Hybrid Work Arrangements and Employee Engagement in Insurance Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

L.Q.Don-Baridam PhD
Department of Employment Relations and Human Resource Management, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
Email: letam.don-baridam@rsu.edu.ng

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Abstract
The study examined the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and employee engagement in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and the measures of employee engagement in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. This study employed a cross-sectional research design. There is a total of number of one hundred and eighteen (118) insurance firms in Rivers State as obtained from the Yellow Pages Directory of Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry (See Appendix III). The population of this study consisted of 810 staff of fifteen (15) insurance firms in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 267 obtained from taro yamen formula at 5% error tolerance and 95% level of confidence. Instrument used for data collection was primarily questionnaire. Mean, standard deviation and frequencies were employed in demographic and univariate analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for the bivariate analysis to the establish the relationship between predictor and the criterion variables of the study. The study found that hybrid work arrangements positively influence the various facets of employee engagement. Specifically, hybrid work arrangements were found to be strong drivers of higher levels of dedication, vigour and absorption among employees in these insurance companies. The study concludes that employees working under hybrid arrangements demonstrate strong dedication, vigour and absorption in insurance firms in Rivers State Nigeria. Based on this, the study recommended that Management in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria should provide the right digital tools and skill development that enable seamless work regardless of location. By doing this, employees can maintain performance quality and team cohesion regardless of where they work.

Keywords: *Hybrid work arrangements, Dedication, Vigor, Absorption, Public Universities.*

Introduction.

Employee engagement has become an important concern in contemporary human resource management because of its implications for employee productivity, organisational commitment, service delivery, and organisational effectiveness. In an increasingly competitive business environment, organisations depend on employees who are not only physically present at work but

also psychologically involved, emotionally committed, and willing to invest their energy in achieving organizational objectives. Employee engagement, therefore, represents an important organisational outcome that reflects the extent to which employees are enthusiastic about their jobs, committed to their responsibilities, and willing to contribute meaningfully to organisational success. The importance of employee engagement lies in its potential to strengthen employees' contribution to organisational objectives. Engaged employees are more likely to demonstrate enthusiasm, persistence, concentration, and dedication in carrying out their responsibilities. Vigour reflects employees' energy, mental resilience, and willingness to invest effort in their work; dedication represents their sense of significance, enthusiasm, pride, and involvement in their jobs; while absorption describes a state of deep concentration and engrossment in work activities (Schaufeli et al., 2002). These dimensions are particularly relevant to organisations that depend on employees' ability to maintain productive relationships with customers, process information accurately, meet performance targets, and respond promptly to changing business requirements

Empirical research has examined employee engagement from different organisational and behavioural perspectives. For instance, Saks (2006) investigated the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement and distinguished between job engagement and organisational engagement. The study demonstrated the relevance of social exchange relationships in explaining why employees become engaged when they perceive that their organisations provide supportive and beneficial employment experiences. This suggests that employees' engagement is influenced not only by their personal characteristics but also by the conditions and practices through which organisations structure the employment relationship. Similarly, Schaufeli et al. (2002) established a conceptual and measurement framework for work engagement based on vigour, dedication, and absorption. Their work provides an important basis for examining employee engagement as a multidimensional construct rather than treating it simply as job satisfaction or organisational commitment. Within the Nigerian insurance industry, employee engagement has also attracted scholarly attention. Akhigbe and Osita-Ejikeme (2021) examined corporate culture and employee engagement in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional survey of employees from selected insurance companies, the researchers investigated the relationships between supportive and involvement cultures and dimensions of employee engagement. Their findings indicated that supportive and involvement cultures were significantly associated with employee engagement, particularly vigour and dedication. The study highlighted the relevance of organisational culture in creating conditions that encourage employees to invest energy and commitment in their work. However, its primary explanatory focus was corporate culture rather than the structure and implementation of hybrid work arrangements. Similarly, Lawrence and Asawo (2024) examined staff training and employee engagement in insurance companies in Rivers State. The study conceptualized employee engagement through vigor, dedication, and absorption and reported a positive and significant relationship between staff training and employee engagement. The findings suggest that opportunities to develop employees' knowledge and capabilities may contribute to greater engagement. However, the study focused on staff training rather than hybrid work arrangements. Although training may help employees adapt to digital working environments, it does not independently establish whether the flexibility, work-location choices, and coordination requirements associated with hybrid work influence employees' energy, dedication, and concentration. These studies demonstrate that employee engagement is an established subject of research in the insurance sector in Rivers State. They also reveal that engagement has been investigated in relation to factors such as corporate culture and staff training. Nevertheless, the emphasis on these organizational practices leaves room for further investigation

