

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT, SUPERVISORY CULTURE, AND THE CHALLENGES OF INSTITUTIONALISING HYBRID WORK IN NIGERIA'S PUBLIC SERVICE: A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NITDA)

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ABSTRACT

The adoption of remote and hybrid work has accelerated across public sector organisations since the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting new opportunities and challenges for digital governance and public service delivery. However, the formal adoption of hybrid work policies does not necessarily translate into their effective institutionalisation. This study examined the role of leadership support, supervisory culture, policy communication, and institutional barriers in shaping the institutionalisation of hybrid work at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Nigeria. Anchored in institutional theory, the study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from a purposively selected stratified sample of 173 employees at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) headquarters in Abuja using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings indicate that leadership support for hybrid work is generally strong, with leadership modelling recording the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 4.02$), while policy awareness was also relatively high ($\bar{x} = 3.89$). Nevertheless, presence-oriented supervision remains evident (reverse-coded $\bar{x} = 2.82$), indicating that traditional supervisory practices continue to influence the implementation of hybrid work. Directors, who occupy a pivotal role in translating policy into operational practice, recorded the lowest policy confidence score ($\bar{x} = 3.62$), compared with middle management ($\bar{x} = 3.98$) and junior staff ($\bar{x} = 4.01$), suggesting communication and implementation gaps at the departmental level. The study further identified presence bias, managerial distrust, digital literacy gaps, inconsistent leadership communication, inadequate infrastructure, and the absence of detailed operational guidelines as the principal barriers to effective hybrid work implementation. Although employees

generally perceive hybrid work as sustainable, differences in digital readiness between junior and longer-serving staff highlight the need for continuous capacity development. The study concludes that hybrid work at NITDA has achieved formal organisational legitimacy but remains only partially institutionalised because deeply embedded supervisory norms and organisational practices continue to constrain its full implementation. The study recommends the development of a comprehensive hybrid work operational framework, strengthened leadership communication, results-based performance management, continuous digital capacity-building, and targeted supervisory training to support the long-term institutionalisation of hybrid work within Nigeria's public service.

Keywords: Hybrid work; institutionalisation; leadership support; supervisory culture; Institutional Theory; digital governance; public sector reform; NITDA; Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The adoption of remote and hybrid work has become an important component of public sector reform following the COVID-19 pandemic, as governments increasingly seek to improve organisational flexibility, service delivery, and workforce productivity through digital technologies. In Nigeria, this transition is reflected in major policy initiatives such as the Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan (FCSSIP) 2021–2025, the Nigeria Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) 2020–2030, and the National e-Government Masterplan, all of which advocate a digitally enabled, technology-driven, and performance-oriented public service (Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation [OHCSF], 2021; National Information Technology Development Agency [NITDA], 2020). These initiatives demonstrate the Federal Government's commitment to modernising public administration and institutionalising flexible work practices across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs).

Despite these policy commitments, evidence suggests that the institutionalisation of hybrid work within

Nigeria's public service remains inconsistent. While many public organisations have formally adopted flexible work arrangements, implementation continues to be constrained by bureaucratic work cultures, supervisory practices, inconsistent policy communication, limited digital capacity, and infrastructural deficiencies (Okolie&Egbon, 2025; Adias& Raimi, 2025). Consequently, the existence of formal policy frameworks has not necessarily resulted in consistent organisational practice. This disconnect between formal policy adoption and day-to-day implementation represents a significant governance challenge because the anticipated benefits of hybrid work; including improved productivity, organisational flexibility, employee well-being, and enhanced public service delivery, cannot be fully realised where implementation remains fragmented.

A more fundamental concern is that there is limited empirical evidence explaining why hybrid work remains only partially institutionalised within Nigeria's public sector, particularly in agencies expected to champion digital transformation. Existing studies have largely examined remote work from the perspectives of employee

productivity, technology adoption, or leadership practices, while comparatively little attention has been paid to the organisational processes through which hybrid work becomes embedded as a routine institutional practice. Consequently, there is limited understanding of how leadership support, supervisory culture, policy communication, and organisational norms collectively influence the institutionalisation of hybrid work within public sector organisations.

This knowledge gap is particularly significant in the case of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). As Nigeria's lead agency for digital transformation and the implementation of national digital policies, NITDA is expected to exemplify best practices in technology-enabled work systems. However, if hybrid work remains only partially institutionalised within NITDA despite its digital mandate, leadership commitment, and organisational capacity, it raises important questions about the readiness of other public sector organisations with fewer technological and institutional resources to implement similar reforms successfully. Understanding the organisational factors influencing hybrid work within NITDA is therefore important not only for strengthening the Agency's internal operations but also for informing broader public sector reform and digital governance initiatives across Nigeria.

It is against this background that this study examines the role of leadership support, supervisory culture, policy communication, institutional barriers, and digital readiness in the institutionalisation of hybrid work at NITDA. Guided by

Institutional Theory, the study argues that the successful institutionalisation of hybrid work depends not only on the existence of formal policies but also on the alignment of organisational culture, managerial practices, communication processes, and employee capabilities. By providing empirical evidence from Nigeria's foremost digital governance institution, the study contributes to the growing literature on hybrid work, digital governance, and public sector reform in developing countries while offering practical insights for policymakers and public sector managers seeking to sustain flexible work arrangements.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do leadership support and policy communication influence the institutionalisation of hybrid work at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)?
2. What supervisory and institutional factors influence the effective implementation of hybrid work at NITDA?
3. How do differences in employees' digital readiness affect the sustainability of hybrid work at NITDA?

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the institutionalisation of hybrid work at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA).

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the influence of leadership support and policy communication on the institutionalisation of hybrid work at NITDA.
2. Assess the supervisory and institutional factors influencing the implementation of hybrid work at NITDA.
3. Examine how differences in employees' digital readiness affect the sustainability of hybrid work at NITDA.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Hybrid Work and the Institutionalisation of Hybrid Work

The rapid expansion of hybrid work represents one of the most significant organisational transformations of the past decade. Although flexible work arrangements predate the COVID-19 pandemic, the global health crisis accelerated their adoption across both private and public sector organisations, fundamentally altering assumptions about where and how work should be performed (Kniffin et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). What initially emerged as an emergency response has since evolved into a strategic organisational model through which institutions seek to improve operational resilience, enhance employee well-being, sustain productivity, and ensure business continuity in increasingly uncertain environments (Kniffin et al., 2021; OECD, 2023). Rather than being viewed simply as an alternative work arrangement, hybrid work is now widely regarded as part of broader organisational transformation

driven by digital technologies and changing workforce expectations.

The literature, however, suggests that hybrid work cannot be understood as a uniform organisational practice. Organisations differ considerably in how they combine remote and office-based work, reflecting variations in operational requirements, organisational culture, technological capability, and managerial philosophy (Kniffin et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Some institutions prescribe fixed schedules for workplace attendance, whereas others allow greater flexibility based on the nature of employees' responsibilities or departmental needs. These differences indicate that hybrid work is better understood as a continuum of work arrangements than as a single management model. Consequently, its effectiveness depends less on where employees perform their duties than on how organisations redesign work processes, communication systems, supervision, and performance management to support flexible working.

This challenge is particularly evident within the public sector, where organisational change often occurs within institutional environments characterised by formal procedures, hierarchical authority, and extensive accountability requirements (Othemeng&Ayee, 2016). Public organisations are expected to embrace digital innovation while maintaining transparency, equity, information security, and uninterrupted service delivery. Hybrid work therefore requires more than technological infrastructure or revised workplace policies; it demands adjustments to managerial practices, organisational culture, and administrative systems capable of supporting work across

multiple locations. Studies on digital government similarly argue that successful hybrid work depends on the alignment of leadership, technology, organisational processes, and employee capabilities rather than on technology alone (Mergel, Edelmann & Haug, 2019; OECD, 2023).

