) and elaborated by Ulrich (1997), posits that HR practices generate organisational value through identifiable causal pathways leading to financial outcomes. In this paper, the framework serves as a diagnostic instrument for locating where the financial measurement deficit interrupts this value pathway. More precisely, it enables the identification of distinct points of pathway failure: the specific stages at which the chain from HR practice to monetary outcome breaks down. This moves the analysis beyond simply observing that financial metrics are absent, toward understanding where and why the breakdown occurs.

The CRANET research network's classification of four core HRM domains, namely resourcing practices, employee development, compensation and benefits, and employee relations and communication, provides the structural organiser for mapping how the deficit is distributed across the HRM domains. Established in 1989 and spanning 50 countries, CRANET represents one of the most credible and internationally validated frameworks for HRM classification (CRANET, 2021). Its selection ensures that functional comparisons rest on recognised, empirically grounded HRM taxonomy and enables consistent cross-review synthesis, since all four source reviews use CRANET as their primary functional organizer.

3.3 Research Sample

The research sample consists of the four completed PRISMA-compliant systematic literature reviews conducted on similar core subject, together examining an aggregate corpus of 469 empirical studies published between 2000 and 2025. Table 1 characterises each source review and its specific contribution to this paper's analysis.

Table 1: Research Sample — Four Source Systematic Literature Reviews

Source Review	n	Period	Databases	Analytical Focus	Key Contribution to This Paper
Sawant & Blstakova (2025)	265	2020–2024	WoS, Scopus, Google Scholar	AI's transformative impact on core HRM domains based on CRANET methodology	Operational transformation evidence; functional research distribution

Sawant, Blstakova & Durisova (2025)	72	2015–2025	WoS, Scopus, Google Scholar	Organizational outcomes and economic evidence of AI-HRM	21% financial reporting rate; measurement type hierarchy; functional asymmetry
Sawant (2025)	70	2020–2025	WoS, Scopus, Google Scholar	Financial decision-making frameworks for AI-HRM investment	Investment evaluation methodologies; cost-benefit indicators; temporal misalignment evidence
Sawant & Blstakova (2025)	62	2000–2025	WoS, Scopus, Google Scholar	Microeconomic impacts of digital HRM tools across three technological phases	Three-phase digital HRM evolution; measurement heterogeneity across eras

Source: Authors' own compilation

Geographic coverage across the four reviews is concentrated in North America (approximately 45% of studies) and Europe (approximately 35%), with limited representation from Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. This reflects indexing patterns in Web of Science and Scopus rather than deliberate exclusion and bounds the generalisability of the findings to these institutional contexts.

3.4 Methods of Analysis

Analysis proceeded in three sequential stages. In Stage 1, quantitative pattern data was extracted systematically from each source review's reported findings, including financial reporting rates, functional distribution figures, measurement type frequencies, temporal phase data, and year-on-year publication growth statistics. All extracted figures were tabulated and compared across all four reviews to identify consistent values and divergent values. In Stage 2, structural causes were identified through thematic analysis of the discussion, limitations, and future research sections across all four source reviews. Each section was coded using an open coding approach for any explanatory statement accounting for why financial measurement is absent or inadequate. Codes were grouped iteratively through constant comparison, and each candidate cause was validated by confirming its presence in at least two of the four source reviews. In Stage 3, extracted patterns and causes were synthesised across all four reviews and assigned a confidence level according to the degree of cross-review convergence. The research agenda was then constructed by directly mapping proposed interventions to each identified structural cause.

3.5 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

All four source reviews applied shared foundational criteria: topics related to AI systems and HRM functions; studies published from 2000 to 2025; sources from Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar supplemented by citation chaining; research areas spanning business management, economics, applied psychology, computer science, and social science; peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, and substantive industry reports; and English-language publications. Quality assessment used adapted Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) criteria, with two researchers independently assessing quality in each review.

4 Result of the Paper

This section presents five cross-validated patterns characterising the financial measurement deficit (RQ1), followed by four structural causes explaining why the deficit persists (RQ2).

4.1 Pattern 1: The 21% Financial Reporting Rate

The most fundamental pattern is the overall rate at which AI-HRM studies report financial metrics. Across 72 empirical studies coded for measurement approach in Sawant, Blstakova and Durisova (2025), only 16 studies, representing 21%, reported financial indicators such as ROI, cost-per-hire, payroll error rates, or productivity gains. The remaining 79% reported operational efficiency metrics (64%) or qualitative perception measures (15%). This rate is particularly striking given that the same 72 studies document substantial operational gains, including 42% cost-per-hire reductions (Kayusi, 2025), 90% time-to-hire improvements (Nusair, 2025), and retention gains of 8.8 percentage points (Saha, 2020). The 21% figure is corroborated by Sawant and Blstakova (2025), where financial audits represent a small minority of all documented outcomes, and independently confirmed by Theres and Strohmeier (2023) in their meta-analysis of digital HRM consequences. The consistency across independent datasets gives this pattern high confidence.

