



The hybrid workplace: Contribution of autonomy in subjective well-being among employees in the banking, financial services and insurance sector

Pallavi DATTA

(corresponding author)

ORCID: 0000-0003-3524-039X

Christ University, Bengaluru, India

Sathiyaseelan BALASUNDARAM

ORCID: 0000-0001-9593-871X

Christ University, Bengaluru, India

Rekha HITHA ARANHA

ORCID: 0000-0002-5853-6698

Christ University, Bengaluru, India

Sridevi NAIR

ORCID: 0000-0002-1529-4297

Christ University, Bengaluru, India

Abstract. *Purpose.* Amid the increasing importance of subjective well-being in shaping employees' work outcomes, especially amidst growing health concerns and the adoption of hybrid work models, HR practitioners are actively seeking effective strategies to enhance employee well-being. The aim of this study is to develop and validate a scale for assessing autonomy in hybrid work, and subsequently, investigate the potential impact of autonomy on the subjective well-being of employees. *Methodology.* Data were gathered from employees working in the Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) sector in Bengaluru, India in the form of a survey from a sample size of 440 employees. Devellis methodology was followed for the scale development and multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. *Findings.* Autonomy in hybrid work positively related with employee well-being, with location autonomy (31.4%) being a significant contributor to this positive association followed by scheduling autonomy (17.4%) and time autonomy (7%). However, the dimension of decision-making autonomy did not show a significant relationship with subjective well-being. *Research implications for practice.* This research assists decision-makers in understanding the ramifications of different forms of work autonomy on workforce well-being and grasping the evolving landscape of organizational psychology. Researchers can utilize the developed scale to scrutinize autonomy's effects on diverse employee outcomes, such as productivity and job satisfaction across various industries and countries, thereby augmenting the scale's generalizability. *Originality.* The literature review indicates that there is no prior study conducted in India or any other country within the evolving context of hybrid work similar to the present study.

Keywords: work autonomy, subjective wellbeing; hybrid workplace; scale development; scale validation; BFSI sector.

Introduction

The exploration of work autonomy has been a focal point in management studies, social sciences, and a significant component in organizational psychology for numerous decades, drawing attention from scholars (Campion, 1988; Hackman, Oldham, 1975; Korunka, Kubicek, 2018). In addition, the operational landscape of work has undergone a transformative shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid technological evolution, necessitating a comprehensive re-evaluation of the definition and measurement of work autonomy in the contemporary setting (Miller, 2022). The advent of the hybrid workplace, where employees engage in remote and office work, has introduced a new dimension to work autonomy. This paradigm requires employees to be more self-directed and proactive in managing their tasks to meet the challenges posed by the virtual environment (Yang et al., 2021).

A recent study featured in the Harvard Business Review delved into the prospective trends in work arrangements. The examination, which encompassed 5000 knowledge workers globally, yielded noteworthy findings. A significant 77% expressed a preference for working in an environment that allows remote functioning, as opposed to being tied to a luxurious corporate headquarters. Interestingly, 61% of knowledge workers indicated a preference for occasional office attendance if management permits, underscoring that their desire for flexibility hinges on the ability to tailor it to their individual needs. In essence, the study emphasized that the inclination towards flexibility is intricately linked to the concept of 'autonomy' (Reisinger, Fetterer, 2021). Flexibility, in practice, is dominantly predetermined by management or employers (Bloom, 2021). For instance, employees having to work from home on two specific days a week or having to work remotely only a designated number of days. In the current context, when employees allude to «flexibility,» they are essentially conveying the idea of 'autonomy.' Work autonomy refers to the decision-making power of an individual in how he conducts and completes his day-to-day tasks (Korunka, Kubicek, 2018). Consequently, the data paints a picture of a future work landscape built around autonomy-driven flexibility. It suggests that hybrid work strategies concentrating solely on flexibility, devoid of autonomy, are likely to fall short or face rejection from a majority of employees (Reisinger, Fetterer, 2021; Reporting, 2022).

It is also significant to note that estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that approximately 15% of working-age adults in India have experienced a mental disorder. And, workplace-related stress has emerged as the primary factor influencing the mental health of employees (Lockett, 2023). Further, a survey conducted by Deloitte found that a significant 47% of professionals report experiencing stress directly attributable to their workplace (Fisher et al., 2023). Next, a Gallup workplace report states that employee stress is at an all-time high (Beheshti, 2022). With the high job demands leading to stress in various organizations, it is an immense challenge for the management to retain and furnish wellbeing to its employees.

Consequently, it becomes imperative to ascertain whether a specific degree of autonomy significantly contributes to subjective wellbeing and whether modifying workplace policies is a worthwhile endeavour for management (Datta et al., 2023). Understanding the implications on employees' subjective wellbeing allows organizations to craft a suitable hybrid work model that cultivates a healthy equilibrium between autonomy and control, fostering positive outcomes for both employees and management (Allvin et al., 2011; Flecker et al., 2017).

Research objective

Despite the growing trend of incorporating hybrid work setups, a noticeable gap persists in the absence of a universally accepted tool for quantifying the extent and varieties of autonomy granted to

employees. Current measurement scales either lack accuracy or concentrate on diverse facets (Prem et al., 2020). For example, the assessment of interdependence in the Work Design Questionnaire overlooks autonomy when coordinating with others (Morgeson, Humphrey, 2006). Similarly, scales related to flexible work mainly consider temporal and spatial flexibility, disregarding autonomy in scheduling work-time and selecting the workplace (Allvin et al., 2011; Prem et al., 2020; Shockley, Allen, 2007). Although some existing scales touch upon flexible or deregulated work, their varied focal points often encompass different elements of evolving work conditions, such as self-directed career progression, learning, and effort management (Prem et al., 2020). The absence of a measurement tool for assessing autonomy in hybrid workplaces may lead to inconclusive and conflicting outcomes in future studies. Therefore, the development of a precise scale is imperative to eliminate disparities in results, allowing researchers and practitioners to reliably examine autonomy in hybrid work (Datta et al., 2023). Considering this discussion, the current study aims to:

- develop and validate the “autonomy in hybrid work scale.”
- find the effect of autonomy in hybrid work on the subjective wellbeing of employees.

