

Article

# Navigating remote leadership in the age of operational hybrid work: current Issues and innovative approaches

Beenish Shameem<sup>1</sup>, Saleem Mushtaq<sup>2</sup>, Babeet Gupta<sup>1</sup>, Abdelkarim Kitana<sup>1</sup>, Varinder Singh Rana<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Aburayya<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> College of Business, City University Ajman, Ajman, P.O. Box 18484, UAE

<sup>2</sup> Business Department, Global University College, Ajman, P.O. Box 346, UAE

\* Corresponding author: Ahmad Aburayya, [A.aburayya@cu.ac.ae](mailto:A.aburayya@cu.ac.ae)

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**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to remote work, radically altering leadership styles across the globe. As businesses move toward hybrid work models that include in-office and remote work, managers must overcome new obstacles to sustain teamwork, engagement, and productivity. This study examines how remote leadership is evolving in the hybrid era, focusing on key topics such as performance management, employee well-being, trust-building, and communication challenges. It also examines how technology, such as AI-enabled instruments and online collaboration tools, might support effective leadership. The research identifies creative methods for resolving these issues by analyzing prior studies, case studies, and interviews with business leaders across sectors. The results highlight the importance of emotional intelligence, flexibility, and fair leadership for creating cohesive, productive teams. This article provides insights into the future of leadership in an increasingly digital and flexible workplace and concludes with suggestions for leaders seeking to succeed in hybrid work environments.

**Keywords:** leadership; remote leadership; hybrid work; innovative approaches; digital transformation

## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted conventional working arrangements, hastening the transition of all industries toward remote work. Organizations had to quickly adapt their leadership practices to manage dispersed teams effectively as they implemented virtual operations to ensure continuity. Many companies decided to keep using remote or hybrid work arrangements even after the pandemic passed, seeing the advantages of increased flexibility, lower costs, and easier access to a larger talent pool. These days, working remotely and in an office set-up together is called hybrid work, and it's the new standard. Because of this change, leadership tactics must be reevaluated as the old ways of managing teams no longer work in the hybrid work context. In the hybrid era, remote leadership requires new skills and methods to sustain productivity, engagement, and team cohesion.

The challenges of remote leadership are numerous, complex, and multidimensional. Many leaders find it difficult to communicate; for instance, virtual meetings can impede interpersonal interactions and subtle human connections that contribute to innovation and creativity in providing business solutions. Similarly, it takes more than the occasional video contact or message to maintain staff engagement and participation. Employees in remote environments frequently feel isolated and disengaged, which can lead to burnout, decreased motivation, and, at times, non-

involvement in contributing to business productivity. To reduce these challenges, leaders need to promote a sense of inclusion and belonging among employees. Furthermore, there are unique challenges associated with remotely monitoring performance, including the need to redefine performance indicators and adopt trust-based management approaches. Because hybrid work settings create disparities between in-office and remote workers, they further complicate leadership. Eroding trust and fairness is proximity bias, in which leaders unintentionally give preference to people they see in person. Leaders must also strike a balance between the needs of people with different work choices and personal situations to maintain the equity and inclusivity of hybrid arrangements. These difficulties highlight the need for a deeper understanding of how leadership techniques must evolve to satisfy the demands of the hybrid era. In their study, Naqshbandi et al. found that flexible work arrangements have significant, positive impacts on work performance (2023). The results also indicated that flexible work enhances work engagement, which in turn significantly mediates the relationship between flexible work and job performance. The study shows that a one-size-fits-all pure Agile approach is frequently unfeasible for large, complex organizations, particularly in the telecom industry. Rather, a hybrid approach provides a practical, realistic means of combining the stability and predictability of traditional models for complex dependency-heavy parts with the flexibility of Agile for suitable parts (Stankovski et al., 2022).

In addition to its challenges, hybrid work offers opportunities. Hybrid teams can create dynamic, innovative work environments by combining the advantages of in-person and remote collaboration when led by capable leaders. This is made possible in large part by technology, with tools such as AI-powered platforms and cloud-based collaboration solutions becoming essential for efficient project management and communication. But excessive reliance on technology can also lead to fatigue. Therefore, it's critical to intentionally balance online and offline relationships.

This study examines the emerging challenges and solutions in distant leadership within hybrid work environments. It seeks to answer important questions, such as: Which leadership competencies are essential for success in hybrid environments? How can team leaders in faraway locations preserve accountability and trust? What part does technology play in making leadership endeavours easier or harder? Furthermore, how can businesses create an inclusive culture that unites employees who work remotely and those who do so in person? Drawing on recent research, industry publications, and best practices in leadership, this study offers practical guidance for managing the challenges of hybrid leadership. The results highlight the crucial role of digital literacy, adaptability, and emotional intelligence for leaders. The paper also provides recommendations for increasing employee well-being in hybrid workplaces, encouraging cooperation, and reducing proximity bias. This research aims to contribute to the conversation on effective leadership strategies that account for the realities of a physically dispersed yet digitally connected workforce as firms continue to reinvent the future of work.

