

**DESIGNING THE
FUTURE OF WORK**

**A STUDY ON
HYBRID WORK
MODELS IN
PAKISTAN**



Executive Summary

The rapid evolution of technology, shifting workforce expectations and the lessons from global disruptions have positioned hybrid work as one of the most significant transformations in modern organizational design. This collaborative study by the **Pakistan Society for Training and Development (PSTD)** and **Salim Habib University Research Center** investigates how hybrid work models are being envisioned, structured and sustained within Pakistan's unique economic and cultural context.

Drawing on insights from organizations across diverse industries, functions, and leadership levels, the research explores how hybrid work operates in practice by examining policies, leadership approaches, employee experiences, and performance outcomes. Participants represented a broad cross-section of the workforce, including **senior executives** providing a comprehensive view of how hybrid models are designed and experienced across different organizational roles.

Findings indicate that hybrid work has become a **strategic enabler of flexibility, engagement, and talent retention**, particularly within knowledge-intensive and service-oriented sectors. However, its successful implementation depends on strong digital infrastructure, leadership alignment and clearly defined performance frameworks. The study also identifies emerging challenges such as blurred work-life boundaries, inequities in access to resources, and the need for new approaches to collaboration and inclusion.

The research concludes that hybrid work is not a temporary adjustment but an **evolving organizational ecosystem** that requires a careful balance between autonomy and accountability, physical presence and productivity, as well as human connection and digital efficiency. Serving as a reference point for organizations across Pakistan, this study provides **actionable insights and frameworks** to guide the design of hybrid work models that are sustainable, inclusive and aligned with the future of work.



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SALIM HABIB UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

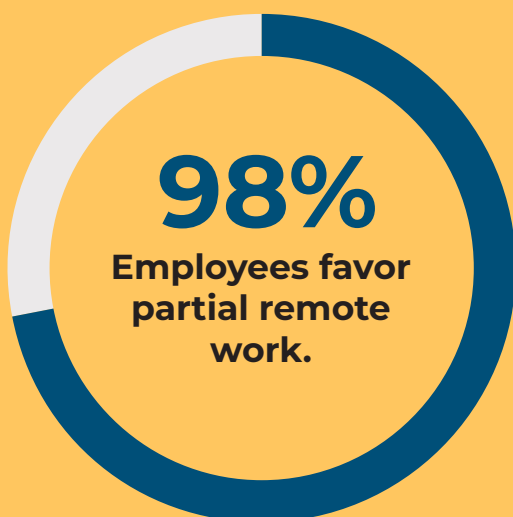
PSTD and Salim Habib University Partnership

The Pakistan Society for Training and Development (PSTD), in collaboration with Salim Habib University (SHU), has established the PSTD & SHU Research Center to strengthen the connection between academic research and organizational practice in Pakistan. The Center's primary objective is to produce credible, evidence-based insights that address emerging workplace challenges and guide institutions in making informed, data-driven decisions.

This partnership unites PSTD's extensive industry network with SHU's academic expertise to bridge the gap between theoretical research and the practical realities of business environments. The Research Center has been envisioned as a platform where applied research informs strategy and practice, helping organizations enhance leadership capability, build resilient systems and promote a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Its purpose is to generate localized knowledge that reflects Pakistan's unique economic, social and workforce context while contributing to global conversations on the future of work.

The first area of research selected by the Center is the Hybrid Workplace Model, a topic that has gained immense relevance in recent years. The decision to focus on this theme stems from the growing need to understand how hybrid structures operate across various industries, functions and employee levels. The study explores how organizations can design effective hybrid models that enhance productivity, inclusion and employee engagement while maintaining operational efficiency.

Through this collaboration, PSTD and SHU reaffirm their commitment to shaping Pakistan's future of work by promoting research that not only studies change but also enables organizations to respond to it strategically and sustainably.



STATISTIC

"In Pakistan, hybrid work is not just a global trend - it is becoming deeply rooted. A recent survey found that 98% of employees favor partial remote work (The News, 2024), while hybrid models in the IT sector reportedly boosted productivity by 68% and reduced operational costs by 35% (ResearchGate, 2024). Furthermore, over 60% of professionals now prefer a hybrid setup over fully remote or fully in-office arrangements (WorkInVirtual.pk, 2025)."