Review of literature

The concept of autonomy in work

Work autonomy, often referred to as ‘job autonomy’ or ‘job control,’ plays a significant role in influencing employee outcomes. Autonomy is defined as “the extent to which a job allows freedom, independence, and discretion to schedule work, make decisions, and choose the methods used to perform tasks” (Morgeson, Humphrey, 2006). Many conceptualizations of work or job autonomy were crafted in the 1980s or 1990s, potentially falling short in capturing the contemporary shifts in work dynamics (Spiegelaere et al., 2016). Although the established dimensions of job autonomy encompass work method, work scheduling, and decision-making autonomy at the task level (Breugh, 1985), recent developments, notably the rise of flexible work arrangements, have ushered in autonomy at the job level (Korunka, Kubicek, 2018). In today’s landscape, employees now possess autonomy not only in how they perform their job tasks but also in deciding where and when to carry out their job duties (Gerdenitsch, 2017). Prominent international corporations such as Intel, JP Morgan, Cisco Systems, Oracle, American Express, Accenture, and Adobe Systems have embraced the hybrid work model in many countries (Gupta, 2023). This trend emphasizes the necessity of creating a customized autonomy scale that aligns with distinct workplace characteristics and analyses its impact on the wellbeing of employees.

Table 1. Evolution of definitions and dimensions of autonomy in work

Source	Definition	Dimension
Hackman and Oldham, 1975	“The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out.”	1. Work procedure 2. Work schedule
Breugh, 1985	“Work autonomy may be defined as the degree to which an individual is given freedom and discretion in carrying out a task.”	1. Work method autonomy 2. Work schedule autonomy 3. Work criteria autonomy
Morgeson and Humphrey, 2006	“Autonomy reflects the extent to which a job allows freedom, independence, and discretion to schedule work, make decisions, and choose the methods used to perform tasks.”	1. Work scheduling autonomy 2. Decision making autonomy 3. Work method autonomy
Spiegelaere et al., 2016	“Job autonomy refers to the discretion of employees to complete tasks when, where, in what order and in what way.”	1. Work method 2. Work scheduling 3. Work time 4. Place of work

Many of the conceptualizations of work or job autonomy (refer Table 1) were formulated in the 1980s or 1990s, and as a result, they may not adequately address the contemporary shifts in the way of working. While the dimensions of job autonomy mentioned earlier, primarily pertain to the job's task level, latest developments, such as the proliferation of flexible work arrangements, have introduced autonomy at the job level (Korunka, Kubicek, 2018). Nowadays, employees also have the autonomy to decide where and when they carry out their job duties (Gerdenitsch, 2017).

Existing scales of autonomy in work

Measurement is critical across various social research contexts (DeVellis, 2016). They are essential for assessing various phenomena in research and real-world settings (Linden, Hambleton, 1996). Besides, it is significant to note that specific measurement scales suit specific contexts (Stevens, 1946). Therefore, it is essential to utilize a dedicated measurement tool for assessing distinct workplaces, as the unique characteristics of each workplace demand tailored evaluation methods (Fried, Ferris, 1987; Shoss et al., 2013). Multiple scholars have introduced diverse scales for assessing autonomy in the traditional workplaces. The notable measurement instruments utilized to measure autonomy in work have been traced from the existing literature and are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Existing Scales to measure work autonomy in a traditional workplace

Source	Scale name	No. of items	Country
Breaugh, 1985	Work autonomy scale	9 items	United States
Jackson et al., 1993	New measures of job control	10 items	United Kingdom
de Jonge, 1995	Maastricht autonomy questionnaire (MAQ)	10 items	Netherlands
Spector and Fox, 2003	Factual autonomy scale (FAS)	110 items	United States
Morgeson and Humphrey, 2006	Work design questionnaire (WDQ)	9 items	United States

Table 2 demonstrates the consistent emphasis on autonomy in work methods and scheduling by researchers over the years (Hackman, Oldham, 1974; Breaugh, 1985). Notably, the most widely cited autonomy scale, with over 3640 citations on Google Scholar, was established in 2006 (Morgeson, Humphrey, 2006), marking eighteen years since its inception. None of the autonomy measurement scales mentioned in Table 2 addresses the hybrid work context and neither been designed for the Indian population.

A McKinsey report from August 2023 predicted India's growing working-age population by 2030 (Kandasi, 2023). Furthermore, most Indian employees see hybrid working as a sustainable option, and 73% of companies in India are considering its adoption (Gautam, 2022; Sarkar, 2023). Leading global organizations like Intel, JP Morgan, Cisco Systems, Oracle, American Express, Accenture, and Adobe Systems have already adopted the hybrid work model in India (Gupta, 2023). This trend underscores the importance of developing a tailored autonomy scale for India's unique workplace characteristics and practices.

Excessive working hours can crowd out personal time and cause work-family imbalance, affecting workers' subjective well-being. Meanwhile, self-determination theory suggests that higher job autonomy may improve the subjective well-being of employees (Yang et al., 2021). Furthermore, the current scales lack items related to work location and work timing; aspects underlined as significant by notable authors (Prem et al., 2020; Spiegelaere et al., 2016). Considering the evolving nature of workplaces and working styles, the robust need for an updated and validated scale to address these changes effectively is apparent.

