

ARTICLE

Enabling the management of diverse employees in the hybrid work model: A qualitative study

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the study is to reveal how employee diversity is managed in the hybrid work model.

Theoretical framework – A link was established between the diversity management literature and the hybrid work model.

Design/methodology/approach – The qualitative research method was used in this study. Interviews and document analysis, which are qualitative data collection methods, were preferred. Purposive sampling was used.

Findings – A total of 64 categories and 11 themes emerged. Each theme offers different perspectives and suggestions regarding the management of employees with different qualifications and characteristics.

Practical & social implications of research – There are no limitations to the scope of the study. The study contributes to theory development by combining the diversity management literature with the hybrid work model and revealing new insights on the management of diverse employees in the hybrid work model. There are also practical implications for managers. The concerns of managers implementing the hybrid work model about how to manage employees with diverse characteristics and attributes can be addressed by considering the results of this study.

Originality/value – The study makes significant contributions, especially to the field of business administration. Diversity management, which has not been considered in the hybrid work model, was examined in this study, paving the way for further studies in the field of business administration.

Keywords: Diversity management, hybrid work model, qualitative methods, interview, document analysis.

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How to cite:

Yeke, S., & Özveren, C. G. (2024). Enabling the management of diverse employees in the hybrid work model: A qualitative study. *Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios*, 26(1), e20230128. <https://doi.org/10.7819/rbgn.v26i01.4254>

Received on:

Feb/16/2023

Approved on:

Mar/05/2024

Responsible editor:

Prof. Dr. Jesús Barrena

Reviewers:

Serdar Bozkurt;

One of the reviewers did not disclose the identity

Evaluation process:

Double Blind Review

This article is open data



Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios

<https://doi.org/10.7819/rbgn.v26i01.4254>

1 Introduction

Companies need employees with different skills, characteristics, and demographic attributes to sustain their activities. Since the expertise, experience, work culture, and perspective of each employee are different, it is expected that business processes will be more productive and constructive with employees with different characteristics. Companies must ensure good harmony to obtain contributions from employees with different characteristics. In a highly diverse environment, satisfying every employee, creating synergy, and reducing conflict are among the duties of managers. In this regard, the importance of diversity management in the physical workplace is increasing in order to obtain high efficiency and performance from employees. Studies on the perception of diversity in the physical workplace and the link between diversity and other factors have been reported in the literature. However, it is evident that employees with diverse characteristics are beginning to diverge from the office environment because of the extensive use of remote work styles today. In particular, with the COVID-19 pandemic that began in China in November 2019, remote work styles started to be adopted by companies. Within the scope of the remote work style implemented by almost all companies during the pandemic, employees with different qualifications started to work outside the office. In this process, the idea arose of how to organize employees with different qualifications in order to make work processes more efficient and effective. This idea is the main research problem of this study. Before the pandemic, companies were seeking methods to get efficiency from employees working on-site, and along with numerous factors influencing employee efficiency, diversity was also believed to get efficiency from employees. On-site work and effective management of diverse employees are associated with high performance and competitive advantage for organizations (Apgar, 1998). With the end of the pandemic effects, both remote and on-site work have begun to be used in business life. It can be observed that remote work is now being used effectively in many sectors. In the face of this reality, it is considered insufficient to address diversity management only in the physical work environment to make a theoretical contribution. However, how to effectively manage diverse employees in a hybrid work model is unknown. In the remote work style that has become an apparent reality today, it is essential to identify how employees with diverse characteristics should be organized and what management practices

should be implemented to achieve high efficiency. This is where the main motivation for this research came from. Thus, the desire arose to contribute to the literature on how to address employees working in this system, what management tools should be adopted, and how to ensure employee motivation. In this context, research was carried out to ensure the management of employees with different characteristics in the hybrid work model, taking into account business life and diversity.

2 Theoretical framework

During the COVID-19 pandemic, human resource managers implemented some strategies to deal with the adverse effects of the pandemic. As we know, working from home or anywhere was one of these strategies. Another work style was the hybrid work model. The hybrid work model can be summarized as a work model based on work “half from home and half from the office.” Some white-collar workers work both from home and from the office. This reduces the congestion in offices (Manpower Group, 2021). This work model undoubtedly has employees with different abilities, characteristics, and characters.

While some employees work remotely, others work on-site (Dowling et al., 2022a). From a manager’s perspective, effectively managing diverse employees in the two different work models is crucial for the company’s success (Beno, 2022). Therefore, which employees would work in which work model, which work model would be more suitable for employees, what equitable and inclusive practices would exist among employees, and how demographic effects would be addressed are questions that need to be considered as they can directly affect company performance.

Diversity management in all its dimensions was discussed in terms of the theoretical framework and the relationship between remote and hybrid work models are presented. The pros and cons of remote work styles and the requirements for effective management in hybrid systems are addressed.

2.1 Diversity management

Human diversity has existed throughout the world since the beginning of time. Ethnic, cultural, and racial differences could already be found within tribes and other groups of people across the continents before recorded history (Arredondo, 1996; Danullis & Dehling, 2004). Diversity can be defined as the understanding,

celebration, and acceptance of individual differences in gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, status, etc. (Esty et al., 1995). Diversity management is a critical aspect of organizational practice, as it involves effectively managing diversity within the workplace. Managers are crucial in translating organizational diversity policies and activities into day-to-day practice (O'Leary & Sandberg, 2016). Diversity management is a broad concept. There are several components of diversity management, such as diversity in demographics (age, gender, etc.), ethnicity, culture, nationality, individual competencies (educational background, talents), networks, organizational processes and functions, and miscellaneous diversity (occupational disabilities, sexual preferences) (Danullis & Dehling, 2004). Diversity management is a strategic approach to address the potential outcomes associated with a heterogeneous workforce, such as increased susceptibility to conflict. According to Stockdale and Crosby (2004), diversity management is characterized as structured and deliberate initiatives or protocols that aim to enhance communication among individuals from different ethnic, gender, or cultural backgrounds. Additionally, these initiatives seek to leverage diversity to foster creativity, complementarity, and overall effectiveness.

In the related literature, diversity management can be divided into two groups (Harrison et al., 2002): surface-level and deep-level. Surface-level diversity refers to the differences among team members in terms of overt demographic characteristics such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, sex, etc. On the other hand, deep-level diversity refers to the differences among team members in terms of psychological characteristics such as values, personalities, and attitudes (Jackson et al., 1995; Harrison et al., 1998). Clues to these latent individual differences are obtained from members' interactions as they unfold over time. These clues are expressed through behavioral patterns, verbal and nonverbal communication, and the exchange of personal information (Harrison et al., 2002). For the purposes of this study, surface-level diversity factors play a central role. From a managerial perspective, the practices and approaches required to manage demographically diverse employees can be determined more quickly than those needed to manage deeply diverse employees. Psychological differences such as perceptions, values, and attitudes are difficult to predict. Therefore, this study focuses on the visible differences among employees.

Diversity management aims to improve the productivity and effectiveness of a workforce that consists

of individuals with different characteristics, such as gender, race, nationality, cultural background, and educational experience. This approach also seeks to create an inclusive environment that supports the development and growth of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Heterogeneity within the workforce can be attributed to several factors, such as the deliberate recruitment of individuals from ethnic minorities, women, and underrepresented groups, as well as the movement of individuals in pursuit of employment opportunities (Tsui et al., 1992). Organizations need to recognize the unique knowledge that each person brings to the table to facilitate their full growth. Managing diversity contributes significantly to facilitating information transfer and the general advancement of businesses (Yadav & Lenka, 2020).