Understanding whether such reforms become embedded in organisational life brings attention to the concept of institutionalisation. Scott (2014) describes institutionalisation as the process through which organisational practices acquire legitimacy and become integrated into routine behaviour, shared norms, and everyday decision-making. This distinction is important because organisations frequently adopt new policies without fundamentally altering how work is carried out. Meyer and Rowan (1977) explain this phenomenon through the notion of institutional decoupling, where formal structures are introduced to demonstrate legitimacy while established routines remain largely unchanged. Applied to hybrid work, this suggests that the existence of flexible work policies does not necessarily indicate that hybrid work has become an accepted organisational practice. Institutionalisation occurs only when organisational policies are reinforced by leadership behaviour, supervisory practices, communication systems, and employee acceptance in ways that make hybrid work part of normal organisational operations.

These issues are particularly relevant to ongoing public sector reforms in Nigeria. Recent initiatives, including the Nigeria Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NITDA, 2020), the Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan (OHCSF, 2021), and the National e-

Government Masterplan, demonstrate a growing commitment to digital transformation and technology-enabled governance. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that translating these policy ambitions into sustained organisational practice remains uneven, reflecting differences in organisational culture, managerial capability, bureaucratic traditions, and levels of digital maturity (Adias & Raimi, 2025; Bassey, 2026; Okolie&Egbon, 2025). This makes the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) an especially important setting for examining whether hybrid work has progressed beyond policy adoption to become an institutionalised feature of organisational practice.

2.2.2 Leadership Support and Policy Communication

Whether hybrid work becomes embedded within an organisation depends largely on the quality of leadership directing the transition. Organisational change rarely succeeds through policy directives alone; it requires leaders who can articulate a clear vision, mobilise resources, address employee concerns, and sustain commitment throughout the implementation process (Van Wart, 2013; Yukl, 2013). This is particularly true in public sector organisations, where reform initiatives often encounter established bureaucratic routines and competing institutional priorities (Ohemeng&Aye, 2016). Leadership support therefore extends beyond formal approval of hybrid work policies to include the visible actions through which leaders legitimise new ways of working and encourage employees to adopt them.

An important aspect of this process is policy communication. Hybrid work alters long-established expectations regarding supervision, collaboration, accountability, and performance, making clear and consistent communication essential for successful implementation. Employees need to understand not only the existence of hybrid work policies but also how they apply to everyday responsibilities, reporting relationships, digital collaboration, and performance evaluation (Kniffin et al., 2021; OECD, 2023). Where communication is fragmented or inconsistent, uncertainty increases, implementation varies across departments, and employees are more likely to rely on informal practices than on organisational guidelines.

The relationship between leadership support and policy communication is therefore mutually reinforcing. Leadership provides the strategic commitment necessary for organisational change, while communication translates that commitment into shared understanding and coordinated action. Institutional Theory offers a useful explanation for this relationship by suggesting that new organisational practices become legitimate only when they are consistently reinforced through managerial behaviour and organisational routines (Scott, 2014). Conversely, weak leadership or ineffective communication creates conditions under which organisations may formally endorse hybrid work without fundamentally changing managerial practices, thereby reinforcing the institutional decoupling described by Meyer and Rowan (1977).

For organisations pursuing digital transformation, leadership support and policy communication are therefore not

independent administrative functions but complementary mechanisms through which hybrid work moves from policy aspiration to routine organisational practice. Their effectiveness is likely to shape how consistently hybrid work is implemented across different units of NITDA and whether employees perceive flexible working as an established organisational norm rather than a temporary management initiative.

2.2.3 Supervisory Culture and Institutional Barriers

Leadership may establish the direction of organisational change, but its success ultimately depends on how supervisors interpret and implement organisational policies in their day-to-day interactions with employees. This places supervisory culture at the centre of the institutionalisation process. Supervisors are responsible for translating strategic decisions into operational practice, and their attitudes towards flexibility, trust, and accountability often determine whether hybrid work is experienced as a genuine organisational reform or merely a formal policy. Schein and Schein (2021) argue that managerial practices are shaped not only by formal rules but also by shared assumptions and unwritten norms that influence how supervisors exercise authority and evaluate performance. These informal expectations can either reinforce or undermine organisational change.

The transition to hybrid work has challenged many of the assumptions that underpin traditional public sector management. Bureaucratic systems have historically relied on direct supervision, visible attendance, and procedural compliance as indicators of employee

commitment and organisational control (Weber, 1947; Denhardt et al., 2022). Hybrid work, by contrast, shifts managerial attention towards trust, collaboration, and performance outcomes rather than physical presence (Kniffin et al., 2021, 2021; OECD, 2023). This shift is not always straightforward. Studies have shown that many supervisors continue to associate visibility in the workplace with productivity, commitment, and competence, a tendency commonly described as presence bias or presenteeism (Mohamed, 2023). Such assumptions may influence decisions relating to work allocation, performance appraisal, and career progression, even where formal organisational policies encourage flexible working.

These managerial behaviours reflect broader institutional barriers that often constrain organisational reform. Institutional barriers arise not only from limited technological capacity but also from deeply embedded organisational routines, bureaucratic procedures, resistance to change, fragmented communication, and traditional performance management systems that are slow to adapt to new ways of working (Scott, 2014; Mergel et al., 2019; OECD, 2023). Kotter (2012) observes that resistance to organisational change frequently reflects uncertainty and attachment to familiar practices rather than deliberate opposition. Within hybrid work environments, this may manifest in excessive monitoring, reluctance to delegate responsibility, or inconsistent application of organisational policies across departments.

These issues remain particularly relevant within the Nigerian public service, where

administrative structures continue to reflect strong hierarchical traditions despite ongoing digital reforms. Consequently, the institutionalisation of hybrid work requires not only supportive leadership but also a gradual shift towards supervisory practices that prioritise trust, collaboration, and measurable performance over physical presence. Whether such changes have occurred within NITDA remains an important empirical question, as supervisory culture may ultimately determine whether hybrid work is sustained as an organisational norm or constrained by enduring institutional barriers.

2.2.4 Digital Readiness

Even where leadership is supportive and organisational policies encourage flexible working, hybrid work cannot be sustained without adequate digital readiness. Early discussions of digital transformation often focused on investments in technology, but more recent scholarship argues that successful implementation depends equally on employees' digital competence, organisational preparedness, and the institutional capacity to integrate technology into everyday work processes (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2021). Digital readiness therefore extends beyond the availability of hardware and software to encompass the organisational conditions that enable employees to work effectively within technology-mediated environments.

The literature consistently identifies digital competence, technological infrastructure, organisational support, and digital confidence as central dimensions of digital readiness (European Commission, 2022; ILO, 2021). Employees require the skills to use collaborative platforms, manage

information securely, and adapt to evolving digital systems, while organisations must provide reliable connectivity, secure digital infrastructure, technical support, and continuous learning opportunities. Equally important is employees' confidence in using these technologies, as individuals who perceive themselves to be digitally capable are generally more willing to adopt new work practices and adapt to organisational change (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021). Digital readiness is therefore both an individual and organisational capability that shapes the effectiveness of hybrid work.

These issues assume particular significance within the public sector, where digital transformation must occur alongside requirements for accountability, cybersecurity, and the protection of public information. Although Nigeria has made significant progress through initiatives such as the Nigeria Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NITDA, 2020) and the Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan (OHCSF, 2021), studies continue to report uneven levels of digital infrastructure, disparities in digital skills, and inconsistencies in organisational support across public institutions (Adias & Raimi, 2025; Usman et al., 2025). Consequently, digital readiness represents more than a technical requirement; it is an institutional capability that influences whether hybrid work can become a sustainable organisational practice within agencies such as NITDA.

