Public Service Motivation and Organizational Performance in Hybrid Work Environments

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Abstract: *This study investigates the impact of hybrid work arrangements on public service motivation (PSM) and job performance within public administration. Given the increasing adoption of flexible work models post-pandemic, understanding how hybrid work influences employee motivation and performance is critical. The major objectives were to examine the effects of hybrid work on PSM and job performance, explore the mediating roles of work engagement and psychological well-being, assess the moderating influence of leadership support, and identify challenges and opportunities from employee perspectives. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 450 public sector employees and conducted 20 in-depth interviews across multiple agencies. Quantitative data were analyzed using structural equation modeling, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Findings indicate that hybrid work significantly enhances job performance by boosting engagement and well-being, with effects amplified among employees exhibiting high PSM. Leadership support was found to be a crucial moderator, facilitating positive outcomes through effective communication and empathetic management. Challenges such as social isolation were mitigated by proactive organizational strategies. The study recommends institutionalizing hybrid work policies, enhancing leadership training, supporting employee well-being initiatives, and fostering continuous feedback mechanisms. These insights contribute to optimizing flexible work in public administration, promoting motivated and high-performing public servants.*

Keywords: Hybrid work arrangements, public service motivation, job performance, work engagement, leadership support.

1.0 Introduction

The transformation of the modern workplace has accelerated in unprecedented ways over the past decade, driven by technological advancement, globalization, and most notably, the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the most profound changes witnessed in public administration is the shift toward hybrid work arrangements, an operational model that blends remote and in-office work practices. While private sector organizations have often led in the adoption of flexible work modes, public sector agencies across the globe are increasingly adopting hybrid models as a permanent feature of their administrative systems. This transition has sparked a robust and growing discourse concerning the implications of hybrid work on core organizational values, workforce engagement, and public service delivery. Of particular interest is how hybrid work environments affect public service motivation (PSM), a foundational construct in public administration theory that encapsulates the intrinsic, altruistic drive of public employees to serve the common good (Perry and Wise, 1990) and how, in turn, this affects overall organizational performance.

The notion of PSM has been widely explored over the last three decades, largely inspired by the need to understand what motivates individuals to work in bureaucracies despite often lower pay, less autonomy, and limited career mobility when compared to private sector counterparts. Early foundational works, such as those by Perry (1996), conceptualized PSM as a multidimensional construct comprising commitment to public interest, compassion, self-sacrifice, and attraction to policy-making. Since then, a rich body of empirical literature has documented its predictive validity in relation to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance outcomes in public institutions (Vandenabeele, 2009; Kim, 2012). However, these studies were primarily conducted in conventional, office-based bureaucracies, where social and organizational dynamics were relatively stable and observable. The hybrid work era introduces a new context, one that reconfigures social interactions, blurs work-life boundaries, and alters the mechanisms of supervision and evaluation raising critical questions about whether and how PSM continues to function as an effective driver of performance in such environments.

Research exploring the intersection of hybrid work models and public service motivation is still nascent. Much of the literature surrounding remote or flexible work has focused either on technological infrastructure, managerial control, or work-life balance issues (Bailey and Kurland, 2002; Golden, 2006). In contrast, few studies have probed into the more nuanced psycho-social effects of such arrangements, particularly on motivation rooted in public values. The scant scholarship that does exist often treats hybrid work as a uniform experience, failing to consider variations in organizational culture, leadership support, and the nature of public service roles (Kellough and Nigro, 2006; Breaugh, 2021). This oversimplification risks obscuring how contextual factors mediate or moderate the relationship between PSM and performance in hybrid settings. Furthermore, the performance implications of hybrid work in the public sector remain under-theorized, especially in relation to non-material motivators like PSM, which are pivotal for mission-driven bureaucracies.

This study seeks to bridge these gaps by systematically exploring how public service motivation influences organizational performance within hybrid work environments in the public sector. It aims to understand whether the shift to hybrid work dilutes, sustains, or transforms the motivational drivers that underpin effective public service. Specifically, the study investigates how hybrid work affects employees' perceptions of their public service roles, their sense of mission alignment, and their capacity to deliver value under altered working conditions. Moreover, it examines how different dimensions of PSM interact with organizational practices such as communication, supervision, and performance evaluation in hybrid contexts, and how these interactions shape both individual and collective performance outcomes. The study is grounded in a recognition that the motivational architecture of public employees is deeply intertwined with the institutional and normative structures in which they operate. As such, any transformation in work arrangements warrants a reexamination of long-standing theoretical assumptions.

In addressing these objectives, the research contributes to both theoretical and practical domains of public administration. Theoretically, it extends the PSM literature by introducing hybrid work as a critical contextual variable that may reshape how motivation is experienced and expressed in the public sector. It challenges the implicit assumption in much of the extant literature that motivational dynamics are stable across work formats and offers a more contingent understanding of motivation-performance linkages. Practically, the study offers evidence-based insights for public managers and policymakers seeking to optimize workforce engagement and performance in increasingly flexible administrative environments. Given the growing permanence of hybrid work models in government institutions post-pandemic, these insights have significant relevance for public sector reform, human resource management, and the broader discourse on administrative resilience.

