

Impact Of Remote Work on Employee Engagement of Executive Level Employees in IT Companies in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Remote work has become common in the IT industry, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. While it offers flexibility and comfort, it can also cause problems such as poor communication, loneliness, and low engagement. Therefore, supervisor support is important to keep employees motivated when working from home. This study examines the impact of remote work on employee engagement in selected IT companies in Sri Lanka and the moderating role of supervisor support. Data were collected from 134 IT employees of executive level using a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. The results show that remote work positively affects employee engagement. Employees feel more energetic, dedicated, and focused when they have flexible work arrangements. The study also found that strong supervisor support improves engagement. Good communication, feedback, appreciation, and guidance from supervisors help remote employees feel connected and motivated. This study highlights the importance of supervisor support in maintaining employee engagement in remote work settings and provides useful insights for IT companies and HR managers.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Remote Work, Supervisory Support

Introduction

The unprecedented international migration to remote work triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed the nature of employment, especially in the Information Technology (IT) industry. It is here in Sri Lanka that the phenomenon has been most remarkably witnessed, where 81% of IT and BPM firms have introduced some form of remote working strategy to attract and retain good talent (SLASSCOM, n.d.). While remote work is a godsend for liberty and flexibility, there are problems associated with communication, supervision, and maintaining employee motivation. Employee motivation, vigor, dedication, and absorption is essential to organizational performance as well as employee health.

The research literature highlights the importance of supervisor support to achieve motivation in virtual work environments. Supervisors with effective online communication and empathetic leadership can establish a more intense sense of presence and support among workers, hence increasing levels of engagement. In Sri Lankan context, organizations have begun recognizing this connection; for instance, many leading IT firms have introduced flexible working policies and employee well-being initiatives with supportive leadership as a mechanism to sustain engagement. In addition, cross-national studies point to evidence that employees who are highly supported by managers have a much higher level of engagement than unsupported ones (Gallup, Inc., 2021).

For example, studies point to highly supported employees have much higher levels of engagement, often well over 80% while engagement drops to half when they are not highly supported. But even as this topic is a global focus area, sparse research has been done on these dynamics in Sri Lanka's IT industry, where unique cultural and organizational conditions might yield mixed results.

In turn, this study aims at empirically examining the impact of remote work on employee engagement in sample companies in Sri Lanka's information technology sector with consideration of the supervisor support's moderating effect. The results are expected to provide valuable contributions towards insights for organizational managers and HR practitioners who aim to drive stronger engagement and productivity in progressively digital and flexible working environments.

Statement of the Problem

Remote working has been one of the most significant organizational transformations in recent history, particularly in the IT industry, which was among the first industries to adopt remote and hybrid working on a large scale. While remote working has been giving workers flexibility and independence, it has also raised vital concerns about employee engagement, a psychological state represented by energy, dedication, and absorption to work.

Across the world, authors have highlighted that remote working can both increase and decrease commitment based on how it is managed. For example, remote workers tend to record higher job satisfaction but reduced interpersonal intimacy, which ends up negatively impacting their feeling of belonging and motivation. In the context of Sri Lanka, the BPM and IT industry experienced rapid growth and migration to remote paradigms post-pandemic and during the pandemic. SLASSCOM (2022) estimates that over 80% of the IT firms implemented flexible work culture, yet many face difficulties in sustaining team cohesiveness and employee engagement in the long term. (SLASSCOM, n.d.)

Growing literature recognizes the supervisor support role in maintaining engagement in distance settings. Supervisor support that includes emotional support, communication, and performance feedback serves as a buffer against loneliness and disengagement. It has been found that employees with supportive supervisor's self-report their engagement much higher even from home. However, it is rare for Sri Lankan IT companies to have systematic remote supervisory training, limiting their ability to effectively assist remote employees.

Despite worldwide evidence for the relationship between supervisory support and motivation, there is a clear research gap in the region particularly in Sri Lanka's rapidly expanding IT industry. Most of the existing studies have been conducted in Western economies with clear-cut organizational cultures, so they are not directly applicable to South Asian settings. Moreover, empirical studies that examine the moderating role of supervisor support in linking remote work and employee commitment in this specific industry are scarce.