2.2.5 Conceptual Relationship among the Study Variables

The literature reviewed suggests that the institutionalisation of hybrid work is not the outcome of a single organisational

intervention but the product of interacting organisational, managerial, and technological conditions. Although hybrid work is often introduced through formal policies, its sustainability depends on whether those policies become embedded in routine organisational behaviour. Institutional Theory provides an appropriate lens for understanding this process by arguing that organisational reforms become institutionalised only when formal structures, managerial practices, and shared organisational norms reinforce one another (Scott, 2014). Where these elements are misaligned, organisations may demonstrate formal compliance while everyday practices continue to reflect established routines, thereby producing the institutional decoupling identified by Meyer and Rowan (1977).

Within this framework, leadership support provides the strategic commitment that legitimises hybrid work and signals its importance as an organisational priority (Van Wart, 2013; Yukl, 2013). However, leadership commitment alone is unlikely to produce sustained organisational change unless it is reinforced through effective policy communication. Clear communication reduces ambiguity, promotes consistency in implementation, and enables employees and supervisors to develop a shared understanding of organisational expectations (Ohemeng&Ayee, 2016). Leadership and communication therefore operate as complementary mechanisms through which organisational intentions are translated into coordinated action.

The review further indicates that supervisors occupy a pivotal position in this process because they mediate the

relationship between organisational policy and employees' day-to-day experiences. Supervisory practices grounded in trust, collaboration, and results-oriented management are more likely to support hybrid work than those that continue to emphasise physical presence and hierarchical control (Charalampous et al., 2019; Mohamed, 2023; Schein & Schein, 2021). At the same time, institutional barriers, including bureaucratic procedures, resistance to change, and traditional administrative routines, may constrain implementation even where supportive policies exist (Kotter, 2012; Mergel et al., 2019). These barriers illustrate why the adoption of hybrid work policies does not necessarily guarantee their successful institutionalisation.

Digital readiness strengthens this relationship by providing the organisational capability required to sustain technology-enabled work. Leadership initiatives, supportive supervisory practices, and well-designed policies are unlikely to achieve their intended outcomes if employees lack the necessary digital competencies or if organisations cannot provide reliable technological infrastructure and continuous technical support (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2021; European Commission, 2022). Accordingly, digital readiness functions as an enabling condition that allows organisational reforms to be translated into effective workplace practice.

Taken together, these relationships suggest that the institutionalisation of hybrid work within NITDA depends on the alignment of strategic leadership, effective communication, supportive supervisory culture, minimal institutional barriers, and

adequate digital readiness. The conceptual premise underpinning this study is that hybrid work is most likely to become an established organisational practice when these organisational conditions reinforce one another. Conversely, weaknesses in any one of these areas may limit the extent to which hybrid work progresses beyond formal policy adoption to become an enduring feature of organisational life.

2.2 Empirical Review of Studies

The institutionalisation of hybrid work within Nigeria's public service has attracted increasing scholarly attention as public organisations seek to balance operational efficiency with workplace flexibility. Although the literature on hybrid work in Nigeria remains relatively limited, existing empirical evidence consistently suggests that leadership support, supervisory culture, organisational readiness, and digital capability are fundamental determinants of successful implementation. The reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that institutionalising hybrid work requires more than technological deployment; it demands significant changes in leadership behaviour, supervisory practices, organisational culture, and human resource management.

Using a cross-sectional survey of employees across 34 public institutions in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Owotemu, Bernardi, and Ayo-Soyemi (2024) examined the influence of leadership typologies on organisational performance. Their findings revealed a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.569$) between autocratic leadership and organisational performance, while the autocratic style remained the dominant

leadership approach within the institutions surveyed (mean = 4.41). The authors argued that excessive centralisation of authority suppresses innovation, employee initiative, and organisational adaptability, all of which are essential for sustaining hybrid work environments. Complementing these findings, Suleiman (2025), in an empirical investigation of leadership practices in Nigerian public institutions, reported that democratic and participative leadership styles significantly improved employee engagement, workplace climate, and organisational effectiveness. According to the study, participative leadership encourages innovation and collaborative problem-solving, whereas hierarchical leadership structures inhibit the flexibility required for digital work environments.

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of adaptive leadership, empirical evidence suggests that implementation within the Nigerian public service remains limited. Drawing on survey data from public sector officials, Bawa (2025) found that although 85% of respondents acknowledged the need for adaptive leadership, only 32% reported experiencing such leadership practices within their organisations. The study attributed this disparity to bureaucratic rigidity, organisational resistance to change, and a prevailing "react-and-fix" administrative culture that discourages proactive innovation. These findings suggest that institutional support for hybrid work extends beyond policy formulation and requires leaders capable of managing organisational transformation.

The effectiveness of hybrid work also depends heavily on supervisory practices.

Investigating Management Control Systems (MCS) within Nigerian consulting firms, Ogunleye, Sansa, and Isa (2026) found that employee-centred supervision and results-oriented accountability mechanisms were significantly stronger predictors of successful hybrid work implementation than conventional procedural controls. Their regression analysis demonstrated that organisations relying on technology-mediated monitoring, leadership involvement, and performance outcomes achieved better implementation outcomes than those emphasising direct supervision. Although conducted within the private sector, the study provides important lessons for public organisations transitioning towards flexible work arrangements.

Evidence from the Nigerian public service similarly highlights the limitations of traditional supervisory culture. Drawing on survey data collected from selected Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Delta State, Okolie&Egbon (2025) found that managerial scepticism and office-centred supervisory norms constituted major institutional barriers to remote work adoption. Approximately 58% of respondents believed that supervisors continued to associate employee productivity with physical visibility rather than measurable outputs, reinforcing a culture of presenteeism that undermines trust-based performance management. These findings indicate that institutionalising hybrid work requires a fundamental shift from attendance-based supervision to outcome-oriented performance evaluation.

Infrastructure remains another significant constraint. Based on an empirical

assessment of employees across the Federal Ministries of Finance, Education, and Foreign Affairs, Nwambuko, Ugwu, and Orusaibogha (2025) reported that 60% of public servants experienced reduced efficiency while working remotely, largely because of unstable electricity supply (78%) and poor internet connectivity (72%). The study concluded that the effectiveness of hybrid work is conditional upon both organisational support and broader national digital infrastructure, suggesting that policy reforms alone are insufficient without corresponding investments in enabling infrastructure.

Relatedly, Adias and Raimi (2025), in a cross-sectoral review of remote work practices in Nigeria, found that although several organisations had introduced hybrid work arrangements, only 22% had incorporated them into long-term human resource strategies. The authors observed that many public institutions continued to treat hybrid work as a temporary response to emergency situations rather than as a permanent organisational strategy. Nevertheless, they identified the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) as among the few public institutions making notable, albeit fragmented, progress towards digital governance and flexible work policy adoption.

The role of digital competence has equally received considerable empirical attention. Through a conceptual review of hybrid work adoption across Nigerian Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Usman, Joshua, and Akinloye (2025) proposed that ICT competence functions as a critical moderator of hybrid work effectiveness. They argued that inadequate digital

literacy among both supervisors and employees contributes to role ambiguity, ineffective communication, and weak virtual supervision, thereby reducing organisational performance. Their findings suggest that investments in digital technologies must be complemented by continuous capacity building if hybrid work is to become institutionalised within the public service.

Beyond technology and supervision, leadership support remains central to employee wellbeing and organisational performance. Applying the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework to employees of MTN Nigeria in Bayelsa State, Ayogoi (2026) found that organisational support was the strongest predictor of employee wellbeing and productivity under hybrid work arrangements. Similarly, Lamidi (2025), examining Public Service Motivation (PSM) among Nigerian public servants, reported that supportive leadership significantly enhanced employee engagement while mitigating the social isolation associated with remote work. Importantly, Lamidi argued that traditional organisational rituals and ceremonial interactions, which reinforce motivation and organisational identity in conventional bureaucracies, should be deliberately redesigned for virtual environments to sustain employee cohesion under hybrid work systems.

