

## Research Article

# Leadership Strategies in Hybrid Teams in Corporate Sector: A Study of IT Companies in NCR

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**Abstract:** The post-pandemic hybrid work environment has transformed work practices, particularly in the Information Technology (IT) sector. This study explores leadership strategies in managing hybrid work settings, in order to enhance teamwork, trust and productivity in IT organisations in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India. The paper draws on well-known theories such as transformational leadership, e-leadership and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) to develop a theoretical model that links leadership approaches (transformational, trust, inclusive, digital and communication leadership) to organisational outcomes. The study highlights the impact of mediating factors such as motivation, psychological safety, effective communication and inclusion on team performance, productivity, job satisfaction, well-being and work-life balance. The study adopts a mixed methods approach to blend theoretical knowledge and empirical propositions to provide an organised perspective of leadership in hybrid work. The research proposes that hybrid leadership should include both technology-oriented and people-oriented approaches to attain organisational success and well-being. The study contributes to the literature on hybrid work, and offers a context-specific viewpoint that is pertinent to emerging markets, as well as practical implications for organisations in the new world of work.

**Keywords:** Hybrid Work, Leadership Strategies, Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, Team Performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The nature of work has evolved in recent years, with the help of technology and COVID-19. One recent trend in this area is hybrid work, which involves a mix of remote working and working in the office. This affects how organisations work, particularly those in knowledge-based sectors such as Information Technology (IT). Hybrid work has gained popularity due to the opportunities it has for enhancing employee autonomy, flexibility and work-life balance. Flexible work has been shown to boost satisfaction and engagement, and to increase the size of the labour market for organisations (Allen et al., 2021; Barrero et al., 2021). And employers are also adopting hybrid work arrangements to boost productivity and retention without compromising performance (Bloom et al., 2024). But while hybrid work has its rewards, it also presents challenges to managing teams. Communication issues, reduced social interaction, team coordination and issues of equity between those working in-person and online are now significant issues. These need leadership interventions to improve teamwork in hybrid work.

### 1.2 Emergence of Hybrid Leadership

Leadership in the hybrid work environment has shifted. Traditional leadership styles, which rely on co-location and face-to-face interactions, no longer work in a remote work environment. Leaders now need to adopt more dynamic, flexible and digital approaches to manage employees. E-leadership has been introduced in this regard, which is the ability to lead, motivate and influence people and groups using electronic media (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003). Hybrid leadership builds on this concept, by combining online and offline leadership models to suit the needs of remote employees. Hybrid leadership

involves multiple leadership styles, including transformational, inclusive and trust leadership. For instance, transformational leadership is focused on inspiring and motivating employees to reach a common goal, and inclusive leadership is about giving equal opportunities to team members, regardless of their locations. And tech leadership skills are necessary as leaders must use communication technologies and collaboration tools (Contreras et al., 2020)

### **1.3 Challenges in Managing Hybrid Teams**

Hybrid work arrangements have many advantages, but also pose considerable challenges for managers. A key challenge is facilitating communication among dispersed team members. Without the spontaneous interactions of face-to-face communication, there is the risk of miscommunication, limited collaboration and a decline in team unity. A further challenge is establishing trust within the team. Trust is crucial in hybrid workplaces, where managers can't oversee workers. Studies indicate that trust in virtual and hybrid teams is built through ongoing communication, transparency and reliability (Golden & Veiga, 2005) . Additionally, in hybrid workplaces, there can be issues of fairness and inclusion, with remote employees feeling less included or disadvantaged relative to their in-person colleagues. This may affect employee engagement, motivation and well-being. Research also points to issues of burnout, work-life boundaries, and stress in remote and hybrid work environments (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020) .