Research Objectives

- To assess the impact of remote work on employee engagement of executive level employees in IT companies in Sri Lanka.
- To examine the moderating role of supervisor support in the relationship between remote work and employee engagement.

Research Questions

- What is the impact of remote work on employee engagement of executive level employees in IT companies in Sri Lanka?
- What is the role of supervisor support in moderating the relationship between remote work and employee engagement?

Literature Review

Remote Work

Remote work is defined as "performing work activities outside the traditional office while staying connected through technology" (Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2015). The definition of remote work has changed over the years. Earlier, it referred to home-based work supported by simple means of communication (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016). Later, it was termed as a flexible work arrangement that affects work-life balance, autonomy, and organizational culture (Hill, Hawk, & Miller, 1996). In modern times, remote work can be informal or formal, part-time or full-time, and voluntary or compulsory—as in the case of working from home during COVID-19 (Kniffin et al., 2021). It may happen in locations such as homes, co-working spaces, cafes, and clients' sites among others (Wang et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a sudden shift to remote working, for which employees were not prepared and did not have the required resources. Because of this, researchers have recently distinguished between planned, voluntary remote work and sudden, emergent remote work (Carillo, Cachat-Rosset, Marsan, & Saba, 2021). Research on remote work has been growing fast since the pandemic. Initial findings included positive outcomes such as increased autonomy, job satisfaction, and performance, and negative ones such as weaker relationships with coworkers (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Later evidence has emerged as mixed, where, on one hand, remote work allows for greater flexibility and less commuting stress, while on the other, it carries risks of social isolation, problems that stem from blurring work and life boundaries, and fewer learning and innovation opportunities (Wang et al., 2021; Bloom et al., 2015).

Other studies also suggest that the outcomes of working from home depend on national culture, job type, family conditions, and individual preferences. In cultures where high interaction is emphasized, working from home may be somewhat challenging since face-to-face interaction is more valued. Work-from-home arrangements have been increasing within the IT sector in Sri Lanka, but it is still an under-researched area. Existing literature also depicts contradictory findings; while some report higher productivity, others report no enhancement or even reduced performance. One of the major pitfalls widely identified in work-from-home studies is selection bias, which refers

to the fact that employees choosing to work from home differ from those who prefer working at an office. Most of these studies are cross-sectional in nature, and therefore the full understanding of the long-term effects may not be captured. Very little evidence exists about remote work within IT companies in Sri Lanka, the role of the moderator of supervisor support, long-term outcomes, team-related effects, and negative impacts that include career stagnation or reduced innovation. Wang et al. (2021) and Contreras et al. (2020), therefore, propose that more studies are called for in developing economies such as Sri Lanka.

Remote working skills

A skill is a combination of knowledge, experience, and abilities that allows individuals to perform better or successfully complete a job or process based on their abilities and education. Along with their technical skills, remote employees should be able to use computers and related equipment and software to perform their tasks effectively. However, these skills are essential for all employees, whether they work in an office or remotely.

The focus of this study is on the essential skills required for remote work. In this context, remote working skills can be defined as the combination of knowledge, experience, and abilities needed to successfully perform job duties from any location outside the workplace using information and communication technologies. The literature identifies five main dimensions of remote working skills: cybersecurity, problem-solving, time management, verbal communication, and written communication.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity refers to measures taken to protect computers and systems from unauthorized access or attacks. It includes tools, policies, guidelines, training, and technologies designed to safeguard digital environments and user information. Security systems should be built into devices to prevent violations of confidentiality, integrity, and information availability. Studies show that many cybersecurity threats are caused by users' intentional or unintentional misuse of information systems. Therefore, individuals' cybersecurity awareness and skills are crucial, as human error remains one of the weakest links in the security chain.

For remote workers, cybersecurity skills are essential because most tasks are performed online. These skills include knowledge and experience related to hardware and software for preventing malware, identity theft, and data breaches, as well as ensuring information system security. Employees should be able to recognize phishing attempts, protect personal and company information, and use secure devices and networks responsibly.