Organisational culture has likewise emerged as a recurring theme in the literature. Investigating organisational culture across Nigerian Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Etebo (2025) found that mission clarity and employee involvement exerted significant positive effects on human resource performance,

whereas adaptability did not significantly influence performance because of entrenched bureaucratic inertia and organisational rigidity. Supporting this position, Olakunle et al. (2025) concluded that innovative leadership initiatives within Nigerian public institutions were frequently constrained by systemic inefficiencies, inconsistent leadership commitment, and bureaucratic resistance to organisational change.

Studies on public sector reform further reinforce the importance of leadership in sustaining organisational transformation. Drawing on evidence from institutional reforms within the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Bassey (2026) found that relational governance, described as "community logic," strengthened organisational trust, ownership, and employee commitment during reform implementation. The study further argued that leadership accessibility and sustained interaction between managers and employees constitute important mechanisms for improving organisational performance during periods of institutional change. Likewise, Nasamu et al. (2025), in their review of transformational leadership within Nigerian public sector organisations, concluded that transformational leadership enhances knowledge sharing, employee commitment, and service delivery by encouraging employees to transcend routine administrative responsibilities. However, they noted the limited availability of empirical studies examining how transformational leadership specifically influences hybrid work implementation within Nigerian public institutions.

Finally, Sulaiman and Onah (2025), examining hybrid work and organisational productivity across multiple sectors, observed that although productivity declined during the initial transition to remote work, performance improved progressively as organisations institutionalised digital collaboration platforms, structured communication protocols, and managerial support systems. Their findings suggest that the effectiveness of hybrid work depends less on the work arrangement itself than on the quality of organisational leadership, supervision, communication, and institutional support structures established to sustain it.

Collectively, the reviewed studies demonstrate broad agreement that leadership support, supervisory culture, organisational support, digital competence, and institutional readiness are indispensable for the successful institutionalisation of hybrid work. Nevertheless, the literature also reveals persistent structural and behavioural barriers within the Nigerian public service, including bureaucratic rigidity, presenteeism, weak digital infrastructure, and limited formalisation of hybrid work policies. Furthermore, while existing studies have examined leadership, organisational culture, ICT competence, or remote work independently, relatively few have investigated how leadership support and supervisory culture interact to shape the institutionalisation of hybrid work within specialised digital governance agencies such as NITDA. Addressing this gap provides the empirical justification for the present study.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: Institutional Theory

This study is anchored on institutional theory, which explains how organisational structures, practices, and behaviours are shaped by institutional pressures rather than purely by technical or economic considerations. Originally advanced by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and further developed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the theory was subsequently refined by W. Richard Scott (2014), who conceptualised institutions as operating through interrelated regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars. Institutional Theory has been widely applied to explain organisational change, public sector reform, policy implementation, and the adoption of administrative innovations within government institutions.

The central assumption of Institutional Theory is that organisations adopt structures and practices not only to improve efficiency but also to attain legitimacy within their institutional environment. Consequently, organisational decisions are influenced by formal rules and regulations, professional norms, societal expectations, and deeply embedded organisational values. Scott (2014) argues that institutional behaviour is sustained through three complementary pillars. The regulative pillar comprises formal laws, policies, rules, and sanctions that compel organisational compliance. The normative pillar reflects professional standards, shared values, and expectations that define appropriate organisational behaviour. The cultural-cognitive pillar encompasses the shared beliefs, routines, and taken-for-granted assumptions that shape how organisational members interpret reality and perform

their roles. Together, these pillars explain why organisations often exhibit continuity even when external environments demand significant change.

A related concept within institutional theory is decoupling, introduced by Meyer and Rowan (1977), which refers to the disconnect between formal organisational policies and actual operational practices. Organisations may formally adopt new policies to demonstrate conformity with institutional expectations while continuing to rely on existing routines and behavioural patterns. Such symbolic or ceremonial adoption enables organisations to maintain external legitimacy without fundamentally transforming internal practices. Decoupling is particularly evident in public sector organisations where administrative traditions, bureaucratic procedures, and organisational culture frequently slow the implementation of reform initiatives.

Institutional theory provides an appropriate lens for examining the institutionalisation of hybrid work within the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). As Nigeria's foremost digital governance agency, NITDA operates within a highly regulated public sector environment characterised by civil service rules, administrative procedures, and accountability requirements. From an institutional perspective, the adoption of hybrid work is influenced by multiple pressures. Coercive pressures arise from government reform initiatives, digital transformation policies, and broader public sector modernisation programmes that encourage flexible work practices. Normative pressures stem from professional expectations associated with

digital governance, contemporary human resource management, and international best practices that increasingly recognise hybrid work as a legitimate organisational model. Mimetic pressures further encourage NITDA to emulate successful hybrid work practices adopted by comparable public institutions and technology-driven organisations both within and outside Nigeria.

Despite these institutional pressures, the successful institutionalisation of hybrid work depends on the extent to which new practices become embedded within organisational routines. Institutional Theory explains why this process may remain incomplete. Supervisory culture within the Nigerian public service has traditionally emphasised hierarchical authority, direct oversight, and attendance-based performance evaluation. These long-established norms often conflict with the principles of hybrid work, which require trust, autonomy, digital collaboration, and results-oriented performance management. Consequently, managers may continue to equate physical presence with productivity even after formal hybrid work policies have been introduced.

The concept of decoupling is particularly relevant to the present study because it provides a theoretical explanation for the possible gap between policy adoption and implementation. NITDA may formally endorse hybrid work in response to national digital transformation policies and international workplace trends while supervisory practices, organisational routines, and employee experiences continue to reflect traditional office-centred bureaucratic arrangements. Such a situation would indicate that hybrid work

has been formally adopted but not fully institutionalised.

Institutional Theory therefore provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how leadership support, supervisory culture, and institutional pressures interact to influence the institutionalisation of hybrid work within NITDA. While leadership support can facilitate organisational change through strategic direction, communication, and resource provision, supervisory culture determines whether hybrid work principles are translated into everyday managerial practice. The theory further explains how institutional pressures may encourage policy adoption while simultaneously allowing organisational traditions and bureaucratic norms to constrain implementation. Accordingly, Institutional Theory offers a robust analytical lens for examining why hybrid work may remain only partially institutionalised despite NITDA's mandate to promote digital transformation within Nigeria's public service.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the institutionalisation of hybrid work at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), with particular emphasis on leadership support, policy communication, supervisory culture, institutional barriers, and digital readiness. The design was appropriate because it enabled the collection of data on employees' perceptions of these variables at a single point in time.

The target population comprised approximately 1,200 employees at

NITDA's headquarters in Abuja. A purposive stratified sampling technique was employed to select respondents across key management cadres and functional departments to ensure adequate representation of employees with direct experience of, or supervisory responsibility for, hybrid work arrangements. A total of 200 questionnaires were administered, of which 173 were correctly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 86.5%.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered electronically through Microsoft Forms. The instrument comprised two sections. The first captured respondents' demographic characteristics, while the second measured leadership support, policy communication, supervisory culture, digital readiness, institutional barriers, and perceptions of the institutionalisation of hybrid work using five-point Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire also included open-ended questions to elicit respondents' views on the major challenges affecting hybrid work implementation and recommendations for improving its adoption within the Agency.

The instrument was developed from the extant literature on hybrid work, digital governance, organisational change, and public sector reform. A pilot study involving a small group of NITDA employees was conducted to assess the clarity and suitability of the questionnaire.

The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 29. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and perceptions of the study variables. Responses to the open-ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis, whereby similar responses were coded, grouped into recurring themes, and presented using frequencies and percentages. The findings are presented in tables and discussed in relation to the study objectives and interpreted through the lens of Institutional Theory.

