International Journal of Contemporary Sciences (IJCS)
Vol. 4, No. 9, 2026: 2295-2308

The Impact of Remote Work Policies on Organizational Performance and Employee Productivity in Public Sector Institutional

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ARTICLEINFO

Keywords: Remote Work Policies, Organizational Performance, Employee Productivity, Work Engagement, Public Sector

Received : 15 July
Revised : 20 August
Accepted: 30 September

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of remote work policies on organizational performance and employee productivity in public sector institutions, with work engagement as a mediating variable and digital infrastructure readiness as a moderating variable. A quantitative explanatory design was employed, and data were collected from 137 employees of public sector institutions through purposive sampling. The hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that remote work policies have a positive and significant effect on organizational performance and employee productivity, with work engagement partially mediating the effect on productivity. Digital infrastructure readiness strengthens the effect of remote work policies on organizational performance. These findings suggest that public sector institutions should formalise remote work arrangements and invest in digital infrastructure to sustain performance gains

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of work arrangements has become one of the most visible consequences of the digital era. The rapid expansion of information and communication technology has enabled organisations to decouple work from physical office space, giving rise to remote work arrangements that were previously limited to a small number of technology-intensive firms. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift, compelling public and private organisations alike to adopt remote work policies within a very short period. Although the urgency of the pandemic has subsided, remote work has not disappeared; instead, it has been institutionalised as a permanent feature of contemporary employment arrangements in many countries.

In the public sector, the adoption of remote work policies carries particular significance. Public sector institutions are expected to deliver services continuously, transparently, and equitably while operating under rigid bureaucratic structures, limited financial discretion, and demanding accountability requirements. Unlike private firms that can reconfigure their operations relatively quickly, public sector institutions must balance service continuity with regulatory compliance and public trust. Consequently, whether remote work policies improve or undermine performance in public sector settings remains contested and context-dependent (Atobishi et al., 2024).

Empirical evidence on remote work has grown, yet it remains fragmented and largely concentrated in the private sector. Popovac et al. (2025) found that remote work significantly influenced employee health and sustainable lifestyles in the IT sector, indicating that remote arrangements reshape not only where work is performed but also how employees experience it. Taibah and Ho (2023) demonstrated that flexible work options moderated the relationship between structural empowerment and contextual performance, suggesting that flexibility operates as a boundary condition rather than a universal remedy. In the public sector specifically, Lopes et al. (2023) reported that digital skills were unevenly distributed among workers, raising concerns about the readiness of public institutions to sustain remote arrangements.

Studies on the determinants of performance provide further insight. Qiao et al. (2024) showed that digital transformation, mediated by digital leadership, enhanced employee performance and organisational commitment. Tessema et al. (2025) found that human resource analytics significantly improved organisational performance in a developing-country context, while Tanasescu et al. (2024) demonstrated that data analytics optimised the prediction of employee performance. Rahmadani et al. (2020) established that engaging leadership strengthened work engagement, which in turn improved job outcomes at both individual and team levels. Collectively, these studies suggest that the performance effects of any work arrangement are transmitted through motivational and relational mechanisms rather than through the arrangement itself (Tsoni et al., 2025; Karaferis et al., 2022).

Despite this growing body of literature, three gaps remain. First, most studies examine remote work in private, technology-intensive settings, leaving public sector institutions under-examined even though their accountability

structures and service obligations differ fundamentally. Second, existing research tends to treat organisational performance and employee productivity as interchangeable outcomes, whereas the two are conceptually distinct and may respond differently to remote work policies. Third, the mediating role of work engagement and the moderating role of digital infrastructure readiness in the remote work-performance relationship have rarely been tested simultaneously, particularly in a public sector context.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the impact of remote work policies on organizational performance and employee productivity in public sector institutions, with work engagement as a mediating variable and digital infrastructure readiness as a moderating variable. The study contributes to the literature in three ways: it extends the application of social exchange theory and job demands-resources theory to a public sector remote work context; it disaggregates organisational performance from employee productivity; and it provides empirical evidence on the boundary conditions under which remote work policies translate into performance gains. The findings are expected to inform human resource policy design in public institutions that are currently formalising hybrid and remote work arrangements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory posits that workplace relationships are sustained through reciprocal exchange. When employees perceive that their organisation provides favourable treatment, autonomy, and support, they reciprocate through discretionary effort and commitment. In a remote work context, policies that grant flexibility and autonomy function as organisational investments that employees reciprocate through sustained performance. Empirical support is provided by Cho et al. (2025), who found that fair treatment significantly influenced job satisfaction, and by Gumasing and Ilo (2023), who demonstrated that job satisfaction shaped organisational commitment and workplace sustainability. Yeh and Huang (2025) similarly reported that commitment and work motivation determined retention intention, reinforcing the reciprocity logic that underlies the present model.