into how contemporary work arrangements shape employees' experiences and engagement. Based on this, the study tends to empirically examine the relationship between hybrid work practices and employee engagement in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Purpose and of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and employee engagement in insurance companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. To operationalize the aim of study, there is need for an accurate assessment of the relationship between the variables. The objectives are stated as follows:

i. Examine the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and dedication in insurance companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
ii. Determine the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and vigour in insurance companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
iii. Analyze the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework can be defined as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from the relevant field of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation (Joan & Stanly, 2016). In this research, the predictor variable is hybrid work arrangements. While the criterion variable is Employee engagement with its measures as dedication, vigor and absorption. as represented in fig 1.

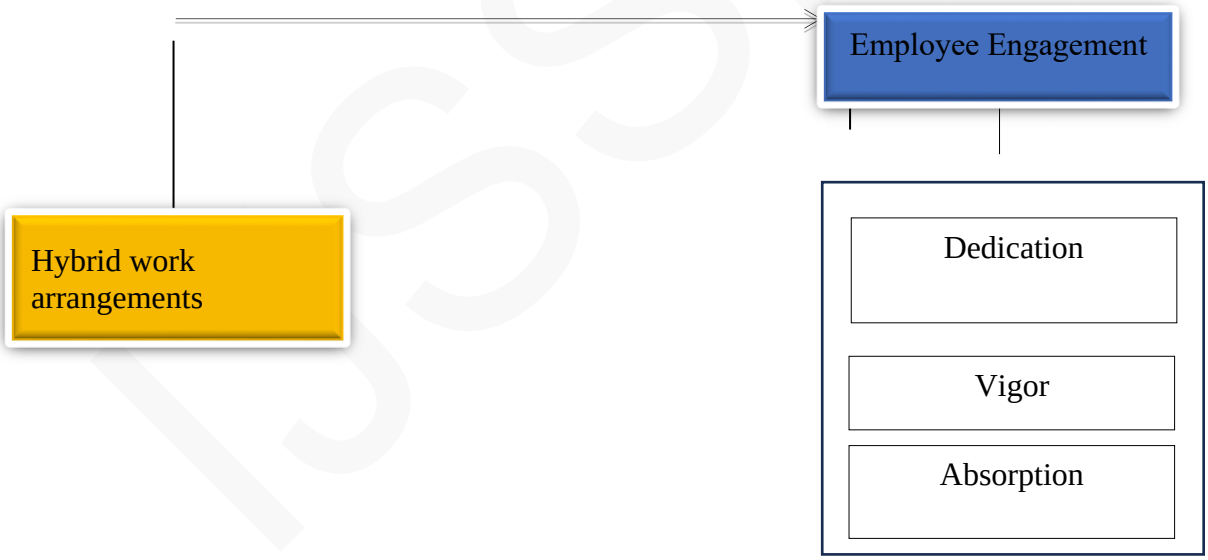


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework for Hybrid work arrangements and Employee engagement in public universities in Rivers State.
Source: Conceptualized by the Researcher, (2026)

Research Questions

The following research question was formulated for the study.

i. What is the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and dedication in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

ii. What is the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and vigour in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?
iii. What is the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and absorption in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is regarded as one of the gold standards for understanding workplace behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It is a common phenomenon embedded not only in organizational life but also in interactions with family, friends, and society. Cropanzano et al. (2017) define SET as involving (i) an initiation by an actor toward a target, (ii) a behavioral or attitudinal response from the target in reciprocity, and (iii) the resulting relationship. Developed initially by Homans (1961) and refined by Pfeffer (1982), the theory posits that human behaviors are social interactions rooted in exchanges of tangible and intangible resources. It further suggests that compliance and commitment within organizations emerge when individuals perceive their efforts or behaviors to be reciprocated with valued returns. By encouraging the exchange of knowledge, support, and recognition, SET creates conditions that strengthen workplace relationships. Several scholars (Nunkoo, 2016; Saks, 2006) have therefore argued that SET provides a strong logical base for explaining employee engagement.

