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Research Article

The Double-Edged Effects of Hybrid Work on Employee Well-Being: A Systematic Bibliometric Review of Technostress, Work-Life Boundaries, and Occupational Health

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Abstract

Purpose: This study maps and synthesizes research on hybrid work and employee well-being, explaining its simultaneous resource and demand effects.

Design/Methodology: Following PRISMA 2020 and SPAR-4-SLR, 250 Scopus records published from 2020 to 3 June 2026 were screened. After excluding 26 articles in press, 224 articles were bibliometrically mapped and 200 underwent structured title-abstract synthesis using VOSviewer and thematic coding.

Findings: Five clusters organize the field. Flexibility and autonomy appeared in 45.0% of core studies, while digital demands and technostress appeared in only 10.0%, despite burnout and stress appearing in 19.0%. Hybrid-work quality is more consequential than remote-work intensity.

Practical Implications: Organizations should design coordinated, choice-supportive hybrid systems and monitor resources and demands jointly.

Originality: The review integrates JD-R, boundary, technostress, and fit perspectives into a Hybrid Work Demands-Resources and Employee Well-Being Framework.

Introduction

Hybrid work has moved from an emergency response to a durable feature of contemporary employment. It combines on-site and remote work across locations, schedules, communication channels, and team routines. This institutionalization has changed the central managerial question. The issue is no longer whether employees can work remotely, but how organizations can design hybrid arrangements that support sustainable performance without eroding health, social connection, or recovery.

Evidence on hybrid work is distinctly ambivalent. Flexibility can increase schedule control, reduce commuting, improve job satisfaction, and support retention. A large randomized trial found that working from home two days per week reduced quit rates and improved satisfaction without harming performance (Bloom et al., 2024). Earlier telecommuting evidence likewise showed that outcomes depend on intensity, task characteristics, autonomy, and managerial support rather than location alone (Allen et al., 2015). Recent hybrid-work studies have reinforced the importance of work-model fit, autonomy, support, and predictable coordination (Dale et al., 2024; Eng et al., 2024; Hopkins & Bardoel, 2023; Schweitzer et al., 2025).

The same arrangement can also intensify demands. Employees may face communication overload, meeting fragmentation, availability expectations, technology problems, social isolation, and permeable work-home boundaries. Digital demands can undermine psychological detachment and contribute to exhaustion, work-family conflict, or withdrawal (Banerjee & Gupta, 2024; Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2023; Parkin et al., 2023; Whelan et al., 2026). Return-to-office requirements may add a further layer of uncertainty when they reduce perceived control or create an unstable mix of home and office expectations. Hybrid work therefore represents a work-design paradox rather than a uniformly beneficial flexibility practice.

Three limitations characterize the expanding literature. First, the field remains terminologically dispersed across hybrid work, remote work, telework, working from home, flexible work arrangements, and new ways of working. Second, positive resource-based explanations and negative strain-based explanations frequently develop in parallel. Studies of autonomy and work-life balance are not always connected to studies of technostress, burnout, and occupational health. Third, the rapid post-pandemic expansion of the field has produced heterogeneous theories, contexts, and methods, which makes it difficult to distinguish established knowledge from emerging claims.

Existing reviews have provided important foundations for remote work and employee well-being (Charalampous et al., 2019; Gifford, 2022), but the contemporary hybrid-work literature requires a review that combines transparent search procedures, performance analysis, thematic science mapping, and theory-driven synthesis. A bibliometric map alone cannot explain mechanisms, while a conventional narrative review may obscure the field's structural fragmentation. This study therefore adopts a systematic bibliometric review design and integrates quantitative mapping with structured analysis of titles, abstracts, and author keywords.

The review makes four contributions. First, it consolidates fragmented terminology and documents the growth, outlets, geographical participation, and influential studies in the field. Second, it identifies the thematic structure and temporal development of hybrid work and employee well-being research. Third, it explains the field's double-edged pattern by integrating Job Demands-Resources theory, work-life boundary perspectives, technostress, and work-arrangement fit. Fourth, it develops a research agenda and a practical design framework that shifts attention from the number of remote days to the quality, voluntariness, predictability, and social architecture of hybrid work. Accordingly, this study systematically reviews and maps the intellectual structure of hybrid work and employee well-being research to identify dominant themes, theoretical foundations, methodological patterns, and future research directions.

Research questions

The review is guided by five interrelated research questions. First, it traces how research on hybrid work and employee well-being has developed in terms of publication growth, sources, countries, and influential documents, through performance analysis. Second, it identifies the thematic clusters that organize the literature on hybrid work and employee well-being through author-keyword co-occurrence mapping. Third, it examines how the thematic focus of the field has evolved over time using overlay and density visualization. Fourth, it explores the job demands, job resources, mechanisms, and outcomes that explain the double-edged effects of hybrid work through structured title-abstract synthesis. Fifth, it develops theoretical, contextual, conceptual, and methodological priorities to guide future research through integrative synthesis and a TCCM agenda.

Positioning relative to prior reviews

Charalampous et al. (2019) established a multidimensional model of remote e-workers' well-being spanning affective, social, professional, and psychosomatic domains, but the review predates the pandemic-driven institutionalization of hybrid arrangements and does not treat technostress or boundary permeability as central mechanisms. Gifford (2022) mapped the rapid post-pandemic growth of remote-working research and called for a developing research agenda, but stopped short of a systematic bibliometric synthesis of demands, resources, and outcomes. Neither review integrates flexibility-based resource gains with technology-driven strain within a single explanatory framework, and neither distinguishes hybrid-work intensity from hybrid-work quality. The present review addresses these gaps by combining transparent bibliometric mapping with structured abstract synthesis of a 2020-2026 hybrid-work corpus, and by developing a theory-informed propositional framework that locates technostress and boundary strain alongside autonomy and support within a common demands-resources logic.

Literature Review and Conceptual Background

Hybrid work as a multidimensional work arrangement

Hybrid work is frequently treated as a binary combination of home and office, but this simplification conceals important dimensions. Employees differ in the number of remote days, the discretion they have over location, the predictability of schedules, the synchronization of team attendance, task interdependence, access to appropriate workspaces, and expectations about digital availability. These dimensions determine the demands and resources embedded in the arrangement. Two employees who both work remotely twice per week may therefore experience fundamentally different work designs.

Hybrid work should also be distinguished from fully remote work, emergency working from home, and flexible scheduling. Fully remote work removes routine co-location, emergency working from home is involuntary and crisis-driven, and flexible scheduling concerns when rather than where work occurs. The present review retains adjacent terms because the intellectual foundation of hybrid work was built through telework and remote-work research. At the same time, the synthesis treats hybrid work as a distinct organizational configuration that requires coordination across locations and creates recurring transitions between work settings.

An important implication is that hybrid-work intensity is not equivalent to hybrid-work quality. The number of remote days is an observable but weak indicator. Quality depends on voluntariness, task-location fit, equipment, managerial trust, inclusion, meeting norms, office conditions, and career visibility. Recent studies of work-arrangement fit, activity-based offices, and hybrid-work autonomy support this broader conceptualization (Rieder et al., 2025; Tulenheimo-Eklund et al., 2025; Wan et al., 2025).