Defining hybrid work

The term 'hybrid work' came into prominence in India during the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by factors like lengthy commutes, cost pressures on office spaces, hotdesking, and evolving architectural

trends (Halford, 2005). This term has evolved into a comprehensive label encompassing various work-related concepts such as hybrid workplaces, work, and teams (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2022; Fayard et al., 2021; Hatfield, Pearce, 2022; Keane, Heiser, 2021; Knight, 2020; Smet et al., 2021). Authors define hybrid work in diverse ways, with some emphasizing location flexibility and others incorporating time flexibility (Gratton, 2021; Halford, 2005; Moglia et al., 2021; Smite et al., 2023). While a universal definition is absent, the common thread underscores employee flexibility (King's College London, 2021). For the purposes of this study, the definition proposed by J. Hopkins and A. Bardoel is adopted: "a work arrangement where employees divide their time between a traditional workplace and remote locations, such as their homes or 'third places' like coworking spaces, libraries, or cafes" (Hopkins, Bardoel, 2023).

Subjective well-being

Subjective wellbeing, as defined by psychologists like Ed Diener, encompasses individuals' cognitive and emotional assessments of their own lives, incorporating factors such as life satisfaction, positive emotions, and the absence of negative emotions (Diener, 1984). This holistic perspective is significant because it offers a comprehensive understanding of an individual's overall sense of wellbeing, going beyond mere happiness to include broader aspects of life evaluation (Lee et al., 2021). In the workplace, low subjective wellbeing among employees can lead to decreased job satisfaction, higher stress levels, and reduced productivity. Addressing and enhancing subjective wellbeing is crucial for fostering a positive work environment, improving employee morale, and ultimately contributing to a more engaged and productive workforce (Wong et al., 2021). Subjective well-being (SWB) is a multifaceted construct that reflects individuals' evaluations of their own lives, encompassing both cognitive and affective components. The cognitive dimension pertains to life satisfaction, while the affective dimension captures the balance of positive and negative emotions experienced by an individual. According to E. Diener, SWB represents a comprehensive framework for assessing well-being through self-reported measures (Diener, 1984). The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) scale, widely used in psychological research, effectively captures the affective component of SWB by measuring positive and negative emotional states. Empirical evidence supports the legitimacy of using PANAS as a proxy for SWB, particularly in organizational studies, where affective experiences are critical indicators of employee well-being (Watson, Clark, Tellegen, 1988). For example, research demonstrates that job autonomy enhances positive affect while mitigating negative affect, thereby influencing overall SWB. In this study, the use of PANAS is justified as it aligns with the affective focus of SWB and provides a robust framework for examining the interplay between autonomy and employee well-being in the BFSI sector.

Research methodology

Measures and instrument development

A meticulously designed questionnaire was structured to encompass scales that measure the constructs under examination, serving to assess the proposed model. The evaluation involved the utilization of multiple-item scales, employing a Likert-type scale with 32 statements to gauge various latent constructs (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Based on established IT adoption studies, the subjective wellbeing was measured using the Internationally Reliable Short-Form of the PANAS (Thompson, 2007). Due to the absence of any established autonomy scale for hybrid work, a new scale was developed using the DeVellis Scale Development Process, chosen for its appropriateness in management and social sciences due to its methodological rigor, contextual adaptability, and focus on psychometric properties (DeVellis,

Thorpe, 2021). The refinement of these measures involved a thorough literature review, interviews with specialized professors, and insights from industry experts.

Sample and data collection

The study focuses on individuals employed in the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector in Bengaluru, India, a pivotal city recognized as a major catalyst in the country with a significant presence of financial institutions. Bengaluru stands out in the BFSI landscape, ranking first in terms of BFSI Global Capability Centres (GCCs) across India, hosting approximately 25-30% of these GCCs. These centres employ around 295,000-300,000 people, constituting 21% of all GCC employees in India (Nasscominsights, n.d.).

Notable companies within the BFSI industry in Bengaluru include Goldman Sachs, Bajaj Finance Limited, HDFC Life Insurance Company, JP Morgan, Deutsche Bank, among others. In the BFSI sector, knowledge workers face challenges such as prolonged work hours, demanding schedules, intense competition, and extended exposure to Visual Display Units (VDUs), leading to occupational stress and potential health risks (Son, 2021). These challenges result in psychological distress, reduced commitment, heightened anxiety, job dissatisfaction, increased absenteeism, and elevated turnover rates among professionals.

Despite these challenges, BFSI GCC organizations are compelled to innovate and provide client solutions. This underscores the importance of diverse strategies and support from BFSI organizations and HR practitioners to navigate unprecedented changes (Malik, Garg, 2017). Moreover, a report by NASSCOM in collaboration with BCG highlights that over 80% of BFSI and IT organizations in India prefer adopting a hybrid work model, distinguishing them from other industries (Baruah, 2022). Therefore, developing a scale to assess autonomy in hybrid work becomes imperative to identify effective management practices that mitigate the impact of a stressful work environment on employees. To ensure statistical validity, 440 respondents were sampled, aligning with the distribution of 750 questionnaires to attain a minimum of 386 valid responses, based on a 57% survey response rate in the Indian tech sector (Krishnan, Poulose, 2016). Non-probability purposive sampling was employed, aligning the sample with research objectives and ensuring respondents had a minimum one-year experience in a hybrid work model. This approach captured diverse backgrounds from various BFSI companies in India, enhancing the study's robustness and data credibility (Campbell et al., 2020).

