

PRELIMINARY REPORT

Flexible Work Arrangements and the Hybrid Work Model: Attitudes of Employees in the Scientific Research Sector in Serbia

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the advantages, disadvantages, and possibilities of implementing flexible work models in modern organisations, focusing particularly on the hybrid work model. The aim of the research is to identify the key benefits of the hybrid work model and examine the attitude of employees in the scientific research sector in Serbia regarding this relatively new and innovative concept. By using the desk research method and the empirical approach, the main advantages of flexible work models have been analysed, as well as the key challenges managers face during the implementation. The research findings indicate a growing popularity of the hybrid work model across various sectors, including scientific research in Serbia. Due to its numerous benefits, the model has been actively adopted by employees in the field of social sciences and humanities.

Keywords: *flexible work arrangements, the hybrid work method, job satisfaction, productivity, scientific research sector, flexibility*

JEL Classification: L20, M54

INTRODUCTION

Flexible work arrangements are becoming a key part of business strategies of an increasing number of companies, a new standard of business operation providing greater agility and adaptability to modern market demands. The rapid adoption of new work models is caused by a number of factors, mostly due to the development of modern information technology, globalisation, and the positive experiences gained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Modern technologies play a major part in the implementation of flexible work arrangements, enabling easier communication, collaboration, and access to resources from any location. The application of new technologies, especially generative artificial intelligence, leads to significant changes in business operations and has a positive impact on sustainability (Komatina et al., 2024).

The growing trend of introducing new work models, along with the aforementioned ones, is also driven by changes in employee expectations, particularly the increasing demand for higher levels of work flexibility (Hunter, 2019; Lazarević-Moravčević, 2024). Given the benefits of remote work, employees have shown resistance to returning to traditional work environments after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The popularity of flexible work arrangements has expanded since the global workforce now predominantly consists of Generation Z and Millennials, i.e., the generations that have grown up

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in a technologically advanced environment. Not only does Generation Z aspire to great professional success, but it also strives to align jobs with its values, including social responsibility, inclusiveness, and sustainability. This generation can be seen as a key driver of change, bringing new expectations and demands regarding preferred working conditions, career development, and interpersonal relationships in the professional environment.

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) imply a wide range of models and work approaches tailored to modern business needs and employee expectations. These models can include flexibility of working hours, the freedom to choose work location, reduced working hours, a combination of remote and in-office work (the hybrid work model), job sharing, and other forms of work organisation. Despite their differences, all of these models depart from traditional work practices, bringing significant changes to the way business is structured nowadays.

Flexible work arrangements enable a higher degree of flexibility in terms of place, time, and the way in which work activities are performed. Types of flexible work schedules can be categorized based on four key dimensions: 1) the flexibility of *when* work is performed, referring to the timing and scheduling of tasks; 2) the flexibility of *where* work takes place, such as the physical or virtual location; 3) the flexibility regarding *how much* one works, encompassing variations in workload or working hours; 4) the flexibility in *work continuity*, including the possibility of taking short, or long-term breaks or leaves from work (Kossek & Michel, 2011).

New work models that allow a higher level of flexibility, unlike traditional approaches, have become the norm and common practice in many organisations. Due to numerous benefits offered to employees, employers and society as a whole, flexible work arrangements are becoming one of the basic factors for improving productivity, employee satisfaction, and business sustainability in the modern environment. New work models, including remote and hybrid work, have proven to be able to support sustainable development goals. Moreover, before the COVID-19 pandemic, these work practices were available to only a small portion of the workforce and were often considered an "elitist phenomenon" (Hopkins & Bardoel, 2023). However, the pandemic accelerated the adoption of flexible work arrangements, making these models accessible to far more employees.

Although flexible work schedules offer many benefits, their implementation can be a complex and challenging process. In practice, the introduction of these models poses a significant challenge for management, especially in the context of effective employee management and maintaining productivity.

The aim of this research is to explore the key advantages of the hybrid work model and to analyze the attitudes of employees in Serbia's scientific research sector, specifically within the fields of social sciences and humanities, toward flexible work arrangements. By combining desk research with an empirical approach, the study focuses on identifying the core benefits of flexible work models - particularly the hybrid model - as well as examining the main challenges that managers encounter during their implementation. The research starts from the assumption that, due to its numerous benefits, the hybrid work model meets specific needs and preferences of employees engaged in the scientific research sector in Serbia, in particular, in the field of social sciences and humanities.

