

Developing a new framework for organisational performance in the post-pandemic world: A study of German Corporates

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Paper's importance

The post pandemic normal of hybrid working was predicted by some (Alipour et al., 2020; Bianchi-Weinand and Wannöffel, 2022), hoped for by others (Speck, 2022) and is not completely researched (Sekhar and Patwardhan, 2023; Verma et al., 2023). This working paper focuses on developing appropriate frameworks to enable individual and organisational performance in the context of specific labour law by sharing the preliminary findings of an ongoing study in German Corporates.

Theoretical base

Hybrid work has become an integral part of today's professional life (Flüter-Hoffmann and Stettes, 2022). The challenge for employees and employers is to find a good balance between working in the office and from home - with the aim of ensuring and strengthening the performance of the individual as well as the overall organisational performance (Lee and Gascó-Hernandez, 2023). Positive aspects include the flexibility gained, the compatibility of work and family life and the increased personal responsibility of employees (Boch, 2021; Schaffelhofer, 2022). Critics emphasise the blurred boundaries between work and leisure time, isolation while working from home and loss of control by managers (Burkhart, 2023; Von Bergen et al., 2019).

Both advocates and critics emphasise the need for further research to create an effective working model focused on the organisational perspective. Two key models of organisational performance developed prior to the pandemic are the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017) and the approach of the seven (formerly 16) HRM best practises (Pfeffer, 1998). Both models work on the assumption that the interaction of HR practices and factors can have an influence on organisational performance. This study explores the appropriateness of such models in developing frameworks for hybrid working.

Research purpose

In order to investigate the ambiguities in previous research and develop a new framework for hybrid working the study will seek through a series of qualitative interviews and thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) answers to the following questions through the perspective of HR managers, general managers and employees:

1. What do HR professionals perceive as the essential features of effective working from home in hybrid patterns on an overall organisational level?
2. What do general managers perceive as the essential features of effective working from home in hybrid patterns on an overall organisational level?
3. What do white-collar employees perceive as the essential features of effective working from home in hybrid patterns on an overall organisational level?
4. Where do HR professionals, general management, and white-collar employees agree and disagree regarding effective working from home in hybrid patterns on an overall organisational level?

Conclusions and implications for practice

Previous findings suggest a positive link between organisational performance and teleworking. However, the majority of studies have not differentiated between the perspectives of the managers, HR managers and employee. The integrative approach will counteract this methodological vagueness, gain new insights specifically drawn from the German context enable the practical development of frameworks to ensure organisational performance and address the pandemic-related paradigm shift in meeting employee needs and the shortage of skilled workers.