4.2 Pattern 2: Functional Concentration Asymmetry

The deficit is not uniformly distributed across HRM domains; however it follows a systematic pattern of functional asymmetry consistent across two independent datasets. Table 2 presents functional distribution data from the 265-study corpus (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025) alongside financial reporting rates from the 72-study corpus (Sawant et al., 2025).

Table 2: Functional Distribution and Financial Reporting Rates Across HRM domains

HRM Domains	Studies (n=265)	Share of Corpus	Financial Metrics Reported (n=72)	Key Documented Operational Gains
Resourcing Practices	175	66%	28% (n=7 of 35)	CPH -42%; TTH -90%; QoH +39.8% (Kayusi, 2025; Nusair, 2025)
Employee Development	92	35%	18% (n=4 of 22)	Training completion +30%; TTComp -25-35%; Training cost -40% (Sridar, 2023; Adias, 2025)
Compensation & Benefits	39	15%	42% (n=5 of 12)	Payroll error reduced; Processing cycle -95% (Yabanci, 2023; Shet & Nair, 2022)
Employee Relations & Communication	9	3.40%	9% (n=2 of 21)	Engagement +35%; Helpdesk cost -35-45%; Absenteeism -36% (Weng & Nanda, 2024; Majumder & Mondal, 2021)

Sources: Sawant & Blstakova (2025); Sawant et al. (2025)

Table 2 reveals two distinct asymmetries. Resourcing practices receive 66% of research attention while employee relations receives only 3.4%, despite both being core HRM domains. More importantly, the financial reporting asymmetry runs counter to the research concentration: compensation and benefits, the least studied function at 15%, shows the highest financial reporting rate at 42%, while employee relations shows the lowest at 9%. This counter-intuitive

pattern reflects the inherent quantifiability of compensation outcomes: payroll errors and processing costs are already expressed in monetary terms and require no translation infrastructure, whereas engagement scores and relationship quality resist direct monetisation. This insight is analytically important because it reveals that the deficit is not simply a function of how much research attention a domain receives, but of whether the outcomes measured in that domain are inherently translatable to financial values.

4.3 Pattern 3: The Three-Tier Measurement Hierarchy

The 72-study corpus (Sawant et al., 2025) reveals a clear three-tier hierarchy in how AI-HRM outcomes are measured, with financial evidence occupying the smallest tier. Table 3 presents this hierarchy.

Table 3: Measurement Type Hierarchy in AI-HRM Research

Measurement Approach	n	Indicators Used	Primary Functional Focus	Core Limitation
Operational Metrics	48 (64%)	Accuracy %; F1-scores; Time-to-hire; Training completion; Attrition prediction	Resourcing (28), Development (12), Compensation (8)	Rarely translated to financial terms; often short-term only
Financial Indicators	16 (21%)	ROI; Cost-per-hire; Payroll error rate; Productivity gains	Resourcing (7), Development (4), Compensation (5)	Sparse; often context-specific case studies
Qualitative / Perception Measures	11 (15%)	Trust; Fairness; Engagement; Ethical acceptance	Employee Relations (9), Resourcing (2)	Weak link to economic outcomes
Mixed Methods	7 (9%)	Surveys + HRIS analytics; Case studies + system logs	Resourcing (3), Development (3), Relations (1)	Underutilised; high resource demand

Source: Sawant et al. (2025)

Operational metrics dominate at 64%, concentrating in the already-dominant resourcing function. Financial indicators appear in 21% of studies but are heavily concentrated in resourcing and compensation, the two functions with the most directly monetized outcomes. Qualitative measures concentrate in employee relations, which explains that function's near-zero financial reporting rate: the dominant measurement approach in the function with the most to prove financially is the approach least capable of producing financial evidence. Mixed methods, which could bridge operational and financial measurement through triangulation, are used in only 9% of studies despite their potential to generate both types of evidence simultaneously.