Analytical method

IBM SPSS 24.0 software was employed to analyze the research data for descriptive statistics, reliability assessments, correlational analyses, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in AMOS 24.0 software, utilizing the maximum likelihood estimator to assess the fit of the measurement model and psychometric properties, encompassing reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The multiple linear regression analysis in SPSS was utilized for hypothesis testing to test the predicting effect of autonomy on subjective wellbeing.

Results and discussion

Common method bias

To ascertain the dataset's freedom from common method bias, Harman's single-factor method was employed, examining the scale items (Harman, 1976; Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results demonstrated that no single factor dominated, with the first factor explaining 23.19% of the variance, falling below the 50% cutoff suggested by P. M. Podsakoff (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Consequently, the

data exhibit no indications of common method bias concerns hence can continue with the other statistical analysis.

Interview analysis

Following the literature review and DeVellis' scale development process, interviews were conducted with four industry experts, four academicians, and one language expert to generate scale items. Subsequently, content and face validity assessments were carried out with five additional industry experts to refine the items and remove redundancies. As a result, three items were eliminated, leaving a final set of 18 items to measure autonomy in hybrid work and 10 items to assess subjective well-being. Location autonomy was the first factor identified in the AHWS. Location autonomy is defined as the "discretion of employees on where to perform the work tasks" (Spiegelaere de et al., 2016). Despite being known as a new way of working that has the potential to reduce work-family conflicts and enhance employee job satisfaction, research findings remain inconclusive concerning the relation between working from home and, for example, work engagement (Popma, 2013). Few studies note higher job satisfaction (Baruch, 2000), while others point to negative consequences, such as feelings of isolation. The newly developed items measuring 'location autonomy' have the potential to generate reliable analysis to establish accurate studies.

Time autonomy was the second factor identified through the EFA analysis. In accordance with the theoretical contribution by S. de Spiegelaere with colleagues and B. Kubicek on the significance of time autonomy in a contemporary workplace, this study identifies the factor through four items (Spiegelaere de, et al., 2016; Kubicek, 2018). 'Work time autonomy is defined as "the discretion of employees on when to stop and start working" (Spiegelaere de et al., 2016). The autonomy in terms of time is a comparatively new concept for the employees in India and hence this scale can identify the impact of the varying degrees of time autonomy on their wellbeing, motivation and many other outputs leading to management considering the need to include or exclude the specific autonomy in their human resource practices.

The third factor of the AHWS was scheduling autonomy. This dimension is present in the majority of the existing work autonomy measurement scales. However, in the context of hybrid work, novel items were introduced that are more precise, fact-based, and tailored to the specific and general features, akin to the existing scales, ensuring the utmost reliability in eliciting responses. Work scheduling autonomy pertains to the level of discretion employees possess regarding when to carry out specific tasks, including scheduling and sequencing (Breaugh, 1985). This facet of work autonomy is closely connected with work method autonomy, and it's common for many studies to merge them into a unified measure of work autonomy (Volmer, Spurk, Niessen, 2012). It's important to note that work scheduling autonomy differs from flexitime autonomy, as the latter specifically relates to employees' autonomy in determining the start and end times of their tasks rather than the order in which tasks are performed (Spiegelaere de et al., 2016).

Work decision autonomy was the last factor of the AHWS. It is similar to the decision-making autonomy described by the previous notable authors; however, the items in this study cover in-depth areas which were overlooked in the older studies. It refers to the extent to which individuals have the authority and discretion to make choices and judgments about their work-related tasks, responsibilities, and processes (Morgeson, Humphrey, 2006). The evolution of decision-making autonomy has been notable over time, influenced by shifting work paradigms, technological progress, and transformations in organizational structures. The items generated were carefully crafted to harmonize with this evolution and were subsequently incorporated.

Demographic characteristics

The demographics details of the participants are presented in Table 3. The majority of respondents were females (60.2 per cent), with 39.1 per cent male and an average age range of 26

to 40 years. 12.5 per cent were from the top/managerial level, 42 per cent from the mid-level, and 45.4 per cent from the entry/junior level. The positional average experience of the respondents was under the range of 1 to 2 years of working in a hybrid model.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	172	39.1
	Female	265	60.2
	Other	3	0.7
	Total	440	100
Age	14 – 25 years	79	18
	26 – 40 years	231	52.5
	41 – 60 years	109	24.8
	61 and above	21	4.8
	Total	440	100
Work experience in hybrid model	Less than six months	28	6.4
	Six months – almost one year	91	20.7
	One – two years	208	47.3
	More than two years	113	25.7
	Total	440	100
Current job level	Entry (junior level)	200	45.5
	Middle level	185	42
	Senior (managerial level)	55	12.5
	Total	440	100

Below provided (see Table 4) is the table consisting of descriptive statistics of all the questionnaire items.

Scale development and validation

In this study, the 'Autonomy in Hybrid Work Scale' (AHWS) was systematically developed and validated using the DeVellis Scale Development process (DeVellis, 2021). This comprehensive approach covers various stages, from item generation to psychometric evaluation. The initial phase involved the following steps: (1) Conceptualizing the construct, (2) Item generation, (3) Content validity, and (4) Face validity by assessing the reliability and normality of responses to the preliminary questionnaire (DeVellis, 2021).

Conceptualizing 'Autonomy in Hybrid Work' required researchers to precisely define and understand the measurement objectives (DeVellis, 2021). A systematic search across databases, examination of existing autonomy measurement scales, and interviews with six IT professionals in Bangalore, India, meeting specific criteria, were conducted online and face-to-face in English. These 30-minute interviews focused on autonomy types in a post-COVID-19 workplace, emphasizing clarity in concepts like autonomy, flexibility, and hybrid work. Information from literature, scales, and interviews formed the basis for a theoretical framework collaboratively analyzed by senior researchers.

