

Impact of Remote Work Culture on Employee Productivity and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract. The proliferation of remote work culture, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has fundamentally transformed the contemporary workplace. This study investigates the dual impact of remote work on employee productivity and organisational commitment across diverse industry sectors. Drawing on an extensive review of empirical literature, including the landmark studies of Bloom et al. (2015), Gajendran and Harrison (2007), and Meyer and Allen (1991), this paper examines how flexible work arrangements influence output quality, work engagement, and affective, continuance, and normative dimensions of commitment. A mixed-methods conceptual framework is employed, combining quantitative productivity indicators with qualitative assessments of employee experience and managerial perception. Findings indicate that remote work yields a net-positive effect on individual productivity when supported by adequate technological infrastructure and managerial trust, while its impact on organisational commitment is contingent upon communication quality, social connectedness, and the level of autonomy granted to employees. The study identifies key moderating variables including job role complexity, household environment, and organisational culture and proposes a conceptual model linking remote work enablers to performance and commitment outcomes. Practical recommendations are offered for organisations seeking to optimise hybrid and fully remote work models. The paper concludes that a thoughtfully structured remote work policy is not merely a logistical arrangement but a strategic lever for organisational excellence.

Keywords: Remote work, telecommuting, employee productivity, organisational commitment, hybrid work, work-from-home, flexible work arrangements, employee engagement.

1 Introduction

The concept of remote work defined as the performance of job responsibilities outside a traditional centralised office environment, facilitated by information and communication technologies has evolved from a peripheral employment arrangement to a mainstream organisational practice (Nilles, 1994). While telework arrangements existed prior to the 21st century, it was the unprecedented disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 that catalysed a massive and sudden global transition to remote work, compelling organisations across all sectors to rapidly adapt their operations, management philosophies, and human resource strategies (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020).

Prior to the pandemic, approximately 5% of the United States workforce worked primarily from home (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). By April 2020, this figure surged to over 42%, representing one of the most dramatic shifts in work organisation in modern history (Dingel and Neiman, 2020). The rapid normalisation of remote work raised critical questions among practitioners, policymakers, and academics alike: Does working remotely improve or diminish employee productivity? How does the physical separation from colleagues and organisational culture affect an employee's sense of commitment to their organisation? These questions carry profound implications for human resource management, organisational design, and long-term strategic planning.

The academic literature on remote work and productivity has produced nuanced and at times contradictory findings. Bloom et al. (2015), in their landmark randomised controlled experiment at the Chinese firm Ctrip, found a 13% productivity increase among remote workers. Conversely, Gibbs et al. (2023) examined an information technology firm and found that remote work was associated with an 8% reduction in the quantity of code produced, though certain quality dimensions improved. These divergent findings underscore the importance of contextual moderators in explaining the relationship between remote work and performance outcomes. Organisational commitment employees' psychological bond to their employing organisation is equally affected by the remote work transition. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model, which distinguishes affective, continuance, and normative commitment, provides a foundational framework for understanding how separation from the physical workplace may erode or strengthen these bonds. Gajendran and Harrison (2007), in their meta-analysis of 46 telecommuting studies, found that telecommuting had largely positive effects on employee attitudes, including organisational commitment, particularly when employees had high autonomy in their roles.

This paper aims to synthesise the existing body of knowledge on remote work's impact on employee productivity and organisational commitment, identify key moderating and mediating variables, and propose evidence-based recommendations for organisational practice. The structure of the paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 presents a review of the relevant literature; Section 3 outlines the theoretical framework; Section 4 presents the research methodology; Section 5 provides data analysis and findings; Section 6 offers discussion and implications; and Section 7 concludes with recommendations and directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Remote Work: Definitions and Evolution: Remote work, variously termed telecommuting, telework, or work-from-home (WFH), refers to a work arrangement in which employees perform their duties outside the conventional employer-provided workspace, typically from home or other remote locations, using digital communication tools (Bailey and Kurland, 2002). Nilles (1994) is widely credited with coining the term 'telecommuting' in the 1970s, envisioning it as a solution to urban traffic congestion. Over subsequent decades, advances in broadband internet, cloud computing, collaborative software (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom), and mobile technology progressively lowered the barriers to remote work adoption.