H1: Remote work policies have a positive and significant effect on organizational performance in public sector institutions.

H2: Remote work policies have a positive and significant effect on employee productivity in public sector institutions.

Job Demands-Resources Theory

Job demands-resources theory explains that job resources such as autonomy, social support, feedback, and task significance buffer job demands and foster work engagement, which in turn produces favourable performance outcomes. Remote work policies operate as a structural job resource insofar as they increase employee control over the time and place of work. Rahmadani et al. (2020) showed that engaging leadership enhanced work engagement and job outcomes across levels, while Karaferis et al. (2022) identified motivation and

work engagement as critical drivers among professionals. Tsoni et al. (2025) further demonstrated that organisational climate shaped work engagement, and Ye et al. (2024) linked work engagement to employee affect and creativity. These findings indicate that engagement is the principal motivational channel through which structural work resources influence productivity.

H3: Work engagement mediates the effect of remote work policies on employee productivity in public sector institutions.

Digital Transformation Perspective

The digital transformation perspective holds that the benefits of new work arrangements are contingent on the technological and organisational capacity of the institution. Where digital infrastructure, data integration, and digital skills are adequate, remote work policies are more likely to translate into measurable performance gains. Atobishi et al. (2024) demonstrated that digital capabilities improved organisational performance in the public sector through organisational agility. Lou et al. (2024) showed that human resource management and development strengthened job performance through digital transformation, and Zhang et al. (2023) established that organisational agility enabled digital transformation. Comparable evidence has been reported in project-based settings (Hsieh et al., 2025), in agile transformation projects (Chen et al., 2025), and in knowledge-intensive firms where digital leadership and strategic intuition shaped performance (Zhang et al., 2025). Bux et al. (2025), Sacavém et al. (2025), and Tsekouropoulos et al. (2025) each emphasised that leadership behaviour and knowledge sharing condition the success of digital initiatives. Lopes et al. (2023) cautioned that digital skill gaps in the public sector may constrain these benefits.

H4: Digital infrastructure readiness moderates the effect of remote work policies on organizational performance in public sector institutions.

The determinants of performance reported in prior research further justify the selection of the outcome variables. Vuong and Nguyen (2022) concluded from a systematic review that employee performance measurement requires both output and behavioural indicators, which supports the separation of organisational performance from employee productivity in the present model. Pham et al. (2024) found that organisational culture significantly influenced employee performance, while Manzoor et al. (2019), Karimi et al. (2023), and Piaralal et al. (2026) demonstrated that leadership behaviour improved job and organisational performance. Woo (2025) and Ismail and Karamanlıoğlu (2026) added that strategic and entrepreneurial capabilities operate as intervening mechanisms. Taken together, these studies indicate that performance outcomes are jointly determined by structural arrangements and the motivational conditions that accompany them.