4. Results

4.1 Leadership Support, Policy Communication, and the Institutionalisation of Hybrid Work

The first research question examined how leadership support and policy communication influence the institutionalisation of hybrid work at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). To address this question, descriptive statistics were used to analyse respondents' perceptions of leadership practices, organisational culture, policy communication, and digital readiness. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Leadership, Organisational Culture, Policy Communication, and Digital Readiness (N = 173)

Variable	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Interpretation
Leadership Modelling of Hybrid Work	4.02	0.49	High level of leadership support
Managerial Trust in Remote Staff	3.71	0.58	Moderate level of supervisory trust
Presence Bias (Reverse-coded)	2.82	0.74	Presence-oriented supervision remains evident
Cultural Readiness (Overall)	3.68	0.55	Moderate organisational readiness
Policy Awareness	3.89	0.51	High awareness of hybrid work policy
Leadership Communication Clarity	3.76	0.56	Moderately clear policy communication
Director Policy Confidence	3.62	0.63	Lowest policy confidence among management levels
Middle Management Policy Confidence	3.98	0.52	High policy confidence
Junior Staff Policy Confidence	4.01	0.48	Highest policy confidence
Digital Readiness (Junior Staff)	3.95	0.50	High digital readiness
Digital Readiness (Staff with 16+ Years of Service)	3.71	0.64	Moderate digital readiness
Sustainability Perceptions	3.82	0.57	Moderately positive perception

Source: Field Survey (2026).

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that leadership support for hybrid work is generally strong within NITDA. Leadership modelling recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 4.02$, $SD = 0.49$), suggesting that senior management visibly demonstrates commitment to flexible work arrangements. Similarly, respondents reported high levels of policy awareness ($\bar{x} = 3.89$, $SD = 0.51$), indicating that employees are generally familiar with the Agency's hybrid work policies and initiatives.

Despite this positive institutional commitment, leadership communication clarity recorded a comparatively lower mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.76$, $SD = 0.56$). This suggests that while employees are aware

of the existence of hybrid work policies, communication regarding their interpretation and implementation is not entirely consistent across organisational levels. This observation becomes more evident when policy confidence is considered across management categories. Directors recorded the lowest policy confidence score ($\bar{x} = 3.62$, $SD = 0.63$), compared with middle management ($\bar{x} = 3.98$, $SD = 0.52$) and junior staff ($\bar{x} = 4.01$, $SD = 0.48$). Since directors are responsible for translating organisational policy into departmental practice, the finding suggests that communication challenges are greatest at the operational implementation level of the Agency.

The descriptive findings further reveal that managerial trust in employees working remotely is moderately positive ($\bar{x} = 3.71$, $SD = 0.58$). However, the comparatively low mean score for the reverse-coded presence bias variable ($\bar{x} = 2.82$, $SD = 0.74$) indicates that traditional attendance-oriented supervisory practices continue to exist within some departments. This suggests that physical presence remains an important consideration for some supervisors when evaluating employee commitment and productivity, despite the formal adoption of hybrid work arrangements.

Overall, the findings indicate that leadership commitment to hybrid work has been established at the strategic level within NITDA. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in policy communication, variations in confidence across

management levels, and the continued influence of presence-oriented supervisory practices suggest that the transition from policy adoption to consistent organisational implementation remains incomplete.

4.2 Supervisory Culture, Institutional Barriers, and the Institutionalisation of Hybrid Work

The second research question examined the extent to which supervisory culture, institutional barriers, and organisational support influence the institutionalisation of hybrid work within NITDA. Responses to the open-ended questions were analysed using thematic frequency analysis to identify the principal organisational challenges reported by participants. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Institutional Barriers Affecting the Institutionalisation of Hybrid Work at NITDA (N = 173)

Challenge Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Presence Bias / Visibility Culture	118	68.2
Managerial Distrust	95	54.9
Digital Literacy Gap among Senior Staff	87	50.3
Inconsistent Leadership Communication	81	46.8
Infrastructure (Power and Internet)	73	42.2
Lack of Clear Policy Guidelines	65	37.6
Resistance to Change	52	30.1

Source: Field Survey (2026).

The thematic analysis reveals that the most frequently reported barrier to hybrid work implementation is the persistence of a presence-oriented organisational culture. A majority of respondents (68.2%) indicated that supervisors continue to associate employee commitment and productivity with physical presence in the workplace rather than measurable outputs. Closely

related to this finding is managerial distrust, reported by 54.9% of respondents, suggesting that some supervisors remain reluctant to grant employees greater autonomy under hybrid work arrangements.

Digital capability also emerged as an important organisational challenge.

Approximately half of the respondents (50.3%) identified limited digital literacy among longer-serving staff as a significant obstacle to effective hybrid work implementation. This finding corresponds with the lower digital readiness scores reported for employees with longer organisational tenure and suggests that successful institutionalisation requires continuous investment in digital capacity development.

Communication-related challenges also featured prominently. Nearly half of the respondents (46.8%) reported inconsistencies in leadership communication regarding hybrid work policies, while 37.6% expressed concerns about the absence of detailed operational guidelines to support implementation. These findings reinforce the descriptive results presented in Table 1, where leadership communication clarity and director-level policy confidence recorded lower mean scores than overall policy awareness.

Infrastructure-related constraints remain a persistent concern. Approximately 42.2% of respondents identified unstable electricity supply, unreliable internet

connectivity, and inadequate digital infrastructure as significant barriers to effective hybrid work. Although these challenges originate largely outside the organisation, respondents perceived them as important factors affecting productivity and the long-term sustainability of flexible work arrangements.

Resistance to organisational change was identified by 30.1% of respondents, indicating that some employees and supervisors continue to prefer traditional office-based work practices despite ongoing digital transformation initiatives. Collectively, these findings suggest that the institutionalisation of hybrid work within NITDA is constrained not only by technological and infrastructural limitations but also by organisational culture, supervisory practices, communication gaps, and varying levels of employee preparedness.

To complement the findings on implementation challenges, respondents were asked to propose measures for strengthening hybrid work adoption within the Agency. The responses are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' Recommendations for Strengthening Hybrid Work at NITDA (N = 173)

Recommendation Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Output-Based Performance Management	125	72.3
Leadership Participation in Hybrid Work	112	64.7
Clear Long-Term Hybrid Work Policy	105	60.7
Mentorship Between Junior and Senior Staff	100	57.8
Subsidised Internet and Data Support	76	43.9
Regular Virtual Town Hall Meetings	68	39.3
Training on Remote Supervision	60	34.7

Source: Field Survey (2026).

The recommendations indicate that respondents favour a transition from attendance-based supervision to output-based performance management, which was identified by 72.3% of participants as the most important strategy for improving hybrid work implementation. Respondents also emphasised the importance of sustained leadership participation in hybrid work practices (64.7%), the development of comprehensive long-term hybrid work guidelines (60.7%), structured mentorship programmes (57.8%), and continuous investment in employee capacity development and digital infrastructure. These recommendations suggest that successful institutionalisation of hybrid work requires an integrated organisational approach that combines supportive

leadership, clear policy direction, supervisory capacity building, and sustained investment in digital resources.

4.3 Generational Differences in Digital Readiness for Hybrid Work

The third research question examined whether generational differences influence employees' digital readiness for hybrid work at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). Descriptive statistics were used to compare the perceptions of junior employees with those of longer-serving staff regarding their preparedness to operate effectively within a hybrid work environment. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Digital Readiness by Employee Category (N = 173)

Employee Category	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Interpretation
Junior Staff	3.95	0.50	High level of digital readiness
Staff with 16 or More Years of Service	3.71	0.64	Moderate level of digital readiness
Sustainability Perceptions (Overall)	3.82	0.57	Moderately positive perception of long-term hybrid work

Source: Field Survey (2026).