To sum up, the hybrid era of remote leadership requires a leadership paradigm shift that goes beyond operational changes; leaders must reconsider how they engage, motivate, and oversee individuals. In the years to come, retaining employee engagement, encouraging innovation, and maintaining productivity will depend on

your ability to adapt to these changing dynamics. To ensure that organizations and their people can fully realize the promise of hybrid work, this paper aims to provide leaders with useful concepts and ideas to help them thrive in this new environment.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Remote leadership's development after the pandemic**

Leaders had to adjust immediately as the COVID-19 pandemic forced a rapid transition from traditional office settings to remote work. Previous research has focused on the difficulties of leading remote teams, including poor communication, employee isolation, and a lack of spontaneous cooperation (Kniffin et al., 2021). Research also showed that at first, leaders and workers experienced stress from working remotely as companies struggled to establish the required framework and provide psychological support (Contreras et al., 2020). With a combination of remote and in-person components, hybrid work eventually became the most sustainable model, prompting changes in leadership methods to meet both virtual and physical demands. Frkal and Lewis (2024) found that managers faced a host of challenges in remote leadership. American Express write that WFH employees handled 26% more calls and produced 43% more business than traditional employees (Pearce, 2009).

### **2.2. Challenges in hybrid and remote leadership**

Research highlights numerous ongoing challenges with remote and hybrid leadership. Since leaders must rely on outcome-based evaluations rather than direct supervision, trust and accountability are still crucial (Larson et al., 2021). One prevalent problem linked to remote workers' perception of unfairness is proximity bias, which occurs when managers inadvertently give preference to staff members who work in offices (Kellogg et al., 2022). Furthermore, sustaining worker happiness and engagement in geographically distributed teams remains a top priority. Despite having a better work-life balance, remote workers are more likely to experience burnout, according to a Gallup study. Meiryani et al. (2022) found that Employee performance is positively impacted by leadership style. Employee performance will rise if their leadership style is further enhanced, and vice versa if they receive poor leadership. This demonstrates that when workers receive effective leadership, job satisfaction increases and workers are more motivated at work. Conversely, if employees receive little leadership, they won't be satisfied with their jobs. As a result, employees' performance is not always improved by transformational leadership.

### **2.3. Digital leadership and technological solutions**

There has been much discussion in the literature about the use of technology in remote leadership. Cloud-based platforms, virtual collaboration software, and AI-powered solutions are essential for facilitating remote teamwork. Nonetheless, studies caution against an excessive reliance on technology, as it may lead to "Zoom fatigue" and lower staff morale (Lund et al., 2021). In addition to building interpersonal relationships among their teams, leaders must be skilled at utilizing digital tools (Sull et al., 2022). Empathy and communication skills are two human elements of leadership

that technology must enhance, not replace. (Krehl & Büttgen, 2022). Their research indicated that leadership, in collaboration with digital tools, enhances the quality of work, and that the constant use of digital tools is tiring, so a smart structuring is needed to remain effective.

In recent literature, automation and AI are changing leadership paradigms, offering modern enterprises both difficult challenges and previously unheard-of opportunities. In UAS, Aniebonam (2025) stresses the need for inclusive leadership techniques, AI ethics education, and a human-centered approach to AI integration. The study concludes that AI enhances efficiency, adaptability, and innovation. In addition, leaders may ensure ethical responsibility while utilizing AI's disruptive potential by promoting transparency, equity, and interdisciplinary collaboration. In a related study, Cheng et al. (2025) look into how top management team (TMT) traits and green mergers and acquisitions (GMAs) affect green innovation in highly polluting businesses. They conclude that corporate green patent applications are significantly improved by GMAs. The study also emphasizes the crucial role of TMT traits in green innovation. In particular, TMTs with more international experience, higher educational attainment, and greater gender diversity are better at promoting green innovation. Green innovation is more likely to be promoted by teams with a higher percentage of female leaders, higher levels of education, and international backgrounds. Younger TMTs are also more capable of green innovation. Furthermore, according to Shakilla and Saputro (2025), integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and technological tools into managerial processes represents a substantial evolution in contemporary leadership practices, driven by the need to tackle complex organizational challenges and leverage technological advancements. The results of their study show that while project management software maximizes task distribution and communication, encouraging teamwork, AI-driven insights greatly enhance predictive analytics, empowering leaders to make strategic decisions. However, issues such as adoption reluctance and the need for staff training are identified as significant obstacles to successful implementation.

#### **2.4. Competencies of leadership in hybrid work models**

The transition to a hybrid work model necessitates new leadership skills. The need for emotional intelligence (EI) in leading geographically distributed and heterogeneous teams is becoming increasingly essential (Goleman, 2022). Research indicates that emotionally intelligent leaders efficiently handle conflict in remote environments, foster stronger interpersonal relationships, and foster trust (Henderson et al., 2023). Additionally, because hybrid leaders must adapt their strategies to the unique needs of both in-office and remote workers, adaptive leadership styles are essential.

#### **2.5. Engagement of workers and organizational culture**

A frequent topic in the literature is the preservation of organizational culture in hybrid work environments. Research highlights the need for purposeful initiatives to develop culture, such as online team-building exercises and inclusive leadership approaches (Schwartz et al., 2021). According to a Flex Jobs poll, 79% of workers feel

more devoted to their employers when given flexible work schedules, suggesting that hybrid leadership approaches directly affect worker satisfaction and retention. The literature also indicates that hybrid leaders need to address the possibility that workers may start to feel like “second-class” workers if they are not given the same opportunities for training and growth as their colleagues in offices.

## **2.6. Future coming patterns and their significance for leadership**

When organizations were compelled to implement widespread remote labor, their levels of technology preparation varied. There were less immediate practical barriers to productivity for those who had made investments in computers and virtual collaboration technologies. To ensure that workers could perform their duties with ease, others had to expedite the delivery of hardware as well as the installation of operating systems and security updates. Due to the peculiar lockdown conditions, many were working from home for the first time and had to adjust on short notice. They might have to be mobile, negotiating their use of space around household members’ relative need for quiet, or they might be sharing their home-based workspace with others, which meant they had little privacy. For young people who live in shared housing and bedsits and frequently work in their bedrooms or in common areas, workspace may be more of a problem. Supervisors noted that this might then be connected to declines in wellbeing.