Welcome to the Digital Copy of the Research Insights



Anchored in the Values of the Following SDGs



Team Behind Project:

The momentum behind our hybrid research project stems from a vibrant, collaborative team that blends scholarly depth with industry acumen. At the nucleus, dedicated faculty members from Salim Habib University partner with a team of dedicated professionals from Pakistan Society for Training and Development, generating a powerful synergy. The team comprises of Industry Academia collaboration, including core researchers, industry experts, each member lending distinct skills that safeguard the project’s scholarly integrity while grounding it in practical applicability. Integration of theoretical constructs with field-collected data, this cross-sector group produces findings that are not only statistically sound but also strategically actionable, fostering sustained value for both the academic community and industry practitioners.

Industry Lead:

Pakistan Society for Training & Development - PSTD

Academia Lead:

Salim Habib University - SHU

Core Research Team & Data Analyst:

Dr. Shamaila Burney
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Sana Qureshi
 Assistant Marketing Manager - PSTD

Sheeza Kamran Mehdi
 Junior Executive, CILP - SHU

HYBRID WORKPLACE RESEARCH INSIGHTS



Research Methodology & Sampling

Study Duration:

June 2024 – June 2025

Research Design:

Mixed-methods approach

Phases: Literature Review → Pilot Validation → Qualitative Exploration → Quantitative Analysis

Literature Review:

- Local & international reports, articles, professional publications
- Developed conceptual framework & initial survey instrument
- 4 Domains:
 - Organizational Vision
 - Implementation Practices
 - Enabling Conditions
 - Performance Outcomes

Pilot Validation:

- Academic researchers: conceptual clarity
- Industry professionals (C-level HR leaders): practical relevance
- Strengthened tool credibility

Qualitative Phase:

- Multi-round focus groups
- Participants: 70 experienced HR professionals
- Key Insights: hybrid feasibility, leadership readiness, cultural challenges

Quantitative Phase

- Purposive sampling: 171 respondents
- Locations: Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad

Respondent Designation

Managers & Senior Managers



General Managers



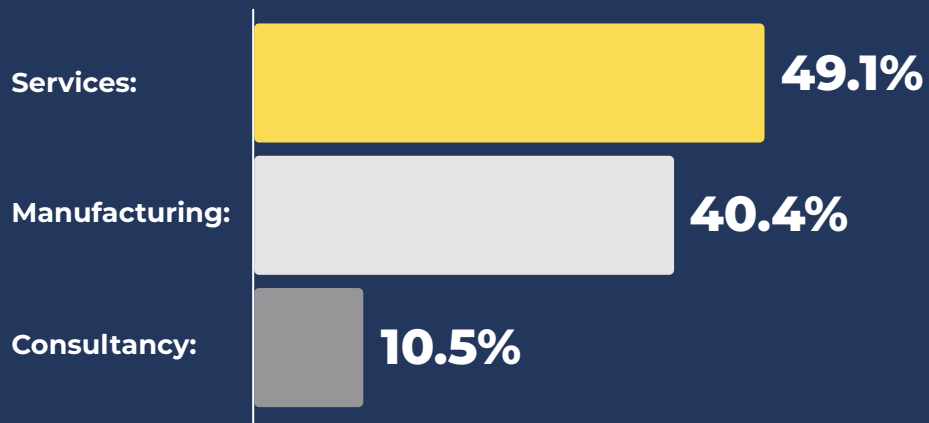
Directors



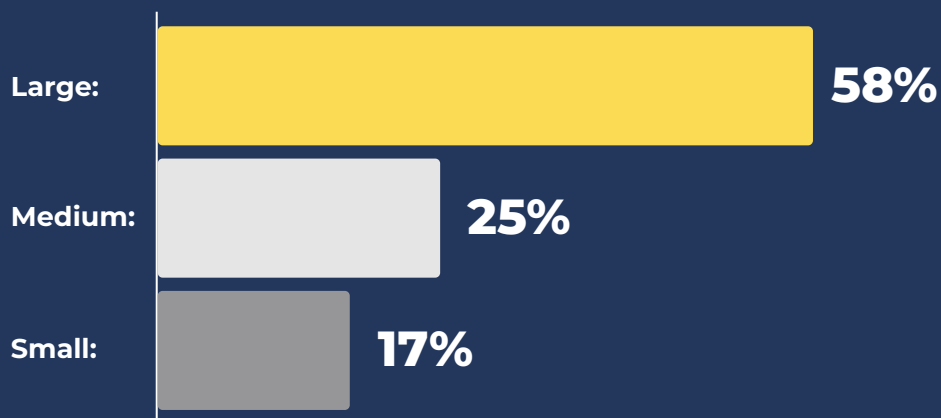
Senior Executives



Respondent Sectors



Respondent Organization Size



Data Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics & thematic analysis
- Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data
- Ensures comprehensive understanding of hybrid work models