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate noticeable differences in digital readiness across employee categories. Junior staff recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.95$, $SD = 0.50$), suggesting that younger employees possess relatively high levels of confidence in using digital technologies and collaborative platforms required for hybrid work. Their responses reflect greater familiarity with virtual communication tools, online collaboration systems, and digital work processes that support flexible working arrangements.

In contrast, employees with sixteen or more years of service recorded a comparatively lower mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.71$, $SD = 0.64$), indicating moderate levels of digital readiness. Although this score remains above the neutral point on the five-point scale, it suggests that longer-serving employees may experience greater challenges in adapting to technology-enabled work practices. The wider standard deviation within this group further indicates greater variation in digital competence, suggesting that while some

experienced employees are highly proficient with digital technologies, others require additional support to participate effectively in hybrid work arrangements.

The overall sustainability perception recorded a mean score of 3.82 (SD = 0.57), indicating that respondents generally believe hybrid work can become a sustainable organisational practice within NITDA. However, the lower digital readiness observed among longer-serving employees suggests that the long-term success of hybrid work will depend on continuous investment in digital skills development, organisational learning, and targeted capacity-building initiatives that address differences in technological competence across employee groups.

The findings further reinforce those presented in the thematic analysis, where 50.3% of respondents identified digital literacy gaps among senior employees as one of the major barriers to the effective implementation of hybrid work. Similarly, 57.8% recommended structured mentorship programmes involving junior and senior staff as a strategy for strengthening digital competence across the Agency. These findings suggest that generational differences in digital readiness should not be viewed simply as individual capability gaps but as organisational capacity issues requiring deliberate policy interventions.

Overall, the results indicate that while NITDA possesses a workforce that is generally receptive to hybrid work, differences in digital readiness across employee categories remain an important consideration for successful institutionalisation. Addressing these differences through continuous

professional development, mentoring, and inclusive digital transformation strategies will be essential for ensuring that all employees are able to participate effectively in flexible work arrangements regardless of age or years of service..

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine how leadership support, supervisory culture, institutional barriers, and generational differences influence the institutionalisation of hybrid work within the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). Guided by Institutional Theory, the findings demonstrate that although NITDA has made significant progress in adopting hybrid work as part of Nigeria's digital transformation agenda, the transition from formal policy adoption to consistent organisational practice remains incomplete. The discussion interprets these findings in relation to existing empirical evidence and the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

5.1 Leadership Support, Policy Communication, and Institutionalisation of Hybrid Work

The findings of this study demonstrate that leadership support for hybrid work is generally strong within NITDA. Respondents reported high levels of leadership modelling and policy awareness, suggesting that senior management has demonstrated visible commitment to digital transformation and flexible work arrangements. This finding indicates that hybrid work has acquired strategic legitimacy within the Agency, with leadership recognising its importance

as part of broader public sector digital reform. Such visible leadership commitment is consistent with the argument that organisational leaders play a critical role in legitimising innovation, mobilising organisational resources, and creating the strategic conditions necessary for institutional change (Van Wart, 2013; Yukl, 2013).

The finding corroborates Ayogoi (2026), who identified organisational support as the strongest predictor of employee well-being and effectiveness in hybrid work environments. Similarly, Nasamu et al. (2025) argue that transformational leadership enhances employee motivation, knowledge sharing, and organisational commitment by creating supportive work environments that encourage innovation and adaptability. Ogunleye et al. (2026) likewise contend that successful hybrid work depends largely on leadership involvement and employee-centred management rather than traditional command-and-control supervision. Collectively, these studies suggest that leadership commitment provides the organisational legitimacy required for employees to embrace new work arrangements.

However, the present study extends these findings by demonstrating that leadership commitment alone does not necessarily guarantee successful institutionalisation. Although respondents acknowledged strong leadership support, directors—the organisational actors responsible for translating strategic policy into departmental practice—recorded the lowest policy confidence scores compared with middle management and junior staff. This finding suggests that while hybrid work has been successfully endorsed at the

strategic level, communication and implementation become less consistent as responsibility shifts towards operational management. Consequently, the principal implementation challenge appears not to be policy adoption but policy translation across managerial levels.

This observation is consistent with Mergel et al. (2019), who argue that digital transformation within public organisations extends beyond technological adoption and requires changes in managerial behaviour, organisational routines, and implementation practices across different organisational levels. Similarly, Ohemeng and Ayee (2016) maintain that successful public sector reforms depend not only on executive commitment but also on the capacity of middle-level managers to translate policy intentions into everyday administrative practice. The relatively lower policy confidence observed among directors in the present study therefore suggests that communication gaps at the implementation stage may undermine otherwise well-designed organisational reforms.

The findings also resonate with Bawa (2025), who reported a substantial implementation gap within Nigerian public sector reforms, noting that although a large majority of public officials recognise the importance of adaptive leadership, considerably fewer demonstrate such practices consistently in their daily managerial responsibilities. While Bawa (2025) attributed this gap to bureaucratic rigidity and reactive administrative cultures, the present study provides further evidence that inconsistent policy communication may constitute an additional mechanism through which organisational reforms lose momentum

during implementation. Rather than reflecting a lack of strategic commitment, the findings suggest that hybrid work policies become progressively diluted as they move through different layers of organisational management.

Institutional Theory provides a compelling explanation for these findings. According to Scott (2014), organisations frequently adopt contemporary administrative practices in response to external expectations, regulatory pressures, and changing institutional environments. However, the successful institutionalisation of these practices depends on whether organisational actors internalise and consistently reproduce them through everyday routines and managerial behaviour. Meyer and Rowan (1977) similarly argue that organisations often separate formal organisational structures from operational practice, resulting in what they describe as institutional decoupling. Within NITDA, leadership has formally endorsed hybrid work through organisational policies and strategic commitment, yet inconsistencies in policy communication across management levels suggest that these formal structures have not been uniformly translated into operational practice.

From the perspective of Institutional Theory, leadership support represents an important source of organisational legitimacy, while policy communication serves as the institutional mechanism through which legitimacy is transformed into routine organisational behaviour. The findings suggest that although leadership has successfully established the legitimacy of hybrid work within NITDA, communication processes have not been sufficiently institutionalised to ensure

consistent implementation across all managerial levels. Consequently, the Agency exhibits characteristics of partial institutionalisation, where formal organisational commitment exists alongside variations in operational practice.

This finding represents an important contribution to the literature on hybrid work within public administration. Previous studies have largely examined leadership support as an independent predictor of organisational performance, employee engagement, or digital transformation (Ayogoi, 2026; Nasamu et al., 2025; Ogunleye et al., 2026). The present study advances this literature by demonstrating that leadership support alone is insufficient for the institutionalisation of hybrid work. Instead, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of leadership depends on the quality of policy communication and the capacity of middle-level managers to translate strategic intentions into consistent operational practice. In doing so, the study identifies policy communication as a critical institutional mechanism linking strategic leadership with successful implementation, thereby extending existing knowledge on digital governance and organisational reform within Nigeria's public sector.

The findings further imply that public sector organisations seeking to institutionalise hybrid work should move beyond symbolic policy endorsement towards strengthening communication structures that ensure consistent understanding and implementation across all organisational levels. Leadership commitment should therefore be complemented by structured

communication frameworks, continuous managerial engagement, and clearly defined implementation guidelines capable of translating strategic vision into sustainable organisational practice.

5.2 Supervisory Culture and Institutional Barriers

The findings of this study identify supervisory culture as one of the most significant factors influencing the institutionalisation of hybrid work within NITDA. Although respondents generally expressed moderate confidence in managerial trust, the relatively low mean score recorded for the reverse-coded presence bias variable indicates that attendance-oriented supervision remains prevalent across parts of the Agency. The thematic analysis reinforces this finding, with presence bias, managerial distrust, inconsistent leadership communication, and resistance to organisational change emerging as the most frequently reported barriers to the effective implementation of hybrid work. Collectively, these findings suggest that while hybrid work has gained formal organisational acceptance, supervisory practices continue to reflect traditional bureaucratic assumptions regarding control, accountability, and employee productivity.