Problem-Solving

A problem is a difficult or complex situation that prevents individuals from reaching a goal. Problem-solving involves analyzing an issue and finding the best possible solution. It is an important skill for both office and remote workers. However, remote workers often need to solve problems independently because they have fewer opportunities for face-to-face discussions with colleagues or supervisors.

Critical thinking skills are linked to higher job satisfaction, creativity, innovation, and performance. They help employees manage complex or uncertain situations effectively. For remote workers, problem-solving includes identifying digital needs, selecting appropriate tools, solving technical or conceptual issues using technology, and improving digital competencies.

Time management

Time management involves planning and organizing tasks to use time efficiently and achieve goals. Employees with strong time management skills tend to perform better, experience less stress, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Poor time management, on the other hand, can lead to stress, anxiety, and work-family conflict.

Time management is especially important in remote work because employees often work across different time zones and must manage their own schedules. Remote workers should clearly understand their job responsibilities, estimate the time needed for each task, set priorities, and avoid distractions at home.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication occurs through face-to-face conversations, phone calls, or online meetings. In remote work, it usually takes place in virtual environments and is essential for teamwork and collaboration. Effective verbal communication improves performance, builds trust, encourages participation, and strengthens relationships among employees.

Remote workers may need to adapt their speaking styles by using simpler language, speaking clearly, and minimizing accents to improve understanding. Key verbal communication skills include active listening, clear expression, giving and receiving feedback, participating in meetings, resolving conflicts, and being persuasive when needed.

Written communication

Written communication involves expressing thoughts, ideas, and opinions clearly and correctly in writing. It is one of the most important skills for all employees, especially remote workers, because most remote communication takes place through text-based channels like email, chat, and online platforms. Effective written communication helps avoid misunderstandings and conflicts that can harm teamwork and performance. To communicate effectively in writing, remote employees should use simple and plain language, follow grammar and punctuation rules, and maintain a polite and professional tone. They should also use the right tools and formats for different audiences, including visuals or data when necessary, and ensure their messages are clear, accurate, and persuasive.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is one of the key organizational behaviors and HRM constructs nowadays. It was first defined by Kahn (1990) as the physical, cognitive and emotional investment that employees make towards their work roles. It was determined by Schaufeli and colleagues (2002) as a desirable condition of energy, commitment, and engagement which resulted in the popular UWES scale. Saks (2006) differentiated between job and organizational engagement, which is later reaffirmed by further studies that engagement is dynamic and varies with time. Macey and Schneider (2008) suggested traits, state, and behavioral levels of engagement. It has been criticized that engagement can be a manifestation of managerial control, or duplicate such constructs as job satisfaction and commitment, but meta-analytic studies indicate that engagement is both unique and highly influential on performance, well-being, turnover, and citizenship behavior. Engagement in IT environments is associated with innovation, sharing knowledge and decreased burnout. Research indicates that there are considerable business implications of an increase in the level of engagement (Harter et al., 2002) and certain factors like developing skills and working on difficult tasks have a strong influence on the engagement of IT professionals. Engagement is culturally determined, as collectivist cultures propose more focus to the team relationship and support (Shimazu et al., 2010). Engagement is also daily and can be harmful when it is very high, e.g. workaholism and burnout (Bakker et al., 2011). The history of measurement arguments persists, with various measurement tools putting emphasis on various aspects of measurement, and the cause-effect relationship can be bi-directional through job craft. Significant gaps still exist: few studies have been made on remote work, few studies have been made in South Asian and Sri Lankan IT settings, cross-sectional designs are used, there is little knowledge on risks of over-engagement in remote IT work, and little knowledge on the phenomenon of support systems working in virtual environment.