### **1.4 Role of Leadership in Enhancing Hybrid Team Effectiveness**

Amid these challenges, leadership plays a pivotal role in hybrid team success. Leaders are pivotal in setting the tone for team dynamics, collaboration and alignment with the organisational objectives. Leadership approaches can address some of the challenges of remote and in-person team members, fostering a productive and collaborative team culture. In hybrid workplaces, leaders should set clear expectations, encourage open and transparent communication, and create a safe environment. Leadership should also aim to build trust and engagement, and promote well-being to boost team effectiveness. And in transitioning from input-based to outcome-based performance appraisal, leaders need to focus on accountability and autonomy. This approach is crucial for achieving productivity while ensuring employee well-being (Choudhury et al., 2021)

### **1.5 Research Context: IT Sector in NCR**

Hybrid leadership is an important phenomenon to study in the context of the information technology (IT) sector, especially in the National Capital Region (NCR) in India. NCR is home to numerous IT firms, ranging from multinational corporations to startups and service-oriented businesses, which have embraced hybrid working arrangements. Here, leadership approaches are essential to overcome the challenges of leading a diverse and dispersed workforce. The technology-driven and knowledge-intensive nature of the industry also highlights the vital role of good leadership for collaboration, innovation and performance.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Evolution of Hybrid Work and Organizational Transformation**

Hybrid work arrangements are a recent paradigm shift in organizational structures and work arrangements. Driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid work has become a sustainable management strategy for many organisations globally. Hybrid work combines the flexibility of remote working with the benefits of in-person collaboration through office-based activities, resulting in a new paradigm of work organisation and execution . Academic studies underline that hybrid work increases employee autonomy, job satisfaction and retention, while at least sustaining, if not increasing, productivity. For example, Bloom et al. (2024) report that hybrid work arrangements enhance employees' retention without adversely affecting productivity . Also, Barrero et al. (2021) argue that flexible work arrangements are important to employees, influencing their job choices . But while hybrid work offers these advantages, it also presents challenges in terms of coordination, communication and culture, demanding innovative leadership strategies.

### **2.2 Leadership in Hybrid Work Environments**

Hybrid leadership has moved beyond the traditional role of a supervisor to more agile, technology-facilitated and human-centric leadership. E-leadership highlights the need for leading via electronic channels and leading remote/geographically distributed teams (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003) . Hybrid leadership combines online and in-person leadership practices. Transformational leadership has been widely acknowledged as a successful style for hybrid leadership. According to Bass and Riggio (2006) transformational leaders motivate, inspire and intellectually stimulate employees, thus increasing their engagement and performance This is also supported by recent empirical research, which shows that transformational leadership, along with digital communication skills, enhances work engagement in remote and hybrid work environments (Boccoli et al., 2024) . Further, leadership flexibility and emotional intelligence play a key role in leading diverse and distributed teams. Managing these technological and human interactions, cultural differences and diverse employee expectations are key to team success.

### **2.3 Collaboration in Hybrid Teams**

Collaboration is a key component of team performance, but it is more challenging in hybrid work settings due to spatial distance and the use of technology. Several studies have shown that clear communication processes, collective goals, and

the proper use of technology are crucial in supporting collaboration in remote teams. Online collaboration tools like video conferencing, project management and instant messaging applications have facilitated connection and coordination. But their success is contingent on their appropriate use by leaders and employees. When not done correctly, they can result in information overload, coordination issues and disengagement. Additionally, hybrid work decreases opportunities for unstructured communication and knowledge exchange, essential for innovation and team dynamics. So leaders need to actively plan communication and collaboration practices to address these challenges.

#### **2.4 Trust and Relationship Building in Hybrid Teams**

Trust is a vital element of hybrid teams. Without direct supervision, trust between employees and trust in leadership is essential for effective performance. Studies suggest trust in virtual and hybrid teams is established through regular communication, transparency and reliability (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Golden & Veiga, 2005). A trust-based approach to leadership focuses on empowerment, accountability, and communication. Trustworthy leaders build a culture of empowerment, encouragement, and engagement. Further, social interactions and connections are essential in hybrid teams. But trust in hybrid workplace environments can diminish as a result of reduced in-person interactions and potential feelings of inequity between remote and on-site employees. Therefore, leaders need to take proactive steps to promote equity.