This finding corroborates the work of Okolie&Egbon (2025), who found that managerial scepticism and office-centred supervisory norms remain major obstacles to remote work implementation within Nigerian public agencies. Their study reported that many supervisors continue to equate effective management with direct observation of employees, making it difficult to embrace flexible work arrangements fully. Similarly, Mohamed

(2023) observed that managers with limited experience of technology-mediated work often rely on physical visibility as a proxy for employee commitment and performance, thereby reinforcing presence bias within hybrid work environments. The persistence of such supervisory practices indicates that organisational reforms involving flexible work require not only technological adjustments but also fundamental changes in managerial attitudes and behavioural expectations.

The findings are equally consistent with those of Owotemu, Bernardi, and Ayo-Soyemi (2024), who reported a significant negative relationship between autocratic leadership and organisational performance in Nigerian public institutions. According to their study, hierarchical supervisory approaches suppress innovation, employee participation, and organisational adaptability. The present study extends this argument by demonstrating that the consequences of hierarchical supervision extend beyond organisational performance to affect the institutionalisation of hybrid work itself. Where supervisors continue to rely on direct monitoring and attendance-based performance evaluation, employees are less likely to embrace the flexibility and autonomy upon which hybrid work depends.

The findings also support Suleiman (2025), who argued that democratic and participatory leadership creates organisational environments that promote employee engagement, collaboration, and innovation. While Suleiman (2025) focused primarily on leadership style and organisational performance, the present study demonstrates that participatory supervisory practices are equally important for embedding hybrid work within routine

organisational operations. Supervisors who encourage trust, shared decision-making and output-based accountability appear more capable of supporting flexible work arrangements than those who rely predominantly on bureaucratic control and physical supervision.

Beyond supervisory culture, the study identified several institutional barriers that continue to impede the effective implementation of hybrid work. Respondents highlighted inadequate policy guidelines, inconsistent leadership communication, digital literacy gaps, infrastructural deficiencies, and organisational resistance to change as significant constraints. These findings align with Adias and Raimi (2025), who observed that although many Nigerian organisations have introduced hybrid work arrangements, relatively few have developed comprehensive human resource frameworks capable of supporting their long-term implementation. Their conclusion that hybrid work often remains an emergency response rather than a fully integrated organisational strategy is consistent with the present findings, which reveal that the absence of detailed operational guidance continues to constrain implementation within NITDA.

Similarly, Nwambuko, Ugwu, and Orusaibogha (2025) identified inadequate electricity supply, poor internet connectivity, and limited technological infrastructure as major obstacles to remote work productivity within Nigerian federal ministries. Although infrastructure-related challenges were reported by respondents in the present study, they did not emerge as the most significant implementation barrier. Instead, organisational culture and supervisory practices were more

frequently identified as obstacles to successful institutionalisation. This finding suggests that while technological infrastructure remains important, organisational and managerial factors may exert greater influence on whether hybrid work becomes embedded as a routine organisational practice.

The identification of resistance to organisational change further supports the observations of Olakunle et al. (2025), who argued that digital transformation within Nigerian public institutions is frequently constrained by bureaucratic inertia and inconsistent leadership capacity. Resistance to change often reflects uncertainty regarding new work practices, concerns about managerial authority, and attachment to established administrative routines. The present study demonstrates that such resistance extends to hybrid work implementation, where traditional assumptions regarding supervision and accountability continue to shape managerial behaviour despite organisational policy reforms.

Institutional theory provides a comprehensive explanation for these findings. Scott (2014) argues that organisational behaviour is governed by three mutually reinforcing institutional pillars: regulative structures, normative expectations, and cultural-cognitive beliefs. While formal hybrid work policies represent the regulative dimension of organisational change, supervisory culture reflects the normative and cultural-cognitive dimensions that shape everyday organisational behaviour. Consequently, organisational actors may comply with formal policy requirements while continuing to rely on long-established supervisory routines that emphasise

physical presence, hierarchical authority, and procedural control. Meyer and Rowan (1977) describe this phenomenon as institutional decoupling, whereby formal organisational reforms coexist with traditional operational practices that remain largely unchanged.

Within NITDA, the findings suggest that hybrid work has achieved formal legitimacy through organisational policies and leadership endorsement but has not yet displaced deeply embedded supervisory norms that define effective management in terms of physical visibility and direct oversight. This partial alignment between formal structures and everyday managerial behaviour explains why hybrid work remains only partially institutionalised despite considerable organisational commitment to digital transformation. Institutional Theory therefore suggests that sustainable implementation requires changes not only in organisational policies but also in the normative expectations and shared assumptions that shape supervisory behaviour.

The present study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that supervisory culture functions as a central institutional mechanism linking organisational policy with implementation outcomes. Previous studies have generally treated supervisory culture, managerial trust, organisational resistance, and institutional barriers as separate explanatory variables (Okolie&Egbon, 2025; Owotemu et al., 2024; Suleiman, 2025). This study integrates these concepts by showing that they collectively constitute the institutional environment within which hybrid work is either reinforced or constrained. In doing so, the study advances existing scholarship by

demonstrating that the successful institutionalisation of hybrid work depends less on the existence of formal policies than on the transformation of supervisory practices, organisational culture, and institutional routines that govern everyday managerial behaviour.

From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that public sector organisations seeking to institutionalise hybrid work should complement technological investments with deliberate initiatives aimed at transforming supervisory culture. Leadership development programmes should therefore prioritise trust-based management, results-oriented performance evaluation, collaborative leadership, and change management competencies. Such interventions would facilitate the gradual replacement of attendance-based supervision with organisational practices more consistent with the principles of hybrid work and contemporary digital governance.

5.3 Generational Differences and Digital Readiness

The findings of this study indicate that generational differences are evident in employees' levels of digital readiness, with junior staff recording higher digital readiness scores than employees with longer years of service. Although both groups generally expressed positive perceptions towards hybrid work, the comparatively higher digital confidence among junior employees suggests that differences in technological competence continue to influence employees' ability to adapt to technology-enabled work environments. These findings imply that digital readiness within NITDA is not evenly distributed across employee

categories and that variations in technological capability remain an important consideration in the institutionalisation of hybrid work.

This finding is consistent with the work of Zacher and Rudolph (2021), who found that differences in digital readiness across age groups are largely attributable to variations in technological exposure, opportunities for digital skills development, and digital self-efficacy rather than differences in cognitive ability. Their review concluded that younger employees generally demonstrate greater confidence in adopting emerging workplace technologies because they have experienced greater exposure to digital tools throughout their educational and professional development. Similarly, the present study found that junior staff reported higher digital readiness than longer-serving employees, suggesting that technological familiarity contributes positively to employees' confidence in hybrid work environments.

The findings also support the conceptual argument advanced by Usman, Joshua, and Akinloye (2025), who identified ICT competence as a critical condition for effective hybrid work within Nigerian Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). According to these authors, inadequate digital literacy reduces effective communication, weakens collaboration, and creates uncertainty in virtual work environments. Likewise, Adias and Raimi (2025) argued that organisations cannot sustain hybrid work through technology acquisition alone; rather, long-term success depends on continuous investment in employee capability and organisational learning. The present study reinforces these arguments

by demonstrating that differences in digital readiness remain evident even within NITDA, an agency widely regarded as one of Nigeria's leading digital governance institutions.