Supervisor Support

Supervisor support can be described as the belief of employees in the fact that supervisors want to see their contribution, they are interested in their welfare and able to assist in the moments of need (Eisenberger et al., 2002). It is based on the organizational support theory (social exchange theory, Blau, 1964), and LMX theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) and is grounded in the assumption that supportive supervisors establish trust, obligation, and positive working results. Supervisor support is not like organizational support since it is more immediate in everyday working. The arguments in research are whether it is a construct or comprises of instrumental, emotional, informational, and appraisal support (House, 1981). In working remotely, supervisor support is more significant as the physical distance restricts impromptu feedback and requires deliberate communication. Research indicates that it is a good predictor of job satisfaction, commitment, performance, and low turnover rates (Ng and Sorensen, 2008). Workers who have supervisors who are supportive feel less isolated and enjoy work-life balance (Golden, 2006). Good behaviors of remote supervisors involve frequent contacts, specific objectives, availability, rewarding, trustful administration and fostering group cohesiveness (Neufeld et al., 2007). Technically skilled supervisors in IT settings, who eliminate barriers, offer direction, and embrace independence, are appreciated by workers (Thatcher et al., 2002; Moe et al., 2010). The difference in culture will impact the perception of support; high power distance and collectivistic cultures will appreciate the attention of the supervisor and paternalistic direction (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). The perception of support varies with time and depends on the regular supervisor's behaviors. Among the important controversies are the underlying support being on behavioral or perceptions basis, the possibility of high support leading to dependency, measurement issues, differences in culture, and duplication with other leadership constructs. Remote work has the disadvantages of diminished communication richness, lack of informal communication, and trust problems. An appropriate communication channel must be planned, rich, and effective to support (Avolio et al., 2000).

Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey of 134 IT employees selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation, and multiple regression, with moderation tested using an interaction term.

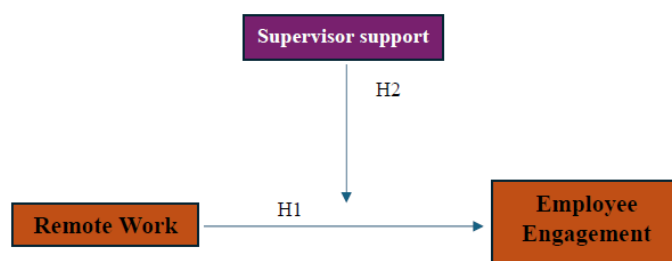


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2025)

Hypotheses

H1: There is an impact of remote work on employee engagement of executive level employees in IT companies in Sri Lanka.

H2: Supervisory support moderates the relationship between remote work and employee engagement.

Research Philosophy

In the case of this study, the adopted research philosophy is a positivist. Positivism assumes that reality is stable and could be described from an objective standpoint (Levin, 1988). As it is intended that this research will measure, through quantifiable metrics, the effect of remote work on employee engagement and the moderating role of supervisor support, the approach of positivism would be applicable. From this philosophy, the empirical data could be gathered and analyzed to determine the relationships among the variables in a systematic and objective way.

Research Approach

This study adopts quantitative research design. Quantitative research is about the collection and analysis of numerical data, with the purpose of describing, explaining, predicting, or controlling phenomena through deductive reasoning. This research design will be appropriate for evaluating these hypothesized associations between remote work practices, supervisor support, and employee engagement within the IT industry. Using statistical methods allows this research to establish the level of these relationships, with generalizations from the sample to the population.

Research Strategy

The research strategy to be adopted in this study is a survey. Surveys are an effective approach to collecting standardized data from a relatively substantial number of respondents within a specific time frame. This strategy enables the orderly collection of information about employees' experiences with remote work, engagement levels, and perceptions of supervisor support across selected IT companies in Sri Lanka.

Time Horizon

The study assumes a cross-sectional time horizon. Information is collected at one point in time, hence giving the current state of employee engagement regarding remote work practices and supervisor support. This approach is very practical since time and resources are limited, and it also considers the relationships between the studied variables at a specific moment.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the individual employee at the executive level. In particular, the study focuses on executive-level employees in selected IT companies in Sri Lanka who engage in remote work arrangements. This level was selected because remote work practices are mostly implemented at the executive level in these organizations, making them the most relevant population to investigate the research questions.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study is executive-level employees in two chosen IT companies in Sri Lanka who engage in remote work. In these organizations, not every employee has the possibility to work from home; therefore, the researcher will focus on the level of executives where remote work arrangements are practiced. The size of the total population in this study will be the 200 executive-level employees from both participating firms ($N = 200$).