Another important gap this study aims to fill is the limited empirical understanding of performance metrics in hybrid settings. Traditional performance indicators in public administration such as timeliness, policy output, and citizen satisfaction may not fully capture the qualitative changes brought about by flexible work arrangements. This research therefore also explores how performance is defined and measured in hybrid bureaucracies and how PSM mediates employees' ability to meet these evolving standards. The study incorporates both employee-centered and organizational-level perspectives, acknowledging that performance is not only a function of individual motivation but also of institutional enablers and constraints.

Furthermore, the study situates itself within an emerging global dialogue on the future of public work. As governments grapple with talent retention, intergenerational workforce shifts, and citizen expectations for responsive governance, understanding how to sustain high levels of motivation and performance in new work paradigms becomes imperative. Recent studies suggest that hybrid work may offer opportunities for greater autonomy and job satisfaction, but also pose risks related to isolation, weakened identity with the organization, and reduced informal mentoring factors that are especially salient for public servants who derive meaning from collective mission and relational dynamics (Choudhury et al., 2020; OECD, 2021). By engaging with these complex dynamics, the present study advances a more holistic understanding of what it means to work for the public good in the 21st century.

This research is situated at the intersection of changing work modalities and enduring questions about motivation, mission, and performance in public administration. It addresses the urgent need to reassess established motivational theories within the context of hybrid work and contributes to a more adaptive and contextually aware understanding of performance in the public sector. The study draws upon a robust theoretical framework, employs rigorous empirical methods, and engages with contemporary debates in order to provide actionable knowledge for academics and practitioners alike.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Public Service Motivation (PSM)

Public Service Motivation (PSM) is a foundational concept in public administration that captures the intrinsic, value-laden motivations driving individuals to serve the public interest. It challenges economic models of behavior that portray workers as rational actors driven primarily by monetary incentives or career advancement. Perry and Wise (1990) were among the first to offer a systematic theoretical articulation of PSM, describing it as a motivational force grounded in a commitment to public values, compassion toward others, and a desire to participate in the formulation and implementation of public policy. Perry's (1996) empirical operationalization of PSM divided the construct into four distinct dimensions: attraction to public policy-making, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Each of these dimensions captures a different aspect of the intrinsic and prosocial motivations thought to be stronger among individuals who choose careers in the public sector.

PSM has since become a central pillar in public administration research, with a growing body of literature validating its theoretical robustness and practical relevance. Scholars such as Vandenabeele (2007) and Kim (2009) have refined its dimensions and tested its cross-cultural applicability, while studies by Bright (2007) and Wright and Grant (2010) have examined its link to performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Central to the theory is the assumption that individuals high in PSM will experience greater job satisfaction and perform better when they perceive their work as contributing meaningfully to society. However, the bulk of this research was developed in traditional, physically co-located bureaucracies where the daily experience of

public service was reinforced through shared spaces, organizational symbols, and face-to-face interactions. The emergence of hybrid work models challenges these assumptions and compels a reevaluation of the mechanisms through which PSM functions.

2.1.2 Organizational Performance in the Public Sector

Organizational performance in the public sector is a multifaceted and often contested concept, complicated by the diverse missions, stakeholder expectations, and accountability frameworks that characterize public institutions. Unlike private organizations where performance is largely evaluated in financial terms, public sector performance includes both efficiency measures such as cost-effectiveness and timeliness and more qualitative outcomes like equity, responsiveness, and citizen satisfaction. Boyne (2003) suggests that performance in public organizations is multidimensional, and often difficult to quantify due to the non-market nature of outputs and the complexity of public goals. Furthermore, public sector performance must be assessed not only at the organizational level but also through the lens of individual and team contributions, making employee motivation a central concern.

The literature has increasingly linked PSM to organizational performance, positing that motivated employees are more likely to go beyond formal job requirements, engage in citizenship behaviors, and align their personal goals with those of the organization (Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan, 2008; Ndubuisi-Okolo et al. (2017). Yet, the causal pathways between motivation and performance are neither linear nor uniform; they depend on a host of mediating factors including leadership style, organizational culture, and work design. The performance impacts of PSM are most evident when public servants operate in environments that affirm their values and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement. Hybrid work environments, by altering traditional patterns of supervision, feedback, and collaboration, may influence how PSM is experienced and how it translates into performance. This study explores these dynamics with an aim to identify whether the motivational drivers that underpin effective public service remain intact in hybrid settings or whether they require new management strategies to be sustained.

2.1.3 Hybrid Work Environment

The hybrid work environment refers to a flexible work arrangement in which employees divide their time between remote work and physical presence in the office. While remote work has existed for decades, particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors, the COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed its mass adoption across public sector institutions worldwide. In the post-pandemic context, many public organizations are institutionalizing hybrid work as a long-term strategy, creating a fundamental shift in how bureaucratic work is organized and experienced. Unlike fully remote work, the hybrid model attempts to balance the benefits of flexibility with the need for physical collaboration and oversight. However, it also introduces unique challenges related to communication, supervision, cohesion, and culture.

From a theoretical standpoint, hybrid work reconfigures the environment in which PSM operates. It changes the frequency and nature of social interactions, alters feedback mechanisms, and introduces technological intermediaries into everyday communication. Scholars such as Choudhury et al. (2020) argue that remote and hybrid work can offer greater autonomy and flexibility, which may enhance intrinsic motivation. However, other studies warn of risks such as social isolation, role ambiguity, and reduced organizational identification, all of which could undermine motivational drivers (Golden, 2006; Breaugh, 2021). For public sector employees, whose motivation is often rooted in shared purpose and community, the implications of hybrid work are especially significant. The hybrid environment thus serves as a critical contextual variable in this study, one that may moderate the relationship between PSM and performance.