#### **2.5 Performance Management in Hybrid Work Settings**

Hybrid work performance management should focus on results rather than inputs. Bailey and Kurland (2002) suggest performance should be assessed on outcomes, not attendance. This is in line with the flexibility of hybrid working arrangements, which give employees more freedom in how and when they work. Performance management should include setting objectives, providing feedback, and tracking performance. Managers need to balance freedom with responsibility to keep employees productive and on track to meet organisational goals. Choudhury et al. (2021) point out that remote work arrangements can boost productivity with effective management practices. Additionally, companies are increasingly using technology and data analytics to track performance and outcomes. But over-monitoring can erode trust and low morale, and stress the importance of transparent performance management.

#### **2.6 Employee Well-being and Work–Life Balance**

Well-being is a key issue in hybrid work arrangements. Flexibility may enhance work–life balance, but it can also create boundary blurring and stress, resulting in burnout. Research shows that remote and hybrid work can affect employee well-being in both positive and negative ways, depending on the level of organisational support and leadership styles (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model proposes that supportive leadership and resources can buffer the impact of job demands and improve well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Leadership is essential in ensuring work-life balance through reasonable expectations, break-taking, and creating a supportive environment. Moreover, boundary management is a key issue in hybrid work, as employees try to manage the boundaries between work and home. Good leadership can assist employees in managing this and promoting well-being.

#### **2.7 Emerging Trends and Future Directions in Hybrid Leadership**

Hybrid work is shaping the future of leadership and organisational strategies. New technologies like artificial intelligence, sophisticated collaboration tools and virtual reality are shaping team dynamics and leadership practices in performance and engagement. New research underscores the importance of digital leadership skills, resilience and lifelong learning in the hybrid work environment (Barnes et al., 2024). There is also a growing emphasis on inclusive leadership to promote equity and diversity in hybrid work teams. While research has made substantial progress, there is still a need for more research on the longer-term consequences of hybrid work on leadership, organisational culture and individual outcomes. This calls for more empirical and conceptual research in various settings, including in emerging markets such as India.

#### **Research Gap**

While research on hybrid work and leadership is increasing, some key areas are being overlooked. Current research is largely confined to Western settings, making it challenging to apply insights to emerging markets like India, especially in the dynamic IT industry of the National Capital Region (NCR) where there are cultural, demographic, and leadership differences. While existing studies note the significance of transformational and e-leadership in a remote and hybrid environment (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Zaccaro & Bader, 2003), there is a lack of agreement on the most effective leadership styles in a hybrid environment and a dearth of comparative studies of leadership approaches. Moreover, while research highlights the role of trust, collaboration and communication in remote teams (Golden & Veiga, 2005; Contreras et al., 2020), there is little research on the interaction of these factors within an integrated leadership model. Equality, inclusion, and psychological safety, and the distinctive challenges faced by remote and on-site employees, have not yet received much attention, despite their increasing relevance in hybrid work settings. Finally, although hybrid work has been associated with enhanced productivity and retention (Bloom et al., 2024; Barrero et al., 2021), there is a lack of understanding about how leaders can balance productivity with well-being and work-life balance. Understanding the influence of digital innovations on leadership is also in its infancy. Hence, a holistic and contextual analysis of leadership strategies that simultaneously focus on collaboration, trust, performance and well-being in hybrid teams is needed, which is the objective of this study.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical underpinning of this research stems from a synthesis of key theories of leadership and organisational behaviour that account for the impact of leadership strategies in hybrid work settings. First and foremost, this framework is anchored in Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006), which focuses on vision, motivation, and individual consideration as critical factors in enhancing employee motivation and performance, and the notion of e-leadership, which draws attention to the use of electronic communication and technology-based influence as critical components of leadership strategies in managing remote teams (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003). The framework also draws on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) to explain how leadership constitutes a key resource in the workplace that boosts motivation, alleviates burnout, and promotes well-being in hybrid work arrangements. The framework also draws on Trust Theory and Social Exchange Theory, which highlights the importance of leader communication, fairness and support in building trust and reciprocity among employees, which is critical in hybrid teams with limited face-to-face interaction (Golden & Veiga, 2005). Further, principles of organizational culture theory (Schein, 2010) stress the role of inclusive and psychologically safe cultures in promoting teamwork and a sense of belonging in hybrid work settings. Combined, these theories justify a conceptual link where leadership strategies (such as transformational, trust-based, inclusive, and e-leadership) are independent variables that affect important outcomes such as team performance, productivity, job satisfaction and well-being through intermediaries such as motivation, effective communication and psychological safety in hybrid work settings.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The pandemic and the widespread adoption of hybrid work arrangements in the business world, especially in the IT sector, have posed considerable challenges for corporate leaders in the management of remote, multi-locational teams with the goal of enhancing collaboration, trust, and productivity. Existing leadership models, which emphasise physical presence and direct interaction, are becoming less relevant in the hybrid environment, featuring virtual communication, flexible work schedules and changing employee expectations. While current research suggests that hybrid work arrangements can increase productivity, retention, and employee satisfaction (Bloom et al., 2024; Barrero et al., 2021), challenges still persist in terms of communication barriers, trust, team cohesion, work-life balance and perceived fairness issues between remote and on-site workers. Moreover, there is a lack of clear understanding of what leadership strategies are most effective in tackling these issues, especially within the Indian IT sector where empirical research is lacking. Against this backdrop, the current study seeks to map and understand the various leadership strategies used in managing hybrid teams, assess their influence on team effectiveness and productivity, understand the challenges faced by leaders in the hybrid work environment, and recommend effective leadership approaches that improve collaboration, trust and other team outcomes in IT firms in the National Capital Region (NCR).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a conceptual framework derived from the literature, where leadership strategies (such as transformational leadership, trust-based leadership, inclusive leadership, digital leadership competence and communication strategies) are viewed as independent variables and team performance, employee productivity, job satisfaction, employee well-being and work-life balance as dependent variables. Intermediate variables, including employee motivation, engagement, psychological safety and communication effectiveness, are used to explain these variables. This model is consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model that suggests leadership as a key organisational resource that impacts employee engagement and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and leadership theories that underline the importance of transformational and digital leadership in improving team performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Zaccaro & Bader, 2003).

## CONCEPTUAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT

### 7.1 Basis of the Conceptual Model

This study's conceptual model is built upon the perspectives of leadership theories, hybrid working, and organizational behavior theories discussed above. Existing research highlights the significance of leadership in determining employee outcomes in distributed and hybrid work arrangements, including trust, communication and engagement (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Zaccaro & Bader, 2003). Further, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model also suggests that leadership is a key resource that impacts employee motivation, well-being and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Based on the summary, the model is designed to explore the impact of various leadership approaches on team and employee outcomes in hybrid work environments, with a focus on IT firms in NCR.

### 7.2 Key Constructs of the Model

(a) Independent Variables (Leadership Strategies): The model proposes the following five key leadership areas:

- Transformational Leadership

- Trust-Based Leadership
- Inclusive Leadership
- Digital Leadership Competence
- Communication Strategies

These are sourced from both traditional and modern leadership literature, and are essential for hybrid team management.

(b) Mediating Variables: Leadership does not directly affect outcomes, but rather through a set of psychological and behavioural mechanisms:

- Employee Motivation & Engagement
- Psychological Safety & Trust
- Communication Effectiveness
- Inclusion & Belongingness

These mediators are backed by past research that emphasises their importance in improving team performance and overcoming hybrid work difficulties (Contreras et al., 2020; Golden & Veiga, 2005) .

(c) Dependent Variables (Outcomes): The ultimate outcomes of hybrid leadership are:

- Team Performance
- Employee Productivity
- Job Satisfaction
- Employee Well-being
- Work–Life Balance

Research shows hybrid work can have a positive effect on these outcomes with good leadership practices (Bloom et al., 2024; Barrero et al., 2021)