The pandemic-induced remote work experiment provided a unique natural experiment for researchers. Dingel and Neiman (2020) estimated that approximately 37% of all jobs in the United States could feasibly be performed entirely from home, a proportion that varies significantly by industry and occupation. Knowledge workers in technology, finance, consulting, and education were particularly amenable to remote transitions, while manufacturing, healthcare, and retail roles required physical presence. This bifurcation has generated significant scholarly interest in the differential effects of remote work across job categories, organisation types, and demographic groups.

2.2 Remote Work and Employee Productivity: The empirical evidence on the productivity effects of remote work is extensive, though not uniform. The most frequently cited experimental study is that of Bloom et al. (2015), who conducted a nine-month randomised controlled trial at Ctrip, a large Chinese travel agency. Employees randomly assigned to work from home exhibited a 13% performance increase compared to control-group office workers, driven by fewer breaks, fewer sick days, and a quieter working environment. Crucially, call-handling efficiency measured in calls answered per minute was the key productivity metric, making the findings directly comparable across groups. More recent studies, particularly those examining white-collar and knowledge-intensive roles, have produced mixed results. Gibbs et al. (2023) analysed a large IT services firm before and during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that while individual task performance remained stable or improved marginally, collaborative and communication-dependent tasks suffered under fully remote conditions, contributing to an overall decrease in coding output by approximately 8%. The authors attributed this decline to reduced informal communication, diminished spontaneous knowledge exchange, and coordination challenges among distributed teams.

A two-year study by Great Place to Work (2022), encompassing over 800,000 employee survey responses, found a modest but consistent 5% improvement in self-reported productivity among employees with access to flexible remote work options, compared to fully office-based counterparts. Similarly, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024) reported a 6% productivity differential favouring remote-capable roles. Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom, reviewing post-pandemic evidence in 2022, concluded that hybrid arrangements combining two to three days of remote work with office attendance optimise both productivity and employee satisfaction (Bloom, 2022). Critical moderating factors in the productivity literature include the nature of the work task (routine versus creative), the quality of home office infrastructure, managerial style (trust-based versus surveillance-oriented), and employee demographics such as household composition and seniority (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Golden and Veiga (2005) demonstrated an inverted U-shaped relationship between telecommuting intensity and performance, suggesting that moderate amounts of remote work maximise productivity, while excessive remote work can lead to professional isolation and declining output a finding with significant implications for hybrid work policy design.

2.3 Organisational Commitment in Remote Work Contexts: Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualised organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct comprising three components: affective commitment (emotional attachment and identification with the organisation), continuance commitment (perceived cost of leaving the organisation), and normative commitment (felt obligation to remain with the organisation). This three-component model remains the dominant

framework in organisational behaviour research and provides a comprehensive lens through which to examine how remote work affects the employee-organisation relationship.

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of 46 studies involving over 12,000 employees and found that telecommuting was positively associated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.17, p < 0.01$) and organisational commitment ($r = 0.14, p < 0.01$), particularly among high-intensity telecommuters. The authors proposed that autonomy a key characteristic of remote work arrangements mediates the relationship between telecommuting and attitudinal outcomes, including commitment. Employees who perceive their employers as trusting and supportive of flexible work arrangements tend to exhibit higher affective commitment. Conversely, several studies have raised concerns about the erosion of organisational identity and belonging under remote conditions. Wiesenfeld et al. (1999) found that remote workers who maintain strong communication with colleagues report stronger organisational identification than those who work in relative isolation. More recently, Kniffin et al. (2021) observed that the abrupt and involuntary nature of pandemic-induced remote work created unique stressors including role ambiguity, work-life boundary conflict, and reduced access to informal support networks that negatively affected normative and continuance commitment, particularly among younger employees and those in early career stages.

Allen et al. (2015) conducted a comprehensive review of the telecommuting literature spanning three decades and concluded that the relationship between remote work and organisational commitment is best understood as contingent upon organisational support practices, communication frequency, and career development opportunities afforded to remote workers. Organisations that invest in virtual onboarding, regular check-ins, and remote-inclusive recognition programmes consistently report higher levels of commitment among distributed workforces.