In the relevant literature, diversity has been evaluated as a competitive advantage, ensuring some positive outcomes in terms of organizational flexibility, problem solving, marketing, creativity, and resource acquisition (Thomas, 1990; Copeland, 1988; Mandell & Kohlergray, 1990; Esty, 1988; Cox & Blake, 1991). On the other hand, diversity in terms of gender, race, etc. may be the source of high turnover rates and absenteeism (Bergmann & Krause, 1972). Job satisfaction levels are also often lower for minorities in organizational settings (Cox & Nkomo, 1991). While team diversity ensures high performance and positively affects creativity, it also reduces harmony and promotes conflict (Kankanhalli et al., 2006; Castellano et al., 2017). Thus, effectively managing diversity in the workplace can be difficult and complex. As stated by Cox and Blake (1991) and as shown in Figure 1, effective diversity management has several dimensions, such as organizational culture, attitudes toward diversity, educational programs, human resource management systems, higher career involvement of women, and heterogeneity in terms of race, nationality, and ethnicity.

As mentioned in the literature, diversity is a great advantage for companies and a significant challenge to manage. Companies can benefit significantly from a remote work style while managing this diversity. In the face of the problems experienced due to differences, remote-work employees may be less affected by these problems. In addition, companies may be able to recruit talented employees from different geographies (Sundermeier et al., 2020). It is proposed that companies benefit from a remote work style while managing diversity.

According to the study conducted by Dowling et al. (2022b), 75% of employees prefer a hybrid system work

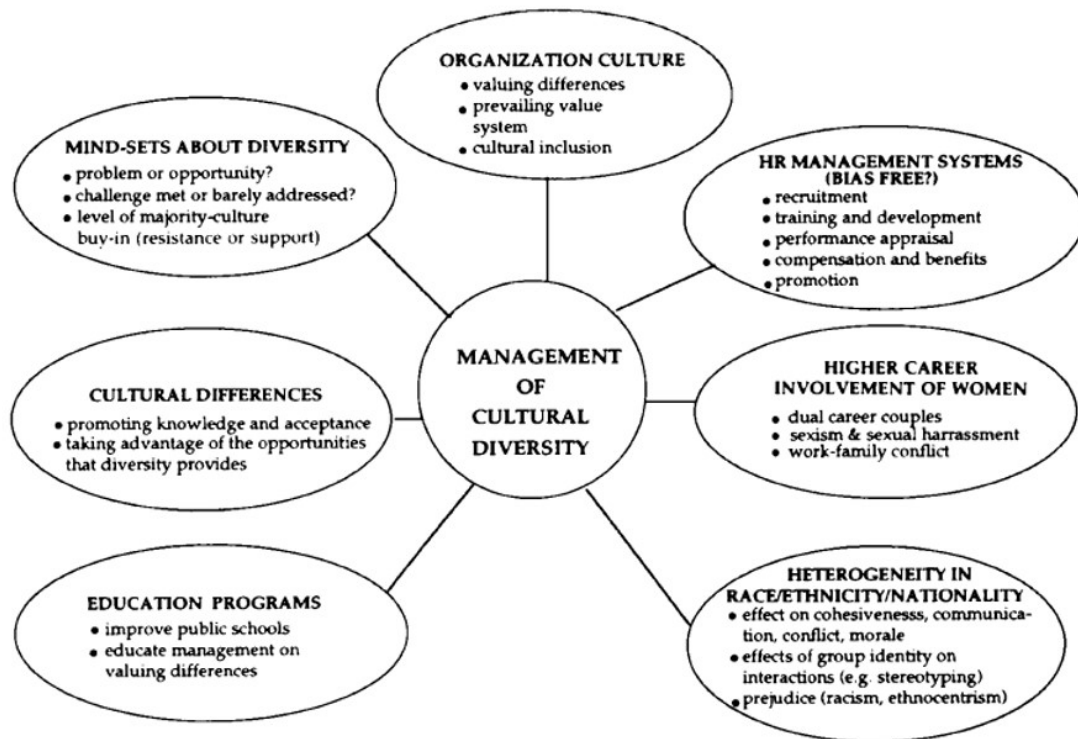


Figure 1. Spheres of Activity in the Management of Cultural Diversity

Source: Cox and Blake (1991).

model. Managers who are aware of the importance of inclusion and diversity may find that such cases exemplify an additional potential benefit derived from hybrid work arrangements. Consider, as an illustrative example, the scenario in which an employee may conceal a disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation to avoid the potential negative associations that may arise from disclosing such information. Empirical evidence suggests that endeavors to conceal one's identity may be detrimental to an individual's overall well-being and job performance (Jones & King, 2014). Enhancing diversity and representation sustainably poses challenges without inclusion, which entails actively embracing, supporting, and empowering workers to facilitate their significant contributions. The absence of an inclusive atmosphere may hinder the long-term performance improvement of a business, even if it has a varied workforce base. The proliferation of hybrid work arrangements has introduced complexities in establishing and sustaining organizational cultures. Workforce diversity can be one of these crucial complexities. Therefore, managers must manage this diversity effectively. To manage this diversity effectively, they must use diversity management techniques such as team building, fostering a learning culture, work-life support, etc. (Dowling et al., 2022b).

2.2 Remote and hybrid work

2.2.1 Remote work style

The increasing integration of technology in today's business life brings with it new applications. Especially with the extensive use of remote work styles in recent years, technological developments have connected employees, allowed access to expertise that is not restricted by location, provided greater flexibility, and significantly reduced costs (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). The mobility and rapid adaptation ensured through working independently of location have also created opportunities for organizations to intervene quickly, regardless of time. The remote work style, one of the new trends of the future at the beginning of the 1990s, could not make the expected breakthrough and was not adopted by companies despite the years that passed (Illegems et al., 2001). COVID-19 significantly affected the work style of employees. It led to the adaptation of strategies to remain competitive in the face of different scenarios resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect employees' jobs. Human resource departments play a crucial role in business life by proposing changes for new forms of work, such as working at home, flexible

wage plans, and reducing working hours (Gómez et al., 2020). The new OECD report (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023) emphasized that, with the COVID-19 pandemic, investments in lifelong learning for all should be urgently increased.

Larsen and Andersen (2007) mentioned different work styles in terms of goals and expectations. These work styles can be listed as follows: remote working abroad, temporary work, working from home, teleworking, product and service supply-based teleworking, and remote working in a neighboring office. Before COVID-19, remote work was categorized into different styles in some studies (Eriksson & Petrosian, 2020): working from home, working from anywhere, telecommunicating (both face-to-face and online working, called the hybrid work model), and full-time remote working (Eddleston & Mulki, 2017).

In terms of remote work styles, when the control of employees is relatively tricky, managers need to give more feedback to employees (Nickson & Siddons, 2004). Therefore, managers need to be in contact with their employees. In this regard, giving feedback on employees' performance is one of the issues that should be emphasized. Controlling individuals who work remotely will undoubtedly be more difficult. Since it will be much more challenging to closely control employees in such a work style, it is recommended that managers focus primarily on two primary strategies (Moon & Stanworth, 1999): coordination and empowerment.