### 7.3 Relationships in the Model

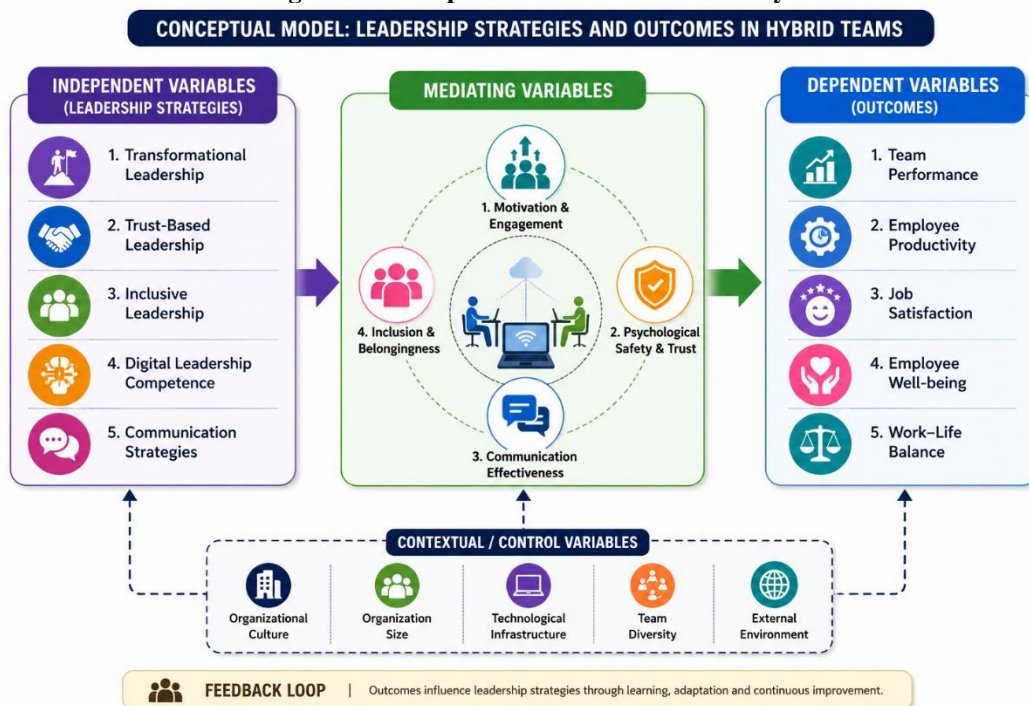
The model assumes that leadership approaches directly impact mediating factors (motivation, trust, communication) which then impact outcomes. This is a mediated (indirect) relationship, in which leadership affects outcomes in terms of performance and well-being through improving internal team dynamics.

- Transformational leadership increases motivation and commitment
- Trust leadership enhances psychological safety
- Virtual leadership enhances communication
- Inclusive leadership enhances belongingness

These factors, in turn, lead to enhanced team performance and employee well-being in hybrid teams.

### 7.4 Conceptual Model Diagram

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study



Source: Developed by Researcher

### 7.5 Significance of the Model

The proposed conceptual model offers a framework to comprehend the effects of leadership strategies in hybrid work arrangements. It draws connections between theory and practice in organisations by showing how effective leadership has an impact through psychological and behavioural pathways. This model is especially applicable to the IT industry in NCR, where hybrid working is common and effective leadership is essential to drive performance, engagement, and overall success.

### Propositions

**Table 1: Proposition of the study**

Proposition No.	Proposed Relationship	Key Variables Involved	Conceptual Rationale
P1	Transformational leadership positively enhances motivation and engagement in hybrid teams.	Transformational Leadership → Motivation & Engagement	Transformational leaders inspire, motivate and provide support and encouragement, which boosts intrinsic motivation and engagement, particularly in less physically proximate settings (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Boccoli et al., 2024)
P2	Trust-based leadership positively fosters trust and psychological safety in hybrid teams.	Trust-Based Leadership → Psychological Safety & Trust	Hybrid work environments may lack direct supervision and control; trust-based leadership behaviour promotes trustworthiness, openness and consistency, resulting in greater interpersonal trust and psychological safety (Golden & Veiga, 2005)
P3	Inclusive leadership is positively associated with feelings of inclusion, belongingness in hybrid work teams	Inclusive Leadership → Inclusion & Belongingness	Hybrid work scenarios can create an imbalance between remote and on-site employees; inclusive leadership promotes equal participation, acknowledgement and opportunities, thus improving belongingness and perceived inequities
P4	Digital leadership skills positively influence communication effectiveness in hybrid work.	Digital Leadership → Communication Effectiveness	Effective use of digital tools and platforms ensures efficient coordination and knowledge sharing, overcoming communication challenges in hybrid work environments (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003; Contreras et al., 2020)
P5	Communication strategies positively affect team cohesion and collaboration in hybrid teams.	Communication Strategies → Communication Effectiveness → Team Cohesion	Clear and consistent communication promotes clarity, coordination and collaboration, reducing the risk of misunderstanding and isolation in remote teams
P6	Motivation and engagement are positively related to team performance and productivity.	Motivation & Engagement → Performance & Productivity	The JD-R model shows that motivated employees have higher energy, engagement and performance, which helps team performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)
P7	Psychological safety and trust contribute to job satisfaction and well-being	Psychological Safety & Trust → Job Satisfaction & Well-being	Psychological safety and trust in management positively affect job satisfaction, well-being, and reduce stress, which is important