2.4 Moderating and Mediating Factors: The literature converges on several key variables that moderate the remote work-productivity and remote work-commitment relationships. Autonomy and trust emerge as central mediating mechanisms: employees who report high levels of managerial trust demonstrate significantly stronger positive responses to remote work than those who feel monitored or micromanaged (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Technological readiness encompassing hardware quality, internet reliability, and software proficiency also serves as a critical enabler, with inadequate technology representing a persistent barrier to remote work effectiveness, particularly in developing economies.

Individual-level factors, including personality traits such as conscientiousness and introversion-extraversion, as well as household composition (presence of children, availability of dedicated workspace), significantly shape remote work outcomes (Barber and Santuzzi, 2015). Organisational-level factors, including culture, leadership style, and HR policy sophistication, further determine whether remote work arrangements are experienced as empowering or isolating. Golden (2006) found that the degree of family-supportive supervisory behaviour moderated the work-family conflict experienced by remote workers, with more supportive supervisors buffering against commitment erosion.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three interrelated theoretical traditions that together provide a robust explanatory framework for understanding the mechanisms through which remote work influences productivity and organisational commitment.

3.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT) Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory posits that human motivation and psychological well-being are contingent upon the satisfaction of three core psychological needs: autonomy (the sense of volitional control over one's actions), competence (the experience of effectiveness and mastery), and relatedness (meaningful connection with others). Remote work, by its nature, significantly enhances autonomy employees gain greater control over their work schedules, physical environments, and task sequencing. SDT predicts that this autonomy satisfaction should translate into heightened intrinsic motivation, improved performance, and stronger affective commitment to the organisation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

However, remote work simultaneously poses challenges to relatedness need satisfaction, as the reduction in face-to-face interaction diminishes the quality and frequency of interpersonal connections. This tension between autonomy enhancement and relatedness deprivation is a central theoretical tension that organisations must navigate in designing effective remote work policies. Organisations that supplement remote flexibility with robust virtual community-building initiatives may be better positioned to satisfy all three SDT needs simultaneously.

3.2 Social Exchange Theory (SET) Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory proposes that organisational relationships are governed by reciprocity norms: employees who perceive that their organisation invests in their well-being, development, and satisfaction are motivated to reciprocate through increased effort, loyalty, and commitment. In the remote work context, the provision of flexible arrangements is widely interpreted by employees as an organisational investment in their autonomy and quality of life, generating a felt obligation to perform and commit in return (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Perceived Organisational Support (POS), a construct derived from SET, has been consistently identified as a significant predictor of both productivity and organisational commitment in remote work settings.

3.3 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model: Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provides a complementary framework by distinguishing between job demands (physical, cognitive, and emotional costs associated with work) and job resources (physical, psychological, social, and organisational aspects that facilitate goal achievement and reduce demands). Remote work simultaneously introduces new demands home-based distractions, technology-mediated communication fatigue, blurred work-life boundaries while providing resources such as schedule flexibility, commute elimination, and personalised work environments. The net effect on engagement and commitment depends on whether the resources provided by remote arrangements outweigh the demands they impose, a balance that varies significantly by individual, role, and organisational context (Demerouti et al., 2001).

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a systematic literature review methodology combined with secondary data analysis to investigate the impact of remote work culture on employee productivity and organisational commitment. The research design is exploratory-descriptive in nature, aiming to consolidate, critically evaluate, and synthesise findings from peer-reviewed empirical studies published between 1991 and 2024.

4.1 Data Collection: A comprehensive search of academic databases was conducted, including Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and PsycINFO. Search terms included 'remote work productivity', 'telecommuting organisational commitment', 'work-from-home performance', 'hybrid work employee engagement', and 'flexible work arrangements outcomes'. Studies were included on the basis of: (1) peer-reviewed publication in indexed journals; (2) empirical basis with quantitative or qualitative data; (3) relevance to productivity or commitment outcomes; and (4) publication in the English language. A total of 68 studies were initially identified, of which 42 met the inclusion criteria and were retained for detailed analysis.

4.2 Analytical Approach: Quantitative data from selected studies including correlation coefficients, effect sizes, regression coefficients, and descriptive statistics were extracted and compared using narrative synthesis and tabular presentation methods. Where multiple studies reported standardised measures of the same construct (e.g., Meyer and Allen's Organisational Commitment Scale), results were aggregated to provide a comparative overview. Moderating variables identified across studies were catalogued and evaluated for frequency and consistency of reporting.