Research Demographics

I: Determination of Size of Organization

The sample predominantly includes large-scale organizations, both in terms of employee count and revenue, reflecting perspectives from entities with substantial resources and operational capacity. Inclusion of small and medium-sized organizations ensures the study also captures insights from organizations with varying structures and constraints. This balanced distribution provides a comprehensive understanding of hybrid workplace practices across different organizational scales, allowing for nuanced analysis of trends, challenges, and best practices in the adoption of hybrid work models in Pakistan.



17%
Less than 250 employees (Small-scale)

25%
250 to 750 employees (Medium-scale)

58%
More than 750 employees (Large-scale)



9%
Less than 100 million (Small-scale)

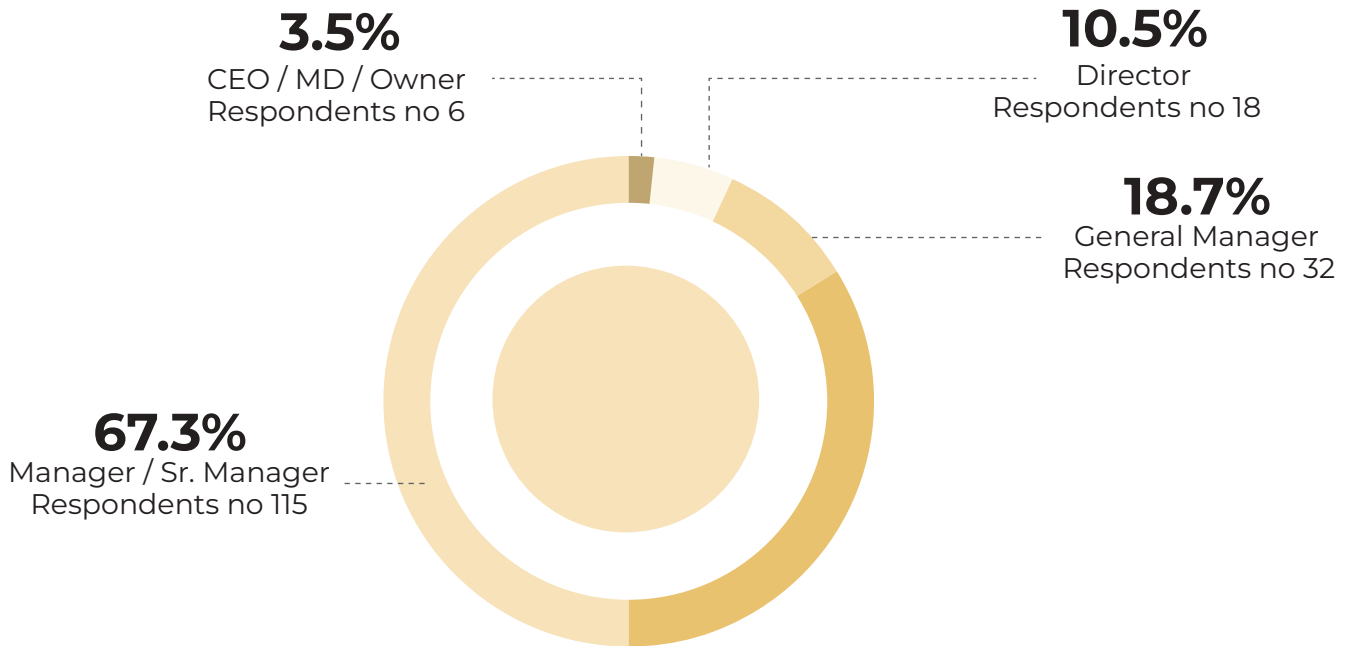
17%
100 million to 1 billion (Medium-scale)