The first part of the paper discusses the key advantages of flexible work arrangements, primarily the hybrid work model, as well as the challenges that management faces during its implementation. Special attention is paid to examining the trends, benefits, and obstacles encountered by the organisations that have adopted remote work practices and utilise the hybrid work model. The second part of the paper presents the results of the empirical research conducted from September to November 2024, focusing on the attitudes of employees in the scientific research sector in Serbia, especially in the field of social sciences and humanities, regarding flexible work arrangements. The conclusion summarises the key findings of the research, outlines limitations, and proposes directions for future analyses and studies.

HYBRID WORK MODEL: ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

Due to the fact that the hybrid work model represents a dynamic concept that requires adjustments to the specific needs of various activities, organisations, and individuals, this work model is not easily defined. Its clear definition is further complicated by the fact that the hybrid work model can involve various forms and work regimes, i.e., various combinations of locations and work schedules.

Fundamentally, the hybrid work model can be defined as an approach to work that combines traditional office work with remote work (Cook et al., 2020). As a relatively new phenomenon, which gained its popularity especially during the pandemic, the hybrid work model can be described as an arrangement in which employees divide their working time between working in an office and remote work which often involves working from home or other locations such as coworking spaces, libraries, cafes, etc. (Hopkins & Bardoel, 2023). According to Griva et al. (2025), hybrid work represents a socio-technical work arrangement mediated by digital technology, which enables collaboration among employees working in different temporal (e.g., synchronous and asynchronous) and spatial (e.g., in the office and at home) conditions. While remote work represents an entirely decentralised model relying exclusively on digital tools and online environments, the hybrid work model retains the office as an essential base for performing business activities, thus facilitating personal interaction and strengthening cohesion. As a matter of fact, the hybrid work model offers employees the possibility to work in the office on some days and from home on others throughout the week, providing flexibility in terms of workspace (location) and time (Krajčík et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be concluded that the hybrid work model integrates the advantages of traditional office work and remote work (Bloom, 2021; Uro, 2022), while simultaneously neutralising the drawbacks of both approaches.

Compared to the conventional office work, the hybrid model offers employees and employers a significantly higher level of flexibility, which, according to various studies and research, can positively impact employee behaviour, job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and performance (Zafari et al., 2019; Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020; Yang et al., 2023; Kelliher & Anderson, 2010; Jung & Yoon, 2021).

There are numerous reasons why employees prefer flexible work arrangements. These work practices provide more efficient use of working time by avoiding daily commuting to the office (Uru et al., 2022; Lazarević-Moravčević, 2024). One of the key advantages of flexible arrangements is saving time and money (Ipsos, 2022). A higher level of autonomy and freedom, i.e., the possibility for employees to independently create their work environment which suits their needs and determine their working time, can lead to increased satisfaction and productivity. Flexible work arrangements have a positive impact on achieving a work-life balance. Diani et al. (2024) maintain that a higher level of flexibility implies a higher level of life satisfaction. Flexibility in the workplace, the possibility of working from home office and organisational support can positively affect productivity, job satisfaction, and help create a healthy work-life balance (Yang et al., 2023), which can further result in reduced stress, increased well-being, and lower staff turnover (Austin-Egole et al., 2020).

On the other hand, Russell et al. (2009) point out that not all forms of flexible work arrangements have the same impact on achieving a work-life balance. While part-time work and flexible working hours reduce work pressure and conflict between work and personal life, working from home may increase stress levels and create conflict between these spheres (Russell et al., 2009).

As for employers, flexible work arrangements, including the hybrid work model, allow for cost savings and greater workforce availability. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of companies began implementing flexible remote work policies to reduce costs, support productivity, and enhance employee well-being (Hermann & Paris, 2020). By implementing flexible work policies, employers can reduce the need for office space and cut down infrastructure,

utilities, and maintenance costs (Grzegorzczuk et al., 2021). Additionally, the implementation of flexible work practices and the hybrid work model decreases staff turnover, improves employee experience rating, and, as proven, has no adverse impact on performance or career advancement opportunities (Hopkins & Bardoel, 2024).