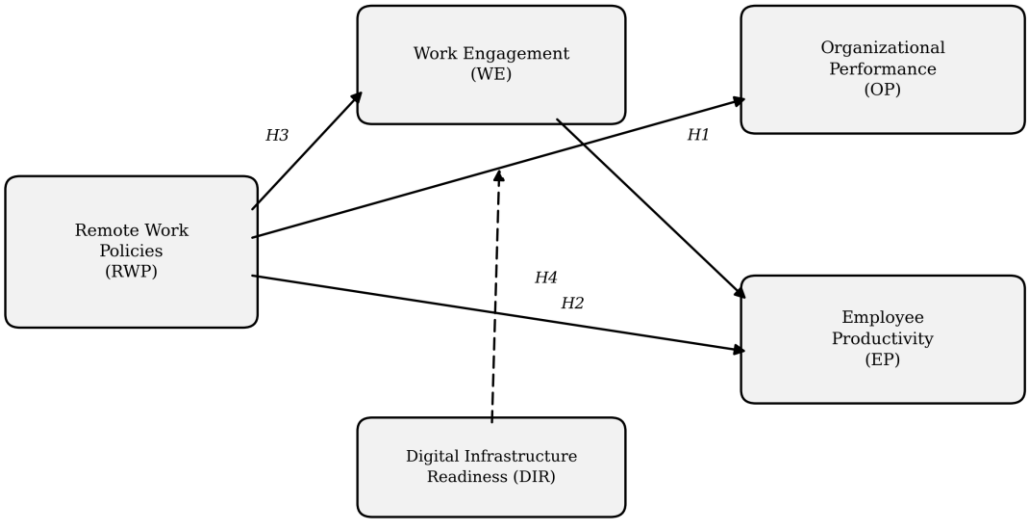

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, explanatory research design to test the hypothesised relationships between remote work policies, organisational performance, employee productivity, work engagement, and digital infrastructure readiness. An explanatory design was selected because the study seeks to establish the direction and magnitude of relationships among latent constructs rather than to describe their distribution. The unit of analysis was the individual employee, while the unit of observation was the public sector institution in which the respondent was employed.

The population comprised employees of public sector institutions who had been subject to a formal remote or hybrid work policy for a minimum of six months. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied, with inclusion criteria requiring that respondents held a permanent or contractual position in a public sector institution, performed at least part of their duties remotely, and had direct exposure to performance evaluation within their unit. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed through an online, self-administered instrument, and 137 valid responses were retained after data screening, yielding a valid response rate of 85.6 percent. This sample size exceeds the minimum threshold of ten observations per indicator recommended for variance-based structural equation modelling.

All latent constructs were measured using reflective indicators adapted from previously validated instruments and operationalised on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Remote work policies were measured using items covering schedule flexibility, location autonomy, and technological support. Organisational performance was measured through items on service quality, efficiency, and goal attainment. Employee productivity was measured through items on output quantity, work quality, and timeliness. Work engagement was measured using items reflecting vigour, dedication, and absorption. Digital infrastructure readiness was

measured using items on connectivity, system integration, and digital competence. A preliminary content validity review was conducted with two academic reviewers and three practitioners before distribution.

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. PLS-SEM was selected because the model contains multiple latent constructs, a mediating path, and a moderating effect, and because the method does not require strict multivariate normality. The analysis followed a two-stage procedure. In the first stage, the measurement model was evaluated through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. In the second stage, the structural model was assessed through the coefficient of determination, effect size, predictive relevance, and path coefficients. Hypothesis testing employed a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples and a two-tailed significance level of five percent. Mediation was tested using the indirect effect approach, and moderation was tested using the product indicator approach.

RESEARCH RESULT

The analysis proceeded in four sequential steps: respondent profiling, measurement model evaluation, structural model assessment, and hypothesis testing. Each step is reported in turn so that the psychometric adequacy of the instrument is established before the structural relationships are interpreted.

The profile of respondents is summarised in Table 1. Female respondents constituted 54.7 percent of the sample, and the largest age group was 31 to 40 years at 42.3 percent. A bachelor degree was the most common educational attainment at 57.7 percent, and 48.2 percent of respondents had served between three and ten years. The distribution indicates that the sample consisted predominantly of experienced, degree-holding employees who are well positioned to assess remote work policies.

Table 1. Respondent Profile (n = 137)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	62	45.3
	Female	75	54.7
Age	20-30 years	41	29.9
	31-40 years	58	42.3
	41-50 years	27	19.7
	> 50 years	11	8.0
Education	Diploma	18	13.1
	Bachelor	79	57.7
	Master	40	29.2
Length of Service	< 3 years	34	24.8
	3-10 years	66	48.2
	> 10 years	37	27.0

The measurement model was evaluated through outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted, as reported in Table 2. All outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.718 to 0.896. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.812 to

0.861 and composite reliability values from 0.877 to 0.899, both exceeding the 0.70 criterion. Average variance extracted values ranged from 0.641 to 0.687, exceeding the 0.50 threshold. These results confirm that all constructs achieved adequate reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Remote Work Policies (RWP)	5	0.742-0.871	0.861	0.899	0.642
Work Engagement (WE)	4	0.756-0.883	0.834	0.890	0.669
Organizational Performance (OP)	4	0.771-0.896	0.847	0.897	0.687
Employee Productivity (EP)	4	0.763-0.889	0.829	0.887	0.663
Digital Infrastructure Readiness (DIR)	4	0.718-0.864	0.812	0.877	0.641

Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations, presented in Table 3. All ratios fell between 0.497 and 0.703, well below the conservative threshold of 0.85, and the square root of each average variance extracted value exceeded every corresponding inter-construct correlation. These results indicate that the five constructs are empirically distinct and that multicollinearity is not a concern.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio)

Construct	RWP	WE	OP	EP	DIR
RWP	-				
WE	0.612	-			
OP	0.588	0.674	-		
EP	0.561	0.703	0.658	-	
DIR	0.497	0.542	0.583	0.519	-

The structural model was assessed through the coefficient of determination and predictive relevance, as shown in Table 4. The model explains 37.4 percent of the variance in work engagement, 31.2 percent in organisational performance, and 56.7 percent in employee productivity. All Q-squared values are greater than zero, confirming that the model possesses predictive relevance for the three endogenous constructs.

Table 4. Structural Model Assessment

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2
Work Engagement (WE)	0.374	0.369	0.243
Organizational Performance (OP)	0.312	0.301	0.186

Employee Productivity (EP)	0.567	0.561	0.368

Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, and the results are presented in Table 5. Remote work policies significantly improved organisational performance (beta = 0.428; t = 6.028; p < 0.001) and employee productivity (beta = 0.391; t = 5.284; p < 0.001), supporting H1 and H2. Remote work policies also significantly increased work engagement (beta = 0.612; t = 10.552; p < 0.001), and work engagement in turn significantly improved employee productivity (beta = 0.447; t = 6.478; p < 0.001). The indirect effect of remote work policies on employee productivity through work engagement was significant (beta = 0.274; t = 5.269; p < 0.001). Because the direct effect remained significant, the mediation is partial, supporting H3. Finally, the interaction between remote work policies and digital infrastructure readiness had a significant positive effect on organisational performance (beta = 0.163; t = 2.672; p = 0.008), supporting H4.

Table 5. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	Std. Error	t-statistic	p-value	f^2	Decision
H1	RWP → OP	0.428	0.071	6.028	0.000	0.214	Supported
H2	RWP → EP	0.391	0.074	5.284	0.000	0.181	Supported
H3a	RWP → WE	0.612	0.058	10.552	0.000	0.598	Supported
H3b	WE → EP	0.447	0.069	6.478	0.000	0.236	Supported
H3c	RWP → WE → EP	0.274	0.052	5.269	0.000	-	Supported
H4	RWP × DIR → OP	0.163	0.061	2.672	0.008	0.038	Supported

The effect sizes reported in Table 5 indicate that remote work policies exert a large effect on work engagement (f-squared = 0.598), medium to large effects on organisational performance and employee productivity, and a small but statistically significant moderating effect on organisational performance (f-squared = 0.038). The relative magnitude of these effects confirms that the motivational pathway is the strongest channel in the model, while the technological contingency operates as a supplementary rather than a dominant condition.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that remote work policies significantly improve both organisational performance and employee productivity in public sector institutions. The direct effect on organisational performance indicates that institutions granting greater schedule flexibility, location autonomy, and technological support achieve higher service quality and goal attainment. This result extends the work of Atobishi et al. (2024), who established that digital

capabilities improve public sector performance through organisational agility, by showing that the work arrangement itself operates as a capability rather than merely as a convenience.

The significant effect on employee productivity reinforces the argument that productivity in the public sector is not inherently tied to physical presence. This finding is consistent with Taibah and Ho (2023), who reported that flexible work options strengthened the relationship between empowerment and contextual performance, and with Popovac et al. (2025), who found that remote work reshaped employee health and lifestyle patterns in ways that plausibly support sustained output. The implication is that supervisory attention should shift from monitoring presence towards evaluating results, a shift that also aligns with the measurement principles recommended by Vuong and Nguyen (2022).

Work engagement was found to mediate the relationship between remote work policies and employee productivity, with a significant indirect effect and a direct effect that remained significant, indicating partial mediation. This pattern supports job demands-resources theory: remote work policies function as a structural job resource that increases vigour and dedication, which subsequently translate into productivity. The mediating mechanism is consistent with Rahmadani et al. (2020), who demonstrated that engagement transmits leadership influence into job outcomes, and with Karaferis et al. (2022) and Tsoni et al. (2025), who identified engagement as a central motivational pathway. The partial nature of the mediation suggests that remote work policies also exert direct instrumental effects, such as reducing commuting time and enabling uninterrupted work.