74%
More than 1 billion (Large-scale)

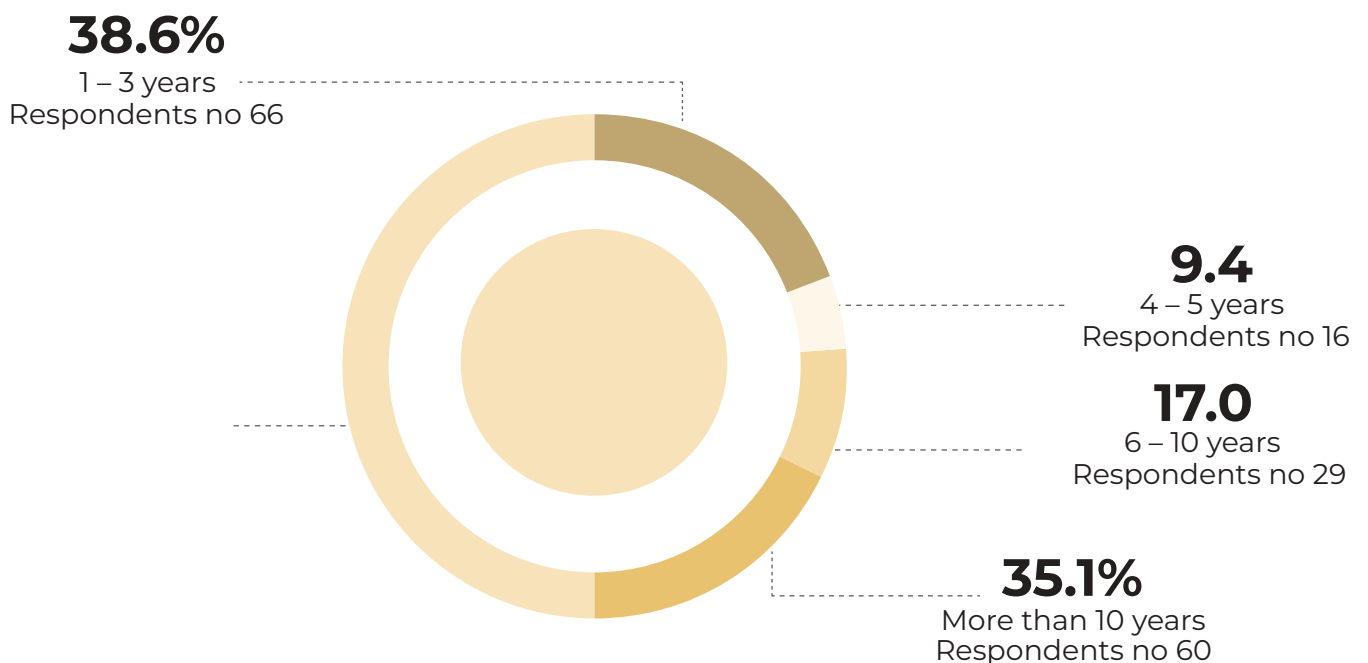
2: Current Position and Experience of Respondents

The majority of respondents are Managers or Senior Managers, reflecting the study's focus on those directly responsible for implementing and managing hybrid workplace practices. General Managers, Directors, and Senior Executives are also included, ensuring that strategic perspectives are captured alongside operational insights. The respondents' tenure ranges from newer employees (1-3 years) to seasoned professionals (>10 years), offering a mix of fresh viewpoints and long-term organizational knowledge. This diversity in roles and experience provides a comprehensive view of hybrid work adoption across leadership levels and experience bands.