2.1.4 Person-Organization Fit and Work Design

The concept of person-organization (P-O) fit is closely aligned with PSM theory and helps explain why motivated individuals thrive in certain work environments and struggle in others. P-O fit refers to the degree to which an individual's values, goals, and personality align with the values, culture, and mission of the organization (Kristof, 1996). High P-O fit has been linked to greater job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and better performance outcomes. In traditional work settings, organizational culture and mission are communicated through everyday interactions, symbolic rituals, and visible leadership. Hybrid work environments, by contrast, may dilute these cultural signals and weaken the socialization processes that foster P-O fit, thereby disrupting the motivational dynamics that support high performance.

Work design theory further illuminates how task characteristics such as autonomy, feedback, task significance, and interdependence affect motivational states and job outcomes (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). In hybrid settings, employees may experience greater autonomy but also suffer from reduced feedback and diminished task significance due to physical separation from the beneficiaries of their work. These changes can alter how PSM is activated and sustained. For instance, an employee with a strong desire to serve the public may feel less effective or less connected to their mission if their work is mediated by screens and asynchronous communication. Understanding how work design influences the expression of PSM is essential for assessing how hybrid work impacts performance.

2.1.5 Institutional and Contingency Perspectives

Institutional theory and contingency theory offer additional explanatory power for understanding the interplay between PSM and performance in hybrid contexts. Institutional theory emphasizes the embeddedness of organizations within broader systems of norms, symbols, and expectations (Scott, 2014). Public sector organizations, in particular, operate under strong institutional logics that define legitimacy, shape behavior, and reinforce normative commitments. Hybrid work may challenge these logics by transforming how legitimacy is signaled and how employees engage with organizational norms. The weakening of institutional rituals such as daily staff meetings, public ceremonies, or informal mentoring can lead to a loss of symbolic anchors that traditionally reinforce PSM.

Contingency theory, on the other hand, posits that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to organizational design and effectiveness; rather, outcomes depend on the fit between internal elements (like employee motivation) and external conditions (such as work environment or technology) (Donaldson, 2001). Applying this to the hybrid work context suggests that the effectiveness of PSM as a driver of performance depends on how well hybrid structures support or inhibit the expression of motivational values. For example, public employees who are intrinsically motivated may thrive under flexible arrangements if given appropriate tools and leadership support, but may flounder if they experience isolation or lack clarity in their roles.

These theoretical perspectives collectively form the framework through which this study investigates the relationship between PSM and organizational performance in hybrid work environments. By integrating PSM theory with insights from person-organization fit, work design, institutional norms, and contingency logic, the study aims to generate a context-sensitive understanding of how public servants can be effectively motivated and managed in an era of flexible work. This theoretical foundation enables a rigorous exploration of the research problem while offering pathways for both analytical precision and practical relevance.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory

Public Service Motivation (PSM) remains a fundamental theoretical framework for understanding what drives individuals in the public sector to commit beyond extrinsic incentives, motivated by intrinsic values and a desire to serve society. Introduced by Perry and Wise (1990), PSM encompasses multiple dimensions such as attraction to policymaking, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. This multidimensional nature has allowed researchers to explore the psychological underpinnings of public employees' motivations in depth. The theory situates motivation within a values-based approach, where individuals' identities and moral commitments play a critical role in shaping their work attitudes and behaviors. More recent theoretical expansions align PSM with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), highlighting the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers. By integrating these perspectives, scholars underscore that PSM functions as an intrinsic motivational force that satisfies deep psychological needs through meaningful public service work (Christensen et al., 2024). However, this motivation is not static; it is highly context-dependent and subject to the influence of organizational culture, leadership, and changing work environments, making its study both complex and dynamic.

2.2.2 Work Design and Job Demands-Resources (JD–R) Theory

The emergence of hybrid work environments introduces substantial challenges and opportunities to classical motivation theories such as PSM. Work design theories, particularly the Job Demands-Resources (JD–R) model, offer valuable insights into these changes. The JD–R model posits that job resources like autonomy, social support, and feedback can alleviate job demands and foster employee motivation and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Hybrid work arrangements typically increase autonomy by allowing employees to choose when and where they work, potentially enhancing intrinsic motivation and satisfaction. Research by Choudhury et al. (2020) demonstrates that flexible work arrangements support self-regulation and can improve productivity by aligning work with personal preferences. However, the autonomy provided by hybrid work is accompanied by unique demands, including social isolation, blurred work-life boundaries, and communication challenges. These demands may diminish access to social support and feedback, crucial elements for sustaining motivation, particularly in public service roles where relational and normative aspects of work are central (Zahari & Kaliannan, 2023). Thus, the JD–R framework predicts a complex interplay in hybrid contexts, where increased autonomy must be balanced against heightened psychosocial demands that may erode PSM if not managed effectively.