Humans have three different choices for work patterns: entirely remote, hybrid, and fully on-site, according to a 2022 Gallup poll of over 140,000 workers that examined their demands, experiences, and future of work throughout the COVID-19 epidemic (Wigert & Agrawal, 2022). Just 32% of workers had a hybrid work choice prior to the pandemic, and just 8% of workers worked solely from home. As a result, 60% of them worked exclusively on-site (Wigert & Agrawal, 2022). In fact, there is currently little research on leadership in hybrid workplaces. A deeper comprehension of leadership in the hybrid workplace should be carried out as work continues to be more precisely defined by what it means to be totally distant, hybrid, and face-to-face (Hopkins & Figaro, 2021). It is currently challenging to discern the distinctions between what is required for effective leadership in both work environments because definitions of virtual leadership and e-leadership recognize aspects of both virtual and face-to-face leadership features (Torre & Sarti, 2020). Additionally, some recent research on e-leadership, virtual leadership, and hybrid work has been done in the context of education rather than business (Hebert & Lovett, 2021). In the present post-COVID-19 corporate context, organization across countries determined the qualities and skills thought to be relevant for the hybrid team leader. Because hybrid work these days (Post Pandemic) combines “the benefits of being in the office in person — greater ability to collaborate, innovate, and build culture—with the benefits of quiet and the lack of commuting that come from working from home,” Bloom (2021) thought that employees preferred it over fully virtual work. Furthermore, Gallop’s September 2022 study of 8,090 remote-capable workers nationwide emphasized the benefits and difficulties of hybrid employment. The study found that better work-life balance, more effective time management, and flexibility in choosing when and where to work were the main benefits of hybrid employment.

According to recent research, hybrid work patterns will become the norm in the years to come, requiring constant adaptation from leaders. 74% of businesses will adopt hybrid and remote work arrangements as regular practice, according to research by Quantum Workplace. This underscores the need for leaders to continuously improve their skill sets to remain competitive (Quantum Workplace, 2023). Empathy, digital proficiency, and adaptability will be key components of future leadership in managing geographically remote teams and advancing inclusivity and justice across work modalities. When creating a framework or model for “Navigating Remote Leadership in the Age of Hybrid Work,” it is crucial to organize the methodology to account for the unique opportunities and challenges of managing geographically dispersed teams. The hybrid work paradigm requires a careful approach to team dynamics, communication, productivity, and technology integration, as some workers are remote while others are on-site. A proposed framework that can assist leaders in successfully navigating distant leadership in this new era, including: (1) Relationship building with the team; (2) Inclusive communication and coordination; (3) Gravitas; (4) High emotional intelligence; (5) Transparency and Trust.

In leadership, relationship building encompasses more than just task-oriented or transactional exchanges; it involves building sincere, human relationships with team members, which serve as the cornerstone of cooperation and trust. This is even more important in remote settings when in-person connections are scarce.

Justification in the Context of Leadership: Skilled leaders recognize that their staff members are people with distinct personal lives, goals, and difficulties in addition to being employees. Leaders who want to build great relationships must be concerned about their team’s well-being, celebrate successes, offer support when things get tough, and foster an environment where people feel appreciated and understood. Through informal virtual coffee conversations, team-building exercises, or personalized recognition, they try to foster a feeling of community and belonging, even in a virtual environment.

The goal of inclusive communication is to ensure that all team members, regardless of position, location, or background, have equitable access to opportunities and information that impact their work. To ensure everyone works together, leaders must coordinate their teams around common objectives and duties. For a leader, inclusive communication entails eliminating prejudices in the dissemination of information, ensuring that all opinions are heard, and taking into account the various needs of team members. Communication must be intentional and available to all in a remote or hybrid setting, whether via digital tools, frequent updates, or explicit written instructions. In reality, leaders ensure that everyone on the team, whether in the office or working remotely, has access to the same information, is encouraged to join discussions, and is involved in decision-making. To ensure no one is left out, tools such as video calls, collaboration platforms, and clear written communication become crucial.

Gravitas is the leader’s capacity to project credibility, authority, and assurance even when they are not physically there. It concerns a leader’s demeanour, choices, and communication style, particularly in remote settings where nonverbal cues are often absent. Since leaders cannot utilize their body language or physical presence to establish authority, gravitas is especially crucial in remote leadership. Confidence,

effective communication, and consistent decision-making are the foundations of gravitas. The goal is to establish trust and respect, not to be controlling. They speak with clarity and decisiveness in remote meetings, provide answers when problems occur, and show trust in their team's capacity to carry out their decisions.