4.4 Pattern 4: Temporal Evolution Across Three Digital HRM Phases

The 62-study corpus spanning 2000–2025 (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025) reveals that the financial measurement deficit has evolved and worsened across three identifiable phases of digital HRM development. In the Foundational HRIS Era (2000 to 2010), financial measurement was relatively straightforward: basic automation achieved 15 to 25% cost reductions through administrative time savings with clear before-and-after comparisons (Udomphol & Siengthai, 2016; Driessen et al., 2015). In the Cloud Integration Era (2010 to 2020), efficiency gains increased to 30 to 40% (Bondarouk et al., 2017), but multi-system integration made cost attribution harder and the growing use of perceptual satisfaction measures began to dilute the financial evidence base. In the AI Acceleration Era (2020 to 2025),

operational gains reached 70% efficiency rates and 90% cycle time reductions (Mwita & Kitole, 2025; Nusair, 2025), but financial measurement capability has not kept pace. Cross-sectional study designs now dominate 87% of studies (Sawant, 2025), and the rapid expansion of generative AI applications has introduced new measurement challenges faster than the field can develop financial evaluation methodologies. The temporal pattern is clear: as AI-HRM operational capability has accelerated, the financial measurement infrastructure has failed to keep pace, producing a growing gap between what the technology achieves and what the research community can financially evidence.

4.5 Pattern 5: Publication Acceleration Without Financial Deepening

AI-HRM research has grown dramatically in volume: from 21 papers meeting inclusion criteria in 2020, to 24 in 2021, to 44 in 2022, to 69 in 2023 which is 229% increase in three years (Sawant & Blstakova, 2025). However, this growth is not accompanied by deepening of financial measurement capability. The 21% financial reporting rate documented in the 72-study corpus reflects studies spanning 2015–2025 suggesting the rate has remained broadly stable even as publication volume has tripled. The field produces more of the same kind of evidence rather than the difference that financial decision-making requires. This pattern implies that the financial measurement deficit cannot be resolved simply by waiting for the field to mature; it requires explicit, targeted methodological intervention.

4.6 Structural Causes of the Financial Measurement Deficit (RQ2)

Four structural causes explain why the deficit persists. These are causes of measurement failure, not claims about AI-HRM financial performance. The absence of financial measurement does not confirm the absence of financial value; it confirms only the absence of the research infrastructure needed to produce such evidence.

Cause 1: Disciplinary Orientation Toward Technical Performance

The most pervasive cause is a disciplinary orientation embedded in how AI-HRM researchers conceptualise their dependent variables. Sawant, Blstakova and Durisova (2025) document that 64% of studies use operational or technical metrics as primary dependent variables, with financial outcomes treated as secondary derivatives. This reflects the disciplinary backgrounds of AI-HRM researchers: the field sits at the intersection of computer science, organisational behaviour, and HR management, none of which has a strong tradition of financial performance measurement in the capital budgeting sense that CFOs and investment committees require. Studies are designed to answer operational questions rather than financial questions, and until journal editors begin requiring financial outcomes as primary variables in AI-HRM studies, this cause will persist regardless of what practitioners need.

Cause 2: Absence of Financial Translation Infrastructure

Even researchers oriented toward financial outcomes face a second structural barrier: the field lacks standardised methodologies for translating operational AI-HRM metrics into monetary values. Sawant, Blstakova and Durisova (2025) document that this infrastructure deficit manifests across four specific domains: isolated metrics without total cost of ownership calculations; efficiency gains that remain 103nmonetized because no standard labour-cost conversion methodology exists; productivity improvements reported as time savings without monetary conversion; and long-term performance metrics underdeveloped, lacking multi-year retention valuation and learning curve monetisation. Unlike manufacturing productivity or marketing analytics, AI-HRM lacks the validated conversion formulas that would allow a researcher to translate a 90% reduction in time-to-hire into a monetised financial figure comparable across organisations.

Cause 3: Temporal Misalignment Between Research Design and Value Accrual

A third structural cause is the mismatch between the time horizons over which AI-HRM value accrues and the time horizons captured by dominant research designs. Sawant (2025) documents that AI-HRM value accrues across three distinct temporal phases: immediate returns (0 to 18 months) through direct cost reductions; medium-term returns (12 to 36 months) through efficiency gains; and long-term strategic returns (36 or more months) through capability development and competitive positioning. Yet 87% of AI-HRM studies employ cross-sectional designs capturing only a single time point, typically in the immediate post-implementation period (Sawant, 2025). This misalignment systematically undercounts financial value by excluding the medium and long-term returns that constitute the majority of AI-HRM's economic contribution.

Cause 4: Systematic Baseline Data Absence

Financial measurement requires pre-implementation baseline data against which post-implementation outcomes can be compared, and most AI-HRM studies lack this. Without documented baseline costs, processing times, error rates, and performance levels, it is mathematically impossible to calculate ROI, payback periods, or NPV even when post-implementation data is excellent. Sawant, Blstakova and Durisova (2025) identify this explicitly. Devaraju (2024) corroborates it in the context of AI-powered HRM financial systems, finding that 47.2% efficiency improvements and 31.4% budgetary accuracy enhancements cannot be converted to investment metrics because no documented baseline exists. Until research protocols systematically require baseline data collection as a precondition for publication, this cause will persist independently of researcher intent.