Sample Size

Given this increase in the estimated population size, a systematic sampling methodology was used to ensure the sample size adequately represented the population with research feasibility. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table for a population of 200 with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, the recommended sample size is 134 respondents. The sample size in this study consisted of 134 executive-level employees participating in this study ($n = 134$). This is a 66% response rate, which compares favorably to empirical survey research and is large enough to provide sufficient statistical power for the proposed analyses.

Sampling Method

The study used probability sampling using a systematic random sampling technique. This method was adopted for the following reasons:

Adequate Population Size: With a population of 200 employees, systematic sampling allows for a representative sample while remaining resource-efficient compared to a full census approach.

Measurement Scales

Employee Engagement

The level of employee engagement was measured using the UWES-9 developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). Work engagement is conceptualized as a state characterized by three interrelated dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The questionnaire consisted of 9 items. The original study indicated that the scale was highly dependable with Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.92$. Sample items include: "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" for vigor; "I am enthusiastic about my job" for dedication; "I feel happy when I am working intensely" for absorption.

Remote Work Practices

The adapted scale from Golden and Veiga (2005) and Gajendran and Harrison (2007) measures the level and nature of remote work arrangements. The scale consists of 8 items with a reported Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.88$. Sample items include: "I have flexibility in determining when I work"; "I have control over how I complete my work tasks remotely"; "Remote work allows me to balance my work and personal responsibilities effectively".

Supervisor Support

The perceived supervisor support was assessed with the Perceived Supervisor Support scale by Eisenberger et al. (2002), adapted and modified for the context of remote work. This scale comprises 7 items. The scale has shown strong reliability in past research, demonstrating a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.91$. Sample items include: "My supervisor shows concern for my well-being while working remotely"; "My supervisor provides helpful feedback on my remote work performance"; "My supervisor is available when I need help with work-related issues."

Data Analysis

Reliability Statistics

Dimension reliability and composite reliability were assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency. Reliability statistics are given in Table 01.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Variable	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Remote work	35	0.975
Employee Engagement	7	0.884

Supervisor Support	10	0.928
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Source: Author (2025)

As depicted in Table 1, Cronbach alpha of internal consistency coefficients of dimensions of independent variable and both composite variables are greater than 0.7 indicating that multi-item measurement scales are reliable enough and no bias.

Validity Statistics

Sampling adequacy was ensured using the KMO measure and the significance value of the KMO coefficient. Further, the construct validity was assessed by performing an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with SPSS. Factor Loadings (FL) and the cumulative percentage of Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (ESSL) were used to draw conclusions. Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate the statistics related to sampling adequacy and construct validity.

Table 2: Sampling Adequacy

Variable	KMO Coefficient	Bartlett's Test(chi-square)	Sig.
Remote work	0.954	3665.500	0.000
Employee Engagement	0.906	448.010	0.000
Supervisor Support	0.951	783.532	0.000

Source: Author (2025)

Table 3: Validity Statistics

Variable	No. of Items	Highest FL	Lowest FL	ESSL Cumulative %
Remote work	35	0.875	0.569	58.299
Employee Engagement	7	0.868	0.604	59.596
Supervisor Support	10	0.835	0.700	60.835

Source: Author (2025)

According to the KMO coefficients and the respective sig. value for both composite variables given in table 5, the study sample seems statistically adequate to perform an EFA to assess the construct validity.

Moreover, as table 6, depicts, ESSL Cum% for both composite variables and the dimensions of independent variables are greater than 50% and the FL values of individual items in the scales used were adequate. Hence, it could be concluded that multi-item scales are valid, and the data set seems statistically free from bias. According to reliability and validity analysis no items were deleted, thus all the items included in the standard scales were retained.

Descriptive Statistics

Major central tendency measures and the descriptive statistics required explaining the individual behavior of variables [univariate analysis], descriptive analysis was performed. Results of the analysis were given in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistic

Descriptive Statistics	Remote work	Employee Engagement	Supervisor Support
Mean	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000

Standard Deviation [SD]	1.0487	1.09444	1.109359
Max	5	5	5
Min	1.06	1	1
Range	3.94	4	4
Variance	1.100	1.198	1.231
Skewness	-0.007	0.020	-0.003
Kurtosis	-0.959	-0.889	-1.093

Source: Author, 2025

Mean values for Remote Work, Employee Engagement, and Supervisor Support are 3.00, each as given in Table 7, indicating that these were reported by the respondent for a moderate level on the construct measured using the 5-point Likert scale. Standard deviation values, ranging from 1.04 to 1.10, indicate reasonable dispersion of the response from the mean value, reflecting that though participants gave varied answers, they remained within an acceptable range.