Job Demands-Resources theory and the double-edged perspective

Job Demands-Resources theory offers a parsimonious explanation for contradictory hybrid-work outcomes. Job demands are aspects of work that require sustained effort and generate psychological or physiological costs, whereas job resources support goal attainment, reduce demands, and stimulate learning or motivation (Bakker et al., 2023). Hybrid work can increase resources by providing autonomy, schedule control, reduced commuting, and opportunities for concentrated work. It can simultaneously increase demands through digital overload, coordination complexity, interruptions, isolation, and uncertainty.

The theory distinguishes a motivational pathway and a health-impairment pathway. In the motivational pathway, resources strengthen engagement, satisfaction, and performance. In the health-impairment pathway, excessive demands consume energy and contribute to exhaustion and burnout. Resources may also buffer demands. For example, digital communication is less likely to become technostress when employees possess adequate competence, managerial support, and control over response times. Hybrid work is therefore not the causal treatment in isolation. The causal content lies in the demands and resources produced by its design.

Empirical studies increasingly support this interpretation. Autonomy can mediate the burnout-reducing effect of remote work, while psychosocial safety climate and organizational support can reduce the consequences of digital demands (Höcker et al., 2024; Parkin et al., 2023). Conversely, hybrid-work stressors can contribute to emotional exhaustion and psychological withdrawal, especially when personal resources are insufficient (Chu & Chou, 2024).

Technostress and work-life boundaries

Technostress refers to strain associated with the use, pace, complexity, and social expectations of information and communication technologies. In hybrid settings, technology is both infrastructure and demand. It allows location flexibility, but it may also produce techno-overload, techno-invasion, meeting saturation, role interruptions, and pressure for constant availability. The effect is organizational rather than purely technological because communication norms determine whether connectivity produces control or invasion (Suh & Lee, 2017).

Boundary perspectives explain how employees regulate transitions between work and nonwork roles. Flexible location can increase boundary control, particularly when employees can align work with caregiving or personal needs. Yet the same arrangement can make boundaries more permeable, increasing work-family conflict and reducing psychological detachment. The ability to segment or integrate roles depends on preferences, household conditions, schedule predictability, and mutual expectations within teams and families (Clark, 2000; Wan et al., 2025).

Technostress and boundary processes are interdependent. Availability pressure extends work into nonwork time, while fragmented communication makes work cognitively present even after formal working hours. Studies of ICT demands, psychological detachment, and location autonomy indicate that employee well-being is shaped by how digital work is governed, not merely by the amount of technology used (Piirsalu- Kivihall et al., 2026; Whelan et al., 2026).

Three related constructs warrant explicit distinction. Work-life boundaries refer to the cognitive and behavioral practices employees use to segment or integrate work and nonwork roles (Clark, 2000). Work-life balance is a broader evaluative state reflecting satisfaction with, or effective functioning across, both domains, and can follow from either successful segmentation or successful integration. Work-family conflict is a more specific negative outcome that arises when boundary management fails and role demands become mutually incompatible. In the coding dictionary (Appendix B), boundary permeability and detachment problems are coded as demand-side mechanisms describing how boundaries are managed; work-family conflict is coded as a

negative mechanism describing a consequence of poor boundary management; and work-life balance is coded as a positive, outcome-level indicator. This mapping keeps the process of boundary regulation conceptually separate from its downstream evaluative and relational consequences.

Employee well-being as a multidimensional outcome

Employee well-being should not be reduced to job satisfaction. It includes affective well-being, psychological functioning, mental health, social connection, physical health, work ability, and the capacity to recover. These dimensions may move in different directions. An employee may report high satisfaction with flexibility while also experiencing loneliness or musculoskeletal discomfort. Likewise, short-term productivity can coexist with chronic exhaustion.

A sustainable assessment of hybrid work therefore requires both positive and negative indicators. Positive indicators include engagement, satisfaction, perceived control, work-life enrichment, vitality, and retention. Negative indicators include burnout, distress, isolation, work-family conflict, and withdrawal. Organizational outcomes remain important, but they should be interpreted alongside health outcomes. Productivity achieved through persistent overextension does not constitute sustainable performance.

Method

Review design and reporting standards

This study used a systematic bibliometric review design. The review followed the transparency principles of PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021) and the assembling, arranging, and assessing logic of SPAR-4-SLR (Paul et al., 2021). Bibliometric procedures followed established guidance for performance analysis and science mapping (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). VOSviewer was used to construct and visualize author-keyword co-occurrence networks using association-strength normalization (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

Database and search strategy

Scopus was selected because it provides standardized bibliographic metadata, abstracts, author keywords, affiliations, citation counts, and export formats suitable for reproducible bibliometric analysis. The search covered 2020 to 3 June 2026. The start year, 2020, was selected because it marks the onset of large-scale remote and hybrid work adoption driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, prior to which hybrid work was not yet established as a distinct organizational practice in the literature; the end date, 3 June 2026, corresponds to the date the search was conducted and ensures the review captures the most recent, post-pandemic institutionalization of hybrid arrangements. The search was conducted on 3 June 2026 using title, abstract, and keyword fields.

Rather than a single undifferentiated string, the search was organized around three conceptual blocks, combined with the Boolean operator AND: (1) work arrangement (e.g., hybrid work, hybrid working, remote work, telework, work from home); (2) population (e.g., employee, worker, workforce, knowledge worker); and (3) employee well-being (e.g., well-being, burnout, emotional exhaustion, technostress, work-life balance, job stress, job satisfaction). The full Boolean string implementing these three blocks in Scopus is reported below for reproducibility, and Table 1 summarizes the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied during screening.

TITLE-ABS-KEY(("hybrid work*" OR "hybrid working" OR "hybrid workplace*" OR "remote work*" OR telework* OR "work from home" OR "working from home") AND (employee* OR worker* OR workforce OR "knowledge worker*") AND ("employee well-being" OR "employee wellbeing" OR "workplace well-being" OR "workplace wellbeing" OR "occupational well-being" OR "psychological well-being" OR "job-related

affective well-being" OR "mental health" OR burnout OR "emotional exhaustion" OR technostress OR "digital fatigue" OR "digital overload" OR telepressure OR "work-life balance" OR "work-life boundar*" OR "work-family conflict" OR "job stress" OR "job satisfaction")) AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2027 AND NOT TITLE-ABS-KEY(student* OR "hybrid learning" OR "blended learning" OR "online learning" OR telehealth OR telemedicine OR patient*)

Table 1. Eligibility criteria

Dimension	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	Employees, workers, professionals, managers, or organizational members	Student-only or patient-only samples
Work context	Hybrid work, remote work, telework, work from home, or flexible location arrangements	Hybrid learning, telehealth service integration, or nonwork use of hybrid
Outcome or mechanism	Well-being, mental health, burnout, stress, work-life boundaries, satisfaction, engagement, or related psychosocial outcomes	No employee experience, health, attitude, or behavioral mechanism
Publication	English-language journal article, final publication stage, 2020 to 3 June 2026	Article in press, conference paper, book chapter, editorial, or non-English item
Relevance	Direct or theoretically informative relationship between work arrangement and employee outcomes	Peripheral digitalization, leadership, health, or sustainability study without work-arrangement relevance

Study selection and corpus construction

The initial export contained 250 records. Twenty-six articles in press were removed before screening to maintain a consistent final-publication criterion. The remaining 224 records constituted the broad bibliometric corpus. A two-pass title-abstract audit was then conducted for the focused synthesis. The first pass assessed direct relevance to hybrid, remote, telework, or location-flexible work. The second pass examined borderline abstracts against the outcome and mechanism criteria. Twenty-four peripheral records were excluded from the focused synthesis: 18 lacked a direct hybrid or remote work context, four lacked a relevant employee outcome, and two concerned service integration rather than employee work design. The focused synthesis therefore contained 200 articles (Figure 1).