The Interaction of Causes

These four causes do not operate independently; they interact and reinforce each other in ways that make the deficit self-perpetuating. Disciplinary orientation (Cause 1) produces studies that do not collect baseline data (Cause 4). The absence of translation infrastructure (Cause 2) makes financial measurement appear more difficult, reinforcing the disciplinary orientation (Cause 1). Cross-sectional designs (Cause 3) reduce incentives to develop translation infrastructure (Cause 2). The result is a mutually reinforcing system of structural barriers that will not be resolved by incremental improvement to individual studies. It requires a coordinated, multi-level intervention which the research agenda in Chapter 5 is designed to provide

5 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This paper makes three theoretical contributions. First, it advances measurement theory in AI-HRM by providing the first typological diagnosis of why financial measurement fails, moving from the descriptive observation that the deficit exists to an explanatory framework of four named, evidenced, and analytically distinct structural causes. This typology provides researchers with a diagnostic tool: when designing an AI-HRM financial study, they can assess which of the four causes their design addresses and which it leaves unresolved. Second, the paper contributes to the methodology of systematic meta-synthesis in HRM research (Noblit & Hare, 1988; Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009) by demonstrating its value for identifying cross-validated patterns that are invisible within any single review corpus. Third, it operationalises the HR Value Chain framework (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Ulrich, 1997) as a diagnostic instrument rather than a prescriptive model, advancing its practical utility for research design.

5.2 Practical Implications

For researchers, the most immediate implication is the call to begin baseline data collection as a low-cost, high-impact intervention. Any research team planning an AI-HRM implementation study can adopt this principle without waiting for field-level standards to be established. For journal editors and professional associations, the paper identifies a specific leverage point: requiring financial metrics as primary or co-primary dependent variables in empirical AI-HRM studies would address Cause 1 at the field level and create demand for the translation infrastructure and longitudinal protocols that Causes 2 and 3 require. For practitioners, particularly CFOs and CHROs, the 21% financial reporting rate is not evidence that AI-HRM delivers poor financial returns. It is evidence that the research community has not yet developed the tools and protocols to produce credible financial evidence. Organisations that document their own pre- and post-implementation financial data contribute directly to closing the deficit and generate competitive intelligence that the published literature cannot yet provide.

5.3 Research Agenda: A Prioritised, Sequenced Programme

The research agenda is derived directly from the four structural causes, with each priority targeting a specific cause and specifying a methodology and success criterion.

Priority 1: Establish community standards for financial dependent variables in AI-HRM research through collaboration among journal editors and professional associations (SHRM, CIPD, EURAM). Success criterion: adoption of financial metric requirements by at least three leading HRM journals within five years.

Priority 2: Develop and empirically validate conversion formulas for the most common AI-HRM operational metrics, including a labour-cost methodology for monetising time-to-hire reductions, a productivity-ramp model for time-to-competency improvements, an engagement-productivity elasticity formula, and a turnover cost model for retention improvements. These protocols must be validated against real organisational financial data. Success criterion: validated conversion formulas for all four major AI-HRM operational metric types within three to five years

Priority 3: Establish funded, multi-year research programmes tracking AI-HRM financial returns across all three temporal phases. The Slovak enterprise network established in Sawant and Blstakova (2025), encompassing 238 companies, provides an initial empirical platform. Success criterion: at least three published longitudinal AI-HRM financial studies covering all three value accrual phases by 2030.

Priority 4: Develop standardised Baseline Data Collection Templates specifying which cost and performance metrics must be documented before implementation begins. Success criterion: adoption by at least two major HRM research consortia and one professional association within three years.

The priorities are sequenced deliberately. Priority 4 should begin immediately as it requires no prior framework and creates the data infrastructure that all subsequent financial measurement depends on. Priority 1 should proceed in parallel, as changing journal norms requires long lead times. Priority 2 depends on baseline data availability and established research demand, while Priority 3 depends on both translation infrastructure and baseline data. Early investments in Priorities 1 and 4 therefore create the preconditions for the more resource-intensive work of Priorities 2 and 3

6 Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This paper has documented, mapped, and diagnosed a structural paradox at the heart of AI-HRM research: a field producing abundant operational evidence and almost no financial evidence, despite the financial nature of the decisions it is meant to inform. The five patterns, the 21% financial reporting rate, functional concentration asymmetry, three-tier measurement hierarchy, temporal evolution across digital HRM phases, and publication acceleration without financial deepening, collectively paint a precise portrait of the deficit's scope and character. The four structural causes explain why the deficit persists and point directly to the interventions required. These causes interact and reinforce each other, making the deficit self-perpetuating in the absence of coordinated multi-level intervention. The core conclusion is that this is a structural design problem requiring deliberate methodological intervention. With annual HR technology spending exceeding \$40 billion and the AI-HRM market approaching USD 14 billion by 2029, organisations are making major capital allocation decisions with almost no investment-grade financial evidence to guide them. Going beyond efficiency is not a theoretical aspiration for AI-HRM research; it is a practical necessity for the organisations investing in it.