The qualitative findings provide further support for this conclusion. Respondents identified digital literacy gaps among longer-serving staff as one of the major challenges affecting hybrid work implementation and recommended structured mentoring programmes that encourage knowledge sharing between digitally proficient junior employees and more experienced staff. This recommendation suggests that respondents perceive digital competence as an organisational capability that can be strengthened through continuous learning rather than an inherent characteristic associated with age. Such an approach is consistent with contemporary public sector human resource management, which emphasises lifelong learning, continuous professional development, and organisational knowledge sharing as essential components of digital transformation (OECD, 2023).

The findings also resonate with those of Nwambuko, Ugwu, and Orusaibogha (2025), who reported that technological and infrastructural limitations continue to constrain remote work within Nigerian public institutions. However, unlike their study, which emphasised infrastructure as the principal challenge, respondents in the present study attached greater importance to organisational capability, supervisory practices, and employee digital competence. This suggests that while reliable infrastructure remains necessary, successful institutionalisation of hybrid work depends equally on developing the

digital capabilities required to utilise available technologies effectively.

Institutional Theory provides an important explanation for these findings. Scott (2014) argues that organisational reforms become institutionalised only when organisational members possess the knowledge, skills, and shared understandings necessary to integrate new practices into routine organisational behaviour. Within this context, digital readiness represents more than technological competence; it reflects the organisational capability required to sustain hybrid work over time. Consequently, differences in digital readiness across employee groups may slow the institutionalisation process because employees differ in their ability to internalise and reproduce technology-enabled work practices. From the perspective of Meyer and Rowan (1977), this illustrates another dimension of institutional decoupling, whereby organisations formally adopt innovative work systems while differences in employee capability limit their consistent implementation across the organisation.

The findings make an important contribution to the literature on hybrid work within the public sector. Existing studies have largely examined digital readiness as a predictor of technology adoption, employee productivity, or organisational performance (Usman et al., 2025; Adias & Raimi, 2025; Zacher & Rudolph, 2021). The present study extends this literature by demonstrating that generational differences in digital readiness also influence the institutionalisation of hybrid work. Rather than viewing these differences as barriers associated with age, the findings suggest

that they reflect organisational capability gaps that can be addressed through targeted training, mentoring, and continuous professional development. In doing so, the study highlights the importance of strengthening digital capability across all employee groups as part of broader public sector digital transformation.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that NITDA and other public sector organisations should complement investments in digital infrastructure with sustained investments in human capital development. Regular digital skills training, structured mentoring between junior and longer-serving employees, peer learning initiatives, and continuous technical support would help reduce disparities in digital readiness while strengthening organisational resilience. Such interventions would enhance employees' confidence in technology-enabled work systems and facilitate the long-term institutionalisation of hybrid work within Nigeria's public service.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study examined the institutionalisation of hybrid work within the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) by investigating the influence of leadership support, policy communication, supervisory culture, institutional barriers, and generational differences in digital readiness. Against the backdrop of Nigeria's ongoing public sector digital transformation, the study sought to determine why hybrid work remains only partially embedded despite formal policy

support and NITDA's strategic role as the country's leading digital governance institution.

The findings demonstrate that leadership support for hybrid work is generally strong, with senior management visibly endorsing flexible work arrangements and employees reporting relatively high levels of policy awareness. However, the study reveals that strategic commitment alone is insufficient to ensure successful institutionalisation. The comparatively lower policy confidence recorded among directors indicates that communication and implementation gaps persist between policy formulation and operational execution. This suggests that the effectiveness of hybrid work depends not only on leadership commitment but also on the ability of middle-level management to consistently translate organisational policies into everyday administrative practice.

The study further establishes that supervisory culture remains one of the most significant obstacles to the institutionalisation of hybrid work. Despite formal policy adoption, presence-oriented supervision, managerial scepticism, and resistance to organisational change continue to influence managerial behaviour. The persistence of these traditional supervisory practices demonstrates that organisational culture has not evolved at the same pace as digital transformation initiatives, thereby limiting the full integration of hybrid work into routine organisational operations.

The findings also show that generational differences in digital readiness continue to influence hybrid work implementation. Junior employees demonstrated higher

levels of digital readiness than longer-serving staff, suggesting that differences in technological competence remain an important organisational consideration. Rather than representing inherent age-related limitations, these differences reflect capability gaps that can be addressed through continuous training, mentoring, and organisational learning.

From a theoretical perspective, the study provides empirical support for Institutional Theory by demonstrating that formal policy adoption does not automatically result in organisational institutionalisation. The findings illustrate the phenomenon of institutional decoupling, whereby hybrid work enjoys formal legitimacy through organisational policies and leadership endorsement but remains only partially embedded because supervisory norms, organisational culture, and employee capabilities have not fully adapted to the new work model. Consequently, successful institutionalisation requires alignment between formal organisational structures and the informal organisational practices that shape everyday behaviour.

Overall, the study concludes that hybrid work at NITDA has progressed beyond the experimental stage but has not yet achieved full institutionalisation. Achieving sustainable implementation will require continued leadership commitment, stronger policy communication, transformation of supervisory culture, investment in employee digital capability, and the development of comprehensive operational frameworks that embed hybrid work within the Agency's routine administrative processes. The study therefore contributes to the growing literature on digital governance and public sector reform by demonstrating that the

institutionalisation of hybrid work is fundamentally an organisational change process rather than merely a technological or administrative initiative.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. NITDA should develop a comprehensive hybrid work operational framework. Although respondents reported high levels of leadership support and policy awareness, directors recorded the lowest policy confidence, indicating gaps in policy interpretation and implementation. The Agency should therefore develop a detailed operational manual that clearly defines eligibility criteria, work schedules, communication protocols, supervisory responsibilities, reporting procedures, and performance expectations to ensure uniform implementation across all departments.
2. The Agency should institutionalise results-based performance management. The findings revealed that presence-oriented supervision remains one of the greatest barriers to hybrid work implementation, with respondents identifying presence bias and managerial distrust as the most significant organisational challenges. NITDA should therefore replace attendance-based supervision with performance management systems that evaluate employees using clearly defined outputs, deliverables, and measurable performance indicators.
3. Leadership communication should be strengthened across all management levels. Although senior leadership demonstrated visible commitment to hybrid work, inconsistencies in communication were evident at the operational level. Regular management briefings, departmental implementation meetings, virtual town halls, and structured communication channels should be established to ensure that hybrid work policies are consistently interpreted and implemented throughout the Agency.
4. Continuous digital capacity-building programmes should be implemented for all employees. The study found that junior employees demonstrated higher levels of digital readiness than longer-serving staff, while respondents identified digital literacy gaps as a major implementation challenge. NITDA should therefore organise continuous digital skills training, particularly for supervisory and senior employees, to strengthen confidence in digital work systems and reduce disparities in technological competence.
5. Structured cross-generational mentoring programmes should be introduced. Respondents recommended mentorship as an important strategy for improving hybrid work implementation. Pairing digitally proficient junior staff with more experienced employees would facilitate knowledge transfer, strengthen digital competence, promote organisational learning, and improve collaboration across different staff categories.

6. Supervisors should receive specialised training in hybrid work management. Since supervisory culture emerged as one of the principal barriers to institutionalisation, NITDA should provide targeted training on virtual supervision, trust-based leadership, employee engagement, remote performance management, and change management. Such programmes would help supervisors transition from traditional attendance-based management to outcome-oriented leadership.
7. Institutional support for hybrid work should be strengthened. Respondents identified inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent organisational support, and limited policy guidance as constraints to implementation. NITDA should continue investing in reliable digital infrastructure, secure collaboration platforms, technical support services, and internet connectivity to create an enabling environment for sustainable hybrid work.
8. NITDA should establish a periodic monitoring and evaluation mechanism for hybrid work implementation. The Agency should regularly assess employee experiences, supervisory practices, digital readiness, policy implementation, and organisational outcomes using clearly defined performance indicators. Continuous evaluation would enable management to identify implementation gaps early, refine existing policies, and ensure that hybrid work becomes fully embedded as part of the Agency's organisational culture.

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