Certain studies underline that flexible work practices, specifically the hybrid work model, have the capacity to further enhance and develop intangible resources and positively impact business performance in the ICT sector (Radonić et al., 2021). Not only does this work model reduce staff turnover, but it positively affects job satisfaction (Bloom et al., 2022).

Extensive research confirms the positive effects of flexible work arrangements on the well-being of employees, employers, and society as a whole. Nevertheless, certain studies warn about potential negative consequences of these models, in particular, challenges posed by remote work. Challenges can arise in the areas of organisation and supervision, necessary support for employees in terms of training, equipment, and resources, reduced capacity to monitor performance, and security risks. Furthermore, employees can experience loneliness resulting from professional isolation during remote work (Pokojski et al., 2022). Some studies also highlight that remote work not only increases the risk of loneliness due to social isolation but also requires employees to develop stronger organisational skills. Moreover, remote work makes it more difficult to maintain a clear separation between work and family obligations (Klopotek, 2017). Remote workers often associate their homes with work duties, which can cause their workday to overlap with the time supposed to be dedicated to family responsibilities. It is not uncommon for employees who work from home to work longer hours, which often disrupts their work-life balance (Smolder, 2021; Buffer, 2022). Since remote workers (teleworkers) who do not frequently interact with colleagues and management may lose their sense of responsibility toward the organisation and the completion of their tasks, it is necessary to ensure continuous interaction among remote employees by implementing efficient online monitoring mechanisms and enabling employees to occasionally come to the workplace (Sholesi et al., 2023).

Due to the challenges posed by remote work, many companies, **such as** Google, Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft, decided after the pandemic to introduce a policy of partial return of employees to the office, i.e., to implement the hybrid work model. The hybrid work model significantly reduces the drawbacks of remote work. It is a model that provides employees with more flexibility while maintaining a certain level of control and stability for employers (Sokolić, 2022).

The hybrid work model allows employees to work from home but also to occasionally come to the office when required. These occasional office meetings positively impact the strengthening of team cohesion, the development of team spirit, and the improvement of communication and coordination among team members. This reduces many negative aspects of remote work, such as feelings of isolation and decreased responsibility toward the organisation, while still retaining the benefits of remote work. The hybrid work balances the freedom offered by remote work with the benefits of physical presence in the office, contributing to greater efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Although the implementation of the hybrid work model offers numerous advantages, its successful introduction is not a simple process. The effective implementation of the model requires a strategic approach, entailing dealing with various questions and challenges, such as how to optimally organise and coordinate remote work with office work; how to design an effective schedule that meets all employees' needs; and how to determine the appropriate work dynamics in terms of balancing the time spent at the workplace and home? (Lazarević-Moravčević, 2024).

The implementation of the hybrid work model can be realised in various ways, depending on the specific needs and goals of each organisation. There is no universal solution that would suit all organisations. Additionally, organizations should not expect the hybrid work model to evolve on its own (Shirma, 2023; Alasoini et al., 2025). Finding the appropriate option requires considering the situation from several perspectives, that is, taking into account numerous factors:

job characteristics, workplace culture, communication methods, employees' well-being, and current skills and knowledge (Hopkins & Bardoel, 2023). The feasibility and success of different work arrangements also depend on laws, organisational goals, job descriptions, along with individual preferences and needs (Eurofound, 2023). Hybrid work involves defining workspaces, choosing appropriate digital technologies to ensure continuous connectivity between the spaces, as well as establishing a precise time frame and schedule (Griva et al., 2025). Considering the above, it can be concluded that the implementation of this model requires additional technical and IT support, which, as a result, may create a need for the development and enhancement of employees' existing skills and knowledge. If the changes are carefully planned and implemented, a positive atmosphere can be created within the company, bringing about positive results for all parties involved in the process (Sokolić, 2022).

In practice, there are various modalities of hybrid work. Generally speaking, this concept has two basic forms: the office-centric and the virtual-centric model (Tippman et al., 2021). In the first type, office work is dominant, while remote work is an additional option. In contrast to the office-centric model, the virtual-centric model favours remote work. Based on these fundamental models, organizations can implement various variants of hybrid work: 1) Office First Hybrid Model - The office is the primary work location. Employees are allowed to work from home one or two days a week, but must spend the remaining days in the office; 2) Flexible Hybrid Model - The most flexible hybrid work option is when employees have the freedom to choose when to work in the office and when to work remotely, without any predefined rules; 3) Split Week Hybrid Model - The workweek is divided into set days for office and remote work, and employees must follow this schedule; 4) Week to Week Hybrid Model - In this approach, employees alternate between working remotely and working in the office on a weekly basis, with a pre-defined schedule; 5) Remote First Hybrid Model - Some organizations encourage employees to work primarily from home, with the office as a secondary option for occasional in-person meetings or collaboration.