Respondent Designation



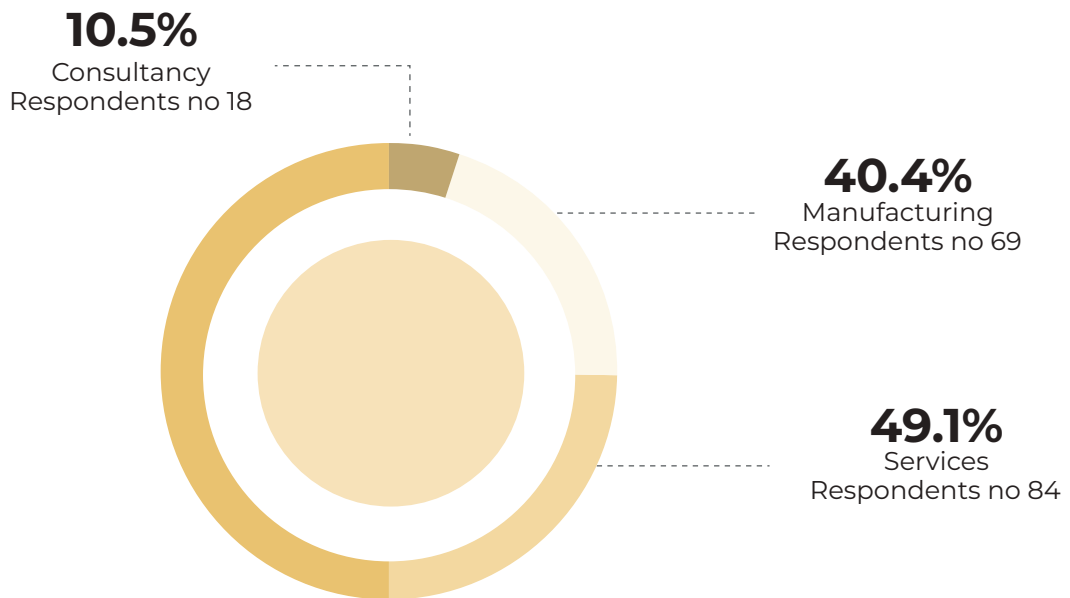
Respondent Experience



3: Participation from Industry Based on Type of Business Operations

The study draws on perspectives from 171 organizations across 03 sectors, highlighting how hybrid work is experienced and implemented in different operational contexts. This diversity reveals patterns in flexibility, collaboration, and workforce engagement unique to each industry. By capturing these varied approaches, the research provides a more nuanced understanding of what drives effectiveness, productivity, and inclusion in hybrid work models across Pakistan's business landscape.

Respondent Sectors



Research Aim and Strategic Focus

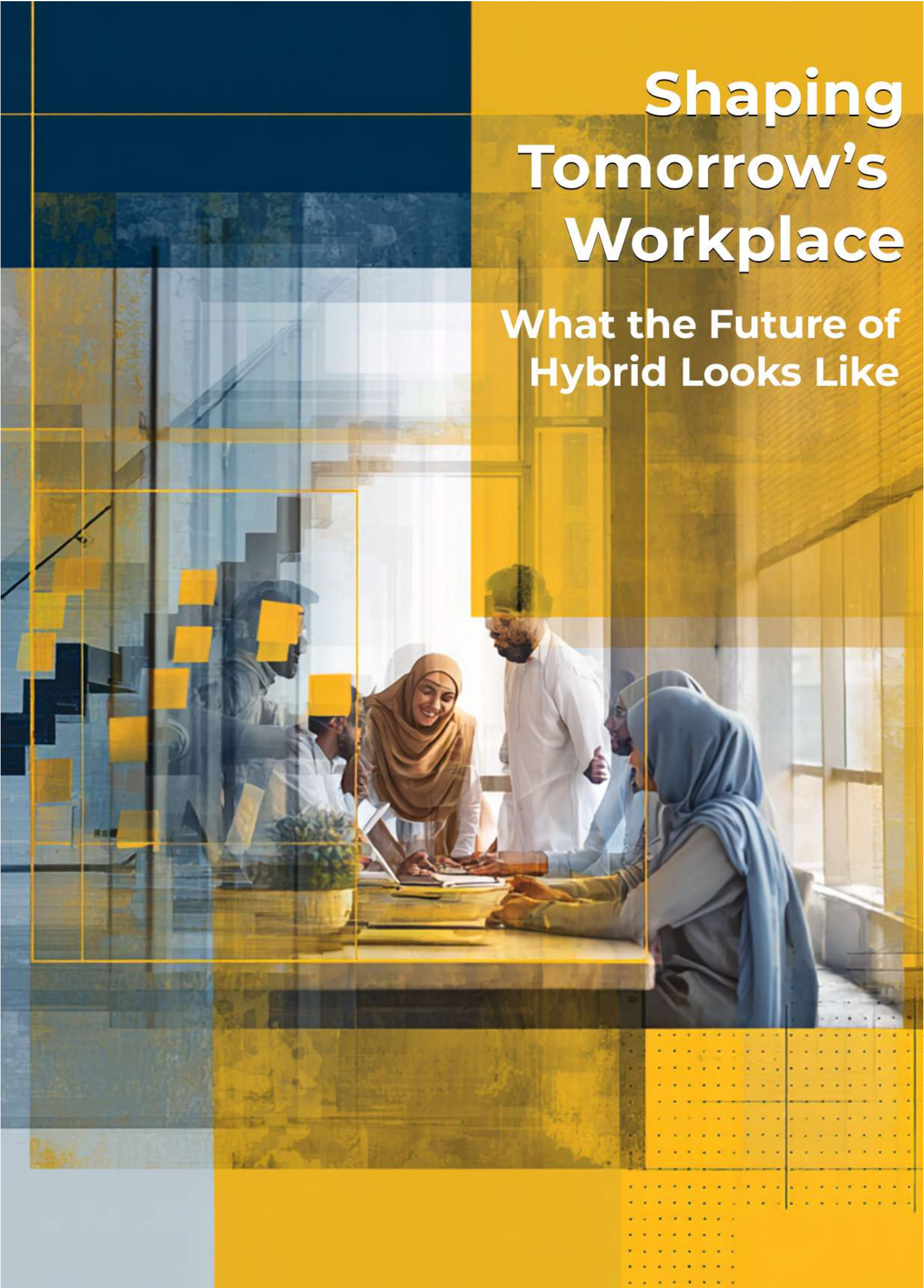
This study examines the evolving landscape of hybrid work models in Pakistani organizations, aiming to identify best practices, challenges, and enabling factors for effective implementation. Through focus group discussions, synergy panel sessions, and one-on-one meetings with senior industry leaders across multiple sectors, the research explores how hybrid work can be designed to be sustainable, inclusive, and performance-driven.