At its core, SET is anchored on the principle of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), which assumes that favorable treatment by the organization prompts employees to respond with positive attitudes and behaviors that benefit the organization. This dynamic is reinforced when employees perceive their employer as supportive and caring about their welfare, motivating them to reciprocate through loyalty, commitment, and engagement (Sekaja, 2021). When employees feel supported and valued, they are more likely to identify with organizational goals, invest discretionary effort, and engage in behaviors that contribute to the company's growth and sustainability. Thus, SET provides a useful framework for linking workplace gratitude with employee engagement, since both thrive on the exchange of care, recognition, and commitment between employers and employees.

Conceptual Review

The concept of Hybrid work arrangements

Hybrid work has become a dominant and evolving concept in contemporary organizational practice, particularly following the global shift in work patterns after the COVID-19 pandemic. It represents a flexible work model that combines both remote (off-site) and on-site (office-based) work arrangements, allowing employees to alternate between different work environments based on organizational policies and job requirements. Conceptually, hybrid work is defined as a work arrangement characterized by the intentional blending of physical and virtual work settings, where employees divide their time between home, office, or other remote locations (Olejniczak, 2024; Skedda, 2025). Recent scholarly work further clarifies hybrid work as a dynamic system involving continuous switching between work modes, incorporating dimensions such as location (where work is done), modality (how work is performed), and temporality (when work is done) (Human Resource Management Review, 2025). This multidimensional nature distinguishes hybrid work from purely remote or traditional office-based models. Hybrid work systems are flexible arrangements that integrate in-office and remote work, allowing employees to choose their work location and methods for fulfilling their duties (Yating et al., 2024)

The Concept of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement can be taken into account in various dynamics. Employee engagement is often associated with the engagement of the business results of an organization, the higher the involvement of employees in an organization is considered to improve the engagement of an organization. The concept of first engagement by Kazimoto (2016) which explains that engagement as an expression and behavior of a person who fully engages in work and in the team, as a manifestation of fulfilling his role in work, which is characterized by a personal presence physically, cognitively and emotionally. The cognitive aspects of employee engagement include beliefs held by employees regarding the organization, its leaders and working conditions. According to Chandani, Mehta, Mall and Khokhar (2016) employee Engagement is defined as active behavior, positive psychological conditions related to work then operationalized by the dedication, vigor and absorption. When employee engagement is considered as a positive mind-set, it can be defined as the enthusiasm, devotion and involvement that an employee has while working in his role. When employee engagement is considered as the adverse of emotional exhaustion, it can be defined as the energy, vigour, and dedication that the employee has when it comes to the employee's work (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019; Don-Baridam, & Jaja 2025). Employee engagement is a key driver of organizational success and competitiveness (Ramalu, Sintok & Rashid, 2016). Past research has demonstrated that employee engagement can have significant consequences for individuals and organizations. It is a vital factor for organizational success because it improves profitability, productivity, and employee engagement (Barik & Kochar, 2017; Breevaart et al., 2014).

Dedication: This describes the level of enthusiasm expressed by the workers in the engagement of their roles and responsibilities. Dedication is defined as a person's emotionally stable and positive attitude towards work with the aim of achieving personally significant results (professional demands and identity) (Sadovaya & Korchagina, 2016). Meanwhile, according to Van Scotter and Motowidlo (2016), Job Dedication refers to a person's disciplined behavior at work which includes compliance in following the rules, working hard, having resilience in carrying out tasks and being able to take the initiative in solving problems. Dedication refers to the strength of engage in a job and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenges (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Dedication is ones' sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge.

Vigour: This refers to the workers physical exertion of energy, vitality and focus on their roles in the organization (Saks, 2006). Engaged workers are full with energy (Vigor), strongly involved in their work (dedication), and often fully concentrated and happily engrossed in their work activities (absorption). Vigor is high levels of energy and mental resilience while working and dedication is described as being strongly involved in one's work with a sense of passion. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work and persistence in the face of difficulty. The enthusiasm can be felt from the high level of energy and endurance of the mind while working, the willingness to give the best in a job, and perseverance when facing a problem (Schaufeli, 2017).