According to the social identity theory developed by Tajfel and Turner (1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1989), individuals try to classify themselves and other people into certain social categories, such as gender, organizational membership, religious affiliation, and age. Conventional wisdom and years of research reveal that we feel closer to those who are physically close to us (Allen, 1977; Festinger, 1951; Kiesler & Cummings, 2002; Wilson et al., 2008). However, technological developments and new applications of remote work styles show that individuals involved in remote work styles may also feel socially identified with the organization. Their perceived proximity can be high if managers understand the factors that lead to high perceived proximity. In this regard, communication and identification can be seen as the main factors affecting perceived proximity. For a team, team members share a common ground: a mutual understanding of knowledge among individuals in the workplace (for instance, experiences, traumatic events, etc.) (Clark, 1992; Sarker &

Sahay, 2002). Despite their remote work style, individuals can identify with their organization and perceive a high degree of proximity by increasing the quality of the communication process.

The potential risk of a remote work style in terms of control brings a new problem, especially in managing employees with low levels of self-discipline. Individuals with low levels of self-discipline may need more guidance, and it will undoubtedly be more difficult to control and manage individuals who work remotely. Moreover, the low self-discipline levels of these people will cause them to use this autonomy negatively. For this reason, the competencies of employees to be recruited in organizations that adopt a remote work style differ from those of employees who will work face-to-face. Nickson and Siddons (2004) underlined that the following criteria should be sought in employees who would work remotely (Roseberry, 2008): the ability to maintain self-discipline, proficiency in the use of technology, the ability to set priorities, the ability to adapt quickly to changes in the business environment, self-motivation, responsibility, trustworthiness, the ability to manage their time effectively, and awareness of the importance of their position to the organization. When these competencies are examined in detail, it is understood that an emphasis is placed on how a person uses autonomy, especially self-motivation and setting priorities. In other words, the remote worker it is expected to maintain discipline because he or she is out of the control area.

2.2.2 Hybrid work model

According to the Oxford Dictionary, hybrid work is a flexible work arrangement in which employees work partly at home and partly in the office. Depending on the kind, size, and technology of the event, hybrid events can mean many things. Conference planners are moving away from simply offering an online, often asynchronous alternative and toward genuinely designing and implementing the hybrid model (Becerra-Astudillo et al., 2022). New technologies, tools, and practices have been developed to support hybrid event experiences. Recent discourse has also sought to examine the socio-technical foundations of hybrid reality. Hybrid systems can have advantages such as reproducing physical affordances and social cues to improve social presence, and multi-sensory stimulation to ensure that all event attendees feel they are on an equal footing (Ansah et al., 2023).

Individual and team performance, productivity, work-life balance, positive and negative work-home interactions, and employee retention may be enhanced by hybrid work that combines work from the office and home. To thrive in a challenging environment, businesses should promote policies that allow employees to work from home and change their workplace cultures (Ateeq, 2022). Employees who work in a hybrid model rate the experience positively, with roughly 75% saying it has improved their job satisfaction. A hybrid workplace requires communication, trust, connection, cooperation, and recognition of people's unique habits and needs. When implementing a hybrid workplace model, insurance, tax, and labor legislation must all be considered. Employees should also consider how much time they should spend remotely versus how much time should be spent in the office (Baker, 2021, p. 21). Some minor negative consequences of hybrid work include increased social isolation and stress or strain. It is important to overcome the potential negative impacts by providing peer, organizational, and technical support, all of which have been shown to reduce the adverse effects of remote work, such as stress, social isolation, and work-family conflict, while increasing job satisfaction and productivity (Bentley et al., 2016; Baker, 2021, p. 22).

True flexibility must go beyond location to include the different preferences and needs of an increasingly diverse employee workforce. A hybrid work model with vital inclusion can make an organization a desirable place to work. Therefore, it is important to view flexibility as a set of evolving expectations. It can be said that employees who are diverse in terms of demographic characteristics such as age, race, gender, and disability tend to embrace the hybrid work model. However, an inclusive approach is essential for widespread adoption of a hybrid work model with diverse employees (Dowling et al., 2022a). Successful results and high workforce performance can be achieved by adopting a hybrid work model. In addition to face-to-face meetings, remote participation can be encouraged with the help of digital tools. Plans must be created that take into account employees' expectations regarding cultural diversity and work practices. Revealing employees' differences and creating synergy among diverse employees can increase the efficiency of the hybrid work model and employees' job performance (Cousins et al., 2007). For example, it is known that the performance of older employees decreases when they work remotely, but their performance increases when they work on-site.

An update at this point reduces the risk of disparities based on age-related work arrangements. This situation reveals the importance of an inclusive approach that identifies and understands employees' needs by taking into account their age (Hamouche & Parent-Lamarche, 2023). Similarly, it is believed that hybrid work conditions should be regulated for neurodivergent employees and autistic employees. Neurodivergent employees believe they can be more productive and experience fewer distractions by working remotely. Likewise, autistic employees can improve their ability by working from home so that they can focus on their work (Szulc, 2022). In the context of these explanations, it should be noted that diverse employees have different, unique abilities and perspectives. Each employee has a unique value, and significant accommodations are needed to ensure their adaptation to the hybrid work model.

The characteristics of employees reflect their differences and diversity. Factors such as perspectives on jobs and work, levels of responsibility, and sources of motivation can reveal diversity. In this sense, a decision regarding the management of diversity can be made by examining factors such as employees' personality, character, habits, and perspectives on work, along with the demographic characteristics of the employees in the hybrid work model. Although the remote work style provides some convenience, it also presents some difficulties in the long run. First, it should be noted that the remote work style is a new practice and an essential part of the companies that have just adopted this practice. As companies and employees try to adapt to remote work styles, some administrative problems are inevitable. Although technological developments make remote work processes more effective, they can also cause communication problems (Sheridan, 2012). Instant communication and interaction in the remote work process are lower than in the office. To ensure this interaction, providing support to remote workers from people or groups working in the office, sending the message that they are a team, and organizing scheduled face-to-face meetings are other factors that will increase productivity (Watson-Manheim et al., 2000). Gómez et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of telecommunications in their research. They concluded that HR managers should establish strong communication with employees during the pandemic. Beyond the pandemic, virtual or online meetings and training have become a part of the work routine in education and business life. The frequency

of video calls in the workplace has increased thanks to video conferencing platforms such as WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, and FaceTime. In the workplace, meetings, conferences, brainstorming sessions, and even all informal video calls within the company take place via the above-mentioned online platforms (Bothra, 2020). Using digital communication tools in companies makes it possible to reach every employee and listen to their ideas. In this respect, digital communication tools are essential for engaging and managing employees who are different in terms of skills, thoughts, and ways of doing work. Essential questions about remote work are whether all employees can use technology and whether they have the technological means to do so. It is also important to consider that some individuals from Generation X may have less knowledge of technology. In contrast, those from Generation Y and Z, particularly, are much more adept at using information processing systems. Generational diversity usually occurs in technology-based jobs and work practices. Therefore, generational diversity should be considered by managers in both remote and on-site work styles.