6.2 Recommendations for Researchers

Based on the structural cause typology and the research agenda, five specific recommendations are directed at the research community:

Begin collecting pre-implementation baseline financial data immediately — this is the single most impactful, lowest-cost intervention available to any individual research team today.

Prioritise mixed methods designs that combine operational measurement with financial translation, particularly in the underresearched employee development and employee relations domains.

Engage with the longitudinal research consortium model, particularly within the Central European and emerging market contexts that are systematically underrepresented in current evidence.

6.3 Recommendations for Practitioners

Document pre-implementation baselines systematically such as current cost-per-hire, time-to-hire, training costs, payroll error rates, engagement scores before any AI-HRM implementation begins. This data is the foundation for any credible post-implementation ROI assessment.

Recognise that the sparse financial evidence base reflects research community limitations, not AI-HRM's lack of financial value. Organisations that document their own financial outcomes contribute to closing the deficit and generate competitive intelligence that the published literature cannot yet provide.

Apply multi-horizon investment evaluation: separate immediate cost reduction (0–18 months), medium-term efficiency gains (12–36 months), and long-term strategic value (36+ months) in financial projections, using scenario analysis and probability-weighted returns.

Treat ethical governance costs eg. Bias auditing, explainability compliance and change management as integral to total cost of ownership calculations rather than discretionary additions.

6.4 Limitations

This paper carries several important limitations. As a meta-synthesis of prior reviews rather than an independent primary SLR, it inherits all limitations of its four source reviews, including geographic concentration in North America and Europe, English-language publication bias,

predominance of cross-sectional designs, and potential publication bias toward successful implementations. The four source reviews, while independently conducted, share the same research team, introducing the possibility that consistent analytical blind spots are carried across all four. The structural causes identified are derived through thematic analysis of discussion and limitations sections, producing plausible explanatory hypotheses rather than causally established mechanisms

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Managerial Approaches to Team Leadership in a Hybrid Work Environment: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze the transformation of managerial approaches in the context of a hybrid work environment and to identify the key factors influencing effective team leadership. The research is based on a systematic literature review conducted through the analysis of 18 scientific studies published between 2020 and 2025. The main research question is: What managerial approaches and key factors influence effective team leadership in a hybrid work environment? The findings point to the absence of a universal managerial approach and emphasize the need for a combination of different leadership styles, particularly transformational, transactional, and empowering approaches. Key factors include, in particular, communication, trust, autonomy, and support for employees' mental health. At the same time, several challenges were identified, such as social isolation, temporal and geographical distance, and disruption of the work-life balance. The study's results contribute to a better understanding of the specifics of leadership in a hybrid work environment and highlight the need for adaptive and flexible managerial approaches

JEL classification: *three JEL codes maximum; example: M12, O33*

Keywords: *managerial approaches, hybrid work environment, e-leadership*

1 Introduction

In recent years, the workplace has undergone dynamic and fundamental changes triggered by the global COVID-19 crisis (Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024). This situation has led to restrictions on social contact and the implementation of lockdowns by governments, which has had an immediate impact on the functioning of the workplace (Coetzee et al., 2025; Leonardi et al., 2024).

Professions whose nature of work allowed it shifted to working from home to minimize personal contact among employees. Such a sudden transition posed a significant challenge for organizations, as many of them were not sufficiently prepared for this change (Efimov et al., 2022; Peristera et al., 2025). As a result, it was necessary to adapt quickly to the new conditions and master effective ways of operating in an online environment. In the context of these events, as well as the parallel development of digital technologies, new forms of work organization have gradually become the standard (Hajjami & Crocco, 2024; Kim & Yoon, 2025)

Even after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations have retained hybrid work models. Although this does not always involve a fully remote setup, the hybrid work model has become a common feature of how many companies operate (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Leonardi et al., 2024). Although hybrid models existed before the pandemic, their use was less common. However, organizations today face several challenges associated with this transformation, particularly in the area of people management and leadership (Coetzee et al., 2025).

These changes have also required an adaptation of leadership styles, which must reflect the new working conditions (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Efimov et al., 2022; Luring &

Jonasson, 2025) while providing adequate support to employees in a hybrid environment (Avrillia et al., 2025; Kim & Yoon, 2025). The aim of this article is therefore to analyze key aspects of leadership in a hybrid work environment, identify the main approaches, and highlight the barriers that arise in this area.