The values of all three variables of skewness and kurtosis are within the acceptable range of ± 2 , indicating that the data is approximately normally distributed. Hence, the distribution of responses would be appropriate for the use of parametric statistical techniques, which mainly include correlation and regression analysis.

Hypotheses Testing

To test the advanced hypotheses correlation and multiple linear regression were used.

Correlation Analysis

Having established that there is a linear relationship between **Remote Work** and **Employee Engagement**, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the strength and direction of the association between these two constructs. Since the hypotheses were non-directional, the Sig. (2-tailed) value was used to determine the statistical significance of the correlation. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

		Independent variable	Dependent variable
Independent variable	Pearson Correlation	1	.537**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	134	134

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

Source: Analyzed data, 2025

As illustrated in Table 5, the results demonstrate a moderate positive correlation between remote working and employee engagement ($r = 0.537$), which is statistically significant as the Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 is less than the 0.01 significance level. This result suggests that more remote working practices are linked to greater employee engagement. Thus, H1 gets acceptance, verifying that remote working alters employee engagement in a significant way.

Regression Analysis

Simple Linear regression analysis was done to the hypotheses and the results of the test are presented in Table 6.

Regression Analysis Between Remote Work and Employee Engagement Simple

Table 6: Regression Analysis Between Remote Work and Employee Engagement Simple

Statistic / Coefficient	Value
R	0.537
R Square	0.288
Adjusted R Square	0.283
Standard Error of Estimate	0.847
F Value	53.427
Significance (p-value)	0.000
Unstandardized B (RW → EE)	0.537
Standardized Beta	0.537
t-value	7.309
p-value	0.000

Source: Author 2025

The regression analysis indicates that remote working has an impact on employee engagement. The model shows a moderate relationship between the variables, as reflected by the R value of 0.537, while the R Square value of 0.288 suggests that 28.8% of the variance in employee engagement is explained by remote working. The model is statistically significant, evidenced by the F statistic of 53.427 and a p-value less than 0.001, confirming that the regression model reliably predicts employee engagement. Therefore, based on these results, **H1 is supported**, indicating that higher levels of remote working practices enhance employee engagement within the selected IT companies.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of Remote Work on Employee Engagement. From the results of the Model Summary, it can be said that the model has an explanatory power rated as moderate. The R value, 0.537, shows that Remote Work and Employee Engagement are moderately and positively related. The R Square value, 0.288, implies that 28.8% of the total variance in Employee Engagement is explained by Remote Work. The Adjusted R Square, 0.283, confirmed the stability of the model.

From the ANOVA table, the overall regression model is statistically significant, with $F = 53.427$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. That means Remote Work significantly predicts Employee Engagement, and the model is suitable for further interpretation.

From the Coefficients table, it can be observed that Remote Work has a positive and statistically significant effect on Employee Engagement, with $\beta = 0.537$, $t = 7.309$, and $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$. That is, with one unit increase in Remote Work, Employee Engagement increases by 0.537 units.

These findings suggest that increases in Remote Work are associated with higher levels of Employee Engagement. Therefore, the hypothesis that “Remote Work has a positive relationship with Employee Engagement” is supported.