Digital infrastructure readiness significantly moderated the effect of remote work policies on organisational performance. Institutions with stronger connectivity, better system integration, and higher digital competence extracted greater performance benefit from the same policy. This conditional effect is important because it implies that remote work policies are not universally effective; their payoff depends on complementary technological investment. The finding is consistent with Lou et al. (2024) and Zhang et al. (2023), who showed that digital transformation and organisational agility condition performance improvement, and with Lopes et al. (2023), who documented uneven digital skills among public sector workers. It also resonates with evidence that digital leadership and knowledge sharing shape the success of transformation initiatives (Bux et al., 2025; Sacavém et al., 2025; Tsekouropoulos et al., 2025).

Theoretically, the study contributes by integrating social exchange theory and job demands-resources theory within a single explanatory model of remote work in the public sector. Social exchange theory explains why employees reciprocate flexibility with discretionary effort, while job demands-resources theory specifies the motivational mechanism through which that reciprocity becomes productive. The moderating role of digital infrastructure readiness adds a contingency dimension that neither theory captures alone. The measurement model demonstrated adequate reliability and validity, with composite reliability values above 0.87, average variance extracted values above 0.64, and all

heterotrait-monotrait ratios below 0.85, indicating that the constructs were empirically distinct.

Practically, the results suggest that public sector institutions should formalise remote work policies rather than treat them as temporary concessions. Formalisation should be accompanied by outcome-based performance evaluation, investment in connectivity and integrated information systems, and targeted digital skills development. Where digital readiness is low, remote work policies should be introduced incrementally alongside infrastructure upgrading, because the moderating effect indicates that premature implementation may yield limited performance returns. These recommendations are consistent with the emphasis placed by Tessema et al. (2025) on analytics-driven performance management, by Qiao et al. (2024) on the strategic role of digital transformation, and by Tanasescu et al. (2024) on the value of data analytics in predicting employee performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the impact of remote work policies on organizational performance and employee productivity in public sector institutions, with work engagement as a mediating variable and digital infrastructure readiness as a moderating variable. Based on the analysis of 137 valid responses using PLS-SEM, four conclusions can be drawn.

First, remote work policies have a positive and significant effect on organizational performance, indicating that institutions providing flexibility, autonomy, and technological support achieve higher service quality and goal attainment. Second, remote work policies have a positive and significant effect on employee productivity, indicating that output in the public sector can be sustained without continuous physical presence. Third, work engagement partially mediates the effect of remote work policies on employee productivity, confirming that motivational mechanisms are central to the translation of policy into results. Fourth, digital infrastructure readiness strengthens the effect of remote work policies on organizational performance, establishing technological capacity as a boundary condition.

Several recommendations follow from these conclusions. Public sector institutions should formalise remote work policies in written regulations that specify eligibility, working hours, reporting mechanisms, and output expectations, so that arrangements are consistent and auditable. Performance management should be reoriented from attendance-based to outcome-based evaluation, supported by measurable indicators of service quality and timeliness. Institutions should prioritise investment in network connectivity, integrated information systems, and secure remote access, because these investments determine whether remote work policies yield performance gains. Digital skills training should be delivered to all employee cohorts, with particular attention to those with lower baseline competence, since uneven skills constrain the collective benefit of remote arrangements. Managers should also strengthen engagement through regular feedback, recognition, and clear task significance, given that engagement is the principal pathway through which remote work policies affect productivity.

These recommendations are expected to assist public sector institutions in designing remote work arrangements that are not only administratively feasible but also performance-enhancing. Implementation should be monitored and evaluated periodically so that policies can be adjusted in response to changing institutional capacity and service demands.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of definitive causal ordering, since the data were collected at a single point in time. Second, the sample was drawn from public sector institutions within one national context, which limits the generalisability of the findings to other administrative systems and cultural settings. Third, all variables were measured through self-reported instruments, so common method variance cannot be entirely excluded despite the satisfactory discriminant validity results. Fourth, the study measured perceived rather than archival performance, and objective output indicators were not available.

Future research should address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs that track performance before and after remote work policy implementation, by extending the sample to multiple countries and levels of government, and by combining survey data with administrative performance records. Further studies could also examine additional moderators such as leadership style, task interdependence, and organisational culture, as well as alternative mediators including trust and psychological safety. Qualitative approaches would be valuable for explaining how public sector employees interpret and adapt to remote work policies in specific service contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the public sector institutions and respondents who participated in this study, and to colleagues who provided suggestions during the preparation of this manuscript. Appreciation is also extended to the research assistants who contributed to data collection and processing.

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