Data cleaning and bibliometric analysis

Bibliographic metadata were cleaned before analysis. Duplicate titles were checked, and author-keyword variants were standardized. Examples included hybrid working to hybrid work, working from home to work from home, teleworking to telework, employee wellbeing to employee well-being, and work-life balance variants to a common label. The generic keyword workplace was removed. The cleaned broad corpus contained 21 author keywords meeting the minimum occurrence threshold of five. Co-occurrence analysis used full counting and association-strength normalization. Network visualization identified clusters, overlay visualization represented average publication year, and density visualization indicated concentrations of frequently connected terms.

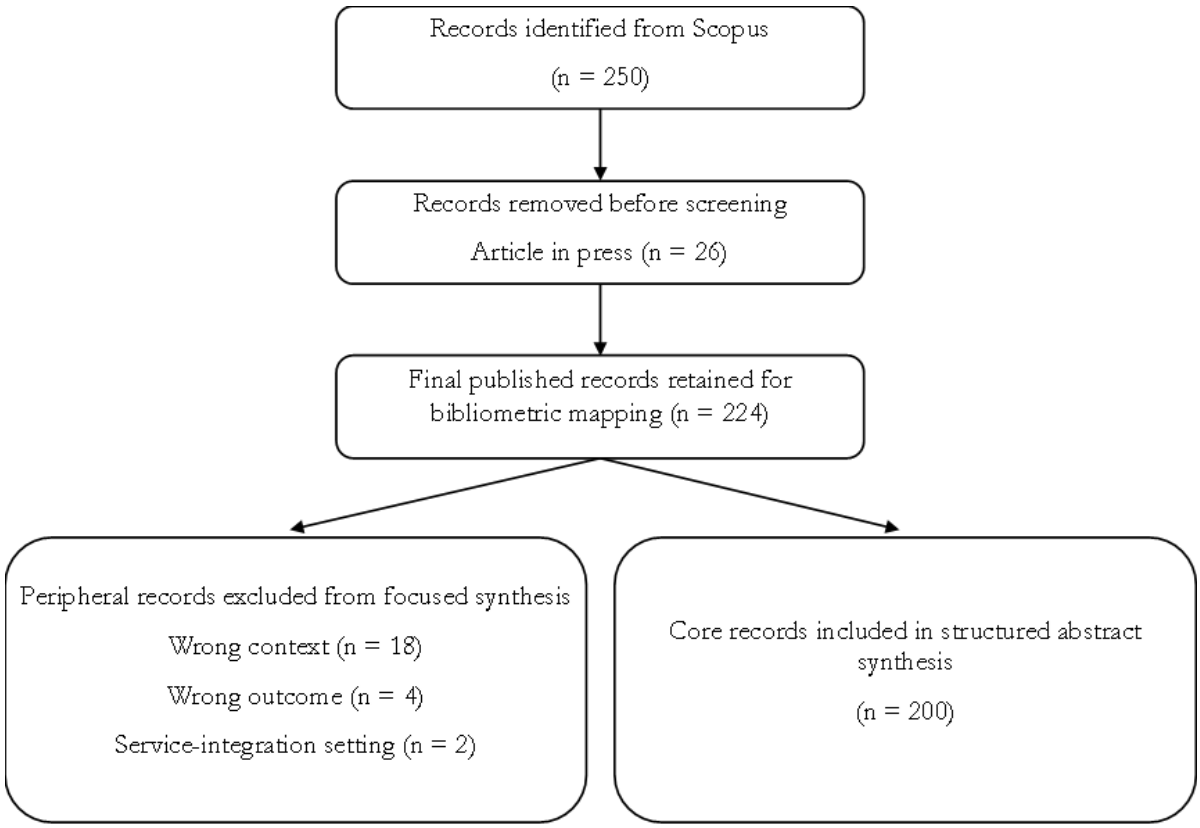


Figure 1. Study identification and construction of the broad bibliometric corpus and focused synthesis corpus. Search date : 3 June 2026. The bibliometric map used the broad corpus; the focused synthesis used the core corpus.

Structured abstract synthesis

The 200 core articles were analyzed using a structured coding dictionary applied to titles, abstracts, and author keywords. The dictionary captured job resources, job demands, mechanisms, outcomes, and methodological characteristics. Resource categories included flexibility and autonomy, organizational and leadership support, and social connection. Demand categories included digital demands and technostress, work-life boundary strain, and workload or coordination demands. Outcome categories included well-being and mental health, burnout and stress, work-life balance, job satisfaction, engagement, performance, and retention. Coding was non-exclusive because a study could address multiple mechanisms or outcomes. Borderline cases were reviewed manually to reduce false classifications.

The coding dictionary was developed iteratively: an initial category list was drafted from Job Demands-Resources theory and the boundary perspectives introduced in the Job Demands-Resources Theory and the Double-Edged Perspective and Technostress and Work-Life Boundaries sections, piloted on a random sample of abstracts, and refined until categories were mutually understandable and consistently applied before coding the full corpus. All 200 core articles were coded by the author. Because a single-coder design cannot generate a formal inter-rater reliability statistic, a random subset of the corpus was re-coded approximately six weeks after the initial pass; discrepancies between the two passes were resolved by returning to the original abstract and, where disagreement recurred, refining the affected category definition. This safeguard, and the single-coder limitation it partially addresses, is discussed further in the Limitations section.

Robustness and interpretive safeguards

Three safeguards were used. First, bibliometric and focused synthesis corpora were reported separately so that field mapping did not conceal the narrower evidence base used for mechanism synthesis. Second, frequencies were treated as indicators of attention rather than estimates of effect size. Third, network proximity was interpreted as co-occurrence, not causality. The framework and future agenda were derived from convergence among keyword structure, abstract coding, and established theory.

Results

Publication growth and disciplinary dispersion

The 224-article bibliometric corpus shows rapid growth. Only four articles were published in 2021, followed by 19 in 2022, 38 in 2023, 46 in 2024, and 83 in 2025. The 34 articles indexed in the first half of 2026 indicate continued activity and should not be interpreted as a full-year decline. The steep rise after 2022 reflects the transition from crisis-oriented working-from-home research to sustained interest in hybrid work as an organizational design (Figure 2).