The adoption of flexible work models has profound implications for all elements of organisational design, especially organisational structure and culture. These elements of organisational design have a significant impact on all segments of business, shaping employee behavior and influencing business outcomes (Lazarević-Moravčević & Mosurović Ružičić, 2023).

New forms of organisational structures should enable an easier transition to modern work practices while ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in business. Traditional organisational models, characterised by rigidity, hierarchical centralisation, and low agility, are unable to fully support the implementation of flexible work arrangements, including the hybrid work model. Therefore, changes need to be implemented in this domain towards establishing a model that fosters positive employee behavior and results in higher satisfaction and productivity (Novikova & Hamse, 2021).

The new approach to attracting and retaining employees, which is characteristic of flexible work arrangements, will lead to changes in organisational structure. Employees are physically separated, which implies new ways of control, but at the same time, greater freedom in work. Remote work makes it more difficult to monitor employee behaviour, reducing the effectiveness of traditional control mechanisms (Groen et al., 2018). This shifts power from the traditional authority based on position to a subtler level that relies on trust, emotional connections, and shared values (Sokolić, 2022). Successful implementation of the hybrid work model means that leadership needs to transition from control to trust, and special attention ought to be paid to ensuring fair inclusion of remote workers (Grzegorzczuk et al., 2021). The implementation of hybrid work models requires leaders to develop innovative strategies that not only enhance employee engagement but also improve performance management processes and foster a healthy organizational culture. In this context, leadership and effective team management are recognized as critical factors for ensuring the long-term sustainability of hybrid work arrangements (Sakal, 2024).

In the context of hybrid work, the transformation of organizational culture requires a thoughtful and strategic approach by leaders, aimed at connecting employees who function in different physical and cultural environments. The key lies in fostering values such as trust, respect for diversity and inclusion of all team members, with clearly directed and open communication (da Silva et al., 2022).

In the hybrid work environment, it is vital to maintain and strengthen corporate culture despite the physical distance between employees. This can be achieved by making key cultural elements (vision, mission, company values) visible in the digital environment and encouraging informal communication through digital channels. In organisations striving to implement the hybrid work model, it is essential to provide ways to establish efficient communication among employees, regardless of their location. Certain studies highlight that transparent communication and consistent feedback are essential for maintaining employee engagement in hybrid work environments. In this context, clear communication practices, strong organizational support, opportunities for career development, and promotion of diversity emerge as key pillars for fostering a connected and motivated workforce (Ramachandaran, 2024).

Organisations need to provide appropriate tools, training, and support to employees to ensure their productivity and well-being, as well as social and emotional support. For effective collaboration in hybrid teams, it is crucial to be familiar with technology and use the right tools. Project management platforms, video conferencing, and real-time collaboration applications enable better communication and productivity. Leaders need to not only choose the right tools, but also provide the necessary training to use them (Sakal, 2024).

According to da Silva et al. (2022), the successful implementation of hybrid work requires fulfilling two key conditions. First, organizations must be technically prepared, which includes having adequate technological resources and support, such as computers, video conferencing equipment, and data storage devices. In addition, a crucial factor in the implementation of the hybrid work model is employees' attitude toward technology. In line with this, Tabor-Błażewicz (2022) argues that digital competencies represent the fundamental and essential set of skills required for effectively performing tasks within a hybrid work environment.

Based on the previous considerations, it can be concluded that the hybrid work model not only alleviates the negative aspects of traditional office and remote work but also optimizes the advantages of both approaches. This model offers employees a high degree of flexibility, allowing them to tailor their working hours and location to their individual needs and preferences, thus improving the balance between work and personal life. For organizations, the hybrid model facilitates more efficient resource utilization, reduces operational costs, and strengthens team cohesion and collaboration. However, its implementation comes with challenges, as it requires fundamental changes in how work is structured, how communication is managed among employees, and how teams are led. Despite these challenges, the hybrid work model stands as the optimal solution for modern organizations, offering the flexibility and adaptability necessary to respond to the dynamic shifts in the labor market.