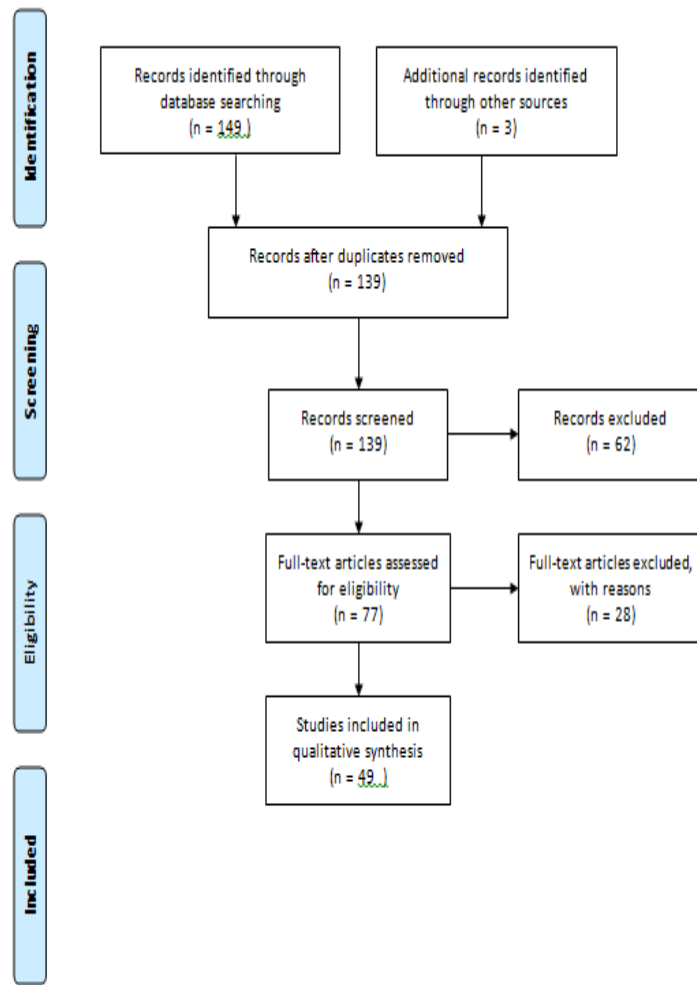
Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the capacity of a leader to identify, comprehend, and control their own emotions as well as those of others. Maintaining a positive workplace culture and cultivating healthy connections requires high EQ, especially in remote settings where social cues are harder to read. Leaders with high EQ can handle stress, resolve disputes, and relate to the challenges their team faces. They are sensitive to their team's emotional dynamics and can tell when someone is feeling overburdened, disinterested, or having difficulties. EQ is a crucial tool for ensuring team members feel encouraged and supported in remote work settings, where emotions are often expressed through digital communication. A leader with a high EQ often inquires about their team's mental and emotional health, as well as their work-related concerns. They can detect subtle clues of stress or disengagement in textual correspondence or virtual encounters. They are adept at providing assistance, whether in the form of encouragement, flexibility, or resources to deal with personal or professional issues, and they establish a secure environment for workers to voice worries or difficulties.

Finally, transparency is being forthright and truthful in information sharing, decision-making, and communication. Consistent openness fosters trust, which is essential to a leader's capacity to inspire and direct their group. Transparency is essential to building a culture of trust in a remote situation where in-person interactions are scarce. In a remote setting, a transparent leader keeps the team updated on key decisions, potential risks, and organizational changes by sharing both successes and failures.

In conclusion, effective leadership, especially in remote and hybrid work contexts, is grounded in five attributes: connection building, inclusive communication, gravitas, high emotional intelligence, transparency, and trust. Leaders who place a high priority on these attributes will be better able to motivate and inspire their staff, cultivate strong teamwork, and navigate the challenges of remote leadership as it continues to shape the future of businesses. Asfahani (2025) investigated the dynamics of digital leadership in remote work, underscoring the importance of transformational leadership and cultural diversity.

### **3. Materials and methods**

The qualitative method is used to conduct the research. This methodology ensures a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon, as qualitative insights will give depth to leadership issues and best practices in hybrid contexts. The research will examine previously published works, such as academic journals, business case studies, and industry reports. Reports from sources including Buffer, Quantum Workplace, and Gallup will provide quantitative insights into data and trends related to remote leadership and hybrid work. In order to find, evaluate, and synthesize all pertinent literature on a subject, the study employed systematic review analysis techniques, which entail an organized, transparent procedure adhering to PRISMA principles.



#### 4. Results and discussion

According to a May 2020 study by the “Center for Transformative Work Design Survey”, when asked if remote workers often perform worse than those who work in offices, global managers gave the following response:

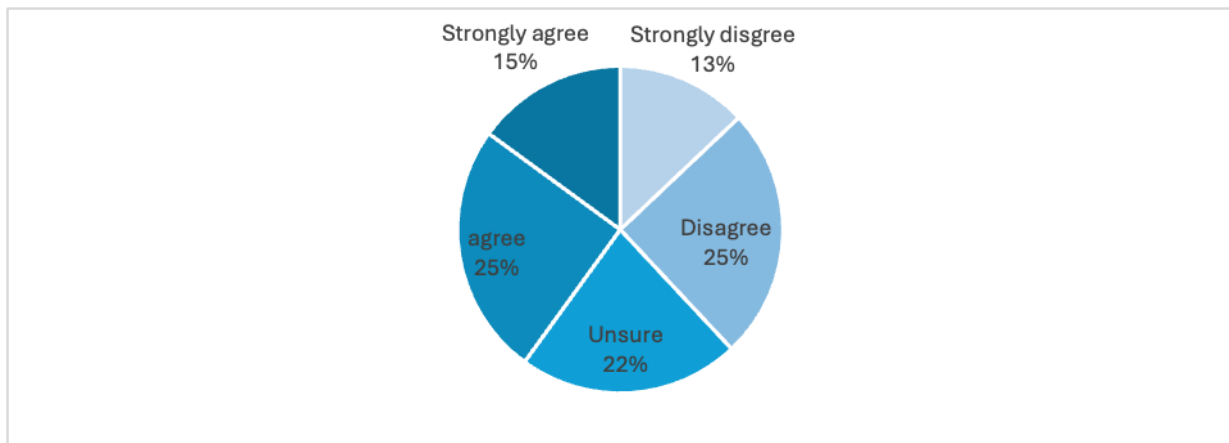


**Figure 1.** Center for Transformative Work Design Survey (May 2020).

According to the report, managing a remote workforce is the largest problem facing global supervisors, followed by breakdown in communication. Ali (2024) investigated the relationship between remote work and organisational culture and its subsequent impact on key outcomes of interest, such as organisational identification, socializing and knowledge sharing, employee turnover, and productivity. It also includes important factors and conditions to examine the impact of multiple factors that moderate the relationship between remote work and organisational culture including social, technological, and normative conditions. Remote management of your employees can significantly impact how well you set expectations and convey information. Remote meetings can sometimes cause people to feel anxious or uncomfortable because they are held virtually. In essence, employee productivity may suffer as a result. Using a remote working system to complete tasks with coworkers in an office setting can have an impact on employees' efficiency and productivity. The employees' active extension of their communication networks is impacted by the weaknesses in their remote working systems. With these models, workers could have to lead more solitary lives (Savić, 2020). One of the main issues with employees working remotely is communication. With half of the working hours of employees, especially those in the aerospace industry, are spent talking, and this percentage is rising with time. Additionally, employees working on increasingly complex technical systems—like those examined in this study—find it more difficult to communicate. Last but not least, employees learn best by talking and listening rather than by reading. Employees would therefore face difficulties if there is any impact on connectivity throughout the remote work session. When compared to co-located work, remote work may have a detrimental effect on people's communication in a number of ways, including a loss of informal communication, the additional effort needed to interact remotely, stretched supervisory obligations, and personal levels of digital technology confidence. Loncar et al. (2025) find that a perceptual divide exists between managers, who are more often in the office, see hybrid work even more positively than employees, and are therefore more likely to overestimate the quality of remote-work resources. This difference in perception is probably due to different daily work experiences and varying control over resources, both of which are major problems for companies. Companies need to develop well-balanced approaches to leverage the benefits of hybrid work adjustments. The study also found that employees who work remotely can have problems with those who are in different time zones. Extreme instances may be team members who live in Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas. In fact, software and hardware problems, as well as poor internet connectivity, are major challenges for employees who operate in multiple locations. As a result, management finds it challenging to interact effectively with employees. Furthermore, compared with offices workers, remote workers have less faith in management. This makes it challenging for the employer to make better use of the resources. In essence, working remotely requires you to monitor your employees more than ever before. While you must have faith in your employees, you also need to ensure that no one abuses the situation.

By encouraging communication, cooperation, and accountability across scattered teams, digital tools and technologies are essential for supporting remote leadership. Integrating multiple platforms that preserve team cohesiveness and productivity over

geographical distances is necessary for effective remote leadership. Communication Tools: While video conferencing services like Zoom or Google Meet facilitate face-to-face engagement, which is essential for preserving rapport and minimizing isolation, real-time messaging platforms like Slack and Microsoft Teams enable quick exchanges. To align on objectives and avoid misunderstandings in remote settings, leaders must maintain regular, consistent communication. Tools for Project Management and Workflow: Programs like Asana, Trello, or Monday.com facilitate tracking assignments, due dates, and progress. These platforms promote openness by giving concise summaries of team and individual duties, which is essential for managing remote teams. Collaborative Platforms: Virtual whiteboards like Miro or digital workstations like Google Workspace facilitate teamwork and collaborative brainstorming. These tools allow distant workers to collaborate and solve problems creatively by simulating in-person working situations. Flexibility and Empathetic Leadership: Effective remote leaders place a strong emphasis on empathy, recognizing that working remotely presents particular challenges, such as juggling personal obligations and taking care of one's health. Providing scheduling flexibility and fostering candid communication fosters team loyalty and trust. The leaders of the majority of firms understand the significance of optimizing the conventional approach to organizational culture and internal communication in the context of the global digital transformation processes. Innovative communication optimization of the company's organizational and communication culture is seen by the great majority of contemporary scholars as the foundation for successful transition toward sustainable development. Most of the time, they believe that improving the quality and speed of economic activity sector optimization requires the active effect of digital capabilities on the communication process. The scientific community is actively studying the dynamics of organizational aspects of business operations in the context of integration processes in the global socio-economic environment, particularly under the notion of digital transformation. In fact, the effectiveness of project communication for example is determined by appropriate communication tools. These days, communication efficiency is limited and waste space is created since traditional communication methods are unable to handle complexity. Digital communication tools are reasonably priced information technology that may deliver a recognized degree of effectiveness. The impact of digital communication technologies on initiatives carried out by companies is examined in the paper "The impact of Social Networking 2.0 on organizations." The following forms of computer-mediated communication qualify as digital tools in a social networking order: 1. One-on-one (Messenger, for example); 2. One-to-many or one-to-few (like Skype and Messenger); 3. Few-to-few or many-to-many (such as wikis).