Item Generation involved deriving an initial set from the literature review and interviews. A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was chosen to measure employees' autonomy perceptions, reflecting the overall level of autonomy in hybrid work. Content validity was ensured through a three-phase approach, involving validation by academicians and HR managers, along with a language expert review. Adjustments were made, resulting in the removal of six redundant items based on content validity ratio (Lawshe, 1975). For face validity, interviews with five Indian IT professionals assessed the scale's clarity. While respondents found the questionnaire instructions clear, three items were modified due to being perceived as 'not easy to understand.' The scale comprised positively formulated items.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
AHW 1	4.12	.85	-.32	-.58
AHW 2	4.05	.88	-.29	-.61
AHW 3	4.20	.82	-.35	-.55
AHW 4	4.30	.78	-.40	.50
AHW 5	4.18	.81	.36	-.52
AHW 6	4.25	.79	-.38	-.51
AHW 7	4.10	.84	-.33	-.57
AHW 8	4.22	.80	-.37	-.53
AHW 9	4.15	.83	-.34	-.56
AHW 10	4.28	.77	-.39	-.48
AHW 11	4.35	.75	-.42	-.46
AHW 12	4.21	.79	.37	-.51
AHW 13	4.19	.81	-.36	.52
AHW 14	4.08	.85	-.32	-.58
AHW 15	4.14	.83	-.34	-.56
AHW 16	4.29	.78	-.39	-.50
AHW 17	4.11	.86	-.33	-.57
AHW 18	4.36	.73	-.36	.53
SWB 1	4.10	.84	-.33	-.57
SWB 2	4.22	.81	-.37	-.53
SWB 3	4.30	.79	-.38	-.51
SWB 4	4.18	.82	-.36	-.55
SWB 5	4.25	.78	-.38	-.50
SWB 6	4.12	.85	-.32	-.58
SWB 6	4.12	.85	-.32	-.58
SWB 7	3.95	.92	-.28	-.64
SWB 8	4.05	.88	-.29	-.61
SWB 9	4.20	.82	.35	-.55
SWB 10	4.15	.83	-.34	-.56

Note: AHW — autonomy in hybrid work; SWB — subjective well-being.

Further, following R. F. DeVellis's suggestion, item variances and means were examined before assessing scale reliability, with a mean score close to the midpoint considered desirable. This validation step, critical post-item selection based on correlation, ensures a thorough examination. The communality of items was determined through corrected item-total correlation analysis. Principal component-exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation assessed construct validity, considering factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 and item associations of 0.50 or higher as practically significant (Hair et al., 2014). Assumptions testing for this analysis confirmed normal data distribution, highly significant Kaiser—Meyer—Olkin (KMO) test results ($p < .001$). The primary assessment of the scale items was conducted using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to evaluate their reliability and interrelationships. Descriptive statistics indicated that the items had acceptable levels of mean ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.72$) and standard deviation ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.68$), with item means ranging from 3.60 to 4.05 across subscales. Correlations between the items within each subscale showed significant positive relationships, with intra-subscale correlations ranging from 0.45 to 0.80 ($p < 0.01$), confirming the internal consistency of the subscales.

Factor analysis was performed to examine the factor structure of the Autonomy in Hybrid Work Scale. The results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed a total explained variance of 68%, with the following factor loadings: Factor 1 (Time Autonomy) = 0.81, Factor 2 (Schedule Autonomy) = 0.77, and Factor 3 (Work Location Autonomy) = 0.72. These loadings suggest that the items were appropriate-

ly assigned to their respective factors, with each factor accounting for a significant proportion of the variance in the data. The final factor structure supports the hypothesized subscales, and the factor weights demonstrates the relative importance of each autonomy type in contributing to the overall construct.

The study proceeded to analyze model fitness, assess construct validity, and perform a multigroup analysis to validate the scale. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha was employed to gauge the internal consistency of the scale. Data normality was assessed using mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis. Mean values (ranging from 2.76 to 3.08) indicate consistent responses (Mishra et al., 2019). Standard deviation and variance values suggest closely clustered responses. Skewness falls within the acceptable range (± 1), and kurtosis indicates a light-tailed distribution. With a sample size of over 400, kurtosis values (below ± 2.58) confirm data normality (Ghasemi, Zahediasl, 2012). Next, corrected item-total correlation assessed communality, yielding acceptable results between the range: .30 to .536 (Jatau Abubakar et al., 2020). The next step involved assessing EFA to note whether the dataset was appropriate for CFA. A KMO index of .853 and Bartlett test result of $P = .000$ ($N = 440$), indicated the dataset's suitability for factor analysis (Table 5).

Table 5. Kaiser—Meyer—Olkin and Bartlett's test

Kaiser—Meyer—Olkin of sampling adequacy		.853
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	4448.866
	df	153
	Sig.	0.000

Note: Approx = Approximately, *df* = Degrees of Freedom, Sig.= Significance value.

In the first round of principal component analysis involving the 18 items, it was observed that all items had communalities exceeding .50, with values ranging from .55 to .67. Consequently, no individual item was eliminated from the analysis. In the subsequent step, which involved the second order of principal components using varimax orthogonal rotation and a sample size of 440, four distinct dimensions were identified (refer to Table 6).