HYBRID WORK MODEL: ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYEES ENGAGED IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN SERBIA IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Due to the numerous advantages and benefits it can offer to both employees and employers, the hybrid work model is becoming an increasingly popular practice in many companies worldwide (Andrade & Andrade, 2023). Some studies indicate that this work model is the second most commonly used work model in Europe (Eurofond, 2022).

According to a 2022 Ipsos survey covering 93 countries and around half a million employees, remote work has become a fundamental part of work expectations. Approximately 68% of respondents prefer a hybrid model, while 24% want exclusively remote work. Only 8% of employees wish to return to the office. Research has also confirmed the popularity of this model

in the United States. According to the data from 2024 (Statista Research Department, 2024), approximately 54% of employees in the USA combine remote work with traditional office work. Studies also confirm that the hybrid work model prevails in metropolitan areas and regions with a high proportion of workers in the knowledge economy (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Remote work is not entirely a new concept for employees in the science research field either (Janböcke et al., 2022). Flexible arrangements are becoming increasingly popular in scientific research due to technological advancements. During the pandemic, working from home became essential for maintaining business continuity, even in institutions focused on scientific research. Employees faced numerous challenges during this period, including balancing work and personal life, technological issues, and home distractions.

Research conducted during the pandemic demonstrated that the transition to remote work caused significant disruptions in research programs, resulting in the slowdown or suspension of numerous projects. The effectiveness of remote work was adversely affected by insufficient home office equipment, lack of structured routines, and limited access to high-speed internet. Furthermore, remote work contributed to increased feelings of isolation and fatigue, particularly among women with caregiving responsibilities (Gilmartin et. al., 2021). Other studies have also shown that remote work during the pandemic further highlighted gender disparities. Female scientists with children were significantly more burdened than their male colleagues, experiencing more frequent physical and mental health issues due to overload and isolation (Heo et al., 2022). Research in the field of social sciences indicates that the challenges faced by female researchers during the pandemic likely contributed to reduced productivity and a lower number of published papers (Cui et. al., 2022).

Despite offering numerous advantages, remote work is not suitable for all scientific fields, particularly those that face limitations in automation and remote management of experiments (Hunter, 2019). In scientific fields where remote or hybrid work is feasible, achieving positive outcomes in employee productivity and well-being depends on several key factors, including technological and managerial support, as well as strong interpersonal relationships (Franken et al., 2021).

While workplace flexibility has become a highly relevant topic in recent years, especially following the global changes triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, research focused on remote work in the context of researchers is extremely limited. Most existing studies focus on the effects of remote work during the pandemic, a unique period marked by specific challenges such as organizational issues, emotional and psychological stress caused by physical distance, reduced interaction with colleagues, and uncertainty. However, there is a clear lack of studies analyzing researchers' experiences and attitudes towards remote work after the pandemic. This research gap is significant, as it is crucial to understand the long-term consequences of this change on researchers' work habits and preferences in the post-pandemic period.

The findings presented in this study fill this gap by providing insight into the post-pandemic changes and challenges faced by researchers. Although this paper partially relies on previously published data, it makes a significant new contribution by focusing attention on examining the attitudes of employees in the research community, particularly toward the hybrid work model. Through expanded analysis and interpretation, the paper enriches the existing literature with additional findings and specific insights. The research was conducted via an anonymous online survey from September to November 2024, with a sample of 353 researchers employed at institutes or faculties in the field of social sciences and humanities (Lazarević-Moravčević, 2024).

The research confirmed that flexibility is a key aspect of modern research work. Remote work is a widely practiced method in the scientific research field in Serbia, with around 67% of respondents (either completely or partially) using this work model.

From the perspective of employees in this field, remote work presents numerous advantages. The primary benefits identified are: 1) Flexibility in managing work hours - employees can tailor their work schedules to better fit their personal lives and peak productivity hours; 2) Enhanced

efficiency in time utilization - remote work often leads to less time wasted on commuting and more time available for focused work, allowing employees to accomplish tasks more effectively; 3) Increased concentration on work tasks - being in a personalized and comfortable environment can foster a higher level of focus, reducing distractions commonly found in traditional office settings (Lazarević-Moravčević, 2024).