Absorption: This measure of workers engagement refers to the extent to which the worker is engrossed in their work or roles. Absorption describes a condition in which workers spend considerable time and energy in their roles or functions (Schaufeli *et al.,* 2012; Sun, 2019).

Absorption refers to the state in which one is highly concentrated and happily engrossed in works so that he or she feels time passes quickly and it is difficult to detach from work. Absorption is being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work which makes workers to feel like time passes by quickly (Schaufeli *et al.,* 2012). It mirrors the extent to which the worker can be considered as having deep interest and physical involvement in the engagement of their functions or duties in the organization (Sun, 2019; Saks, 2006).

Empirical Review

Ananda (2024) examined the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance and employee performance within human resource management. This study employs quantitative methodologies utilising a survey technique. The research population comprises personnel employed by enterprises in Bandung City. The study sample comprised 100 employees, chosen by purposive sampling methodology. This study employed questionnaires and literature reviews as data collection methods. The analytical method employed is regression testing, utilising the SPSS software. The findings indicated that flexible work positively affects work-life balance and employee performance. Employees engaged in flexible work arrangements generally exhibit superior work-life balance and performance relative to those in traditional work settings. The questionnaire results reveal that employees with flexible work arrangements generally experience increased time for family and friends, reduced stress levels, and heightened job satisfaction. Rahayu (2024) assessed the impact of work flexibility and job satisfaction on employee performance in Karawang. This study employs the technique of administering surveys directly to respondents who are employees in Karawang city. This research is quantitative in nature. The processed data is primary data acquired from the outcomes of administering surveys through basic random sampling methods. A sample of 75 respondents was acquired through the distribution of the questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted utilising the Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares) software version 3. Evaluate valid study results and indicators. The variable of work flexibility significantly impacts job happiness. The variable of job happiness does not exhibit a substantial correlation with employee performance. This information might assist a corporation in identifying employees. Based on the review of literature on the variables, the following hypotheses are put forward and will be tested;

H_{O1}: There is no significant relationship between hybrid work arrangements and dedication in insurance companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

H_{O2}: There is no significant relationship between hybrid work arrangements and vigour in insurance companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

H_{O3}: There is no significant relationship between hybrid work arrangements and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology.

This study employed a cross-sectional research design. There is a total of number of one hundred and eighteen (118) insurance firms in Rivers State as obtained from the Yellow Pages Directory of Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry (See Appendix III). The population of this study consisted of 810 staff of fifteen (15) insurance firms in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 267 obtained from taro yamen formula at 5% error tolerance and 95% level of confidence. Instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire. Mean, standard deviation was employed in univariate analysis. Spearman Correlation Order was used for the bivariate analysis to the establish the relationship between predictor and the criterion variables of the study.

Data Analysis and Findings

The analysis process was methodically conducted through a series of systematic stages aimed at ensuring the reliability and accuracy of the data. The data collected from the survey was meticulously inputted into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) editor. 267(100%) copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents. 236(88%) copies of the questionnaire were returned, while 31 copies of the questionnaire representing 12% were not returned. However, out of the returned copies of the questionnaire, 5 copies of the questionnaire representing 2% were not valid, while 231 copies of the questionnaire representing 86% were valid and thus forms the basis for the analysis.

UnivariateAnalysis

This section presents the univariate analysis, focusing on the distribution of each variable and the extent to which they are significantly evident within insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis covers hybrid work arrangements (predictor) and employee engagement (criterion), along with their dimensions and indicators. Using central tendency (mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation), the study assessed how strongly these variables are manifested. Responses were collected on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). Following Asawo's (2009) categorization, mean scores between 1–2.42 indicate low manifestation, 2.5–3.4 moderate, 3.5–4.4 high, and 4.5 and above very high. The frequency distributions for each study variable are provided in the appendix. The frequencies distribution on the responses for each of the individual's study variables are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hybrid work arrangements	231	1.50	4.50	3.6713	.86698
Dedication	231	1.75	4.25	3.4909	.81370
Vigour	231	1.50	4.75	3.7799	.98148
Absorption	231	2.00	4.50	3.7786	.76479
Valid N (listwise)	231				