and factors influencing successful hybrid adoption.

Shaping Tomorrow's Workplace

What the Future of
Hybrid Looks Like



Voices Shaping the Hybrid Future

1 Hybrid Isn't a Choice. It's Survival!

Several participants called hybrid work “the future” and an inevitable evolution of workplace norms. For example, one respondent stated: “Ten years ahead, I think every company would have to implement these policies.”

Gen Z expectations are a strong force. Younger employees now expect flexible arrangements as standard. One participant observed: “After asking about salary, Gen Z now asks about the remote work policy before anything else.”



2 The Future Has Already Taken Over

Some participants challenged the phrasing of the question, stating that hybrid work is not just the future but the present, especially post-COVID. One leader remarked: “What do you mean by future? It is already here.”

3 Flexibility Wins Hearts and Loyalty

The hybrid model is viewed as a way to enhance employee well-being, inclusion, and retention, especially for women, new parents, and those with caregiving responsibilities. Several HR leaders emphasized how flexible work enabled better work-life balance and reconnection with family (e.g., one shared how it improved time with a four-year-old child).

4 Culture Can Kill Ambition or Fuel It

Despite the global shift toward hybrid models, many Pakistani organizations are still held back by traditional mindsets, especially in leadership. It was noted that senior leaders in their 60s or from traditional sectors (e.g., banking, manufacturing) often equate physical presence with productivity.

Conversely, organizations that have embraced outcome-based evaluations over input-based ones (e.g., hours logged) see hybrid as sustainable and scalable.

5 One Size Never Fits All

The nature of the role remains a critical factor. Field-based, production, and customer-facing jobs (like in banks or manufacturing) are less compatible with hybrid structures. Participants stressed the need to define hybrid applicability by job function, not blanket policies.

6 Technology Is the Unsung Hero

For hybrid models to work at scale, there must be investment in digital tools, cybersecurity, and communication systems. Organizations that are already tech-driven (e.g., JBS, Affinity, United Energy) were more confident in sustaining hybrid work.

However, others cautioned about infrastructure limitations (power outages, poor internet, lack of home office setup) as ongoing constraints, especially in middle and lower-income urban households.