Employers face a classic risk/reward choice as they work to transform existing workplace models. Hybrid work can offer greater flexibility, a better work-life balance, and a more tailored employee experience. These can have a disproportionately positive impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts and performance. Hybrid work can also create an uneven playing field and amplify in-group versus out-group dynamics, which can flip these advantages to the liabilities side of the ledger. For workplaces already challenged to diversify and retain employees, adopting ill-conceived hybrid work models could instead accelerate turnover, reduce inclusion, and harm performance (Dowling et al., 2022b).

In the context of the evolving hybrid work model, leaders must adapt their understanding of time and space to increase their agility in responding to disruptive events. Additionally, leaders must develop working relationships rooted in trust and embrace diversity. Workers around the world are now transforming their beliefs, ethics, and work habits to effectively adjust to prevailing circumstances (Raghavan et al., 2021; Radonić et al., 2021; Nowacka & Rzemieniak, 2022; Dowling et al., 2022b). Hybrid work must be inclusive and embrace diversity and equity as principles. To manage diversity effectively, managers must employ diversity management techniques. The concept of hybrid work extends beyond the mere development of labor

management strategies and the enhancement of technical, digital, and social skills. It also involves recognizing people as unique individuals worthy of admiration and respect. To successfully manage diverse work teams and modalities, leaders must demonstrate a high level of acumen while maintaining respect and valuing diversity (Silva et al., 2022). Hybrid work is becoming a dominant model in the world (Carroll & Conboy, 2020). Some challenges, such as lack of communication and social interaction, may occur while switching to the hybrid work model in organizations. Organizations benefit from diversity; diversity management would change the mindset of employees and managers (Kirton, 2020). Thus, it will help to apply the hybrid work model effectively.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research context

This research was carried out to reveal how diversity is managed in the hybrid work model. Although there are many studies on diversity management in the literature, no studies have been conducted on how employees with different qualifications and characteristics are managed in the hybrid work model. Especially with COVID-19, the hybrid work model has become widespread in many sectors. In this regard, while organizing the hybrid work model, it is necessary to manage the demands and expectations of employees with different attributes. Therefore, this research is essential to see how to achieve efficiency and how high performance can be achieved from employees with different qualifications and characteristics through the hybrid work model. This research was implemented to reveal how employees with different attributes are managed to be more productive through the hybrid work model. The scope of the research consists of business managers working in Turkey and abroad. A total of 18 managers working in Turkey and abroad constitute the research sample. The countries where the managers work and their origins are as follows:

Turkey, 5 Turkish managers
 USA, 1 Turkish manager
 England, 1 Turkish manager
 Kuwait, 3 Turkish managers, 1 British manager,
 1 Indian manager
 Turkey, 1 Azerbaijani manager
 Poland, 1 Slovenian manager
 Norway, 2 Norwegian managers

Somalia, 2 Somali managers

General information about the demographics and employment characteristics of the managers is as follows: 12 of the managers are men and 6 are women. Their ages range from 29 to 52. The companies they work for are generally small and medium-sized, with only one manager working in a company with 320 employees. The managers work in the education, finance, food, clothing, construction, and information systems sectors. Nine managers work in a company that uses the fully flexible model. The fully flexible model allows employees to choose when they want to work from the office and when they want to work from another location. Four managers work in a company that adopts a remote work-friendly model. The remote work-friendly model requires setting predefined limits for employees to work remotely. Five managers work in a company that has an office-centered hybrid model. The office-centered hybrid model refers to a largely office-centered work style with one or two days of remote work per week.

It is believed that the diversity of country and origin of the sample can add depth to the management of employees with different attributes through the hybrid work model. Therefore, it was decided not to study managers in a single country and from a single origin within the sample. Since the hybrid work model has become widespread and permanent in the world, it was decided that the research sample would consist of managers with different cultures, disciplines, understandings, and perspectives.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Qualitative research - Interviews

A qualitative research method was used in this study. The interview method was used to collect the research data. The interview method is valuable and adds flexibility to the data collection process. The participants' experiences, beliefs, and behaviors can be collected directly. The interview method provides the opportunity to learn about people's experiences by describing and explaining an event, situation, person, or idea. In this way, rich and detailed information about the research question can be obtained (Frances et al., 2009; Nunkoosing, 2005). In this study, it was decided that the interview method would be more appropriate because it contains rich data about the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of the managers regarding the management of different employees in the

hybrid work model. Accordingly, semi-structured interview questions were prepared. The research questions were formed based on the literature review on the hybrid work model and diversity management. A total of 12 research questions were created (Appendix A. Supplementary Data 1 - Interview Questions). Special attention was paid to how employees with different qualifications and characteristics are managed, especially in the hybrid work model. In this regard, research questions were created to determine how the employees are managed in the hybrid work model, which employees prefer the remote work or on-site work model, whether the opinions of all employees (remote and on-site) are taken into account in the decision-making processes, how the performance and promotion evaluation processes are carried out in the hybrid work model, and whether remote and on-site employees have the same rights in terms of access to resources in a hybrid work model. Face-to-face interviews were held with a total of six managers. Since it was impossible to reach the other managers in the physical environment, the research questions were prepared as an online interview and sent to them. A total of 12 managers responded in detail to the interview forms sent to them (Supplementary Material. Supplementary Data 2 - Interview Responses).

3.2.2 Qualitative research - Document analysis

While assuming that face-to-face interviews are more effective and efficient in data collection, it would not be wrong to say that the data collected through interview forms are obtained through document analysis rather than the interview method. Therefore, it can be said that the document analysis method is also used as a data collection tool along with the interview method. Document analysis is used to examine and evaluate the contents of printed and digital documents. Document analysis is necessary to reveal the meaning of the words, sentences, and expressions of the documents and to develop an understanding of the topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, document analysis, which is mainly used in empirical studies, has content that will reveal specific meanings and emphases for the research question. In this sense, relevant documents can provide examples and evidence for the research (Altheide, 2000).

Documents used for systematic evaluation in research come in many forms. They can include books and brochures; diaries and journals; event programs (i.e.,

printed outlines); letters and memoranda; newspapers; press releases; program proposals, application forms, and summaries; radio and television program scripts; organizational or institutional reports; survey data; and various public records (Bowen, 2009). In this research, managers' views and comments about diversity management in a hybrid work model were considered as documents. By eliciting the understandings and meanings underlying the opinions and comments, detailed data were obtained for the research.

3.2.3 *Validity*

Some criteria reveal the validity of qualitative research. These criteria are transferability, reliability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981). Transferability refers to the adaptability of research results to situations with similar participants and settings (Houser, 2018). In order to ensure transferability, clear information should be provided on how the sample was selected, the characteristics of the participants, and the data collection period (Johnson et al., 2020). In this study, purposive sampling was used. In this context, managers of employees with different attributes in the hybrid work model were chosen as the sample. It is believed that detailed information on how diversity management is carried out in a hybrid work model can be obtained from interviews with managers. In addition, the fact that the managers were located in different countries was taken into account, and diversity management in different cultural environments was evaluated together. This situation provides detailed findings on diversity management in the hybrid work model. The participants come from different origins. As mentioned above, in addition to Turkish managers, Slovenian, Azerbaijani, Indian, Somali, Norwegian, and British managers make up the research sample. The participants are experienced in their field and have worked in hybrid work models for a long time. A total of six managers were interviewed. The interviews lasted on average between 45-60 minutes. The researcher took notes of the managers' responses. Online questionnaires were sent to the other 12 managers. The managers responded to these questions within an average of one month. The managers were asked to provide detailed and honest answers to the questions.