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 1 above illustrates the distribution for the constructs of the study based on summaries obtained from their manifest properties. The distributions for the variable demonstrate evident levels of agreement to the properties and manifestations of the constructs; where mean scores (x) are observed to range mostly between x = 3.0 – 4.0. This shows that hybrid work arrangements, dedication, vigor and absorption are substantial and well manifested realities with the public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Bivariate Data Analysis

This section presents the bivariate analysis, testing the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and employee engagement measures (dedication, vigor, and absorption). Pearson correlation order was used, with a 0.05 significance level (95% confidence). The decision rule is straightforward: if $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship; if $p > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is accepted, showing no significant relationship.

Hybrid work arrangements and Employee Engagement

Table 2 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for hybrid work arrangements and measures of employee engagement in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes us able to answer our research question and generalize our findings to the study population.

Relationship between Hybrid Work and Measures of Employee Engagement

Table 2: Test for Correlation between Hybrid Work and Measures of Employee Engagement

			Hybrid Work	Dedication	Vigour	Absorption
Spearman's rho	Hybrid Work	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.704**	.970**	.808**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	231	231	231	231
	Dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.704**	1.000	.667**	.721**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	231	231	231	231
	Vigour	Correlation Coefficient	.970**	.667**	1.000	.794**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	231	231	231	231
	Absorption	Correlation Coefficient	.808**	.721**	.794**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	231	231	231	231

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The findings show a strong and positive relationship between hybrid work arrangements and the three dimensions of employee engagement in insurance firms in Rivers State. Specifically, hybrid work arrangements were strongly linked to dedication (r = 0.704), indicating that this value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that hybrid work enhances employee engagement which is measured in terms of dedication. Similarly, a strong relationship was observed with vigor (r = 0.970) This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that hybrid work enhances employee engagement which is measured in terms of vigour.. Hybrid work arrangements also demonstrated a strong relationship with absorption (r = 0.808). This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that hybrid work enhances employee engagement which is measured in terms of absorption. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between hybrid work and absorption in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussions of Findings

The result revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between hybrid work and employee engagement in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the findings indicated that there is a strong positive correlation between hybrid work and dedication, suggesting that employees who operate under hybrid work arrangements tend to exhibit a higher level of commitment to their roles and organizational objectives. This implies that the flexibility associated with hybrid work enhances employees' sense of responsibility, loyalty, and willingness to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of organizational goals. Furthermore, the findings indicated that there is a very strong positive correlation between hybrid work and vigour in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. This suggests that employees who work under hybrid arrangements are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of energy, enthusiasm, and resilience in performing their job responsibilities. The result implies that hybrid work provides employees with a conducive work environment that promotes work-life balance, reduces stress, and enhances their motivation and overall well-being, thereby increasing their vigor at work.

The finding is in support of the work of Michael, Jennifer, Griffith, and Matthew (2024) who used a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the relationship between hybrid work models and employee performance in the U.S. context. The study found that hybrid work models were associated with higher levels of employee performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. However, the relationship between hybrid work and employee performance varied depending on factors such as job type, industry, and organizational culture. The study concluded that hybrid work models can be an effective strategy for improving employee performance and organizational outcomes, but the success of such models depends on careful consideration of contextual factors and effective implementation strategies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the findings, it can be concluded that hybrid work arrangement plays a vital role in strengthening employee engagement across dedication, vigor, and absorptions dimensions in insurance firms in Rivers State. When employees are given the opportunities to grow, they are more energized, attentive, and emotionally connected to their work. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Management in insurance firms in Rivers State, Nigeria should provide the right digital tools and skill development that enable seamless work regardless of location. By doing this, employees can maintain performance quality and team cohesion regardless of where they work.

ii. Management in insurance companies should provide regular training and professional development opportunities to employees working in hybrid arrangements.

iii. Management in insurance companies should assess hybrid employees based on measurable outcomes, work quality, productivity, and the achievement of agreed objectives rather than physical presence in the office this will help increase level of engagement of employees

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