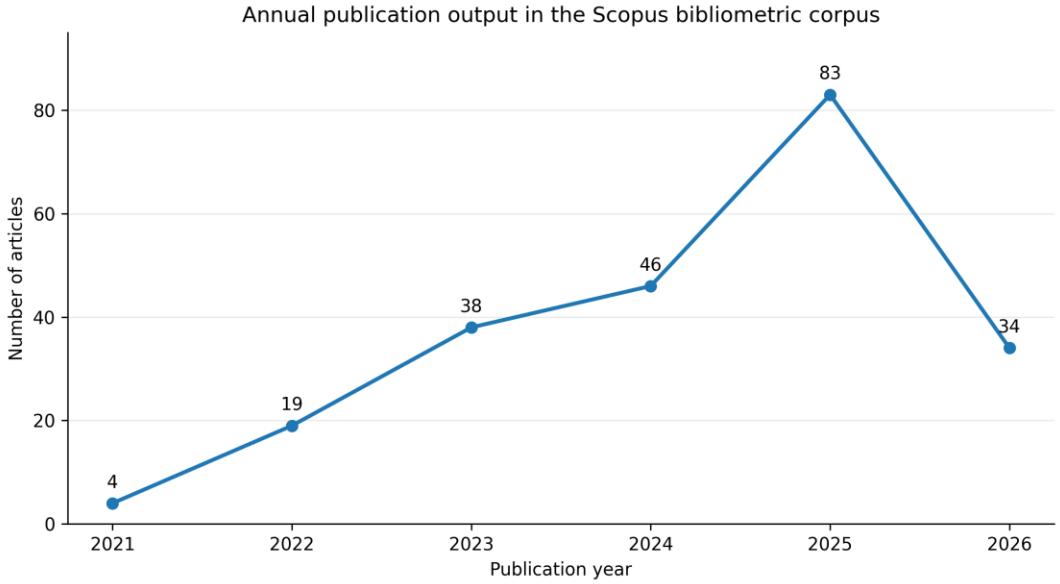


Figure 2. Annual publication output in the broad Scopus corpus. The 2026 value covers publications indexed through 3 June 2026.

The literature is dispersed across management, psychology, occupational health, public health, information systems, and workplace-design journals. Sustainability was the largest outlet, while journals devoted to HRM, environmental and occupational health, workplace health, and psychology also contributed substantially. Affiliation counts indicate particularly strong participation from the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, India, South Africa, Poland, Indonesia, Canada, and the Netherlands. The geographical distribution demonstrates global interest but also suggests that national institutional conditions and occupational structures may shape how hybrid work is experienced (Table 2).

Table 2. Leading publication sources and affiliation countries

Source	Articles	Affiliation country	Articles
Sustainability (Switzerland)	13	United States	39
SA Journal of Human Resource Management	6	United Kingdom	24
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	6	Italy	18
Frontiers in Psychology	5	India	16
International Journal of Workplace Health Management	5	South Africa	14
PLoS ONE	4	Poland	13
Problems and Perspectives in Management	4	Indonesia	12
Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction	3	Canada	11
BMC Public Health	3	Netherlands	10
Journal of Vocational Behavior	3	Malaysia	8

Country counts are based on author affiliations. Internationally coauthored articles can contribute to more than one country.

Influential documents

Table 3 lists the eight most cited documents in the broad corpus, ranked by citation count.

Table 3. Most cited documents in the broad corpus

First author; Year	Title	Source	Citations
Babapour Chafi et al. (2021)	Post-pandemic office work: Perceived challenges and opportunities for a sustainable work environment	Sustainability (Switzerland)	258
Hopkins & Bardoel (2023)	The Future Is Hybrid: How Organisations Are Designing and Supporting Sustainable Hybrid Work Models in Post-Pandemic Australia	Sustainability (Switzerland)	133
Yang et al. (2023)	Does working from home work? Experience of working from home and the value of hybrid workplace post-COVID-19	Journal of Corporate Real Estate	107
Juchnowicz & Kinowska (2021)	Employee well-being and digitalwork during the COVID-19 pandemic	Information (Switzerland)	90
Gifford (2022)	Remote working: unprecedented increase and a developing research agenda	Human Resource Development International	81
Kossek & Kelliher (2023)	Making Flexibility More I-Deal: Advancing Work-Life Equality Collectively	Group and Organization Management	68
Beck & Hensher (2022)	Working from home in Australia in 2020: Positives, negatives and the potential for future benefits to transport and society	Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	65
Smite et al. (2022)	The Future Workplace: Characterizing the Spectrum of Hybrid Work Arrangements for Software Teams	IEEE Software	53

Citation counts reflect the Scopus export retrieved on 3 June 2026 and are time dependent.

The most cited studies focus on sustainable post-pandemic office work, the design of hybrid models, the value of working from home, employee well-being in digital work, and the emerging remote-work research agenda. This pattern shows that early influence was achieved by studies that framed the transition broadly. More recent work has moved toward specific mechanisms such as autonomy, technostress, psychological detachment, mental distress, and work-arrangement fit.

Author-keyword network and thematic clusters

The cleaned author-keyword analysis identified 21 terms with at least five occurrences and grouped them into five clusters, visualized in the co-occurrence network in Figure 3 and summarized in Table 4. Hybrid work was the dominant and most connected term, with 80 occurrences, 18 links, and a total link strength of 112. Remote work followed with 42 occurrences and a total link strength of 64. Work-life balance, work from home, well-being, employee well-being, telework, and burnout formed the next tier of central concepts.