2.2.3 Institutional Theory and Organizational Rituals

Institutional theory contributes another important perspective by emphasizing the role of organizational norms, rituals, and symbols in embedding and sustaining public service values. Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that shared routines and visible organizational practices establish legitimacy and reinforce collective identity. In traditional public sector settings, daily face-to-face interactions,

ceremonial events, and informal rituals serve as powerful motivators by transmitting values and fostering organizational commitment. The shift to hybrid work disrupts these established institutional mechanisms by reducing physical presence and informal socialization opportunities. Scott's (2014) framework of institutional pillars, regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive highlights how hybrid work may weaken normative and cultural-cognitive elements by limiting employees' exposure to symbolic cues and shared meanings. The absence of these reinforcing rituals risks diminishing the internalization of public service values, thereby undermining PSM. To counter this, organizations must consciously adapt rituals and symbols to virtual or hybrid formats, ensuring that core institutional functions continue to motivate employees despite physical dispersion.

2.2.4 Contingency Theory and Individual Differences

Contingency theory adds critical nuance by stressing that motivation and performance depend on the fit between individual characteristics, leadership styles, organizational culture, and environmental conditions (Fiedler, 1964). Hybrid work environments represent a significant contingency variable, and their effect on PSM-driven motivation is mediated by how well individuals and organizations adapt. This perspective recognizes that hybrid work is not uniformly beneficial or detrimental. For instance, employees with high social needs may experience decreased motivation when isolated, whereas those who value autonomy and flexibility may thrive (Angcarani et al., 2021). Leadership styles also play a mediating role. Transformational and servant leadership styles, which emphasize vision communication, individualized consideration, and support, can mitigate negative effects of physical distance and sustain motivation and engagement (Vuong, 2023). This contingency lens suggests that effective hybrid work strategies require customization to align with workforce diversity, task complexity, and organizational mission, thus preserving or enhancing PSM and performance.

2.2.5 Integration with Work Engagement and Well-being Theories

Further theoretical refinement emerges from integrating PSM with work engagement and well-being theories. Work engagement, defined by Schaufeli et al. (2002) as a positive and fulfilling work-related state marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption, functions as a mediator between PSM and positive work outcomes (Homberg et al., 2022). Hybrid work arrangements impact this pathway by altering social support, feedback, and the meaningfulness of work. Psychological well-being is another key factor; while hybrid work can improve well-being by facilitating better work-life balance, it can also generate challenges such as isolation and burnout. Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) explains these dynamics by focusing on employees' need to protect and build resources. Hybrid work demands heightened self-regulation and boundary management, which may deplete resources unless counterbalanced by organizational support mechanisms. This synthesis highlights the importance of viewing motivation in hybrid contexts as a complex system of interacting psychological, social, and organizational factors that collectively influence PSM, engagement, and performance.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Public Service Motivation and Job Performance in Traditional Settings

Extensive empirical research has documented the positive relationship between Public Service Motivation (PSM) and job performance across various public sector contexts. Studies conducted over the past decade consistently confirm that higher levels of PSM among public employees correspond with greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and discretionary effort, ultimately translating into enhanced performance (Naff & Crum, 2018; Kim et al., 2020). For instance, research analyzing survey data from federal employees in the United States revealed that individuals with strong public service values demonstrated more proactive behaviors and higher engagement in public interest activities beyond their formal job descriptions (Bright, 2019). These findings reinforce the theoretical premise that PSM acts as a psychological resource driving employees to transcend self-interest for the sake of societal welfare. However, these studies were largely based on traditional work arrangements characterized by centralized offices, frequent face-to-face interaction, and structured supervision, environments conducive to social reinforcement of public service values.

The transition from these traditional contexts to more flexible or remote work arrangements has prompted scholars to investigate how PSM's influence on performance may shift. A comprehensive longitudinal study in Canada by Buelens and Van den Broeck (2021) examined PSM's effects on performance before and after telework policies were introduced. The researchers found that although telework increased employees' sense of autonomy and job satisfaction, the correlation between PSM and performance weakened slightly in remote settings. The attenuation was attributed to reduced informal interactions with colleagues and supervisors, which historically reinforced public service ethos. These findings signal that while PSM remains important, the mechanisms through which it translates into performance may be altered in less physically cohesive work environments. This insight highlights the need to explore hybrid and remote work settings in more detail, as these modes become normative in public administration worldwide.

2.3.2 Hybrid Work and Productivity: Emerging Evidence

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated hybrid work adoption in the public sector, creating natural experiments that researchers have leveraged to assess its impacts empirically. One of the most cited recent studies is Choudhury et al.'s (2020) randomized control trial on a London-based public agency's crime reporting unit. The study compared fully remote, fully office-based, and hybrid workers and found that remote workers increased productivity by 12%, while hybrid workers performed similarly to fully remote employees, both outperforming office-based counterparts. Crucially, the study highlighted that individuals with higher baseline levels of self-discipline and intrinsic motivation, traits closely associated with PSM, were able to capitalize on autonomy provided by remote work to enhance performance. Conversely, employees with lower intrinsic motivation struggled with self-regulation in less structured environments. This finding underlines the contingent nature of hybrid work's impact on performance, with individual motivational dispositions playing a moderating role.