The hybrid work model was identified as the most commonly implemented work practice among employees in the scientific research sector in social sciences and humanities.

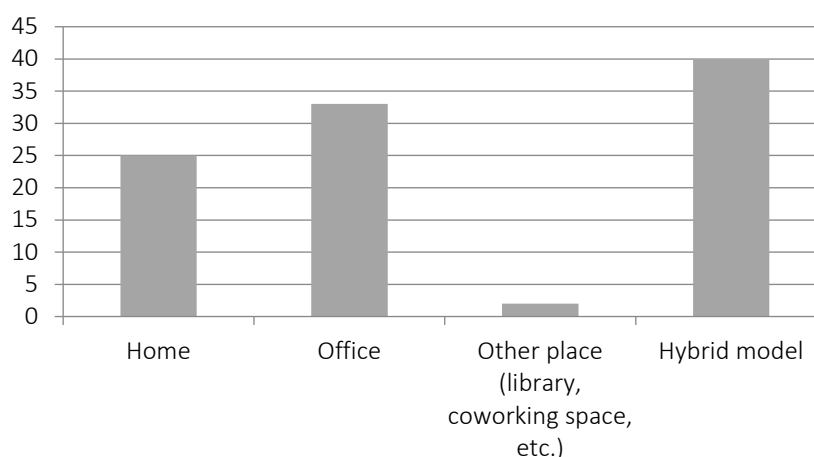


Figure 1. Primary work location for researchers in social sciences and humanities in Serbia (expressed in %)

Source: Lazarević-Moravčević, M. (2024)

The attitudes of the respondents on the hybrid work model are extremely positive, taking into account the entire sample size. The majority of researchers perceive the hybrid work model as the most suitable solution for scientific research activities. To be precise, more than half of the respondents (53%) completely agree, while 27% mostly support the view that the hybrid work model is the most effective for scientific research activities (Lazarević-Moravčević, 2024).

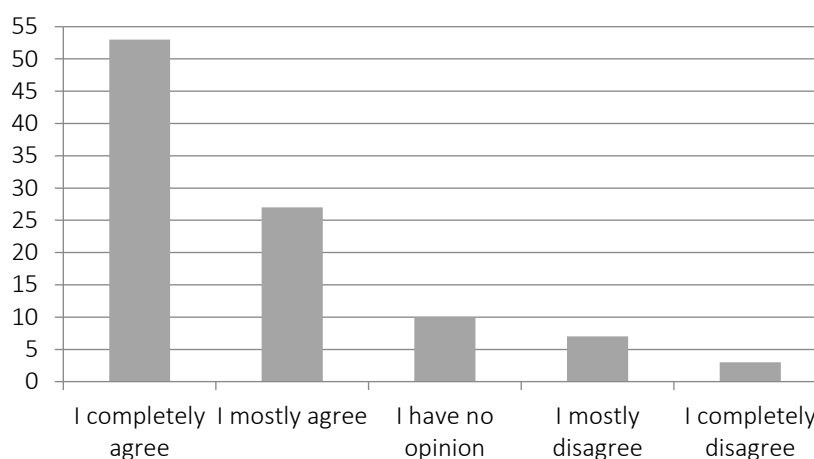


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents' views on the hybrid work model as the most suitable solution for scientific research activities (expressed in %)

Source: Author's research

The research also analysed the preferences of the respondents regarding the hybrid work model to identify differences in the attitudes between the female and male populations. The flexibility afforded by hybrid work can enable a more efficient balancing of professional and personal tasks. Based on the aforementioned position, this work model could be particularly functional for women, considering that gender roles in modern society still imply a disproportionate division of family responsibilities. However, the results of this study demonstrated that the concept is widely accepted among both women and men. Namely, researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities, regardless of gender, favor the integration of working from home and working in the office.