Skill Development and Leadership Agility: As remote work becomes more common, leaders need to become more flexible to adapt their approaches to the demands of different teams and situations. Encouraging team members to participate in online training courses, workshops, or mentorship sessions promotes ongoing education and leadership growth. Effective hybrid leadership requires blending digital tools with human-centric leadership — something that is unique and more complex than either pure remote or pure office leadership. (Adaptive Leadership Competencies for Hybrid Work Teams in the South African Banking Sector, 2025)

By implementing these tactics, leaders can effectively manage the challenges of remote work while maintaining high levels of performance and engagement. Long-term success in remote or hybrid environments depends on these techniques' ability to foster a culture of trust, adaptability, and creativity while also meeting operational demands. Leaders of remote teams can use technology to foster an innovative culture. Digital project management tools, online collaboration platforms, and virtual brainstorming sessions enable leaders to foster innovation and problem-solving. By providing appropriate technology infrastructure, leaders can foster a collaborative atmosphere that transcends geographical boundaries and time zones. Technology also enables leaders to gather information and insights that can guide decision-making. Analytics tools can offer useful data on team output, project completion dates, and general performance. These insights can help by leaders pinpoint development opportunities, well-informed strategic decisions, and streamline processes in the context of remote work.

Setting boundaries between work and personal life is crucial for people dealing with the challenges of remote work. Maintaining a feeling of routine and separation can be facilitated by establishing specific work hours, designating a specific workstation, and scheduling regular breaks. Making communication with supervisors and coworkers a priority is also essential for creating a supportive, connected environment in a virtual setting. Additionally, utilizing employer-sponsored resources, including wellness initiatives or mental health services, might improve general well-being. Organizations and individuals can successfully navigate the complexities of remote work by proactively addressing these issues and implementing initiatives to improve employee health.

Even while working remotely has many benefits, there are a number of challenges to working from home. According to Buffer's State of Remote Work survey, 18% of respondents cite unplugging after work as the most frequent challenge faced by remote workers. The other most prevalent issue is loneliness (20%), while other challenges that impact remote workers and their employers include cooperation (20%), distractions at home (12%), time zones (10%), and maintaining motivation (8%).

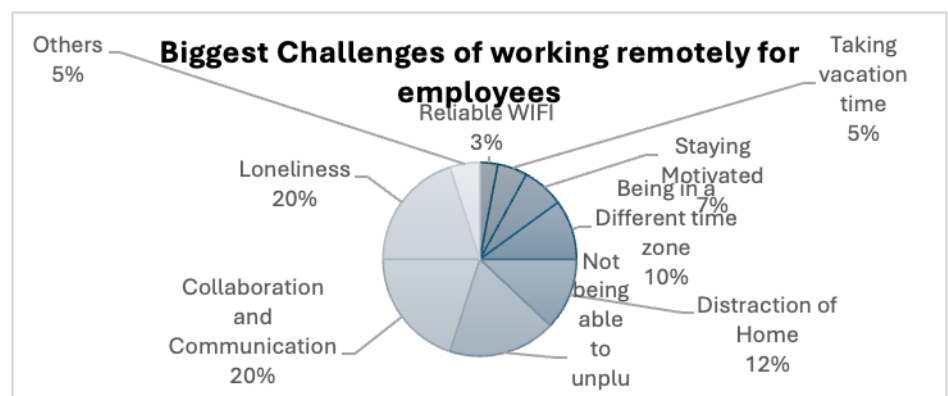


**Figure 2.** State of remote report (2019).

Due to its convenience and flexibility for both companies and individuals, remote work has become increasingly popular in today's industry. Although there are many advantages to this arrangement, such as better work-life balance and increased

productivity, there are also drawbacks that could affect workers' well-being. For instance, 20% of remote workers experience loneliness, isolation, and a sense of disconnect from work, which can lead to burnout and lower job satisfaction, according to a Buffer study. Businesses that prioritize employee well-being while navigating the difficulties of remote work include Automattic, the firm that created WordPress. Through virtual team-building exercises, frequent check-ins, and efficient communication channels, they have established in place policies and procedures that foster a sense of community and connection among distant workers. Employees should maintain regular social connections with coworkers, set boundaries between work and leisure time, and create a dedicated workspace that encourages concentration and productivity in order to ensure a great remote work experience. Businesses can establish a successful remote work culture that prioritizes employee well-being by investing in technologies and services that promote mental health and work-life balance.

It has been demonstrated that working remotely has a surprisingly positive impact on workers' mental and general well-being. For instance, according to a survey by social media management company Buffer, 57% of remote workers said they felt less stressed than their colleagues who worked in offices. Additionally, after implementing a remote work program, American Express found a 43% increase in employee productivity. These real cases demonstrate how remote work can improve mental health by reducing commuting-related stress, offering a more flexible work environment, and enabling staff members to better balance their personal and professional lives. Promoting work-life balance has emerged as a key priority for many companies seeking to enhance their workers' well-being in recent years. A key element in accomplishing this objective is remote work, which offers flexibility and autonomy that can boost worker morale and output. Buffer is a social media management platform that is a noteworthy example of a business that has successfully implemented remote work to improve work-life balance. Employees at Buffer can work from anywhere in the world and adjust their schedules to better suit their personal lives. Higher employee retention and satisfaction rates are the outcome of this strategy, proving the importance of remote work in fostering worker well-being. A recent Lattice research found that almost one in four businesses anticipate having 90–100% of their employees work remotely by 2025. Companies with a 90% remote workforce reported being equally satisfied with manager-employee facetime as those with a 10% remote workforce, further demonstrating the success of the hybrid workforce, according to the study.