2 Current State of the Solved Problem at Home and Abroad

Hybrid work has established itself in recent years as the dominant model of work organization for employees whose job roles allow for remote work. According to Gallup (2026), approximately 52% of these employees work in a hybrid model, while a smaller proportion work exclusively remotely or exclusively in the office. The stability of these proportions suggests that the hybrid model is ceasing to be a temporary solution and is becoming a long-term standard of the modern work environment.

Hybrid work is most defined as a combination of working from home and from the workplace or office (Avrillia et al., 2025; Luring & Jonasson, 2025; Leonardi et al., 2024). In practice, however, there are several variations and terms for this way of working, such as telework, working from home, remote work, or virtual work (Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024; Leonardi et al., 2024). Although there are certain differences between these terms, they share a common characteristic consisting of the use of information and communication technologies and flexibility in the location of work (Choudhary & Brookes, 2025; Peristera et al., 2025). At the same time, managing and leading teams in such a work environment requires different approaches compared to traditional forms of management (Avrillia et al., 2025; Ghosh et al., 2025).

The key elements of managerial approaches to team leadership in a hybrid work environment, on which several authors agree, include communication, trust, delegation of authority, autonomy, digital literacy, and support for mental health (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Kim & Yoon, 2025; Peristera et al., 2025). Communication is considered one of the most important aspects of managing hybrid work and should be open (Leonardi et al., 2024), transparent (Avrillia et al., 2025), empathetic, and based on mutual respect (Hajjami & Crocco, 2024).

Trust from managers toward employees plays an equally significant role. Excessive control can lead to increased pressure and have a negative impact on both work performance and overall employee satisfaction (Choudhary & Brookes, 2025; Hajjami & Crocco, 2024). Closely related to trust is the delegation of authority and the promotion of autonomy, which contributes to the development of employees' independence and proactivity (Avrillia et al., 2025; Maheshwari et al., 2025).

Since hybrid work is largely facilitated by information and communication technologies (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Efimov et al., 2022), digital literacy and the development of digital competencies are essential components, not only for managers but also for employees themselves (Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024; Leonardi et al., 2024). While digital technologies offer numerous benefits, such as flexibility, efficiency, and easier access to information, they can also have negative impacts on individuals' mental well-being. For this reason, it is important to focus on supporting employees' mental health, particularly by maintaining a work-life balance. Managers should demonstrate empathy and take an active interest in the mental well-being of their employees (Avrillia et al., 2025; Hajjami & Crocco, 2024; Mohase et al., 2025).

In the context of hybrid work, several managerial approaches to employee management can be identified. Traditional forms of leadership prove inadequate in a hybrid work environment, as they fail to reflect its specific characteristics and dynamics (Kim & Yoon, 2025; Maheshwari

et al., 2025; Wallo et al., 2025). Modern managerial approaches should therefore be flexible, resilient, adaptable, and agile, and it is essential that they be able to respond effectively to changing conditions in the work environment (Avrillia et al., 2025; Choudhary & Brookes, 2025; Kim & Yoon, 2025). One relevant approach is hybrid leadership, which combines elements of transformational and transactional leadership styles (Ghosh et al., 2025). Another significant approach is empowering leadership, characterized by the delegation of authority, the provision of autonomy, and the promotion of employee motivation (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Choudhary & Brookes, 2025). E-leadership focuses primarily on building trust and ensuring effective communication in an online environment (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024; Maheshwari et al., 2025). Inclusive leadership emphasizes fostering a sense of belonging, creating psychological safety, and promoting the overall well-being of employees (Maheshwari et al., 2025; Mohase et al., 2025).

Despite the benefits of these managerial approaches, several barriers and challenges arise in a hybrid work environment that complicate their effective implementation in practice. Among the most significant are differences in time zones, varying work schedules, and geographical distance, which can lead to national and cultural differences (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Efimov et al., 2022; Leonardi et al., 2024). Other significant factors include employees' social isolation, disruption of the work-life balance, as well as other related aspects affecting team functioning in a hybrid environment (Coetzee et al., 2025; Leonardi et al., 2024; Peristera et al., 2025).

3 Research Design, Research Methodology and Methods

This study employs a systematic literature review methodology, based on the recommended framework for systematic reviews in the field of management proposed by Sauer and Seuring (2023). This framework consists of six main steps:

1. formulating the research question,
2. defining publication selection criteria,
3. searching for and selecting sources,
4. synthesizing the literature and identifying key findings,
6. presentation of results (Sauer & Seuring, 2023).

In the first step, the research question was formulated: *“What managerial approaches and key factors influence effective team leadership in a hybrid work environment?”* To better define it, the question was divided into two sub-questions: (1) what managerial approaches are most commonly applied in a hybrid work environment, and (2) what key factors influence the effectiveness of team leadership in this environment.