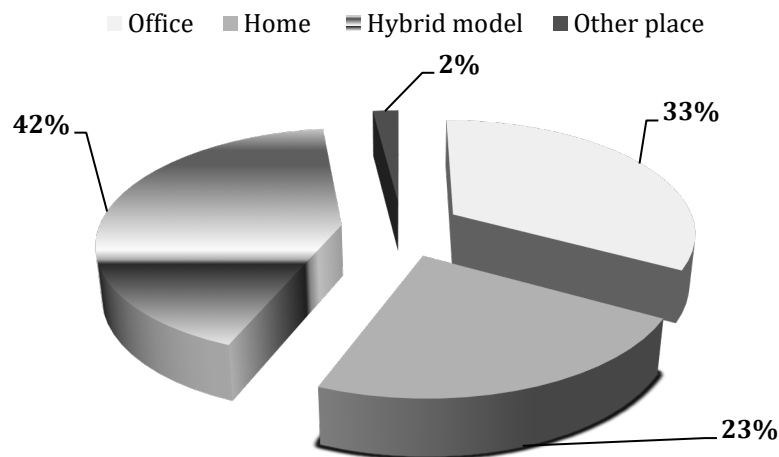


Figure 3. Primary work location for female researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities in Serbia

Source: Lazarević-Moravčević, M. (2024)

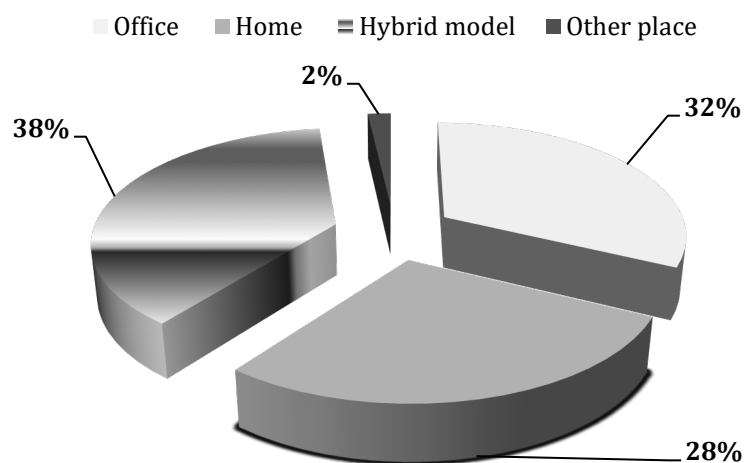


Figure 4. Primary work location for male researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities in Serbia

Source: Lazarević-Moravčević, M. (2024)

The research also indicates that the hybrid work model is the most preferred practice among the respondents in the age groups of 40-49 and 25-39. This group shows a greater tendency

toward combining remote and office work, suggesting their need for a higher level of flexibility. On the other hand, the researchers aged 50-59 tend to lean towards the traditional work environment, i.e., working from the office.

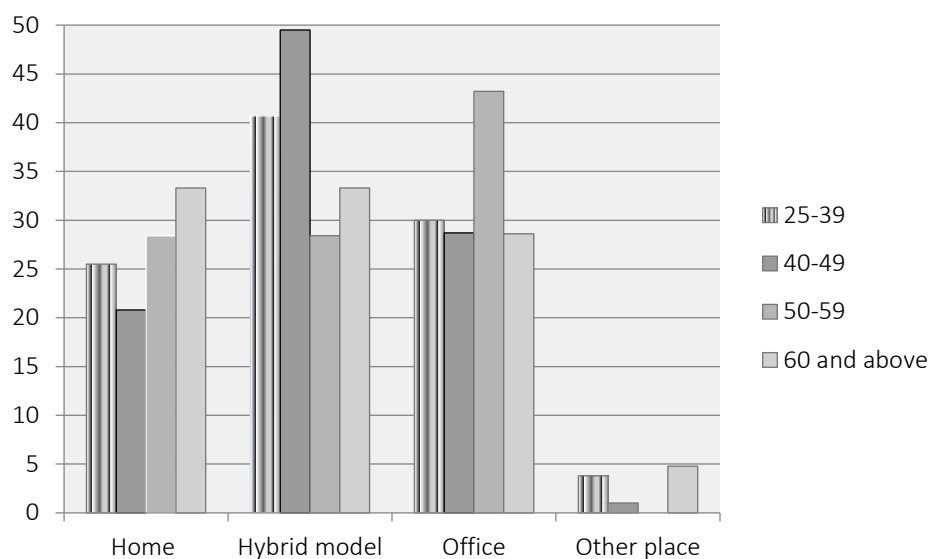


Figure 5. Primary work location for scientific workers in the field of social sciences and humanities in Serbia by age group (expressed in %)

Source: Author's research

It is assumed that, as new generations, particularly Generation Z, become increasingly involved in scientific research in Serbia, the trend toward flexible work arrangements will continue and intensify. The younger generation, particularly Generation Z, shows a strong preference for flexible working conditions (Bhat et al., 2024). This generation focuses on flexibility, creative tasks, technology, and work policies that offer not only material but also psychological satisfaction (Arar & Oneren, 2018). It has been proven that the freedom to choose the time, location, and work model has positive impact on the productivity of Generation Z employees (Febriana & Mujib, 2024), and that flexibility is one of the key factors contributing to the retention of employees from this group (Kgarimetsa & Naidoo, 2024).