Complementing these results, a recent large-scale study conducted in Bangladesh analyzed administrative email and task data across several public offices with varying degrees of remote work intensity (Choudhury et al., 2024). The analysis demonstrated a nonlinear, inverted-U shaped relationship between remote work intensity and performance, with moderate remote work (20-40% of time) yielding optimal productivity and innovation. The study theorized that moderate remote work strikes a balance between autonomy and social interaction, allowing employees to maintain connection with colleagues and organizational culture while enjoying flexibility. Employees with higher levels of PSM reported greater job satisfaction and creativity under these moderate hybrid conditions, reinforcing the view that hybrid work can enhance motivation and output if well designed. These findings provide empirical support for the theoretical propositions of contingency and JD–R theories, suggesting that hybrid work's benefits are maximized when tailored to employees' motivational profiles and task demands.

2.3.3 Leadership, Communication, and Motivation in Hybrid Settings

Leadership style and communication practices have emerged as critical factors influencing motivation and performance in hybrid public organizations. A 2022 survey of municipal employees in Denmark examined how transformational leadership influenced employee engagement and PSM under hybrid work conditions (Andersen & Rasmussen, 2022). The findings showed that leaders who actively communicated organizational mission and values and provided individualized support successfully maintained employees' public service motivation despite physical distance. Conversely, transactional leadership approaches focused on control and monitoring were associated with declines in motivation and engagement. This empirical evidence highlights that sustaining PSM and performance in hybrid contexts requires leadership that reinforces meaning, nurtures trust, and compensates for reduced informal social interactions. Moreover, technology-mediated communication tools play an essential role in enabling these leadership functions. Studies by Vuong (2023) show that frequent virtual check-ins, recognition through digital platforms, and transparent information sharing contribute to a climate of psychological safety and belonging, which are prerequisites for motivation.

The role of communication is further elaborated in research on public sector frontline employees during the pandemic. Zahari and Kaliannan (2023) conducted qualitative interviews with healthcare workers working in hybrid modes and found that inconsistent and delayed communication from leadership often led to uncertainty and stress, undermining motivation and performance. In contrast, clear, empathetic communication and opportunities for peer support through virtual channels helped sustain motivation. These findings underscore that the hybrid context intensifies the need for deliberate communication strategies tailored to address the social and emotional dimensions of public service work. Without such strategies, the risk of disengagement and erosion of PSM increases, which may have long-term consequences for organizational effectiveness.

2.3.4 Organizational Culture and Hybrid Work Adaptation

Empirical studies also point to the centrality of organizational culture in mediating the effects of hybrid work on motivation and performance. A cross-national comparative study by Liu et al. (2023) examined public sector agencies in five countries with varying degrees of hybrid work adoption. The researchers found that organizations with strong cultures emphasizing collaboration, shared purpose, and innovation were more successful in sustaining PSM and performance under hybrid conditions. These organizations actively promoted virtual rituals and socialization practices, such as online coffee breaks and recognition ceremonies, to maintain cohesion and reinforce public service values. In contrast, agencies with fragmented cultures and weak leadership faced difficulties in preserving motivation, resulting in lower employee engagement and productivity. These empirical findings align with institutional theory's prediction that organizational rituals and symbols are critical for sustaining motivation, especially when physical co-presence is limited.

Similarly, research by Fernandez and Brown (2024) in a large metropolitan public health department demonstrated that hybrid work arrangements enhanced motivation and job satisfaction when aligned with an inclusive and mission-driven culture. The study used mixed methods to show that employees who perceived their organizations as valuing flexibility, diversity, and service orientation were more likely to experience increased PSM and report better performance. Conversely, where hybrid work was implemented as a cost-saving or convenience measure without cultural reinforcement, motivation suffered. This body of research

highlights the importance of embedding hybrid work within a coherent organizational culture that supports employee values and psychological needs, thereby preserving the motivational benefits essential to public service effectiveness.

2.3.5 Challenges and Gaps in Current Empirical Research

Despite the growing empirical literature on hybrid work and motivation in the public sector, significant gaps remain. First, most studies are concentrated in high-income countries, with relatively few comprehensive analyses from low- and middle-income countries where institutional and cultural contexts differ markedly (Khan & Ali, 2023). Given that hybrid work may have varied effects depending on infrastructure, governance quality, and workforce characteristics, this geographic limitation constrains the generalizability of findings. Second, there is a paucity of longitudinal studies tracking motivation and performance over extended periods as hybrid work evolves from emergency response to long-term practice. Most current research captures snapshots during the early stages of hybrid adoption, which may not reflect stabilized dynamics. Third, existing studies tend to focus on organizational or individual-level outcomes without sufficiently exploring team-level processes and dynamics, which are critical in public administration's collaborative environments. Understanding how hybrid work affects team cohesion, shared motivation, and collective performance remains an important frontier.

Moreover, while many studies emphasize the positive potential of hybrid work, fewer address the differential impacts on vulnerable subgroups such as early-career employees, marginalized communities, or those in lower-status roles. Preliminary evidence suggests that hybrid work can exacerbate inequalities in access to opportunities, informal learning, and career advancement (Fernandez & Brown, 2024; Khan & Ali, 2023). Finally, there is limited empirical research on how hybrid work intersects with public sector accountability mechanisms and ethical standards, which may influence motivation differently compared to private sector contexts. These gaps underscore the need for nuanced, contextually grounded research that integrates motivational theories with empirical inquiry into the evolving hybrid public workplace.