Triangulation is the most widely used technique for ensuring reliability in qualitative studies. Triangulation refers to the use of two or more data collection methods (for example, observations and interviews) or two or more

data sources (for example, individual interviews with different group members) in the same research (Mays & Pope, 2000). This study used two data collection methods (interviews and document analysis), and triangulation resulting from the data collection method can be mentioned.

In order to ensure confirmability, which is another validity criterion, the existence of raw data such as field notes, audio recordings, analyzed data, the formation of findings (code, category, theme), and how the measures were developed (open-ended questions, observation, etc.) should be clearly stated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During the data collection using the interview method, no voice recordings were made and the data were collected in the form of notes. These notes can also be considered as field notes in the managers' environment due to the analysis of the obtained data; open coding, axis coding, and theme formation were carried out, respectively. Detailed information about the coding can be found in the next section.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

This research data was obtained from face-to-face interviews with the managers and responses to the online questionnaire. One researcher conducted the face-to-face interviews. The interviews lasted on average 45-60 minutes. The researcher took notes on the responses to the questions. Notes were taken in the form of keywords for each response, and the managers were not guided in any way during the interviews. Online questionnaires were sent to the managers by another researcher. A total of 12 managers were sent online questionnaires. The managers were asked to provide detailed and honest answers to the questions.

3.3.1 *Open coding*

Detailed data obtained from the interviews and online questionnaires were then analyzed. During the analysis process, the data were analyzed. The interview data and online question form were coded as open coding. Every word, sentence, phrase, gesture, facial expression (in the interviews), etc., related to managing employees with different attributes in the hybrid work model was coded. As a result of the open coding, 151 codes were obtained.

3.3.2 *Axis coding*

The codes obtained were then converted into categories using axis coding, the second stage of the analysis process. In this stage, the codes that emerged from the

open coding were grouped around the principal axes. Each axis represents a different dimension and perspective of diversity management in the hybrid work model. A total of 64 categories emerged from the axis coding.

3.3.3 Theme generation

In the last stage of the analysis process, the main themes of the research were formed by taking into account the common points of the emerging categories. A total of 11 themes emerged. These themes are equitable perspectives in the hybrid work model, demographic effects in the hybrid work model, inclusivity in the hybrid work model, personalized approaches, employee responsibilities, pillars of hybrid work, challenging conditions and their impact on the work model, factors that force on-site working, prejudices against hybrid work, changing performance in the hybrid work model, and changes in employees in the transition to the hybrid work model. These themes are composed of factors that

affect the management of employees with different qualifications and characteristics in the hybrid work model. Essentially, it can be said that these themes that emerged from the research will shed light on diversity management in a hybrid work model.

3.4 Findings

As a result of the research on diversity management in the hybrid work model, a total of 64 categories and 11 themes emerged (Table 1). Each theme offers different perspectives and suggestions regarding the management of employees with different qualifications and characteristics. The content of the themes consists of the factors that affect the management of employees with different attributes in the hybrid work model, the factors that can make the diversity management process successful, the prejudices against the hybrid work model, and the changes that occur in employees during the transition to the hybrid work model.

Table 1
Categories and themes that emerged as a result of the data analysis

Categories	Themes
Giving responsibility to employees in the hybrid work model without discrimination	Equitable approaches in the hybrid work model
Consistent and equitable performance appraisal	
Promotion decisions based on performance	
Equal access to resources for all	
Equal treatment	
Equal approach, but decisions based on the manager	
Equality in the hybrid work model	
Equal incentives for hybrid work	
Gender	
Age	
Generations	
Marital status (married women with children)	Demographic effects in the hybrid work model
Experience	
Physical endurance	
Family status	
Religious groups	
Inclusive decision-making process (online meetings, getting everyone's opinion)	Inclusivity in the hybrid work model
No immediate decisions on controversial issues	
No importance given to the work model in performance evaluation and promotion processes	
Democratic management style	
Seeing diversity as an opportunity in the hybrid work model	
Personalized management	
Sensitivity to personal needs/demands	
Individual characteristics and capabilities	
Industriousness/laziness	
Employees who can/cannot concentrate	

Table 1
Continued...

Categories	Themes
Hiring according to employee style	Personalized approaches
A unique way of working for those who perceive themselves differently	
Those who work with “micro-control”	
“Those who are dedicated to work (work-oriented employees)”	
Emphasizing employee expectations	Responsibilities of employees
Establishing policies and procedures	
Employee duties in the hybrid work model	
Getting to know employees and their differences	
Trust in employees	Pillars of hybrid work
Synergy	
Team stability	
Rotation	
Remote work support in challenging conditions	Challenging conditions and their effect on the work model
Physical distance	
On-site work of those with administrative duties	
The way of doing business and applications that are not aligned with the hybrid work model	
On-site work for specific tasks and use of internal sources	Factors that force on-site work
On-site work in situations requiring physical presence	
No remote access to resources in restricted areas	
Criticality of the job position	
Negative approach to hybrid work	Prejudices against hybrid work
Support for on-site work	
Challenges of online decision-making processes	
Unilateral decision making	
Greater adoption of the ideas from on-site workers	Changing performance in a hybrid work model
Promotion advantage for on-site workers	
Lack of official policy for employee productivity and well-being	
Encouragement of on-site work	
Efforts to break down prejudices about hybrid work need time for society to adapt to hybrid work	Changes in employees in the transition process to the hybrid work model
Changing performance in the hybrid work model	
Employees hide	
Decreased organizational commitment levels among remote workers	
Adaptation problems	
Aggressive behavior	
Some employees may be more vocal in this process	

The first of the themes is equitable approaches in the hybrid work model. The categories that determine the emergence of this theme are equal incentives for hybrid work, giving responsibility to employees in the hybrid work model without discrimination, consistent and equal performance evaluation, promotion decisions based on performance, equal access to resources for all, and equal treatment/approach. The second theme is demographic effects in the hybrid work model. The categories that emerge in this theme are gender, age, generations, marital status (married and women with children), experience, physical endurance, family status, and religious groups.