Subsequently, criteria for selecting relevant scientific publications were established, which formed the basis of the selection process. The criteria are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Criteria for the Selection of Scientific Publications

Criteria	Specification
Time period	2020 – 2026
Databases	Web of Science, a Scopus

Keywords	“hybrid work”, “hybrid workplace”, “leadership”, “e-leadership”, “virtual teams”, “remote work”, “management”
Language	English

Source: author’s own elaboration

Based on these criteria, a systematic literature search and subsequent selection process was conducted. During the selection process, duplicate records were excluded, as were publications that did not align with the study’s thematic focus or research objective.

An analysis of the selected scientific sources, consisting of 18 studies, led to the identification of three main thematic areas: a) managerial approaches and leadership styles applied in a hybrid work environment, b) factors influencing the effectiveness of team leadership (e.g., communication, trust, autonomy, and mental health), and c) challenges and barriers related to the implementation of hybrid work. These thematic areas were subsequently systematically organized and compiled into clear tables to ensure better orientation and interpretation of the results.

4 Result of the Paper

The presented results are the outcome of a systematic literature review, supplemented by statistical data that highlight their practical application and relevance. The results are divided into two main sections. The first section addresses the most frequently identified managerial approaches in the context of a hybrid work environment, while the second section focuses on key aspects and challenges related to the transformation of the work environment and highlights differences compared to traditional approaches. The findings were summarized in three tables to ensure clarity and facilitate navigation when addressing the research questions.

Based on the scientific articles reviewed, we have compiled an overview of the leadership styles and approaches most commonly used in hybrid and virtual environments. This overview is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The Most Commonly Used Management Approaches and Leadership Styles in Hybrid Work

Management Approach or Leadership Style	Description	Authors
Hybrid Leadership	Elements of transformational and transactional styles	(Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024; Ghosh et al., 2025)
Empowering Leadership	Delegating authority, promoting employee autonomy and accountability	(Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Choudhary & Brookes, 2025; Kim & Yoon, 2025)
E-leadership	Leadership facilitated by digital technologies, focused on building trust and effective online communication.	(Efimov et al., 2022; Girardi et al., 2025; Li & Xiao, 2023; Maheshwari et al., 2025)
Inclusive leadership	Promoting a sense of belonging and psychological safety.	(Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Maheshwari et al.,

		2025; Mohase et al., 2025)
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Source: author's own elaboration

According to Ghosh et al. (2025), transformational and transactional leadership styles should form the basis of hybrid approaches to team management. Kim & Yoon (2025) emphasize the need to delegate authority, provide autonomy, and foster employee accountability in a hybrid work environment. At the same time, they highlight the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation and engagement. Another relevant approach is e-leadership, which, however, is not uniformly defined in the literature. Nevertheless, Li & Xiao (2023) state that the achievement of both individual and organizational goals in this model occurs through the effective use of information technologies. Finally, inclusive leadership emphasizes psychological safety, reducing social isolation, and strengthening a sense of belonging within the team (Mohase et al., 2025).

Table 3 Key Elements of Effective Leadership in a Hybrid Work Environment

Key elements	Description	Authors
Open and Clear Communication	Transparent communication is essential for team alignment, preventing misunderstandings, and overcoming the barriers of distance.	(Leonardi et al., 2024; Maheshwari et al., 2025; Mohase et al., 2025)
Building Trust	A shift from direct physical supervision to building trust and supporting employee autonomy.	(Avrillia et al., 2025; Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024; Hajjami & Crocco, 2024)
Supporting well-being and empathy	Empathetic and compassionate leadership with an emphasis on maintaining a work-life balance.	(Efimov et al., 2022; Girardi et al., 2025; Peristera et al., 2025)
Empowerment and autonomy	Delegating decision-making authority and reinforcing accountability for meeting deadlines and delivering results.	(Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Coetzee et al., 2025; Hajjami & Crocco, 2024; Kim & Yoon, 2025)
Digital literacy	Enables leaders to effectively use technology to coordinate tasks and build relationships in a digital environment.	(Avrillia et al., 2025; Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Krehl & Büttgen, 2022)

Source: author's own elaboration

The most frequently identified fundamental element of leadership in a hybrid environment is open and clear communication. Leonardi et al. (2024) note that open and regular communication with the team fosters a sense of connection and collaboration. Closely related to this is the building of trust, which represents a significant shift from traditional approaches. We are moving away from direct control toward trust and employee autonomy (Avrillia et al., 2025). Building trust is also linked to delegating authority and assuming responsibility (Kim & Yoon, 2025). At the same time, hybrid work brings with it the need to consistently maintain a balance between work and private life, as blurring the boundaries between them can have a negative impact on employees' well-being (Peristera et al., 2025). Last but not least, a leader's digital literacy plays a significant role. According to Krehl and Büttgen (2022), the effective

use of digital technologies enables not only faster task coordination but also relationship-building in the digital environment.