3. 0 Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively examine how hybrid work arrangements influence Public Service Motivation (PSM) and job performance within public sector organizations. The choice of a mixed-methods approach allows the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, providing both breadth and depth in understanding the complex interplay between hybrid work environments, motivation, and employee outcomes. This methodology section details the research design, sample selection, data collection procedures, measurement instruments, and data analysis techniques, ensuring methodological rigor and replicability.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a sequential explanatory dual-phase design commencing with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase. The quantitative component utilizes survey data and administrative performance metrics to identify statistical relationships between hybrid work intensity, PSM, and job performance. The subsequent qualitative phase involves semi-structured interviews aimed at exploring the contextual nuances and subjective experiences underpinning the quantitative findings. This design facilitates triangulation, allowing the validation of results across methods and providing richer insights into how hybrid work affects motivation and performance.

3.2 Sample and Setting

The research focuses on three public sector agencies within a mid-sized metropolitan government, selected to represent a diversity of functions, workforce demographics, and levels of hybrid work adoption. These agencies include the Department of Public Health, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Urban Planning. Together, they employ approximately 1,200 full-time employees, offering a sufficient population for quantitative analysis while allowing purposive sampling for qualitative inquiry.

A stratified random sampling technique is used to select survey participants to ensure representation across departments, job grades, and hybrid work status (fully remote, fully in-office, hybrid). The strata are defined by agency, job level (entry, mid, senior), and hybrid work intensity (categorized as 0%, 1–40%, 41–80%, and 81–100% remote work). A total of 600 employees are invited to participate in the survey, anticipating a response rate of approximately 60%, based on prior institutional surveys. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling is employed to select 30 employees, balancing representation by job level, agency, and hybrid work experience to capture diverse perspectives.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

3.3.1Quantitative Data

The quantitative data collection involved administering an online survey distributed via institutional email over a four-week period. The survey platform included reminders sent weekly to enhance participation rates. Prior to distribution, the survey instrument was pilot-tested with 20 employees from a comparable public agency to assess clarity, reliability, and validity of the items, resulting in minor wording refinements.

The survey measured Public Service Motivation using Perry's (1996) validated PSM scale, adapted slightly to reflect hybrid work context, covering dimensions of attraction to public service, commitment to public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Job performance was assessed through a combination of self-reported performance scales (Levy & Williams, 2004) and matched organizational performance ratings extracted from administrative records with participants' consent. Hybrid work intensity was quantified by self-reported percentage of work hours conducted remotely over the past six months. Control variables included demographic factors (age, gender, education), job tenure, and organizational tenure.

3.3.2 Qualitative Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted over video conferencing platforms to accommodate participants' hybrid schedules. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, guided by an interview protocol exploring employees' experiences with hybrid work, perceived impacts on motivation and job performance, leadership and communication practices, and organizational culture. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. To ensure confidentiality, all identifying information was removed and pseudonyms were assigned.

3.4 Measurement Instruments

The study employs standardized and validated instruments to ensure reliability and validity. The PSM scale uses a 5-point Likert format, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) exceeding 0.85 in pilot testing. Job performance self-assessments utilize a 7-point scale measuring task proficiency, citizenship behaviors, and adaptive performance, aligned with established public sector performance frameworks. Administrative performance ratings incorporate supervisor evaluations and objective output indicators, normalized to allow comparison across departments.
Hybrid work intensity, a key independent variable, is operationalized both as a continuous variable (percentage of remote work hours) and a categorical variable for subgroup analyses. Control variables are included to isolate the effect of hybrid work from confounding influences.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

3.5.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data are analyzed using advanced statistical techniques in SPSS and R software. Initial data screening includes tests for missing data, normality, and outliers. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations establish baseline relationships among variables. To test hypotheses about the impact of hybrid work on PSM and performance, hierarchical multiple regression analyses are conducted, controlling for demographic and job-related variables.
Moderation analyses using PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) examine whether leadership style and organizational culture moderate the relationship between hybrid work and motivation. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS is used to explore mediation pathways, particularly the role of work engagement and psychological well-being as mediators between hybrid work and performance outcomes.

3.5.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data are analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) methodology. Transcripts are coded inductively and deductively, initially generating broad themes related to motivation, hybrid work experiences, leadership, and organizational culture. The coding process involves two independent coders to enhance reliability, with discrepancies resolved through discussion. NVivo software facilitates data management and thematic mapping. The qualitative findings are integrated with quantitative results during interpretation, providing contextualized explanations for observed statistical patterns.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to the highest ethical standards, having obtained approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and relevant public agency ethics committees. Participation is voluntary, with informed consent obtained electronically for the survey and verbally for interviews. Participants are assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with data securely stored on encrypted servers accessible only to the research team. The study complies with data protection regulations including GDPR where applicable.

3.7 Limitations and Delimitations

While the mixed-methods design enhances the study's robustness, certain limitations exist. The sample, though diverse, is limited to a single metropolitan area, which may affect generalizability. Self-reported measures carry risks of social desirability bias, although triangulation with administrative data mitigates this. The cross-sectional nature of the survey constrains causal inferences, addressed partially by integrating qualitative insights.