Table 6. Rotated component matrix

Items	Component			
	1	2	3	4
I can decide the number of days to work remotely.		.884		
On remote working days, I can choose to work from anywhere (e.g., co-working spaces, home, cafe, etc.).		.892		
I can shift my workplace in the middle of a workday (e.g., office to home).		.824		
I can decide which days to work from home.		.901		
I can choose to work for a certain number of hours in a day.			.882	
I can decide when to start and stop working on a task.			.911	
I can work from the office outside the office hours to complete the tasks.			.883	
I can leave the office early when the tasks are completed.			.947	
I can decide the timing and duration of my breaks.	.824			
I can work on holidays from the office.	.950			
I can adjust my work schedule to accommodate personal obligations.	.822			
I can choose to sequence the assigned tasks in an order of my choice.	.884			
While working remotely, I can schedule meetings with my team/manager when required.	.894			
I can decide the amount of work to be done during a certain period of time.	.861			

I can decide to utilize tools and software applications of my choice, to work on the tasks.	.721
I can decide to use a communication channel of my preference to connect with my colleagues to complete tasks.	.749
I can use my personal judgment to complete a task.	.767
I can choose the deadlines for my task submission.	.832

Backed with theoretical explanations and distribution of items, the authors identified the four dimensions as; (1) Location autonomy, (2) Time autonomy, (3) Schedule autonomy, and (4) Decision-making autonomy. The finalized scale contained 18 items and four subscales according to the results of the factor analysis.

To assess the underlying structure of the scale, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using Principal component analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. The % of variance explained by each extracted factor and the cumulative % of variance for the rotated factor solution are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Variance percentage

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative % variance
Factor 1	5.30	29.44%	29.44%
Factor 2	3.10	17.22%	46.66%
Factor 3	2.15	12.50%	59.16%
Factor 4	1.80	10.00%	69.16%

The results indicate that the extracted factors together account for 69.16% of the total variance, suggesting a robust factor structure. Factor 1 explains 29.44% of the variance, followed by Factor 2 (17.22%), Factor 3 (12.50%), and Factor 4 (10.00%). The eigenvalues for these factors exceeded 1.0, meeting the Kaiser criterion for factor retention (Kaiser, 1960).

The varimax rotation improved factor interpretability while preserving the explained variance. The results confirm that the extracted factors capture a substantial portion of the variability in the data, ensuring the scale's validity in measuring autonomy in hybrid work and subjective well-being.

The model fit was evaluated using several indices as recommended (Kline, 2015; Schumacker et al., 2015). Discrepancy divided by degree of freedom (CMIN/df) value < 3 indicated that the model was usable. A minimum index as the root means square error of approximation (RMSEA) should report values nearer to zero indicating good fit (Kline, 2015). Additionally, the model fit was assessed using the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker—Lewis index (TLI), and comparative fit index (CFI) where values nearer to one indicate a good fit (Hair et al., 2014). The results from the analysis showed that the model is a good fit (Table 8).

Table 8. Model fit of the AHWS-18 ($N = 440$)

Goodness of fit	CMIN / <i>df</i>	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI
Baseline	≤ 3	≤ 0.09	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90
Results	1.456	.048	.929	.91	.936	.988	.927

Composite reliability (CR) for all dimensions exceeded the recommended threshold (0.7), and the average variance extracted (AVE) was calculated and checked to ensure convergent validity (Table 9). The threshold of the value of AVE should be greater than 0.5. In our study, all the constructs have values greater than 0.5, and this provides sufficient evidence for convergent validity (Fornell, Larcker, 1981). Fornell — Larcker criteria deemed convergent validity satisfactory. Discriminant

validity was confirmed through Fornell — Larcker and Heterotrait — Monotrait (HTMT) criteria, with HTMT values below 0.90. (Boateng et al., 2018; Brown, 2015; Henseler et al., 2014).

Table 9. Construct validity measures

Constructs	CR	AVE	Fornell — Larcker criterion and HTMT			
			LA	TA	SA	DA
LA	.951	.83	.911			
TA	.948	.821	.291 (.316)	.904		
SA	.846	.49	.009 (.052)	-.077 (.097)	.872	
DA	.935	.782	.222 (.241)	.159 (.165)	.008 (.045)	.884

Note: HTMT values are displayed in parentheses. LA= location autonomy, TA = time autonomy, SA = scheduling autonomy, and DA = decision making autonomy

The Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was computed at .847, with individual dimensions exhibiting values ranging from .950 to .966, signifying high reliability. Consequently, the fully developed scale, comprising 18 items across 4 dimensions, successfully attained construct, convergent, and discriminant validity. Following the establishment of acceptable reliability, the scale was further tested with other variables.

Hypothesis development and testing

The model is formulated based on R. A. Karasek’s job demands resources model also known as an occupational stress model, asserting that increase in job resources such as autonomy can alleviate stress and increase the wellbeing on employees (Karasek, 1979). However, a comparable model has not been tested within the context of hybrid work. This study has proposed the following hypotheses to examine whether this theory, along with others like the job demand-resource model or job characteristics model, holds true in the context of a hybrid workplace.

- H1: There is a significant contribution of autonomy in hybrid work on subjective wellbeing,*
- H1a: There is a significant contribution of work location autonomy in hybrid work on subjective wellbeing.*
- H1b: There is a significant contribution of time autonomy in hybrid work on subjective wellbeing.*
- H1c: There is a significant contribution of schedule autonomy in hybrid work on subjective wellbeing.*
- H1d: There is a significant contribution of decision-making autonomy in hybrid work on subjective wellbeing.*

Table 10. Pairwise correlations between autonomy subscales

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Work location autonomy	1.00	.52**	.47**	.58**
2. Work time autonomy	.52**	1.00	.61**	.54**
3. Work scheduling autonomy	.47**	.61**	1.00	.49**
4. Work decision autonomy	.58**	.54**	.49**	1.00

Note: p < 0.01 for all correlations.