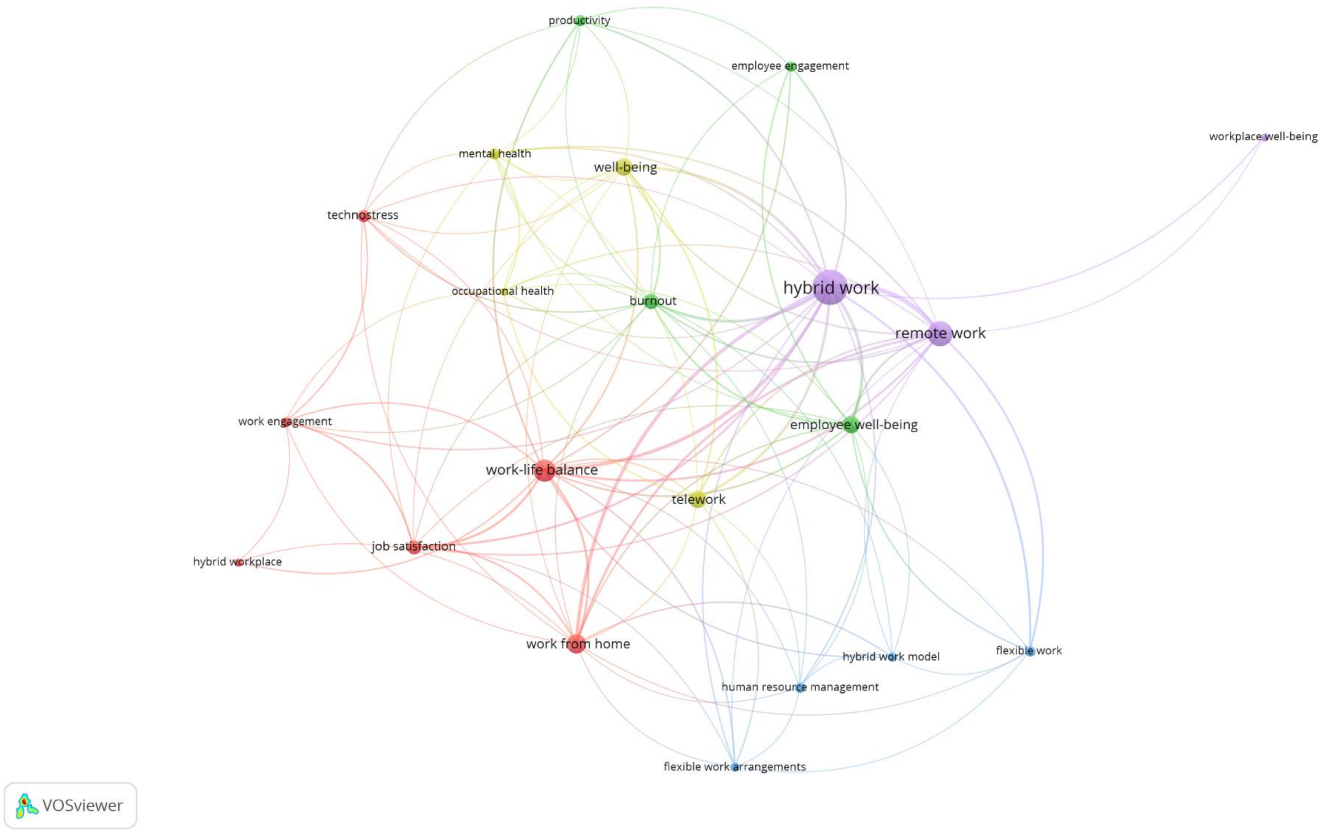


Figure 3. Author-keyword co-occurrence network based on 224 final Scopus articles. Full counting; minimum occurrence threshold = 5.

Table 4. Thematic clusters in the author-keyword network

Cluster	Core keywords	Interpretation
1. Work-life interface and psychosocial responses	Work-life balance; work from home; job satisfaction; technostress; work engagement; hybrid workplace	Captures the tension between flexibility, positive attitudes, boundary management, and technology-related strain.
2. Employee well-being and performance outcomes	Employee well-being; burnout; productivity; employee engagement	Connects employee health with motivational and organizational outcomes and highlights the sustainability question.
3. Flexible work design and HRM architecture	Flexible work; flexible work arrangements; human resource management; hybrid work model	Frames hybrid work as a policy, job-design, and HRM system rather than a location preference.
4. Telework and occupational health	Well-being; telework; mental health; occupational health	Represents the health-oriented foundation inherited from telework and occupational-health research.
5. Core hybrid-remote work nexus	Hybrid work; remote work; workplace well-being	Forms the conceptual center of the field while showing that work-arrangement labels remain more integrated than well-being constructs.

The network reveals a field with a strong structural vocabulary and a less integrated mechanism vocabulary. Hybrid work is strongly connected to remote work, work from home, work-life balance, well-being, and burnout. By contrast, technostress has fewer and weaker links to the core. This does not mean technostress is absent. It indicates that technology-related strain remains partly separated from the dominant flexibility and general well-being streams.

Temporal development and thematic density

Overlay and density visualizations of the author-keyword network trace how thematic emphasis has shifted over time (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

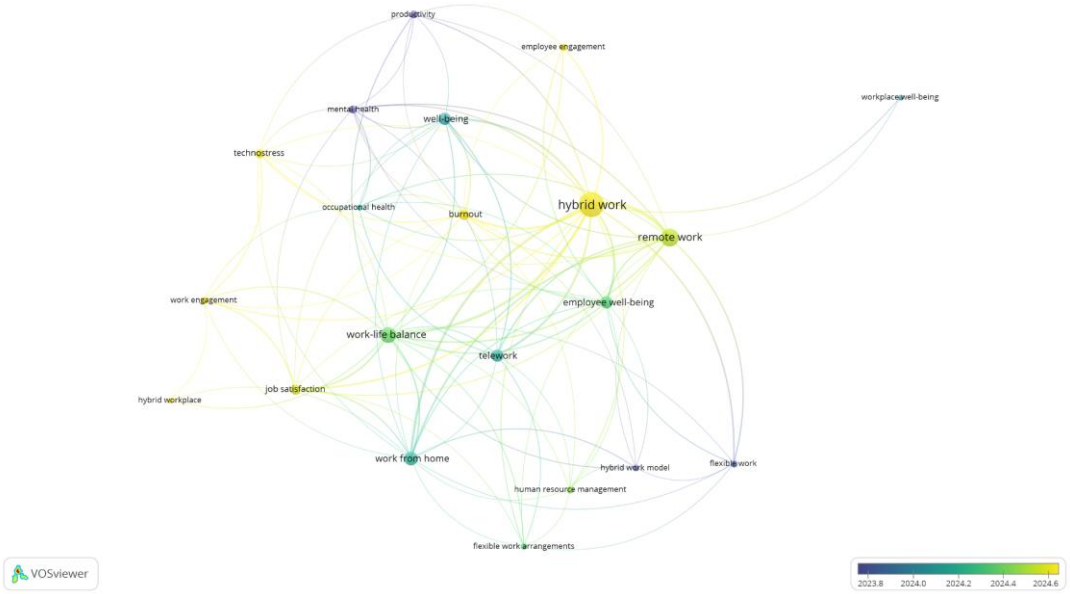


Figure 4. Overlay visualization of author keywords. Lighter colors represent more recent average publication years.

The overlay map suggests a movement from earlier concerns with productivity, mental health, telework, and hybrid-work models toward newer concerns with technostress, burnout, engagement, job satisfaction, and hybrid work as a distinct arrangement. This evolution reflects a transition from adoption and feasibility questions to employee-experience and sustainability questions. It also indicates that the field is beginning to ask why the same arrangement produces different outcomes across employees and organizations.