The third theme is inclusivity in the hybrid work model. The categories that emerge from this theme are inclusive decision-making processes, not making immediate decisions on controversial issues, not giving importance to the work model in performance evaluation and promotion processes, democratic management style, and seeing diversity as an opportunity in the hybrid work model. The fourth theme is personalized approaches. Categories that are effective in the emergence of the theme are personalized management, sensitivity to personal needs/demands, individual characteristics and capabilities, industriousness/laziness, employees who can/cannot concentrate, hiring

according to employee style, a unique way of working for those who perceive themselves differently, employees with “micro-control,” and “dedicated to work (work-oriented employees).” The fifth theme is employee responsibilities. Categories that express employee responsibilities emphasize employee expectations and establish policies and procedures. The sixth theme is the pillars of hybrid work. The categories that reveal this theme are getting to know the employees with their differences, building trust in employees, creating synergy, team stability, and rotation. The seventh theme is challenging conditions and their impact on the work model. The categories that affect the formation of this theme are remote work support in challenging conditions and physical distance. The eighth theme is factors that force on-site work. The categories that determine the emergence of these factors are the on-site work of those with administrative duties, the non-alignment of the way of doing business and practices with the hybrid work model, on-site work in specific tasks and use of internal resources, on-site work in situations that require physical presence, no remote access to resources in restricted areas, and the criticality of the job position. The ninth theme is prejudice against hybrid work. The categories that reveal this theme are the negative attitudes toward hybrid work, support for on-site work, challenges in online decision-making processes, unilateral decision making, greater adoption of ideas from on-site employees, promotion advantage for on-site employees, lack of official policy for employee productivity and well-being, encouragement of on-site work, and efforts to break down prejudices about hybrid work. The tenth theme relates to changing performance in the hybrid work model. The category that reveals this theme is also expressed as changing performance in the hybrid work model. Therefore, this category itself is the theme. The last theme is changes in employees in the

transition to the hybrid work model. The main categories that can express this theme are employees’ hiding, decreased organizational commitment levels of remote employees, adaptation problems, and aggressive behavior. In a positive sense, the ability of some employees to express themselves more in this process is seen as another category. Some codes that reflect a total of 64 categories that were critical to the emergence of 11 themes were directly evaluated as categories because these codes are believed to have a direct impact on the formation of themes.

In addition to these findings, there are a number of findings that are not considered themes but that may attract attention. The first of these findings is that there is no consensus that the hybrid work model attracts more diverse workers to the workplace. There is no consensus among managers about whether hybrid workplaces are more attractive to employees with diverse attributes. While some managers felt that hybrid workplaces could attract labor force candidates, others were unsure and hesitant. Another finding is that diversity may be more effective in recruitment than hybrid work processes. Accordingly, it was noted that the perceptions of diversity may be more important in recruitment processes. Finally, it can be said that business managers do not think much about diversity when displaying their management style in the Turkish work context. It can be seen that managers apply the same management style to all employees, and there is no perception of diversity in their thoughts. It can be said that the factors that affect this situation are the traditional management approach, habits, and generational characteristics.

In order to improve the validity of the research, the managers’ statements were also included in this study. Sample statements from the managers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Sample Statements from Participants

Statements	Themes
“All employees are working under the same conditions. All the rules and regulations apply to everyone without any exceptions.”	
“I believe if you’re truly a diverse company, you need to consider everyone.”	
“As long as the job task is completed, it doesn’t matter if they work remotely or on-site. No, working remotely doesn’t play a role in promotions. Promotions are only based on work performance, if they completed the tasks on time and correctly.”	Equitable approaches in the hybrid work model
“The evaluation process is the same for all employees. No segregation based on work modality.”	

Table 2
Continued...

Statements	Themes
<p>“Company policies regarding access to resources are applied equally, and compliance with policies regarding these resources is mostly consistent.”</p>	
<p>“Married women employees were more demanding about working remotely because they need to take care of children.”</p>	
<p>“Often more experienced employees make more advanced comments because they have experience from other jobs regarding similar situations.”</p>	
<p>“We have employees from different religious groups, but most of these employees are not religious - atheist.”</p>	
<p>“The main factor is age. Young workers are more effective than the others. As for gender, male workers are more result-oriented than women, and women are more process-oriented than men.”</p>	Demographic effects in the hybrid work model
<p>“Each individual’s physical attributes and personal beliefs are irrelevant to the workplace and the tasks to be completed. Therefore, the only management necessary is to control the task given to those based on their skill-set (no bias or consideration of physical attributes or culture).”</p>	
<p>“An online discussion group has been created, and everyone can voice their opinions, whether they work remotely or on-site.”</p>	Inclusivity in the hybrid work model
<p>“It doesn’t matter if they work remotely or on-site. No, working remotely doesn’t play a role in promotions. Promotions are only based on work performance.”</p>	
<p>“I talked to everyone a lot to gather their individual information. Based on their situation, I address their needs and try to adapt to them as much as possible.”</p>	
<p>“Situations arise from time to time where a policy may not be adhered to. If this happens, I would first explain this to the individual and establish their personal circumstances.”</p>	Personalized approaches
<p>“We give women with children the opportunity to work more remotely. They usually come to the office three days a week on average. We give moms more remote work opportunities to make their work easier.”</p>	
<p>“Firstly, you follow all the policies and procedures in place and apply all the situations to those policies. The main issue with remote work is the question of trust. You would communicate to all concerned what you expect and ways of working.”</p>	
<p>“Expecting them to be available during working hours, to attend meetings, and most importantly, to get the work done on time.”</p>	Employee responsibilities
<p>“The employees can work remotely; it doesn’t matter where they are, but the employee must be available when called. When there’s an urgent meeting, employees should be able to attend the meeting without internet problems.”</p>	
<p>“Employees are different based on their experience and qualifications, as well as the nature of the job. The management task is to recognize these differences and still keep the team working towards the goal.”</p>	
<p>“Working remotely or from the office depends on the position; some employees have to work from the office due to their work. For example, controllers must do on-site control; they don’t work remotely. It depends entirely on the work done. Unfortunately, working remotely in some departments is impossible.”</p>	Pillars of hybrid work
<p>“Employees with internet connection problems may sometimes be unable to participate in collaborative work. Such situations are very challenging; if they cannot solve this problem, I ask them to come and work from the office.”</p>	
<p>“Employees who were married and have had children, especially women with children, were favored to work remotely, and they worked more remotely. After all, people have children, but this was sometimes inefficient because we were always hearing children’s voices at meeting times, and the performance of women who paid more attention to their children inevitably decreased.”</p>	Challenging conditions and their effect on the work model
<p>“The task of some positions is to scan the sources constantly; they are very confidential, and we cannot transfer them to the online system. Therefore, the conditions are unsuitable for remote work, and employees must come to work.”</p>	
<p>“People who need access to office resources for security reasons must come to the workplace.”</p>	
<p>“Remote work for certain tasks is unfeasible and adds the burden of time and resources to ensure quality output. It is extremely task specific.”</p>	
<p>“People who need to be physically present due to the nature of the work will be required to report to the workplace.”</p>	Factors that force on-site work
<p>“Items that are only available in restricted areas cannot be accessed from home. E.g., critical servers require on-site access, communications equipment, and spares cannot be easily transported.”</p>	
<p>“It can be most challenging when conducting meetings online.”</p>	

Table 2
Continued...

Statements	Themes
“The performance of on-site employees will be higher than that of remote employees. The performance of those who work from the office and those who work remotely cannot be the same; the performance of those who come to work is always better.”	Prejudices against hybrid work
“Employees who work remotely do not feel authority in the workplace and avoid work.”	Changing performance in a hybrid work model
“It has worked both ways for staff members, and where there has been negative trend in work performance, corrective actions have been taken.”	
“Generally, they like to hide or act aggressively with remote work.”	
“I think that the performance of remote workers has decreased relatively. Some of them concentrated more on the home.”	
“Some employees had difficulty using the technology, and we were negatively affected. The good thing was that things went faster, and we took quick action on some issues. However, for some employees, it wasn't possible.”	Changes in employees in the transition process to the hybrid work model

4 Discussion

This study was conducted to demonstrate diversity management in a hybrid work model. In this sense, determining how diversity is managed in the hybrid work model, what elements are considered in this process, and what factors may affect the management of diversity constituted the primary motivation of the study. Although diversity management is a topic that is frequently searched for in the literature, the literature on diversity management in the hybrid work model is notably insufficient. Therefore, it is believed that this study covers the content that can fill the gap in the literature, and it is assumed that it can set the ground for further studies. This study offers some recommendations for managers to ensure diversity management in the hybrid work model.