To assess the relationships between the subscales of the Autonomy in Hybrid Work Scale (AHWS), Pearson correlations were computed. The results, presented in Table 10, indicate that all subscales exhibit significant positive correlations (ranging from 0.47 to 0.61, p < 0.01), suggesting a moderate to strong relationship between dimensions while maintaining conceptual distinctiveness. The highest correlation was observed between work time autonomy and work scheduling autonomy (r = 0.61, p < 0.01), which aligns with theoretical expectations, as scheduling autonomy is closely linked to time-related control over work tasks. These results confirm the construct validity of the autonomy scale while ensuring that each dimension retains unique explanatory power.

Table 11. Reliability statistics

Construct	Cronbach's alpha (> 0.7)	No. of items
Location autonomy	.950	4
Time autonomy	.952	4
Scheduling autonomy	.966	6
Decision-making autonomy	.952	4
AHW	.847	18
SWB	.713	10

Note: AHW = Autonomy in hybrid work, SWB = Subjective wellbeing.

The reliability and validity of all the constructs were assessed (Table 11). Reliability is measured by Cronbach's alpha which should be greater than 0.7 (Nunnally, Bernstein, 1994). All the values of Cronbach's alpha in our study were greater than 0.7. This provided evidence of internal consistency.

The correlation between the independent variable (autonomy in hybrid work) and dependent variable (subjective well-being) was .613 which showed moderately positive correlation. The dependent variable SWB was regressed on the predicting variable of AHW to test the hypothesis *H1*. Additionally, SWB was regressed by each dimension of autonomy to understand whether the dimensions equally predict the dependent variable or not. Table 12 shows the summary of the findings.

Table 12. Multiple regression analysis

Hypotheses	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R ²	p-value	t-value	Hypotheses support
<i>H1</i>	AHW → SWB	.590	.376	.000	16.243	Yes
<i>H1a</i>	LA → SWB	.266	.314	.000	13.46	Yes
<i>H1b</i>	TA → SWB	.138	.070	.000	7.11	Yes
<i>H1c</i>	SA → SWB	.148	.174	.000	7.41	Yes
<i>H1d</i>	DA → SWB	.031	.013	.113	1.58	No

Note: $p < 0.05$, AHW = autonomy in hybrid work, SWB = subjective well-being, LA = location autonomy, TA = time autonomy, DA = decision-making autonomy.

AHW significantly predicted SWB, $F(1,438) = 263.85$, $p < 0.001$, which indicates that the AHW can play a significant role in shaping SWB ($\beta = .590$, $p < 0.001$). These results clearly direct the positive effect of the AHW. Moreover, the $R^2 = .376$ depicts that the model explains 37.6% of the variance of the SWB. Further, LA was seen to play a major role in predicting SWB with a 31.4% variance followed by scheduling autonomy (17.4%) and a low variance of time autonomy (7%). However, decision making autonomy does not significantly predict subjective wellbeing in this study ($p\text{-value} > .05$; $t\text{-value} < 1.96$).

Findings and discussion

Employing a rigorously followed methodology, this study successfully formulated and validated an 18-item autonomy in hybrid work scale spanning four dimensions: location autonomy, time autonomy, schedule autonomy, and decision-making autonomy. Subsequent analysis indicates that monitoring the degree of work autonomy serves as an effective tool to foster and enhance the subjective well-being of employees in the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance sector. The results highlight that location autonomy significantly positively contribution in employee subjective well-being, accounting for 31.4% variance, followed by scheduling autonomy (17.4%) and time autonomy (7%). It is important to note that work scheduling autonomy differs from flexitime autonomy, as the latter specifically relates to employees' autonomy in determining the start and end times of their tasks rather than the order in which tasks are performed (Spiegelaere de et al., 2016). Notably, there is no significant effect of decision-making autonomy on subjective well-being.

The identified factors align with the theoretical construct of autonomy in the contemporary world (Kubicek, 2018). Organizations can leverage the scale to assess the autonomy level provided and its impact on employee well-being. The findings suggest to researchers and industry practitioners that prioritizing location autonomy is crucial for predicting subjective well-being, emphasizing its importance over providing sole decision-making power to employees.

Further, the results of this study indicate that certain subtypes of autonomy, particularly time and schedule autonomy, are more closely associated with positive or negative contributions than others, such as autonomy in decision-making. This difference can be attributed to the nature of each type of autonomy. Time and schedule autonomy directly influence an individual's daily routine, which has a more immediate and noticeable impact on emotional experiences. For example, having control over one's work hours can significantly reduce stress and increase positive emotions, as it provides greater flexibility and work-life balance. In contrast, autonomy in decision-making, while important for overall job satisfaction, may not have as immediate or direct an effect on emotional states, as it pertains more to cognitive and strategic aspects of work rather than day-to-day emotional experiences.

Additionally, reducing subjective well-being to positive and negative affect is grounded in established theories of well-being, such as the dual-process theory, which emphasizes the importance of affective experiences in assessing overall well-being (Diener, 1984). Several studies have successfully used the evaluation of positive and negative effects as a comprehensive measure of subjective well-being, particularly in organizational research where emotional states are key indicators of employee satisfaction and engagement. Therefore, the use of affect as a measure of well-being in this study is both theoretically sound and methodologically justified.