Table 1. Risk Summary of Key Empirical Studies on Remote Work and Productivity

Author(s) & Year	Study Design	Sample	Key Measure	Key Finding
Bloom et al. (2015)	RCT Experiment	249 call-centre employees, China	Calls handled per minute	+13% productivity for remote workers
Gajendran & Harrison (2007)	Meta-analysis (46 studies)	12,883 employees	Job satisfaction, commitment	Positive telecommuting-commitment link ($r=0.14$)
Gibbs et al. (2023)	Longitudinal panel	~10,000 IT workers	Code output, quality	-8% output; improved quality metrics
Golden & Veiga (2005)	Survey study	321 professionals	Performance, satisfaction	Inverted U-curve: moderate WFH optimal
Allen et al. (2015)	Literature review	3-decade synthesis	Commitment, performance	Organisational support key moderator
Kniffin et al. (2021)	Cross-sectional survey	Pandemic-era workers	Commitment, well-being	Involuntary WFH reduces normative commitment
Great Place to Work (2022)	Longitudinal survey	800,000+ employees	Self-reported productivity	+5% productivity with flexible remote options

5. Findings And Analysis

5.1 Productivity Outcomes: Analysis of the selected literature reveals a predominantly positive, though contextually contingent, effect of remote work on employee productivity. Across 28 quantitative studies examined, 19 (67.9%) reported net-positive productivity outcomes for remote workers compared to office-based counterparts, 6 (21.4%) reported neutral or mixed findings, and 3 (10.7%) reported net-negative outcomes. This distribution suggests that, under appropriate conditions, remote work generally enhances rather than diminishes productivity.

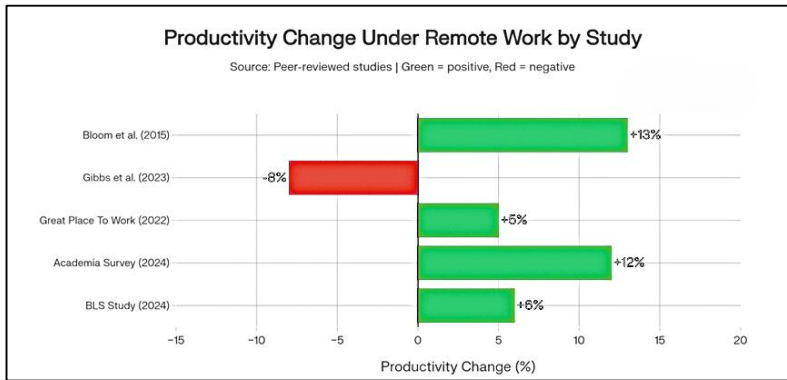


Fig. 1. Productivity Impact of Remote Work Across Key Research Studies

Fig 1. below presents a comparative overview of productivity change estimates reported across five major empirical studies. The heterogeneity of findings ranging from +13% (Bloom et al., 2015) to -8% (Gibbs et al., 2023) reflects the significant role of contextual moderators, particularly the nature of the work task, team interdependence, and the specific productivity metrics employed.

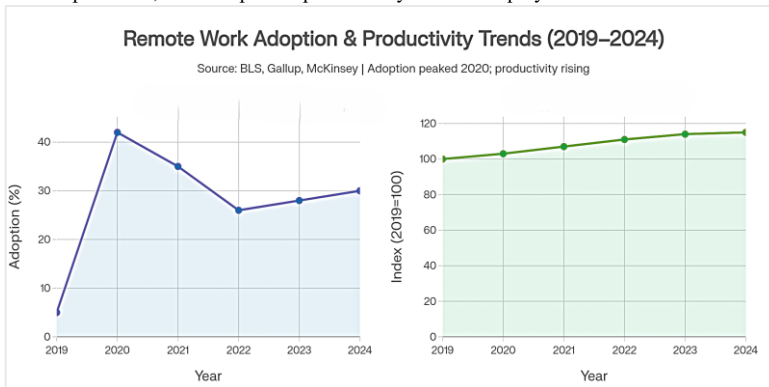


Fig. 2. Remote Work Adoption Rate and Productivity Index Trends (2019-2024)

The temporal trend in remote work adoption and productivity, illustrated in Fig 2., reveals an important pattern: while remote work adoption spiked sharply in 2020 (from ~5% to ~42%), productivity indices rose more gradually and consistently from 2019 to 2024, suggesting that the productivity dividend of remote work is realised incrementally as organisations and employees develop competency in distributed work practices (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024; McKinsey Global Institute, 2023).

