

# The Impact of Remote Work on Employee Productivity and Engagement

 Muhammad Abdullah<sup>1</sup>

 Shafqat Ali<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of remote work on employee productivity and engagement, addressing the increasing adoption of flexible work arrangements and how these impact individual and organizational outcomes. The shift to remote work, especially post-COVID-19, has raised questions about its effectiveness in maintaining productivity and engagement levels. Using a combination of literature review and analysis of recent surveys, this study highlights key factors influencing productivity and engagement in a remote setting. Findings reveal that remote work can both enhance and challenge productivity and engagement, depending on individual and organizational factors like autonomy, communication, and technology. Implications for management and future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** Remote job, Employee productivity, Engagement, Remote work

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Remote work, or telecommuting, has surged in prevalence, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many organizations to adapt to new working norms rapidly. While remote work provides employees with flexibility and convenience, its impact on productivity and engagement is complex, involving both benefits and challenges (Bloom et al., 2015). With remote work becoming mainstream, understanding its influence on core work outcomes, particularly productivity and engagement, is vital.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

While remote work has clear advantages, there are concerns about its impact on employee productivity and engagement. Productivity may vary based on job type, individual self-management, and technological infrastructure, whereas engagement can be affected by isolation,

<sup>1</sup>University of Okara, Okara, Pakistan

**Corresponding Author:** [Abdullah\\_M.@uo.edu.pk](mailto:Abdullah_M.@uo.edu.pk)

<sup>2</sup>University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan



lack of support, and communication challenges.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

This paper seeks to explore:

1. How remote work influences employee productivity.
2. The impact of remote work on employee engagement.
3. Key factors that moderate these relationships, such as job autonomy, communication quality, and access to resources.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

The insights generated can guide managers in implementing remote work policies that maximize productivity and engagement while addressing potential drawbacks, ultimately contributing to the success of flexible work arrangements.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework: Self-Determination Theory and Job-Demand Resource Model

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential for intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Remote work enhances autonomy, which can drive productivity and engagement. However, lacking structure can increase job demands, impacting productivity.

The Job-Demand Resource Model (JD-R) posits that job resources (e.g., autonomy, support) can improve employee motivation, while excessive demands (e.g., isolation, poor communication) can lead to burnout and disengagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

### 2.2 Impact of Remote Work on Productivity

Several studies suggest remote work can boost productivity, given that it eliminates commuting time and allows for flexible scheduling (Choudhury et al., 2020). However, other studies indicate challenges such as poor communication and lack of immediate access to colleagues, which can hinder productivity (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

### 2.3 Remote Work and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is defined as the emotional commitment an employee has toward their organization, influencing their willingness to go above and beyond in their roles (Kahn, 1990). Remote work can increase engagement by fostering autonomy but may also reduce engagement due to social isolation and diminished support.

### 2.4 Moderating Factors

**Autonomy and Self-Management:** Autonomy in remote work settings can empower employees to manage their time and work efficiently. However, it requires strong self-management skills (Grant et al., 2013).

**Communication and Technology** Effective communication tools are crucial for productivity and engagement in remote work (Morganson et al., 2010). **Work-Life Balance** Remote work can support work-life balance, which in turn can boost productivity and engagement. However, the blurring of work and personal life can lead to increased stress and burnout (Allen et al., 2015).

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study used a mixed-method approach, combining a quantitative survey and qualitative

interviews to gather comprehensive data on the impact of remote work on productivity and engagement.

### 3.2 Sample

The survey targeted 300 employees from various industries who transitioned to remote work within the last year. In addition, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with managers and employees to gain qualitative insights.

### 3.3 Data Collection

A Likert-scale survey was administered to measure productivity, engagement, and key moderating factors (autonomy, communication, and work-life balance). The interview questions focused on individual experiences, perceived productivity changes, and engagement levels.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using regression analysis to assess the impact of remote work on productivity and engagement. Thematic analysis was used to interpret interview responses and identify recurring themes.

## 4 Analysis and Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Productivity: 65% of respondents reported higher productivity, with a mean score of 4.2 on a 5-point scale.

Engagement: 40% of respondents reported feeling less engaged, with a mean score of 3.1 on a 5-point scale.

### 4.2 Correlation Analysis

Productivity and Autonomy: Positive correlation ( $r = 0.52$ ), suggesting that autonomy in remote work is associated with increased productivity.

Engagement and Communication Quality: Positive correlation ( $r = 0.48$ ), indicating that effective communication can enhance engagement levels.

### 4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis revealed that autonomy ( $\beta = 0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly predicts productivity, while communication quality ( $\beta = 0.43$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly predicts engagement.

### 4.4 Qualitative Themes

Three main themes emerged:

- Increased Flexibility Enhances Productivity: Employees appreciated the flexibility, reporting improved concentration and less stress from commuting.
- Isolation Challenges Engagement: Many employees felt disconnected, emphasizing the importance of regular team check-ins and virtual gatherings.
- Work-Life Balance as a Double-Edged Sword: While some employees enjoyed the integration of work and life, others struggled with setting boundaries.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Remote Work and Productivity

The findings support the view that remote work can enhance productivity by providing autonomy,

as supported by SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The positive correlation between autonomy and productivity highlights the importance of trust and independence in maximizing remote work benefits. However, the need for self-management skills underscores that not all employees thrive in remote settings.

## 5.2 Remote Work and Engagement

The study's results reveal that remote work presents challenges to engagement, particularly in terms of social connectivity. The JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) aligns with these findings, as engagement is contingent upon adequate resources like communication and team support.

## 5.3 Implications for Organizations

Managers must implement strategies to promote both productivity and engagement in remote settings:

- Fostering Autonomy with Guidance: While autonomy enhances productivity, employees benefit from clear goals and support.
- Promoting Regular Communication: Frequent check-ins, virtual meetings, and social interactions can sustain engagement.
- Supporting Work-Life Balance: Policies that encourage breaks and respect for personal time can mitigate burnout.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The study concludes that remote work positively impacts productivity but presents challenges for employee engagement. The effectiveness of remote work is influenced by autonomy, communication quality, and work-life balance. Organizations are encouraged to tailor remote work policies that provide autonomy while maintaining robust communication channels and support systems to enhance productivity and engagement.

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