Improving leadership in hybrid work settings requires tailored strategies that accommodate both in-person and remote workers. The following practical recommendations to increase leadership effectiveness in these situations are supported by research and real-world examples:

1. Promote trust through transparent communication action: establish a consistent communication schedule that informs all team members of company objectives, modifications, and expectations. Examples of this schedule include weekly updates or daily check-ins. Justification: transparency fosters trust, which is essential in hybrid teams. According to a McKinsey study, executives who communicate openly expressed higher engagement and productivity from remote workers. For example, the multinational tech company Atlassian uses a "team central" function that enables all

team members, wherever they are, to receive project and goal updates. In hybrid teams, this openness fosters trust.

2. Put employee autonomy first with flexibility action: give workers a say in some aspects of their work schedules and workspaces while offering clear instructions without being overly controlling. Justification: autonomy strengthens the trust that is essential to hybrid work. Employees are more productive and satisfied with their jobs when they have control over how they work, according to research. Microsoft implemented a “hybrid workspace flexibility guide” that encourages managers to enable staff members to choose how much time they spend at home and at work. Employee satisfaction increased, and turnover decreased as a result of this campaign.

3. Use digital platforms to improve collaboration: make use of a variety of digital platforms made for hybrid collaboration, including Microsoft Teams, Slack, Zoom, and Asana, and make sure that both remote and in-office employees have equal access to them. Justification: In hybrid settings, productive teamwork can lessen conflict. According to Harvard Business Review studies, hybrid teams’ productivity increased by 20% when businesses used digital collaboration tools. *\*\*Example\** makes it simpler for in-office and remote workers to collaborate effectively by using Google Workspace for both synchronous and asynchronous collaboration.

4. Put clear performance measures into practice: establish quantifiable, open performance measures that emphasize results over hours done. All team members should be able to access and understand these metrics. Justification: studies indicate that unambiguous performance measures help avoid “proximity bias,” which occurs when in-office employees are occasionally unjustly given preference. This method guarantees that their performance, rather than their actual presence, is assessed. For instance, Spotify changed its performance appraisals to focus more on outputs and goal achievement than location-based biases after adopting a “work from anywhere” paradigm.

5. Place a strong emphasis on Work-Life Balance and Well-Being: promote flexible scheduling, breaks, and mental health days, and offer tools to promote staff well-being. Justification: According to a Gallup survey, leaders who prioritize their mental health greatly enhance retention and engagement in hybrid teams. For instance, Salesforce launched “Health Reimbursement Programs” to promote employee well-being, which raised morale and strengthened dedication to the organization’s objectives.

6. Foster inclusive team-building activities: provide hybrid-friendly team-building exercises, like online coffee breaks or hybrid social gatherings, to make sure all workers, no matter where they are in the world, feel like they belong. Justification: Because distant workers may feel alienated in hybrid workplaces, achieving inclusion can be difficult. Inclusive team-building exercises increase engagement and reduce turnover by up to 50%, according to Gartner. For instance, to encourage communication across hybrid teams, HubSpot hosts monthly “Unplugged” events that include both virtual and in-person choices.

7. Create leaders with hybrid-specific skills: train leaders in managing hybrid teams, including topics like emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and digital communication. Justification: According to McKinsey, companies that invest in leadership development tailored to hybrid work environments see increases in worker

satisfaction and productivity. For instance, Cisco introduced the “Bridge to Program,” which teaches managers hybrid leadership techniques and equips them the to successfully lead both in-person and remote teams. By putting these tactics into practice, executives can build a diverse, effective, and stimulating hybrid workplace that promotes employee’s well-being and drives business growth.

The study’s conclusions are generally consistent with the body of recent research. According to Naqshbandi et al.’s research, flexible work schedules significantly improve productivity (2023). Additionally, the findings showed that flexible work considerably mediates the association between flexible work and job performance by increasing work engagement. The study demonstrates that large, complex businesses, especially those in the telecom sector, often cannot implement a one-size-fits-all pure Agile methodology. Instead, a hybrid approach offers a workable, realistic way to combine the flexibility of Agile for appropriate sections with the stability and predictability of traditional models for complex dependency-heavy parts (Stankovski et al., 2022). The use of technology in remote leadership has been extensively discussed in the literature. To enable remote teamwork, cloud-based platforms, virtual collaboration tools, and AI-powered solutions are crucial. However, research warns against relying too much on technology because it can cause “Zoom fatigue” and poor employee morale (Lund et al., 2021). Leaders need to be adept at using digital tools in addition to fostering interpersonal interactions among their teams (Sull et al., 2022). Two human components of leadership that technology must supplement, not replace, are empathy and communication skills. (Krettgen & Krehl, 2022). According to their research, using digital tools in conjunction with leadership improves the quality of work. However, using digital tools all the time can be exhausting, so smart structuring is necessary to be productive.

According to current research, automation and artificial intelligence are altering leadership paradigms and presenting contemporary businesses with both challenging problems and unprecedented prospects. Aniebonam (2025) emphasizes the importance of human-centered AI integration, inclusive leadership strategies, and AI ethics education in UAS. The study comes to the conclusion that AI improves productivity, flexibility, and creativity. Additionally, by encouraging openness, equity, and interdisciplinary cooperation, leaders may guarantee ethical responsibility while using AI’s revolutionary potential. In a related study, Cheng et al. (2025) investigate how green mergers and acquisitions (GMAs) and top management team (TMT) characteristics impact green innovation in highly polluting companies. They come to the conclusion that GMAs greatly enhance corporate green patent applications. The study also highlights how important TMT characteristics are to green innovation. TMTs are more effective at fostering green innovation, especially those with more international experience, higher levels of education, and greater gender diversity. Teams with a greater proportion of female leaders, higher levels of education, and international backgrounds are more likely to support green innovation. Additionally, younger TMTs are better in green innovation. Furthermore, Shakilla and Saputro (2025) claim that the incorporation of technological tools and artificial intelligence (AI) into managerial processes signifies a significant evolution in modern leadership practices, motivated by the need to address intricate organizational challenges and take advantage of technological advancements. The study’s findings demonstrate that

while project management software optimizes communication and task distribution, promoting teamwork, AI-driven insights significantly improve predictive analytics, enabling executives to make strategic choices. However, major barriers to successful implementation are noted, including adoption reluctance and the requirement for staff training.