The research demonstrates that flexibility is extremely important to employees in science. Additionally, researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities consider a combination of remote and office work, i.e., the hybrid work model, as the most suitable solution for performing their business activities. The assumption is that this work model meets the needs of researchers and is appropriate for this type of work for several reasons:

- Flexible work arrangements, such as the hybrid work model, allow employees to manage their time in a way that suits them best. This flexibility enables them to work during most productive periods, choosing their working hours - either early in the morning or late at night (Lazarević-Moravčević, 2024).
- A significant advantage can also be the more efficient use of working hours by eliminating daily commuting. By avoiding commuting, employees can better plan their activities. They are less exposed to stress, which can positively impact their mental health and productivity.
- The hybrid work model allows employees in the scientific research field to adjust their working hours and space according to personal needs. Flexibility in choosing work location, either from home or the office, contributes to a better integration of professional

and private life. The option to perform certain activities remotely (from home) provides more control over the work environment and helps eliminate or minimise distractions (noise, conversations with colleagues, meetings, etc.) typical of an office setting. This can contribute to greater concentration and focus, increased productivity, and reduced stress and tension.

Given the points discussed above, the hybrid work model provides researchers with both an optimal combination of freedom and autonomy while working from home and the benefits of team integration and collaboration when working in the office. The synergy can significantly contribute to increased satisfaction, motivation, and productivity.

CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted in this paper examines the key features of the hybrid work model, with findings confirming that this model effectively addresses the drawbacks of both traditional office work and remote work. In fact, hybrid work has been recognized as a balanced approach that combines the best aspects of both models - physical presence in the office and the flexibility offered by remote work. By integrating various elements, the hybrid model provides increased flexibility and practicality, while simultaneously enhancing work efficiency (Andrade & Andrade, 2023).

The research identified numerous advantages of the hybrid work model, but also highlighted that implementing this relatively new work practice is a complex and demanding process. Implementing a hybrid workforce brings numerous challenges, such as communication problems, varying levels of technical literacy among employees, irregular working hours, and potential internal problems within teams (Putri et. al., 2023). Therefore, creating an effective hybrid system requires careful consideration of the strategic direction in which the organization wants to develop, as well as the types of challenges that need to be overcome. It is also necessary to keep in mind the fact that the advantages and disadvantages of a hybrid working model are often not immediately obvious, especially in the short term (Allassoini et. al., 2025).

Introducing a hybrid work model entails the transformation of all elements of organizational design, particularly organizational structure and culture. Viewed in the context of hybrid work implementation, leaders play a crucial role in the renewal of organizational culture. This primarily involves adopting a more flexible and sensitive approach to leadership. The strategic focus should be on strengthening connections among employees, regardless of their geographical location. By affirming values such as trust, diversity, and inclusivity, through proactive communication and fostering intrinsic motivation, it is possible to maintain a high level of employee engagement (da Silva et. al., 2022).

Empirical research has confirmed that the hybrid work model is highly supported by employees in the scientific research sector in Serbia, particularly in the fields of social sciences and humanities. The hybrid work model allows researchers to find the optimal combination of freedom and autonomy associated with working from home and the benefits provided by working in the office - collaboration, team integration, and effective communication.

The results of this research may have important implications for adapting the work environment to the needs of employees, especially in the scientific research sector. One of the key findings of the research is that the implementation of flexible and personalized work policies is becoming essential for institutions operating in the field of scientific research, given that productivity is maximized in work environments tailored to employees' needs.

This analysis also has certain limitations. Specifically, it does not provide an in-depth understanding of how the preferences of employees in the research sector of social sciences and humanities in Serbia regarding flexible work models influence their actual performance, level of engagement, workload, or work-life balance. The identified limitations will serve as a foundation for future research, where these aspects will be further examined and elaborated.

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