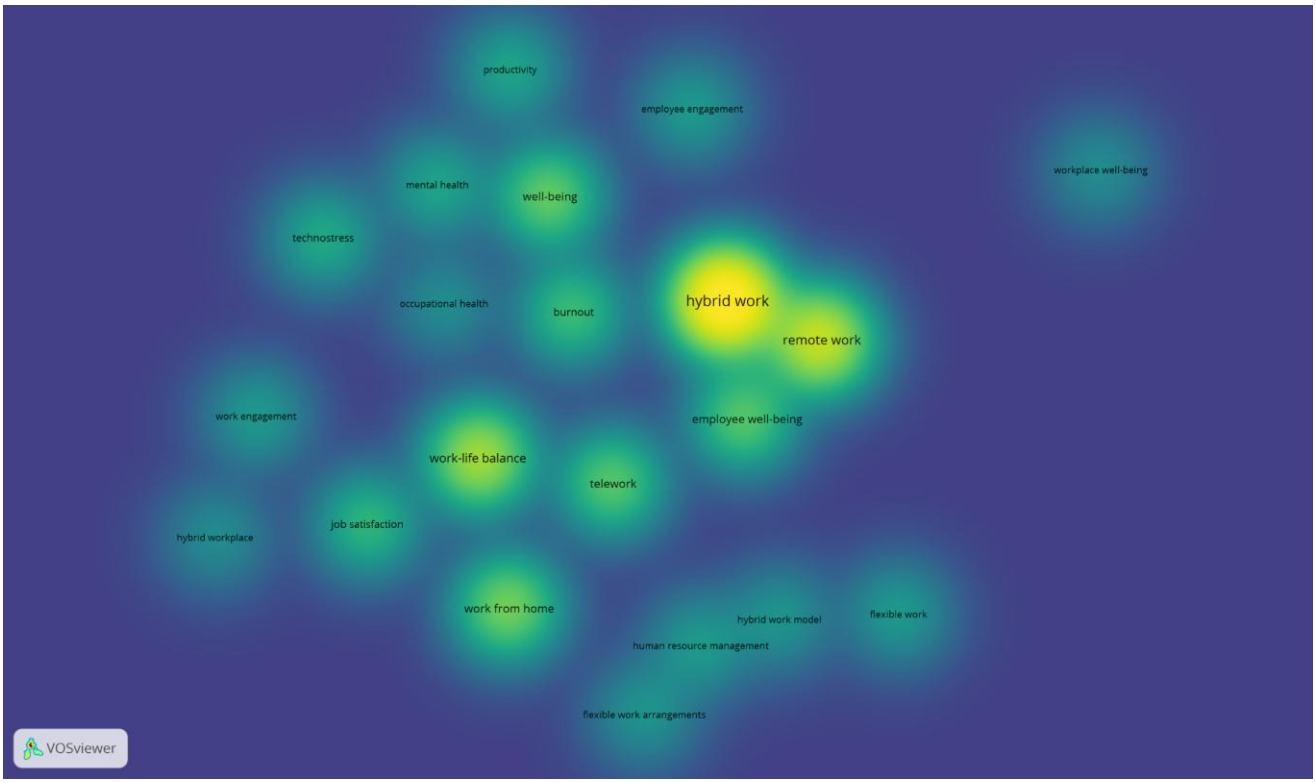


Figure 5. Density visualization of author keywords. Yellow areas indicate higher concentrations of frequently co-occurring terms.

The highest density occurs around hybrid work and remote work, followed by work-life balance, employee well-being, work from home, and telework. Technostress, occupational health, workplace well-being, and flexible-work design occupy lower-density regions. Lower density is not evidence of a gap by itself, but it identifies areas where conceptual integration and empirical accumulation are weaker.

Structured synthesis of demands, resources, and outcomes

Table 5 reports the frequency with which each theme was coded across the 200-article focused synthesis. Two patterns are especially important. First, flexibility and autonomy are nearly as common as work-life balance, indicating that the literature largely treats discretion as the main resource pathway. Second, burnout, exhaustion, and stress are discussed almost twice as often as explicit digital demands and technostress. The field therefore recognizes negative outcomes more often than it identifies technology-specific causal processes. This imbalance supports the need to integrate technostress, workload, boundary strain, and organizational norms within a common work-design model.

Table 5. Frequency of coded themes in the 200-article focused synthesis

Theme	Articles	Share	Interpretive meaning
Employee well-being and mental health	118	59.0%	Dominant outcome domain, including psychological, affective, and subjective well-being.
Work-life balance and enrichment	91	45.5%	Central positive pathway and a recurring bridge between work design and well-being.
Flexibility and autonomy	90	45.0%	Most frequently discussed resource, but often measured as schedule or location discretion.
Performance and productivity	51	25.5%	Shows continued organizational emphasis alongside employee outcomes.
Burnout, exhaustion, and stress	38	19.0%	Most common negative health pathway.
Job satisfaction and positive attitudes	36	18.0%	Frequently linked to autonomy, flexibility, and work-arrangement fit.
Engagement and thriving	33	16.5%	Motivational outcome associated with resources and supportive coordination.
Workload and coordination demands	33	16.5%	Includes meeting load, communication load, work pressure, and coordination complexity.
Social connection and inclusion	32	16.0%	Includes support, belonging, psychological safety, loneliness, and isolation.
Organizational and leadership support	25	12.5%	Important buffering resource but less frequently foregrounded than flexibility.
Digital demands and technostress	20	10.0%	Technology-specific strain mechanism, still less prominent than general strain outcomes.
Work-life boundary strain	20	10.0%	Includes work-family conflict, boundary permeability, and detachment problems.
Retention and withdrawal	17	8.5%	Includes turnover intention, retention, quitting, and psychological withdrawal.

Categories are non-exclusive. A single article can contribute to several themes. Frequencies are based on titles, abstracts, and author keywords.

Methodological and theoretical profile

Cross-sectional quantitative studies form the largest identifiable category, followed by qualitative research. Longitudinal, diary, and experimental designs remain a minority. This distribution limits causal inference because employee preferences and well-being can influence work-arrangement choice as well as result from it. Theoretical usage is also fragmented. Job Demands-Resources theory appears most often, followed by Conservation of Resources, self-determination or need-satisfaction perspectives, boundary theory, social exchange, and work-arrangement fit. The field has appropriate theoretical building blocks, but they are rarely combined in a way that captures demands, resources, boundaries, and fit simultaneously (Table 6).

Table 6. Methodological profile of the focused synthesis

Methodological category	Articles	Share
Cross-sectional quantitative	54	27.0%
Qualitative	45	22.5%
Review/conceptual	25	12.5%
Experimental/intervention	15	7.5%
Longitudinal/diary	14	7.0%
Mixed methods	9	4.5%
Simulation/Delphi	1	0.5%
Other/unclear	37	18.5%

Classification was based on titles and abstracts. Other/unclear includes studies whose design was not sufficiently specified in the abstract.

Discussion

The following synthesis reports patterns in how the reviewed corpus frames and emphasizes hybrid-work research. Abstract-level coding can establish which themes and relationships receive scholarly attention, but it cannot establish causal effect sizes or resolve inconsistencies within individual studies. Accordingly, statements below refer to what the reviewed corpus suggests or emphasizes rather than to definitive claims about "the literature," and stronger causal or prevalence claims are attributed to the specific primary studies cited rather than inferred from frequency coding alone.

The resource pathway: flexibility must become usable control

The results confirm that flexibility is the dominant resource narrative in hybrid-work research. Yet flexibility is not automatically a resource. It becomes beneficial when employees possess meaningful discretion over location and timing, when schedules are predictable, and when tasks are compatible with remote execution. Autonomy supports need satisfaction, reduces commuting burdens, and can improve work-life balance and job satisfaction (Datta et al., 2025; Domenech & Danvila-del-Valle, 2026; Peijen et al., 2025).

Usable control differs from nominal flexibility. A policy may permit remote work while managers require continuous availability, schedule meetings unpredictably, or signal that office presence is necessary for advancement. Under these conditions, formal flexibility coexists with low control. Work-arrangement fit is therefore a more informative predictor than remote-work intensity alone because it captures congruence between preferences, tasks, household conditions, and organizational expectations (Schweitzer et al., 2025).

The resource pathway also depends on social architecture. Organizational and leadership support appeared in only 12.5% of the core studies, but the studies that examined support consistently treated it as a buffer or enabling condition. Support includes access to equipment, fair coordination, inclusion in information networks, trust, feedback, and protection from career invisibility. Leadership effectiveness, perceived organizational support, and psychosocial safety climate can convert location flexibility into a sustainable resource (Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2023; Oleksa-Marewska & Tokar, 2022; Parkin et al., 2023).

The demand pathway: strain is recognized, but mechanisms remain under-specified

This near two-to-one gap between general strain outcomes and technology-specific demands (Table 6) is theoretically important: it suggests that the field often documents strain without fully specifying how hybrid work produces it. A more precise account distinguishes workload, coordination load, availability pressure, technology complexity, communication fragmentation, and social isolation.

Technostress is not simply the amount of technology used. It emerges when technological demands exceed skills, control, recovery opportunities, or organizational support. Meeting load, rapid platform switching, duplicated communication across office and remote participants, and after-hours messaging can make flexibility cognitively expensive. Recent studies show that technostress can contribute to work-family conflict, reduced engagement, burnout, and turnover intention, while detachment, autonomy, and support can attenuate these effects (Banerjee & Gupta, 2024; Datta et al., 2024; Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2023; Whelan et al., 2026; Wijaya et al., 2026).