4.1 Equality in the hybrid work model

It is said that social and workplace inequalities have increased with the remote work style that has become widespread, especially after the pandemic. This increase may indicate that businesses are experiencing deficiencies and problems in diversity and inclusion management (International Labour Organization, 2022). It is essential to address all employees equally and holistically to eliminate such inequalities. Beno (2021) found research that supports this idea. Interviews with employees and managers revealed the importance of acting in harmony and togetherness by keeping remote and on-site workers on the same level. Eriksson and Santesson (2021) found that the number of online meetings has increased with the remote work style and that all employees have had the same voice in these meetings. It was claimed that informal side discussions

would be prevented and that all employees would be involved in decision making. The importance of providing the same conditions for remote and on-site employees and including all employees in the decision-making process was emphasized. It was observed that equal management practices, the importance of which emerged from this study, were also addressed in the literature on diversity management in the hybrid work model. Therefore, it can be expected that this study will contribute to the development of an equal management approach that would include all employees in the hybrid work model.

4.2 Diversity elements and demographic effects

In the sample of this study, the diversity profile of the employees was characterized mainly by gender, age, marital status, experience, and physical endurance. Variables such as ethnicity, origin, creed, physical appearance, disadvantaged groups, and culture were not identified as dimensions of diversity in the sample of this study. Studies on diversity management seem to focus more on a few dimensions of diversity. These dimensions are sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, social class, education/function, and nationality/language (Pitts & Wise, 2010). Among these dimensions, gender and age were evaluated in the sample for this research. Diversity dimensions vary by region and country. The frequency and intensity of diversity dimensions vary across regions. Diversity dimensions such as gender, age, race or ethnicity, education, disability, language, and income appear at different levels in each region and country (Forbes, 2012). It is impossible to say that the exact dimensions of diversity are considered standard worldwide.

It can be said that workforce diversity in Turkey occurs in specific dimensions and is influenced by regional and cultural factors. Therefore, in terms of this study, results regarding the management of employees with more diversity in terms of gender, age, marital status, experience, and physical endurance occurred in the hybrid work model. Among these results, the effect of demographic factors occurred very clearly. It was observed that female employees with children preferred to work remotely. The same data have been presented in the literature regarding the work style preferences of female employees. Female employees prefer to work remotely in order to care for their children and balance their home-work life (Powell & Craig, 2015). In addition, it can be said that young and dynamic employees are being encouraged to work on-site, and the opinions of experienced employees are valued more than those of less experienced ones. In particular, the preference of young employees regarding the way of working has been observed. Young employees have different expectations regarding remote work styles, and these expectations must be met by their managers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). It can be said that top management is generally sensitive to the desire of employees, who differ in demographic terms, to work remotely or on-site, but also considers the interests of the business. In this regard, managers seek solutions that will provide both business benefits and employee satisfaction. In addition to demographic characteristics, it should be stated that there is a demand for remote work styles in challenging situations, such as physical distance from the workplace. The desire of women with children to work from home, expressed in demographic factors, can also be considered compelling. Although physical distance and the compelling conditions of women with children have been noted in the literature, it has been stated that working remotely would help them overcome these difficulties (Junction, 2022). In addition, illness, disability, and psychological problems can also be considered compelling factors.

4.3 Remote work and inclusivity versus traditional mindset

The difficulties of benefiting from the shared knowledge and cooperation of all employees working remotely and on-site have been mentioned in the literature (Cramton, 2001). It can be said that there is a tendency to make decisions and adopt practices that include everyone in the hybrid work model. Online meetings, performance and promotion evaluations regardless of work style, and the

assignment of responsibilities to each employee reveal this tendency. The results of this study may help to overcome these difficulties. It has been suggested that a high level of integration can be achieved by involving all employees in the decision-making process. So far, the importance of employee participation in decision-making processes in the physical work environment and of an inclusive approach have been emphasized. In the physical work environment, it is essential to establish mutual trust before and during work processes, respect all kinds of thoughts and perspectives, ensure that everyone has access to resources, remove barriers, and give feedback on the ideas of diverse employees (Bell and Reed, 2022). However, adequate ways to foster an inclusive approach in the hybrid work environment have not been developed. In this study, the importance of a democratic and inclusive management approach was determined, especially in online meetings, promotion, and performance evaluation processes. On the other hand, while face-to-face meetings are expected to decrease due to the remote work style, this may reveal a greater awareness of diversity. The literature suggests that employees and managers may be able to understand differences and diversity more quickly in the few meetings held in the physical environment due to the hybrid work model (Fiol & O'Connor, 2005). However, it should be noted that one group found traditional on-site employees more advantageous. In addition, some managers believe that on-site employees perform better and therefore deserve more promotions. These managers have a mindset that supports on-site work, pointing out that online meetings are difficult and slow down decision making. This situation is also indirectly related to the factors that force on-site work, a research topic. In an enterprise with managers who support on-site work, it can be expected that the employees will feel challenged in this situation. The traditional reasons that have led to the emergence of this challenge have also been identified in the literature. Barriers such as management skepticism, different planning cycles, and lack of support for teams have emerged prior to the implementation of work processes within the hybrid work model (Zasa et al., 2021). These barriers may indicate a mindset that favors on-site work. The factors that force on-site work consist of independent factors that are not directly related to the managers. The presence of people who have administrative duties in the office, the presence of people in specific and critical positions in the office, a way of doing business that does not align with the hybrid model, and the need to use internal resources can be given as examples of these factors.

These factors are not related to the mindset and attitude of managers, but are the factors that require on-site work out of necessity. However, as mentioned above, the presence of managers who support and encourage on-site work may indirectly force employees to work on-site.

4.4 Choosing a work style based on a personalized approach

Another important finding of the study was the need to develop a personalized approach to the hybrid work model. Every employee has different personality traits. Therefore, there is a need to develop a management approach that follows their personality traits. Due to their personalities, people who are more at ease and have low concentration are not welcome to work remotely. They are required to be more present in the office. Industriousness and laziness are other characteristics that require a different approach. While industrious people are controlled less, lazy people need to be controlled more. Lazy people are expected to be assigned less work, while industrious people are expected to be assigned more work. In this sense, it can be said that the way of assigning work changes according to the style of the employees. In the OECD report (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021), it was stated that there should be a focus on the personalities and expectations of employees to decide which employees will work remotely or on-site. In this regard, developing different personas for employees and determining ways to incorporate these personas into the hybrid work model will result in more efficient outcomes. Approaches may vary according to individual abilities. For example, people who are successful in fieldwork may not prefer to work in the office. In general, sensitivity is shown to the special requests and needs of the employees. Accordingly, work styles are updated. When deciding on the work style, the personality, work style, abilities, and special needs of the employees are taken into consideration. In this case, the diversity of personalities, skills, and business practices are in question, and it can be said that they, together with demographic characteristics, influence the decision on work styles (remote or on-site).