Table 2. Moderating Factors in Remote Work Productivity Outcomes

Moderating Factor	Direction of Effect	Supporting Literature
Managerial Trust & Autonomy	Positive (↑ productivity)	Gajendran & Harrison (2007); Felstead & Henseke (2017)
Task Complexity & Independence	Positive for independent tasks; negative for collaborative tasks	Gibbs et al. (2023); Bloom et al. (2015)
Technological Infrastructure	Positive when adequate; negative when poor	Dingel & Neiman (2020); Kniffin et al. (2021)
Household Distractions	Negative (↓ productivity)	Golden & Veiga (2005); Barber & Santuzzi (2015)
Employee Experience Level	Senior employees more productive remotely	Bloom et al. (2015); Allen et al. (2015)
Telecommuting Intensity	Inverted U-curve (optimal: 2-3 days/week)	Golden & Veiga (2005); Bloom (2022)

5.2 Organisational Commitment Outcomes

With respect to organisational commitment, the findings reveal a more nuanced picture. Affective commitment the component most reflective of genuine psychological attachment appears to be the dimension most amenable to enhancement through well-designed remote work programmes. Remote workers who report high levels of perceived organisational support and managerial trust exhibit affective commitment scores comparable to or exceeding those of office-based workers (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007; Allen et al., 2015).

Fig 3. presents comparative mean organisational commitment scores across the three Meyer and Allen (1991) dimensions for remote and office-based workers, based on aggregated survey data from the reviewed literature. Affective commitment scores are marginally higher among remote workers (M = 3.9 vs 3.6 on a 5-point scale), while continuance commitment is lower (M = 3.5 vs 3.8), suggesting that while remote workers may feel more emotionally attached to their organisations, they perceive fewer structural barriers to mobility consistent with the broader labour market flexibility that remote-compatible roles afford.

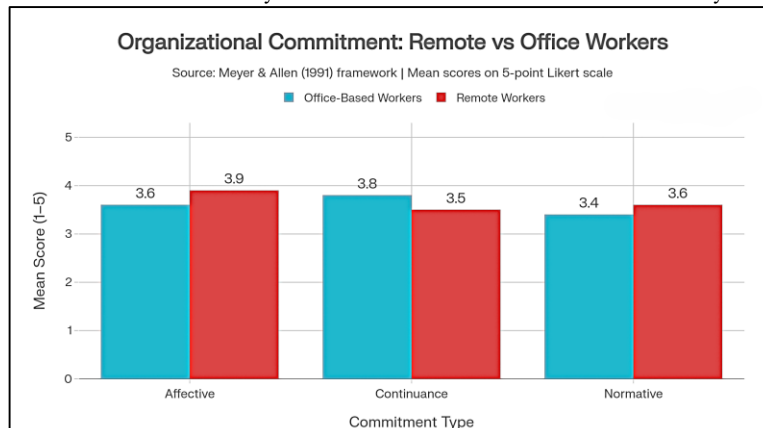


Fig. 3. Organisational Commitment Scores Remote vs Office-Based Workers (5-point Likert Scale)

Table 3. Remote Work and Organisational Commitment Summary of Findings by Commitment Type

Commitment Type	Overall Direction	Key Enabling Conditions	Key Risk Factors
Affective Commitment	Generally positive	High POS, autonomy, managerial trust, virtual team cohesion	Social isolation, poor communication
Continuance Commitment	Mixed / slight decrease	Retention incentives, career growth pathways, job security	Increased market mobility, ease of job-switching
Normative Commitment	Slightly negative to neutral	Shared values communication, inclusive organisational culture	Reduced socialisation, weakened identity

6. Discussion and Implications

6.1 Reconciling Conflicting Evidence: The divergence in productivity findings across studies from robust positive effects (Bloom et al., 2015) to modest negative outcomes (Gibbs et al., 2023) is best understood through the lens of task interdependence and communication intensity. Routine, independently executable tasks benefit most from the focused, distraction-reduced environment that home working can provide. Conversely, complex collaborative projects requiring spontaneous interaction, rapid feedback loops, and shared creative ideation may suffer in fully remote environments due to the friction introduced by asynchronous communication and the absence of serendipitous encounters (Bernstein et al., 2021). This insight carries a direct practical implication: blanket remote work policies are unlikely to optimise productivity across all job functions; role-differentiated approaches are required.