## **5. Conclusion**

The dynamic character of today's workplace is reflected in the literature on remote and hybrid leadership. Leaders face particular challenges balancing equity, well-being, and productivity for both in-person and remote workers. Even if technology is important, emotional intelligence and flexible leadership remain vital. Future studies should look into creative ways to reduce proximity bias, encourage employee engagement, and maintain organizational culture in increasingly digital workplaces as hybrid work becomes more common. This research shows that remote leadership is now a long-term strategy that calls for ongoing learning and adaptation rather than merely a temporary solution to the pandemic. Organizations whose leaders are ready to accept change, make sensible use of technology, and foster inclusive work environments will thrive in this change.

## **6. Future research**

Despite extensive examination of remote and hybrid work since the COVID-19 pandemic, several critical gaps remain in the current literature on remote leadership. These research gaps indicate that further study is needed to adapt leadership techniques to the evolving needs of hybrid work environments. To monitor the development and efficacy of leadership practices over time, long-term research is required. There is a dearth of research on effective measures to mitigate proximity bias, which favors on-site workers over remote personnel, despite its recognition (Kellogg et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is limited knowledge about integrating emotional intelligence (EI) into virtual leadership training (Goleman, 2022). There is still more research to be done on how hybrid work models affect remote employees' efforts to promote diversity and inclusion (D&I). Furthermore, insufficient research has been conducted on the relationship between excessive technology use (such as Zoom fatigue) and burnout, as well as on how leaders can adapt to changing expectations around flexibility. Beyond temporary pandemic remedies, more investigation is required into crisis management and leadership flexibility in hybrid environments. In the context of digital and hybrid workplaces, sustainable leadership models must incorporate technology, emotional intelligence, and equity to ensure long-term organizational success.

As of several researches such as Martinolli et al. (2023) and Nakash & Bouhnik (2023) and in order to investigate the causal relationships between the variables under consideration, the authors first advise conducting studies on the subject using a longitudinal research methodology. Second, it would be wise to make more thorough contact with teams located in several countries. Lastly, the authors recommend that future study should investigate and incorporate more potential telework components in order to better understand how to design and implement telework in research teams,

among other contexts. Third, Future research should focus on a number of topics, such as the relationship between an organization's size and the quality of its information and its capacity for crisis adaptation. This, in our opinion, is a fundamental problem whose thorough investigation could result in a critical comprehension of various risk management approaches. Our understanding of the relationships between these variables may be improved by researching organizations of various sizes in different nations and even in the private sector. To supplement the techniques employed in the current investigation, further real-time and non-intrusive data collection techniques can be taken into consideration.

The study that is being given finds useful implications that are significant insights that can eventually affect organizational strategies and behaviors. The findings give organizations direction on how to alter their leadership development. Organizations must make an effort to provide an educational platform that equips managers and leaders with these skills due to the significance of emotional intelligence and technical proficiency in hybrid work. All things considered, this study advances a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of leadership in integrated work settings like hybrid work. primarily by moving away from several conventional leadership models and emphasizing and concentrating on the truly crucial abilities and strategies to address present and upcoming issues. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for leadership as well as the growing trend of decentralization in the hybrid workplace, which raises issues with building community and inclusivity within teams. This realization advances our understanding of the evolution of the modern leadership role, which is no longer primarily focused on control. In hybrid settings, leadership tends to be more flexible, coaching, and mentoring. In addition, the study provides businesses, executives, and governments with practical strategies for successfully navigating the difficulties of remote work and digital leadership. The necessity for a change in leadership development strategy is highlighted by the transition from traditional to collaborative and dispersed leadership. Businesses should use this as a chance to rethink their leadership development programs. Leaders may be equipped to succeed in remote settings by creating training programs that prioritize cultural intelligence, conflict resolution, and transformational leadership skills. The study's conclusions may be a useful tool for developing policies. The information gathered could help create policies that improve remote teams' ability to communicate and work together. Additionally, remote teams may be led by regulations intended to handle cultural diversity, creating a peaceful and effective work environment. The study highlights how crucial digital tools are to facilitating effective remote team leadership. This means that businesses need to make investments in the right digital technologies and make sure that teams are proficient in using them. These tools improve the efficiency of remote work by facilitating task collaboration, tracking team progress, and encouraging knowledge sharing across geographic borders. The difficulties with productivity, communication, and isolation that come with working remotely emphasize how important it is to put employee welfare first. The dangers of burnout and overwork must be deliberately addressed by leaders. This could involve putting in place regulations that support work-life balance, offering mental health assistance, and fostering an environment that values autonomy and trust. The study emphasizes how cultural variety may foster team innovation and creativity. By

encouraging an inclusive and diverse culture, leaders may take use of this potential. This could mean creating a culture that values different viewpoints and putting diversity and inclusion training programs into place.

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