4.5 Essential pillars of hybrid work performance

In the literature, it has been stated that to achieve high efficiency and performance from employees, it is necessary to determine who wants to spend more time remotely, who chooses to be in the office, and what remote

management tactics should be used in the hybrid work model (Samuel & Robertson, 2021). At this point, it will be important to give responsibility to the employees. Giving responsibility to all employees without making any discrimination, explaining what is expected from the employees, publishing policies and procedures for this, creating a sense of duty, and adhering to the established schedule and deadline are also crucial for the success of the hybrid work model. However, it is necessary to emphasize the following distinction: before assigning responsibilities to employees, it is necessary to confirm that the employees are trusted, cared for, their well-being is considered, and an environment is created in which they feel comfortable. After this confirmation, employees can be expected to perform at a high level after being given responsibility. Especially during the pandemic, it was observed that managers had difficulty trusting remote workers and had to constantly control them (Parker et al., 2020). However, it was observed that employee productivity did not decrease in the later stages of the pandemic (Lund et al., 2020). This finding suggests that employers should have confidence in their employees. In this respect, mutual and shared trust between managers and employees is very important for hybrid work performance (Sharma et al., 2002). Therefore, this study also found that employees should be trusted for the hybrid work model and performance. The research revealed that the performance of employees varied according to their work styles. In addition to the finding that on-site workers had higher performance, it was also observed that young people and employees who did not have a good command of technology had low performance in the remote work style. However, it should be noted that there was an increase in the performance of remote workers. Both positive and negative performance changes were observed in the hybrid work model.

4.6 Changes for employees in the transition process to the hybrid work model

Identifying the reasons behind performance changes may also be a topic worth investigating. During the transition to the hybrid work model, besides the changes in performance, there were also changes in employee attitudes and behaviors. Although these changes were not frequent, it was noted that employees tended to hide themselves or behave aggressively. Self-hiding behavior was higher among employees who believed

they had different characteristics. These employees wanted to establish good relationships with groups with primary cultures and displayed self-hiding behaviors to protect these relationships (Miminoshvili & Černe, 2022). Aggressive tendencies and behaviors appeared in employees who were rejected by others and could not establish social ties (Twenge et al., 2001). The fact that these employees have different characteristics, personalities, and thoughts can effectively prevent them from being accepted by others. The tendency of employees to hide or show aggressive behavior indicated that there could be problems in diversity management, and the finding that these tendencies and behaviors could emerge during the transition to the hybrid work model was presented in this study. In addition, adaptation problems and a decrease in the level of commitment to the organization were other issues that occurred among the employees. On the positive side, remote workers did want to express themselves more, although not often. These employee changes in the transition to a hybrid work model can be explained by their differences and distinguishing attributes.

4.7 Prejudices against hybrid work

Although many guiding factors regarding the management of diverse employees in the hybrid work model have emerged, it is observed that prejudices against the hybrid work model persist. The outlined mindset and company practices oppose the hybrid work model. Attaching more importance to the ideas of on-site workers, complaining about the difficulty of online meetings and unilateral decision-making styles, and emphasizing that on-site work is more efficient at every opportunity show the prejudice against the hybrid work model. Especially today, it is observed that there is still mistrust from top management toward employees who work remotely and that there is not enough support for them (Policy Report, 2022). Although there are other challenges associated with working remotely, distrust and a lack of support are two factors that make the prejudice against remote work more pronounced. It can be argued that companies that adopt the hybrid work model are also trying to break down this prejudice. For this reason, companies do not hesitate to show the concrete contributions of the hybrid work model at every opportunity.

5 Conclusion

This study was carried out on diversity management in the hybrid work model. The aim was to reveal how employees with different characteristics and qualifications are managed in the hybrid work model, what factors are taken into account in this process, and what factors influence diversity management. Eleven themes emerged from the research, and each theme offered different perspectives and directions on diversity management in the hybrid work model. While these themes provided guidance on managing diverse employees in the hybrid work model, they also included factors affecting the management process and critical points to be considered. The results are seen as a guide for corporate organizations adopting the hybrid work model. Considering the differences between on-site and remote work styles, it is necessary to update the diversity management approach in the on-site work style according to the hybrid work model. It is believed that the findings of this study can provide an up-to-date guide for diversity management in hybrid work models.

6 Limitations

This study was carried out within a specific and small sample, and the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population. Undoubtedly, the representativeness of the findings will increase as the amount of data increases.

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APPENDIX A

Supplementary Data 1 - Interview Questions

Before answering the questions, it will be helpful to explain two important concepts related to the study. These concepts are “workplace diversity” and the “hybrid work model.” Here is an explanation of the concepts:

Workplace diversity: This refers to a workplace consisting of employees with different characteristics such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, creed, culture, etc. Companies with workplace diversity include employees with a wide variety of characteristics and experiences.

Hybrid work model: This refers to flexible work arrangements in which employees work partly in the office and partly at home.

In light of the explanations above, please answer the following questions.

1) How do you manage your diverse employees (age, gender, appearance, marital status, ethnicity, creed, culture, values, status, perspective, disadvantaged groups, etc.) in a hybrid workplace (a work environment that combines attributes of remote work and on-site work)?

2) What principles do you use to determine remote working conditions? Which of your employees (age, gender, appearance, marital status, ethnicity, creed, culture, value, status, perspective, disadvantaged groups, etc.) most want to work remotely? Which of your employees most want to work on-site? What do you look for when evaluating these requests?

3) Does the hybrid work environment apply to all employees? If not, what are the reasons?

4) Are all employees encouraged to hybrid work without distinction?

5) How do you conduct decision-making processes (in meetings, interviews, etc.) in a workplace with remote employees and on-site employees? Is the opinion of each employee taken into account in decision-making processes? Are decisions made in consultation with everyone (remote and on-site employees)?

6) Do you evaluate your remote and on-site employees according to the same performance processes? Does location (home or office, etc.) play a role in your promotion decisions?

7) Can remote employees access resources whenever they need to? What is the policy regarding their access to resources? Is there equal access to resources for remote and on-site employees?

8) If you have employees who perceive themselves differently than others, what type of work (remote or on-site) do you think these employees are inclined to do? Do you have a policy to get efficiency from these employees and make them feel good?

9) What are the factors (age, gender, appearance, marital status, ethnicity, creed, culture, value, status, perspective, disadvantaged groups, etc.) that challenge you in terms of diversity in the hybrid workplace?

10) Have there been any employees in your workplace who have experienced significant changes in their performance, either positive or negative, as a result of working remotely?

11) Have there been any employees in your workplace who have experienced significant positive or negative behavioral changes (such as acting aggressively, hiding themselves, or expressing themselves more) as a result of working remotely?

12) Do you believe that a hybrid workplace (a work environment that combines the attributes of remote work and on-site work) will help attract a more diverse workforce (in terms of knowledge, equipment, skills, demographics, culture, ethnicity, etc.) to your organization?

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Supplementary Data 2 - Interviews Responses

Supplementary data 2 to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FGV9CB>

Financial support:

There are no funding agencies to report.

Open Science:

Yeke, Selçuk; Özveren, Cem Güney, 2024, "Supplementary Data -Enabling the Management of Diverse Employees in the Hybrid Work Model: A Qualitative Study", <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FGV9CB>, Harvard Dataverse, V1

Conflicts of interest:

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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