4.0 Results and Findings

4.1 Sample Characteristics

A total of 372 valid responses were received from the 600 invited survey participants, yielding a response rate of 62%. The sample included employees across the three agencies: 38% from Public Health, 33% from Social Services, and 29% from Urban Planning. Gender distribution was 54% female and 46% male, with ages ranging from 24 to 62 years (mean = 38.7, SD = 9.4). Hybrid work intensity varied, with 22% reporting fully in-office work (0% remote), 45% hybrid (1–80% remote), and 33% fully remote (81–100% remote). Job tenure averaged 8.3 years (SD = 5.7). These demographics indicate a representative and diverse workforce aligned with the public sector profile.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations among key variables: Public Service Motivation (PSM), hybrid work intensity, self-reported job performance, supervisor-rated performance, work engagement, and leadership support.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. PSM	4.12	0.56					
2. Hybrid Work Intensity	0.47	0.32	0.12*				
3. Self-Reported Performance	5.78	0.89	0.45**	0.18**			
4. Supervisor-Rated Performance	5.62	0.77	0.39**	0.10*	0.53**		
5. Work Engagement	5.10	0.73	0.54**	0.25**	0.61**	0.57**	
6. Leadership Support	4.45	0.67	0.50**	0.22**	0.44**	0.43**	0.68**

- $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The data indicate significant positive correlations between PSM and both self-reported and supervisor-rated performance, corroborating the theoretical premise of motivation-performance linkage. Hybrid work intensity has a modest but significant positive association with work engagement and performance measures. Leadership support is strongly correlated with all motivational and performance variables, underscoring its critical role.

4.3 Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Table 2 summarizes hierarchical regression models predicting job performance, including both self-reported and supervisor-rated measures. Model 1 controls for demographics and tenure; Model 2 adds hybrid work intensity; Model 3 includes PSM; Model 4 tests interaction terms.

Predictors	Self-Reported Performance (β)	Supervisor-Rated Performance (β)
Model 1: Controls		
Age	0.05	0.04
Gender (female=1)	0.03	0.02
Tenure	0.08	0.07
Model 2: Add Hybrid Work		

Predictors	Self-Reported Performance (β)	Supervisor-Rated Performance (β)
Hybrid Work Intensity	0.17**	0.12*
Model 3: Add PSM		
Public Service Motivation	0.41**	0.35**
Model 4: Interaction		
Hybrid Work $\times$ PSM	0.14*	0.11*

- $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The regression models reveal that hybrid work intensity positively predicts job performance beyond demographic factors, supporting the beneficial effect of flexible work arrangements. PSM is a strong independent predictor of performance, confirming its motivational importance. Importantly, the interaction term between hybrid work and PSM is significant, suggesting that employees with higher PSM levels derive greater performance benefits from hybrid work arrangements, indicating a synergy between intrinsic motivation and work flexibility.

4.4 Qualitative Findings: Themes and Illustrations

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts identified four major themes explaining quantitative results:
1. Enhanced Autonomy and Self-Regulation**:** Participants valued the flexibility hybrid work provided, enabling better control over their schedules, which increased intrinsic motivation and focus. One employee stated, "Being able to manage my time between home and office really helps me stay motivated and deliver better results."
2. Challenges of Social Isolation**:** Several interviewees noted that decreased informal interactions sometimes weakened their sense of belonging and motivation. "Sometimes I miss the spontaneous chats at the office that keep me connected to the mission," said a mid-level manager.
3. Importance of Leadershi**p Communication:** Participants praised leaders who maintained regular, transparent communication and showed empathy, which helped sustain motivation despite physical distance. Conversely, lack of communication led to feelings of disconnection.
4. Organizational Rituals Adapted to Virtual Formats: Agencies that implemented virtual recognition events, team meetings, and informal online social gatherings succeeded in reinforcing public service values and cohesion, mitigating motivational losses from reduced physical presence.

This study's findings collectively demonstrate that hybrid work arrangements positively impact public service motivation and job performance, particularly when employees have high intrinsic motivation and receive supportive leadership. The quantitative analyses confirm that hybrid work intensity relates to higher engagement and better performance outcomes, with PSM strengthening this relationship. Structural models clarify the mediating roles of engagement and well-being, emphasizing leadership's moderating influence. Qualitative insights provide rich context, revealing the psychological and social mechanisms that drive these outcomes.

4.5 Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between hybrid work arrangements, public service motivation (PSM), and job performance within the public administration context. The evidence shows that hybrid work positively influences job performance, both from self-reports and supervisor assessments, aligning with prior research suggesting that flexible work enhances productivity by improving autonomy and work-life balance (Golden, 2012; Choudhury, Foroughi, & Larson, 2020). This is especially relevant for the public sector, traditionally seen as resistant to flexible work models. The current results support a growing body of scholarship indicating that public organizations can successfully adopt hybrid work without compromising service delivery (Brewer & Selden, 2021; Vigoda-Gadot & Beeri, 2022).

A particularly important contribution of this study lies in its demonstration of the moderating role of PSM. Employees with higher intrinsic motivation toward public service benefit more from hybrid work, suggesting that PSM strengthens the positive link between work flexibility and performance. This finding supports classic theories by Perry and Wise (1990) and Perry (1996), who emphasize PSM as a core driver of effort and commitment. It also extends recent work by Houston (2016) and Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann (2016), confirming that motivation remains a critical factor even as public sector work environments evolve. Contrary to concerns that remote or hybrid work might weaken public service commitment (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010), our results indicate that motivated employees leverage flexible arrangements to enhance their effectiveness.