Social and professional isolation create a parallel demand pathway. Hybrid work can reduce spontaneous interaction and weaken access to informal learning, belonging, and visibility. These effects are not evenly distributed. Newcomers, early-career employees, employees with highly interdependent tasks, and those with limited home workspaces may face greater costs. Conversely, some employees experience the office as distracting, socially demanding, or inaccessible and may benefit from greater remote intensity. This heterogeneity reinforces the importance of fit and segmentation.

Work-life boundaries are the central switching mechanism

Work-life balance is the third most central keyword and the second most frequent coded theme. Its prominence indicates that the work-home interface is the central switching mechanism through which hybrid work becomes either supportive or harmful. Reduced commuting and schedule control can create time and energy for family, health, and recovery. At the same time, physical proximity to nonwork roles can increase interruptions and make it difficult to detach.

Boundary effects depend on permeability, flexibility, and control. Permeability describes how easily one domain intrudes into another. Flexibility describes the ability to move boundaries. Control describes whether the employee can decide when and how those movements occur. High flexibility with low control can be destabilizing. Employees may constantly adjust to unpredictable team and family demands without obtaining genuine recovery. The most sustainable arrangements are therefore likely to combine moderate permeability with high control and predictable coordination.

Recent longitudinal and diary studies provide a stronger basis for this argument than cross-sectional correlations. Boundary preferences can change as employees adapt to hybrid work, and daily work location can influence need satisfaction and well-being differently across individuals (Peijen et al., 2025; Wan et al., 2025). Future research should therefore treat boundaries as dynamic processes rather than stable personal preferences.

Hybrid-work quality is more consequential than hybrid-work intensity

The review suggests a shift from counting remote days to assessing the quality of hybrid-work design. Intensity can still matter, particularly when it affects coordination or isolation, but it does not reveal whether the arrangement is voluntary, predictable, inclusive, or supported. Two or three remote days may be beneficial in one organization and harmful in another because the underlying architecture differs.

Hybrid-work quality can be represented through six dimensions: voluntariness, predictability, task-location fit, team synchronization, digital governance, and inclusion. Voluntariness reflects meaningful choice rather than unilateral assignment. Predictability concerns stable expectations about location and availability. Task-location fit aligns work setting with concentration, collaboration, and service requirements. Team synchronization prevents coordination from becoming constant negotiation. Digital governance defines communication, meeting, and response-time norms. Inclusion protects access to information, development, visibility, and relationships across locations.

This quality perspective reconciles apparently contradictory findings. It explains why hybrid work can improve retention without reducing performance in well-designed settings, while producing distress, exhaustion, or withdrawal when control and support are weak (Bloom et al., 2024; Chu & Chou, 2024; Trevino Garcia & Christensen, 2025).

An integrative demands-resources framework

The proposed framework (Figure 6) treats hybrid-work design as an upstream configuration that generates job resources and job demands in parallel. Resources activate a motivational pathway (perceived control, engagement, need satisfaction, work-life enrichment, and psychological detachment); demands activate a health-impairment pathway (emotional exhaustion, digital fatigue, work-family conflict, loneliness, and withdrawal). Both pathways converge on employee well-being, mental health, satisfaction, performance, retention, and sustainable work ability, and are moderated by work-arrangement fit and by boundary conditions such as occupation, task interdependence, family demands, career stage, culture, and leadership.

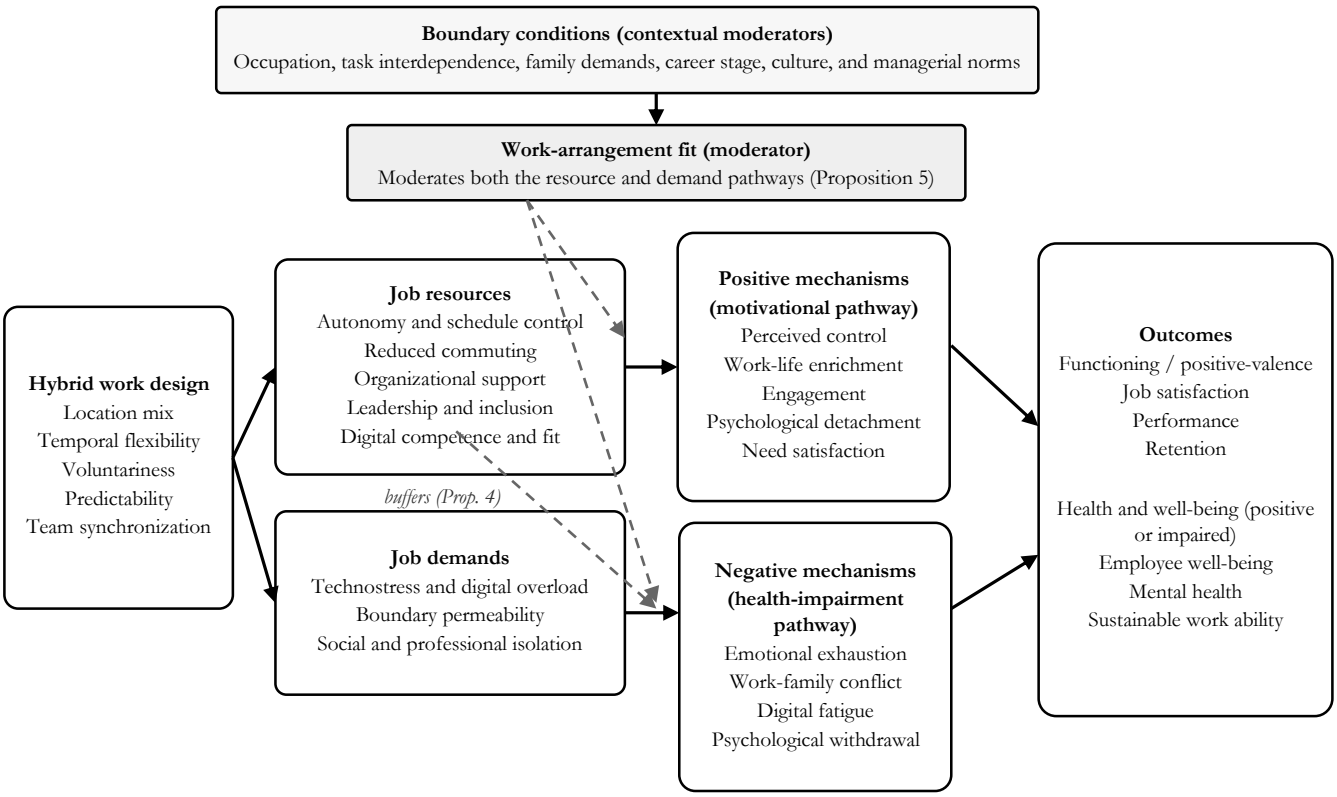


Figure 6. Hybrid Work Demands-Resources and Employee Well-Being Framework.

Consistent with its propositional status (see Testable Propositions), the framework is presented as a theory-informed synthesis rather than an empirical result of the bibliometric analysis. The structural placement of technostress and organizational support, each discussed in a minority of coded abstracts (10.0% and 12.5% respectively; Table 6), reflects their theoretical centrality within the health-impairment and motivational pathways established in the Job Demands-Resources Theory and the Double-Edged Perspective section, not their raw frequency in the corpus.