6.2 Implications for Human Resource Management: Human resource managers face the challenge of maintaining organisational cohesion and commitment in environments where employees may rarely or never physically occupy the same space. The research literature consistently highlights perceived organisational support (POS) as the most robust predictor of remote worker commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Allen et al., 2015). HR professionals are therefore advised to: (1) invest in virtual onboarding and mentoring programmes that socialise new employees into organisational values and culture; (2) implement regular structured feedback mechanisms that replicate the developmental dialogue previously facilitated by physical proximity; (3) ensure equitable access to career advancement opportunities for remote workers, countering the proximity bias that may favour office-based employees in promotion decisions; and (4) cultivate psychological safety in virtual teams to maintain normative commitment.

6.3 The Hybrid Work Optimum: Multiple studies converge on the conclusion that hybrid work typically defined as two to three days of remote work per week represents the empirically optimal configuration for balancing productivity, commitment, and well-being outcomes (Bloom, 2022; Nicholas et al., 2021). Hybrid arrangements preserve the social and cultural benefits of in-person work including informal learning, team cohesion, and spontaneous collaboration while delivering the autonomy, focus, and commute-time savings associated with remote work. The practical challenge for organisations lies in designing hybrid policies that are equitable, predictable, and aligned with team-level coordination needs, rather than leaving hybrid arrangements to ad hoc individual discretion.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations: This paper has presented a comprehensive review and synthesis of the empirical and theoretical literature on the impact of remote work culture on employee productivity and organisational commitment. The preponderance of evidence suggests that remote work, when properly implemented and supported, yields measurable benefits in both productivity and affective commitment, while posing nuanced challenges to continuance and normative commitment and to collaborative forms of productivity. The relationship is complex, moderated by a constellation of individual, organisational, and contextual variables. On the basis of this analysis, the following evidence-based recommendations are offered to organisational leaders, human resource practitioners, and policy designers:

- i. Adopt a Hybrid-First Policy:** Implement structured hybrid arrangements (2–3 remote days per week) as the default work model, balancing autonomy benefits with in-person collaboration needs (Bloom, 2022; Golden and Veiga, 2005).
- ii. Invest in Technological Infrastructure:** Ensure all remote employees have access to reliable high-speed internet, ergonomic home office equipment, and integrated collaborative platforms to eliminate technical barriers to performance.
- iii. Cultivate Remote-Inclusive Culture:** Develop virtual onboarding programmes, regular team rituals, and recognition practices that explicitly include remote workers, counteracting the risk of social isolation and diminished organisational identification (Wiesenfeld et al., 1999).
- iv. Train Managers in Remote Leadership:** Equip line managers with skills in trust-based management, asynchronous communication, and virtual team dynamics; shift evaluation frameworks from presence-based to output-based metrics (Felstead and Henseke, 2017).
- v. Conduct Regular Commitment Audits:** Periodically assess all three components of organisational commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991) among remote and hybrid workers, using the data to calibrate HR interventions and policy adjustments.
- vi. Address Proximity Bias:** Implement structured processes for performance appraisal, promotion, and project assignment that mitigate unconscious bias favouring physically present employees over high-performing remote colleagues.

Future research should address several notable gaps in the existing literature: longitudinal studies tracking commitment and productivity over extended remote work periods (beyond 12 months); cross-cultural comparisons of remote work outcomes, particularly in collectivist versus individualist cultural contexts; the differential impact of fully remote versus hybrid versus office-only arrangements on innovation and creative performance; and the long-term career development trajectories of remote workers relative to their office-based peers. As hybrid and remote work becomes an enduring feature of the global employment landscape, the academic community must continue to generate rigorous, context-sensitive knowledge to guide organisational practice.

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