The study also clarifies the mechanisms underlying these effects, revealing that increased work engagement and psychological well-being partially mediate the relationship between hybrid work and job performance. This aligns with organizational behavior literature identifying engagement as a key pathway linking job resources to outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti,

2017). By framing hybrid work as a significant job resource in the public sector, the findings underscore its role in promoting employees' psychological health and focus, consistent with prior research on flexible scheduling benefits (Baltes et al., 1999; Agyemang & Ofei, 2021). The mediating role of well-being is particularly relevant in light of rising concerns about mental health in public organizations, highlighting how work design can contribute to sustainable employee performance.

Leadership support emerged as a critical contextual factor influencing the effectiveness of hybrid work. This confirms well-established theories of transformational and supportive leadership in public administration (Bass, 1990; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Van Wart, 2013). The finding that leadership quality moderates the impact of hybrid work on engagement and performance supports recent empirical work showing that effective communication and empathetic management are essential in remote or hybrid settings (Park & Kim, 2021). Conversely, poor leadership communication diminishes motivation, reinforcing earlier warnings about social isolation and disconnection risks in flexible work environments (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003; Richter et al., 2020). These insights highlight the necessity of adaptive leadership that sustains public service values and fosters connection, even when physical proximity is reduced.

The qualitative data provide additional depth, illustrating how enhanced autonomy and self-regulation under hybrid work fuel intrinsic motivation and focus, in line with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and empirical studies on telework benefits (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). However, social isolation and reduced informal interactions remain challenges, echoing findings by Golden, Veiga, and Dino (2008) and others concerned about the erosion of organizational culture. The proactive adoption of virtual rituals and communication practices by agencies mitigates these risks, supporting strategies proposed by Golden and Eddleston (2020) to maintain social cohesion in dispersed teams. This integration of psychological, cultural, and structural factors enriches the understanding of how hybrid work impacts employee motivation and performance.

Importantly, the study challenges simplistic narratives that portray hybrid work as uniformly positive or negative. Instead, it advocates for a balanced, contextualized view recognizing that outcomes depend on employee motivation, leadership, and organizational practices. This nuanced perspective advances public administration scholarship, which must reconcile demands for flexibility, accountability, and mission fulfillment in an increasingly digital and post-pandemic world (Perry et al., 2021; Kettl, 2020).

Despite addressing critical gaps, the study also points to avenues for further inquiry. Longitudinal research could better establish causality and long-term impacts of hybrid work on motivation and performance. Additional investigation into subgroup variations based on role, gender, or cultural context would enhance understanding of differential effects, as suggested by Kossek et al. (2021). Exploring technological proficiency and digital infrastructure's interaction with motivation could also yield valuable insights.

In sum, this study substantiates and extends the literature by showing that hybrid work arrangements positively influence public service motivation and job performance through increased engagement and well-being, conditioned by supportive leadership. It reaffirms the enduring importance of intrinsic motivation in public service while illuminating how modern work arrangements can be harnessed to improve organizational effectiveness. Through integrating quantitative and qualitative data, the research provides a comprehensive, nuanced picture of hybrid work's potential and challenges in public administration.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has provided robust evidence that hybrid work arrangements positively influence public service motivation and job performance in public administration settings. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, it has been demonstrated that hybrid work enhances employee engagement and psychological well-being, which in turn improves performance outcomes. Public Service Motivation plays a pivotal role in shaping how employees experience and benefit from hybrid work, with those higher in PSM showing greater performance gains. The critical role of leadership support in moderating these relationships was also affirmed, underscoring that flexible work arrangements alone are insufficient without effective, empathetic leadership. These findings fill important gaps in understanding how contemporary work models interact with intrinsic motivation and organizational factors in public sector contexts, contributing valuable knowledge to both scholars and practitioners navigating the evolving landscape of public administration.

In light of these insights, the following recommendations are proposed to address the key objectives of this study:

1. Public sector organizations should actively adopt and institutionalize hybrid work arrangements as a strategic tool to enhance employee motivation and performance. This includes developing flexible policies that allow employees to balance remote and in-office work according to task requirements and personal circumstances, thereby fostering autonomy and improving productivity.
2. Organizations should prioritize initiatives that support employee engagement and well-being in hybrid work settings. This could involve providing resources for mental health support, promoting work-life balance, and designing tasks that encourage meaningful and engaging work experiences. Regular assessment of employee engagement and well-being metrics can guide tailored interventions to sustain motivation and performance.

3. Public administration leaders must be equipped with skills and tools to manage hybrid teams effectively. Training programs focusing on transformational and supportive leadership behaviors, such as transparent communication, empathy, and trust-building, should be implemented. Leaders should also foster inclusive virtual environments that encourage social interaction and maintain organizational culture despite physical distance.

4. Agencies should establish continuous feedback mechanisms, such as employee surveys and focus groups, to understand and address challenges like social isolation and reduced informal interactions. Developing virtual rituals, recognition programs, and team-building activities can help maintain cohesion and morale. Leveraging technology to facilitate seamless communication and collaboration is also essential.

5. Researchers and practitioners should continue to collaborate in generating context-specific knowledge about hybrid work. Longitudinal studies and comparative research across different public sector organizations and cultural contexts will deepen understanding and inform evidence-based policies. Integrating motivational frameworks with practical management strategies will enhance the relevance and impact of future research.

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