EXECUTION

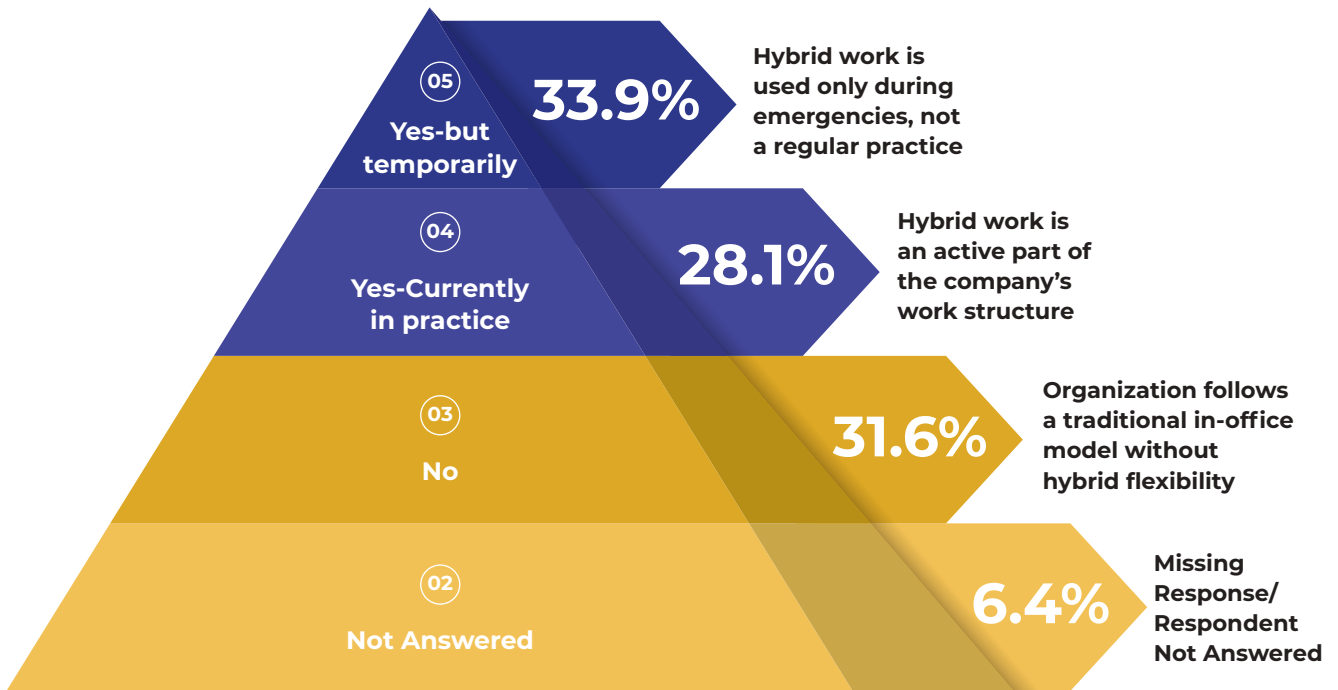
Making Hybrid Work: From Plan to Practice



Hybrid Work in Action: Implementation Insights

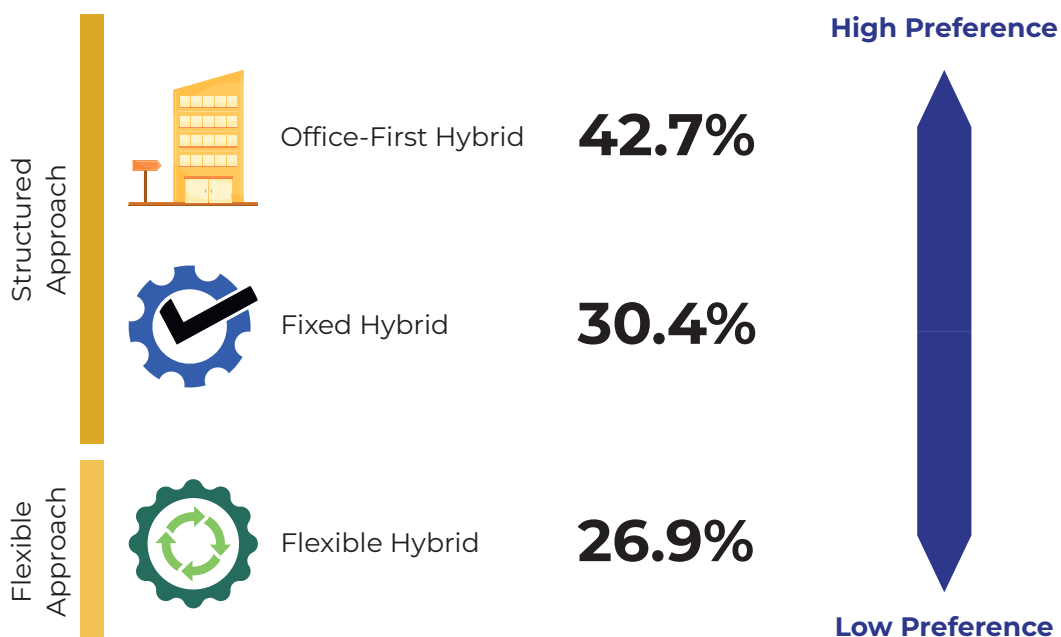
How organizations across Pakistan are putting hybrid strategies into practice, tackling challenges, and learning as they go