			in hybrid work arrangements (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020)
P8	Effective communication has a positive impact on performance and productivity.	Effective Communication → Performance & Productivity	Clear communication ensures clarity, coordination and alignment towards tasks, which are critical for productivity in hybrid work
P9	Inclusion and belongingness positively impacts work well-being and work-life balance.	Inclusion & Belongingness → Well-being & Work-Life Balance	Inclusion and belongingness contribute to well-being and work-life balance in flexible work environments
P10	Leadership strategies positively influence outcomes through intermediaries.	Leadership Strategies → Mediators → Outcomes	Leadership has an indirect effect on outcomes such as performance, productivity and satisfaction, which can be explained through mechanisms such as motivation, trust and communication, reflecting a mediated effect as seen in hybrid work studies

The above propositions collectively set out a holistic model of the impact of leadership strategies on hybrid work outcomes. The model does not take a direct approach but underscores the importance of mediators of human psychologies and behaviours, including motivation, trust, communication quality, and inclusion. Leadership strategies (especially transformational, trust, inclusive, and digital leadership) represent the drivers that influence the mediators, which in turn influence key outcomes such as performance, productivity, job satisfaction, well-being and work-life balance. This is consistent with other theoretical frameworks such as the JD-R model and e-leadership theory, which point out that for leadership to be effective in hybrid conditions, leaders need to balance the human and technological aspects. The propositions therefore offer a framework for empirical validation and enhance our understanding of leadership in hybrid work teams, especially in the IT industry.

## DISCUSSION

The current conceptual review contributes to the body of research on effective leadership in hybrid work environments by synthesising the literature on leadership and hybrid work, showing that leadership in hybrid environments is not just about task management, but also includes psychological, social and technological aspects. The results indicate a move from control-oriented leadership to trust-based and goal-oriented leadership, as also supported by previous studies (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003; Choudhury et al., 2021). Notably, transformational leadership is critical to enhancing motivation and engagement, especially in hybrid settings where physical separation may undermine social connections; inspirational leaders who set a vision and offer personalised support can better maintain employee engagement and performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Boccoli et al., 2024). Trust-based leadership is also critical to hybrid teams, as it underpins consistency, fairness and clarity, which create a sense of safety and well-being, and improve job satisfaction (Golden & Veiga, 2005). The research also underscores the importance of digital leadership competence, noting that even though digital platforms enable communication, coordination and tracking of performance, this is not sufficient without aligning with human-focused practices such as empathy and inclusion (Contreras et al., 2020). Inclusive leadership is also critical in overcoming the challenges of inequity between the remote and in-person workforce, as well as promoting inclusion and belonging. Crucially, the study highlights that leadership has an indirect influence on organisational outcomes through mediating factors, including motivation, psychological safety, communication effectiveness and inclusion, consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Finally, regarding outcomes, leadership is linked to higher team performance, productivity, job satisfaction, and well-being, echoing the literature that hybrid work can work well when coupled with effective leadership (Bloom et al., 2024; Barrero et al., 2021). In terms of context, the study adds to the scant research on hybrid leadership in the Indian IT industry (especially in NCR), and suggests that context-specific approaches are needed. In conclusion, the discussion confirms that hybrid leadership is indeed multifaceted and demands a blend of leadership styles, digital leadership competence and human-centred practices to create robust and high-performing teams in the hybrid work environment.

## IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

### 10.1 Theoretical Implications

This research adds to the body of research by synthesising various theoretical paradigms - such as transformational

leadership, e-leadership and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model - to develop a holistic model for hybrid teams. It adds to existing leadership theories by grounding them in the context of remotely located and digitally connected teams, and by emphasising the role of mediating factors such as motivation, trust and effective communication. In addition, this study helps bridge the gap in context-specific research in developing economies by staying focused on the IT industry in India, and thereby adds to the global conversation on hybrid leadership from a developing economy perspective.

### 10.2 Managerial Implications

This study provides several lessons for managers and leaders in hybrid work settings. First, leaders should embrace a multi-faceted leadership style, blending transformational, trust, inclusive and digital leadership strategies for managing distributed workforces. Second, companies should focus on building digital leadership skills to equip leaders with the ability to use digital platforms for communication, collaboration, and performance measurement. Third, creating a trusting and safe work environment should be emphasized, as this affects engagement, job satisfaction and well-being. Third, leaders should establish clear communication practices and include everyone to reduce equity issues between remote and office-based workers. Lastly, companies should adopt an outcomes-focused performance management approach, allowing flexibility and control to sustain employee productivity and well-being in hybrid work environments.

### 10.3 Practical Implications

Practically, this study offers a guide for companies to create hybrid work policies. HR professionals can use the model to create training programs for leaders in the areas of communication, trust and digital literacy. It also suggests the importance of employee-oriented policies promoting work-life balance and well-being. In addition, organisations can use the mediating factors - such as engagement and inclusion - to assess leadership quality in hybrid work teams. The findings are highly relevant for IT firms in NCR but can also be applied to other industries embracing hybrid work arrangements.

### 10.4 Limitations of the Study

The study has some limitations. First, the study is conducted in the National Capital Region (NCR) and may not be applicable to other regions or sectors. Second, the study is mainly confined to the IT industry, and thus the findings may not be equally applicable to other non-IT industries. Third, the use of self-reported data in the methodology may lead to response bias and impact the validity of the results. Fourth, the study has a cross-sectional design, which may limit the understanding of the long-term effects of leadership strategies in the ever-changing hybrid work environment. Finally, although the conceptual framework in the study includes important variables, other variables, including organizational culture, IT infrastructure, and environmental factors may also influence the results but are not comprehensively explored in this study.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

In summary, the current study reveals that the success of hybrid work arrangements in the corporate world, especially in the IT industry, is contingent on the type of leadership strategies used to manage remote teams. Drawing from leadership theories and hybrid work studies, the study establishes that leadership practices such as transformational, trust-based, inclusive, and digitally competent leadership have a significant influence on critical organizational outcomes such as team performance, employee productivity, job satisfaction and well-being. Crucially, the study stresses that these connections are indirect and are mediated by key factors like employee motivation and engagement, psychological safety, communication, as well as feelings of inclusion and belongingness. In the hybrid work environment, which is marked by distance and virtual communication, leaders need to transcend control-based practices to more adaptive, empathetic and technology-based practices that build trust, teamwork and accountability. The study also highlights that although hybrid work has many benefits, including flexibility, work-life balance and better retention, its effectiveness is highly dependent on the leadership's ability to overcome issues related to communication, isolation and perceived fairness. Looking to future research, there is a clear need to rigorously test the proposed conceptual model across large-scale quantitative and qualitative studies, and in various cultural and organisational settings. Longitudinal studies could also contribute to better understanding the sustainability of hybrid leadership approaches and their impact on organisational performance and employee outcomes. Moreover, future research could investigate the increasing impact of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, data analytics, and virtual meeting platforms on leadership effectiveness in the hybrid work environment. More research is also needed to address diversity, inclusion, and well-being in the hybrid work environment, which is under-researched. In sum, this research not only adds to the scholarly body of knowledge on hybrid leadership, but also it presents a baseline framework for organisations to thrive in the future of work.

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