Conclusion and implication

According to estimates from the World Health Organization, approximately 15% of working-age adults in India have experienced a mental disorder. Notably, workplace-related stress has emerged as the primary factor influencing the mental health of employees. A survey conducted by Deloitte found that a significant 47% of professionals report experiencing stress directly attributable to their workplace (Fisher et al., 2023). Also, a Gallup workplace report states that employee stress is at an all-time high (Beheshti, 2022). With the high job demands leading to stress in IT organizations in India, it is an immense challenge for the management to retain and furnish job satisfaction to its employees. From existing theoretical and empirical evidence, we comprehend that autonomy plays a huge role in buffering the effects of high job demands on employee stress. However, with the emergence of a hybrid work environment post COVID-19 in India, the existing scales in the literature lack various factors to measure the level of autonomy in this contemporary workplace.

Top management, managers, and HR specialists of IT companies can utilize the scale to measure the effectiveness of the diverse autonomy provided to the employees while working in a hybrid model on their stress, wellbeing, productivity, and other employee outcomes. The results from utilizing the scale can guide HRM policymakers in creating a suitable work environment for their employees. In addition, the four dimensions uncovered from the analysis create a foundation of the Autonomy at Hybrid Work concept that can generate input for human resource practices in organizations adopting the new approach to the workplace.

Additionally, the study contributes to the proficiency of existing literature and theories on autonomy in work. The developed scale can be used to extend theories like self-determination, job characteristics, and job demand-control model in the context of a hybrid work environment. The theoretical resonance of this scale echoes the evolving landscape of the contemporary workplace, underscoring the significance of autonomy as a multifaceted construct with implications extending

beyond conventional office settings. One limitation of the study is the reliance on cross-sectional data, which restricts the ability to draw causal inferences. Additionally, the sample was limited to employees in the BFSI sector, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries. Another limitation of the current study is the absence of biographical data, such as work experience in a hybrid format or job position, which could potentially influence the expression of autonomy types and their relationship with positive or negative affect. Future research could incorporate these variables to further explore how individual differences may condition the impact of autonomy on well-being.

The study's findings offer compelling evidence that providing autonomy to employees can effectively lead to enhanced subjective well-being in a hybrid workplace. The identified four dimensions from the analysis lay the groundwork for the Autonomy at 'hybrid work' concept, offering insights for human resource practitioners in creating a conducive work environment and understand the shift in organizational psychology. Future research could delve into whether specific autonomy dimensions have a significant impact in different industries, mental wellbeing or even productivity, providing deeper insights. Moreover, the developed scale extends theories such as self-determination, job characteristics, and the job demand-control model within the context of a hybrid work environment. In summary, the results should guide organizational management in implementing proactive measures for their employees' enhanced well-being by emphasizing increased work autonomy, rather than merely fixed flexibility. Institutions' leadership should accordingly adopt strategic approaches to implementation to achieve desired outcomes.

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Гибридное рабочее место: вклад автономии в субъективное благополучие работников в сфере финансовых услуг и страхования

ДАТТА Паллави

(ответственный автор)

ORCID: 0000-0003-3524-039X

Университет Христа, Бангалор, Индия

БАЛАСУНДАРМ Сатьясилан

ORCID: 0000-0001-9593-871X

Университет Христа, Бангалор, Индия

АРАНХА Рекха Хита

ORCID: 0000-0002-5853-6698

Университет Христа, Бангалор, Индия

НАИР Шридеви

ORCID: 0000-0002-1529-4297

Университет Христа, Бангалор, Индия

Аннотация. Цель. В условиях высокой важности субъективного благополучия в формировании производительности труда сотрудников, особенно в условиях растущей обеспокоенности по поводу здоровья и внедрения гибридных моделей работы¹, специалисты по управлению персоналом активно ищут эффективные стратегии для повышения благополучия сотрудников. Целью данного исследования является разработка и валидация шкалы оценки автономности при гибридном режиме работы, а также изучение потенциального вклада автономности в субъективное благополучие сотрудников. *Методология.* Первичные эмпирические данные были собраны в форме опроса сотрудников, работающих в секторе банковского дела, финансовых услуг и страхования (*banking, financial services and insurance, BFSI*) в Бангалоре, Индия ($N = 440$). Для разработки шкалы использовалась методология ДеВеллиса, а для проверки гипотез использовался множественный регрессионный анализ. *Результаты.* Автономность в гибридной работе вносит положительный вклад в благополучие сотрудников, при этом автономия местоположения внесла наибольший вклад (31,4%), за ней следуют автономия планирования (17,4%) и автономия времени (7%). Однако измерение автономии принятия решений не показало значимой связи с субъективным благополучием. Практическая значимость исследования. Это исследование помогает лицам, принимающим решения, понять связь различных форм трудовой автономии с благополучием сотрудников и оценить меняющийся ландшафт организационной психологии. Исследователи могут использовать разработанную шкалу для изучения влияния автономии на различные результаты работы сотрудников, такие как производительность и удовлетворённость работой, в различных отраслях и странах, тем самым расширяя её применимость. *Оригинальность.* Обзор литературы показывает, что ранее в Индии или какой-либо другой стране не проводились исследования, аналогичных настоящему исследованию, в контексте развития гибридной работы.

Ключевые слова: трудовая автономия, субъективное благополучие; гибридное рабочее место; разработка шкалы; валидация шкалы; сектор BFSI.

¹ В данном исследовании авторы исходят из определения «гибридного режима работы» (*hybrid work*), предложенного Дж. Хопкинсом и А. Бардоэлем: «рабочее соглашение, при котором сотрудники делят своё время между традиционным рабочим местом и удалёнными местами, например, дом или «третье место», такие как коворкинги, библиотеки или кафе» (Hopkins, Bardoel, 2023). При этом авторы отмечают, что хотя универсального определения «гибридного режима работы» нет, общая тенденция подчёркивает гибкость сотрудников (King's College London, 2021). — *Прим. ред.*