The transition to hybrid work models is also associated with several challenges that managers must overcome to ensure effective team management. These challenges are listed in Table 4.

Table 4 Challenges of Hybrid Team Management

Challenges	Description	Authors
Time and geographical distance	Problems with task coordination, different time schedules	(Girardi et al., 2025; Kim & Yoon, 2025; Lauring & Jonasson, 2025)
National and cultural diversity	Cultural diversity makes it more difficult to build team identity and individual motivation, as effective approaches differ.	(Avrillia et al., 2025; Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024; Lauring & Jonasson, 2025)
Social isolation	The leader must compensate for the lack of personal contact, actively maintain relationships, and create equal opportunities for remote employees.	(Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Efimov et al., 2022; Peristera et al., 2025)
Blurring of work–life boundaries	The manager takes on the role of a “border keeper,” who must define norms of availability to prevent employee burnout.	(Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Coetzee et al., 2025; Leonardi et al., 2024; Peristera et al., 2025)

Source: author’s own elaboration

In teams operating in a hybrid environment, leaders often find themselves managing a diverse group of employees from different parts of the world. In addition to coordinating time zones and aligning work schedules, they also face another significant challenge: national and cultural diversity (Leonardi et al., 2024). This can complicate communication, collaboration, and the development of a unified team identity. In addition to these geographical and time-related challenges, it is important for managers to actively maintain contact with remote employees, just as they do with those in the office, and to ensure equal opportunities for engagement and development (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025). Peristera et al. (2025) also emphasize the manager’s role as a “border keeper” who sets availability standards to prevent employee overload and burnout in a hybrid environment.

5 Discussion

The aim of this systematic literature review was to synthesize current knowledge on leadership transformation in a hybrid work environment. Several authors agree that leadership and human resource management play a key role in implementing changes associated with this work model. Lauring & Jonasson (2025) point out that hybrid work is not clearly defined, which can lead to ambiguities and complications when applying it in practice. Bauwens & Cortellazzo (2025) also address this issue, noting that the concept of e-leadership lacks a uniform definition and clearly defined scope.

The findings of this review also indicate that there is no single universal managerial approach in a hybrid work environment. Avrillia et al. emphasize the importance of hybrid

leadership as a key approach to team management that reflects the need for flexibility and adaptation. This view is also supported by Ghosh et al. (2025), who argue that so-called hybrid leaders—capable of integrating transformational and transactional behavior—achieve the highest effectiveness. Coetzee et al. (2025) reach the same conclusion, highlighting the necessity of combining both styles to navigate the complex conditions of the modern work environment. On the other hand, Kim & Yoon (2025) complement this perspective by emphasizing empowering leadership, highlighting the importance of delegating authority and supporting autonomy, which, in a hybrid environment, replace direct supervision and foster team agility.

Nevertheless, several key elements essential for the effective management of hybrid teams have been identified. The most frequently emphasized element is communication. Avriilia et al. highlight the importance of open and transparent communication in maintaining employee engagement and motivation, while Ebojoh & Högberg (2024) add that communication should be not only clear but also sensitive, as mishandling it can lead to a breakdown in team cohesion. Leonardi et al. also emphasize that effective communication is closely linked to trust, and that managers should foster an open communication environment and trust their employees.

On the other hand, insufficient or poorly managed communication can lead to a number of negative outcomes, such as mistrust, social isolation, uncertainty, or emotional exhaustion among employees, which represent significant challenges in a hybrid work environment (Coetzee et al., 2025; Leonardi et al., 2024).

Overall, it can be concluded that leadership in a hybrid work environment requires a comprehensive and flexible approach that combines various leadership styles while reflecting the specific characteristics of a digital and geographically dispersed work environment.

6 Conclusion

The transformation of the workplace toward hybrid models presents new challenges for leaders in managing teams. Based on the studies reviewed and our own findings, it can be concluded that there is no single universal leadership style or approach suitable for a hybrid environment. Despite the diversity of approaches, however, we have identified common key elements that appear to be essential for effective leadership in this context. These include, in particular, transparent communication, building trust, promoting well-being, strengthening employee autonomy, and developing leaders' digital competencies.

The main limitations of the research include the time constraints of the analyzed studies, the chosen systematic review methodology, and the heterogeneity of work environments, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Another limitation is the varying definitions of the hybrid work model across individual studies.

For future research, we recommend focusing on the empirical validation of the identified elements across different types of organizations and cultural contexts. At the same time, it would be beneficial to examine the long-term impact of hybrid leadership on team performance, employee satisfaction, and burnout rates. Attention should also be given to the development of specific tools and strategies that would help leaders effectively manage hybrid teams in practice.

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