Does your organization have a Hybrid work model?



If yes, then what practices and policies have you adopted?

Which one of the following Hybrid models do you prefer more?



Which Hybrid Approach Fits Your Organization Best?

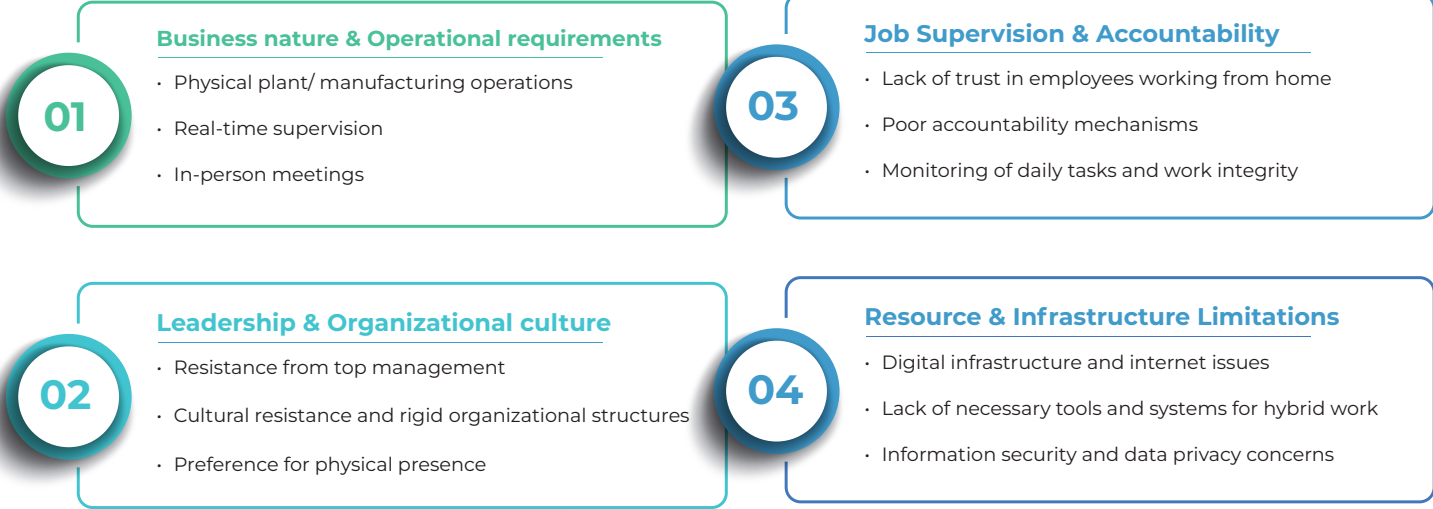
Are you leaning in, dialing back, or striking the perfect balance?

Overcoming Hybrid Challenges: Lessons from the Field

How organizations are identifying roadblocks and implementing solutions across Pakistan.

**Why isn't your workplace hybrid yet?
What's stopping the shift to flexible work?**

Hybrid Workplace Implementation Barriers



Opportunity for Enablers

72%

Seize the levers of hybrid success. Invest in people, technology, and culture. In fact, 72% of hybrid companies report improved employee productivity, making it more than just flexibility. It is a true performance accelerator.

Source: IWG Survey, ETHRWorldSea



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