Moderation Analysis

Table 7: Moderation Analysis

Model / Statistic	Model 1	Model 2
R	0.620	0.654
R Square	0.385	0.428
Adjusted R Square	0.375	0.415
R Square Change	–	0.043
F Change	–	9.782
Sig. F Change	–	0.002
Std. Error of Estimate	0.790	0.765
RW → EE (Beta)	0.535***	0.544***
SS → EE (Beta)	0.311***	0.296***
Interaction → EE (Beta)	–	0.208**
Interaction (p-value)	–	0.002

Source: Author 2025

The hierarchical multiple regression analysis was carried out to ascertain if Supervisor Support acted as a moderator for the relationship between Remote Work and Employee Engagement. Model 1: Only Main Effects (RW and SS) The outcome of Model 1 indicates that Remote Work and Supervisor Support combined account for 38.5% of the variance in Employee Engagement ($R = 0.620$, $R^2 = 0.385$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.375$). The model is significant at the 0.001 level ($F = 40.961$, $p = 0.000$). The two variables have the following independent significant positive effects: Remote Work → EE ($\beta = 0.535$, $t = 7.812$, $p = 0.000$) Supervisor Support → EE ($\beta = 0.311$, $t = 4.536$, $p = 0.000$) This suggests that the factors of RW and SS were increases in Employee Engagement independently. Model 2: Interaction Term Introduced ($RW \times SS$) Model 2 involved including the interaction term “Remote Work $\times$ Supervisor Support” in order to measure the impact of moderation. The model has been greatly improved: $R = 0.654$ $R^2 = 0.428$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.415$ This indicates that the total variance explained has increased from 38.5% to 42.8%, which means that the interaction contributed an extra 4.3% to the explanatory power. The R^2 change is 0.043, and this has been statistically confirmed ($F_{change} = 9.782$, $p = 0.002$). This indicates that there is a moderation effect that is not only present but also significant. Interaction Coefficient Interaction ($RW \times SS$) → EE $B = 0.211$ Beta = 0.208 $t = 3.128$ $p = 0.002$ Because the interaction term is significant ($p < 0.05$), the conclusion can be drawn that: Supervisor Support acts as a significant moderator in the relationship between Remote Work and Employee Engagement. This indicates that Remote Work's influence on Employee Engagement is strengthened when

Discussion and Finding

In this study, the findings indicated that remote work has a fundamental impact on employee engagement, implying that working out of the office could either increase or decrease engagement depending on specific conditions. The findings indicated that supervisor support played an important moderate role. Employees experiencing strong guidance, feedback, and communication from supervisors had higher engagement even when working remotely. Such findings are consistent with several prior studies showing that flexibility tends to enhance motivation, but that isolation tends to reduce it unless supervisor support is strong. The discussion, therefore, explains why the findings

happened, connects them with past research, and indicates that supervisor support is one of the most important elements when trying to work with a dispersed workforce.

Conclusion

The study established that remote work does have a significant influence on employee engagement. While it can enhance engagement through flexibility and autonomy, it can also decrease engagement if an employee feels isolated or unsupported. The study further established that supervisor support is the significant factor that strengthens engagement in virtual work conditions. When supervisors communicate effectively, guide, and show they care, remote employees are motivated and connected to their job. Therefore, the conclusion emphasizes that both remote work and supervisor support together determine the level of employee engagement.

Implications

The findings imply that supervisors should be trained to acquire necessary virtual leadership skills to support remote working employees effectively. Companies should establish proper communication channels, provide regular feedback, and offer resources to alleviate remote work-related stress. In terms of theoretical implications, this study contributes to new knowledge in the Sri Lankan IT industry, which is a less researched area. It also justifies certain theoretical models, such as the Job Demands-Resources Model and Social Exchange Theory, by proving that resources like supervisor support increase engagement.

Limitations

First, the research has been carried out in only two IT companies, which makes generalizing findings to the whole industry impossible. Second, the study was restricted to Sri Lanka, and therefore, the results might be different in other countries. Thirdly, data were collected through self-report questionnaires, which can include bias as employees may not always answer honestly. Fourthly, this study utilized a cross-sectional design; data were collected at one point in time, and long-term changes could therefore not be observed. Finally, the study focused on only three variables and did not consider other factors such as work-life balance or personality traits.

Directions For Future Research

It suggests that further studies should involve more IT companies or involve other industries to gain wider and more accurate results. Longitudinal designs could also be used by researchers to show long-term influences of working remotely. Future studies may also focus on other variables such as job characteristics, work-life balance, technology support, or employee personality. It would also be helpful to compare the levels of engagement in fully remote, hybrid, and office-based work arrangements. These suggestions help guide future research to expand knowledge in this area.

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