Two construct placements require clarification. Autonomy is coded as a job resource because it describes structural discretion granted by the work arrangement, whereas perceived control is coded as a motivational mechanism because it describes the employee's subjective appraisal of that discretion; autonomy is therefore an antecedent condition for, rather than a synonym of, perceived control. Boundary permeability is coded as a job demand because it describes an objective feature of the work-home interface, while the Work-Life Boundaries Are the Central Switching Mechanism section discusses work-life boundaries as the field's central switching mechanism at a broader conceptual level; the two uses are compatible because permeability is one demand-side component of the boundary-regulation process introduced in the Technostress and Work-Life Boundaries section.

The framework advances the literature by locating technostress and boundary strain within the health-impairment pathway while retaining autonomy, support, and fit within the motivational pathway. It also avoids treating resources and demands as mutually exclusive. Digital tools may be resources when they improve access and control, but demands when they create overload or invasion. The same characteristic can change function depending on intensity, norms, and employee circumstances.

Future Research Agenda

The next phase of hybrid-work research should move from broad comparisons of remote and office workers toward mechanism-rich, context-sensitive designs. Table 7 organizes priorities using theory, context, characteristics, and methodology.

Table 7. TCCM-oriented future research agenda

Domain	Priority	Illustrative research question
Theory	Integrate JD-R with boundary theory, Conservation of Resources, technostress, social exchange, and work-arrangement fit. Distinguish resource gain, resource loss, and resource conversion processes.	How do organizational resources convert location flexibility into perceived control and recovery?
Context	Study frontline, manufacturing, public-service, SME, disability, caregiving, and Global South settings. Compare institutional regimes and labor-market protections.	Do the benefits of autonomy depend on employment security, digital infrastructure, and cultural expectations?
Characteristics	Measure hybrid-work quality through voluntariness, predictability, synchronization, digital norms, office quality, career visibility, and task-location fit.	Which configurations produce high well-being and performance simultaneously?
Methodology	Use longitudinal, diary, field-experimental, multilevel, objective digital-trace, and quasi-experimental designs. Test nonlinear and configurational relationships.	Is the relationship between remote-work intensity and well-being curvilinear, and for whom?
Outcomes	Use multidimensional well-being, recovery, work ability, loneliness, inclusion, retention, and sustainable performance. Avoid productivity-only evaluation.	When do short-term performance gains create longer-term health costs?

Testable propositions

1. Hybrid-work quality has a stronger positive association with employee well-being than the number of remote working days.
2. Autonomy and work-life enrichment mediate the positive relationship between hybrid-work quality and employee well-being.
3. Digital demands and boundary permeability mediate the positive relationship between poorly governed hybrid work and burnout.
4. Organizational support and clear communication norms weaken the indirect effect of digital demands on burnout through technostress.
5. Work-arrangement fit moderates both motivational and health-impairment pathways, such that the same hybrid intensity produces different outcomes across employees.

6. The relationship between hybrid-work intensity and well-being is nonlinear when coordination needs and isolation increase at high remote intensity.

7. Team synchronization and inclusion practices reduce location-based inequalities in access to information, development, and career visibility.

Theoretical contributions

First, the review reframes hybrid work as a configuration of demands and resources rather than a location category. This moves theory beyond comparisons of home and office and identifies the organizational mechanisms that give flexibility its positive or negative meaning.

Second, the framework integrates domains that have remained partially separated. The keyword network shows strong integration of hybrid work with work-life balance and general well-being, but weaker integration with technostress. Locating technostress, boundary permeability, and coordination load within the same health-impairment pathway addresses this fragmentation.

Third, the review distinguishes hybrid-work intensity from hybrid-work quality. This conceptual distinction explains heterogeneous findings and creates a more useful construct for future measurement. Quality includes voluntariness, predictability, task-location fit, synchronization, digital governance, and inclusion.

Fourth, the review positions employee well-being as a criterion of sustainable work design rather than a secondary outcome. Productivity and engagement remain important, but their value depends on whether they are achieved without persistent exhaustion, isolation, or boundary violation.

Methodological contributions

The study's principal methodological contribution is the nested dual-corpus design detailed in the Study Selection and Corpus Construction section, which is superior to a single-corpus approach because it preserves the field's full bibliometric footprint for growth, keyword, and network mapping while restricting the more labor-intensive mechanism coding to the subset of records with a substantively confirmed employee-outcome relationship. Keyword cleaning further reduces semantic fragmentation across hybrid working, remote working, teleworking, and well-being variants, and reporting both frequency and network structure helps distinguish frequently discussed outcomes from weakly integrated mechanisms.

Practical implications

These findings carry several practical implications for organizations designing hybrid work. Organizations may benefit from treating hybrid work as a work-design system rather than an attendance rule, aligning decisions about location with tasks, team interdependence, employee circumstances, technology, and office conditions. Within this system, employees should be given meaningful choice inside coordinated team constraints: unrestricted individual choice can harm synchronization, while rigid mandates can reduce control and fit. Clear digital norms for meetings, response times, channel use, and protected nonwork time are equally important, and meeting load and after-hours communication should be measured as job demands rather than left informal.

Resource and demand indicators should be monitored together rather than separately. Resource indicators include autonomy, support, inclusion, fit, and access to development, while demand indicators include overload, isolation, boundary violations, and burnout. Because hybrid work can allow physical presence to become a proxy for commitment, location-neutral access to information, feedback, promotion, and informal learning is worth protecting, and managers may need training to evaluate outputs rather than presence. Hybrid policies

should also be segmented by occupation, task, career stage, disability, commute burden, home workspace, and caregiving needs, since a universal model is unlikely to be equitable or effective.

Finally, organizations should evaluate hybrid work using a balanced dashboard that includes well-being, retention, absence, work ability, service quality, collaboration, and productivity, rather than relying on productivity or attendance metrics alone.

Limitations

The review used Scopus as a single database. This choice improved metadata consistency but may omit studies indexed exclusively in Web of Science, PsycINFO, PubMed, or regional databases.

The broad bibliometric corpus and focused synthesis corpus served different purposes. Although transparently reported, future replications could rerun all maps on the final focused corpus and compare network stability.

The structured synthesis was based on titles, abstracts, and author keywords rather than complete full-text coding. Abstracts may underreport theories, measures, null findings, and contextual details.

Theme frequencies indicate scholarly attention, not effect magnitude or causal strength. A future meta-analysis should quantify relationships when measures and designs become sufficiently comparable.

Author-keyword thresholds favor established terms and can underrepresent emerging concepts such as digital fatigue, telepressure, algorithmic monitoring, return-to-office stress, and hybrid-work equity.

Citation counts are time dependent and advantage older publications. Recent 2025 and 2026 articles may be influential despite currently low citation counts.

The corpus spans pandemic, transition, and post-pandemic periods. Emergency working from home differs from voluntary hybrid work, and not all studies make this distinction clearly.

Structured synthesis relied on a single coder. Although the coding dictionary was piloted and a subset was re-coded after a time gap as a partial safeguard (see Structured Abstract Synthesis), the review did not employ a second coder or report a formal inter-rater reliability statistic, and some classification decisions may reflect the author's individual judgment.

Conclusion

Hybrid work is neither an inherently beneficial flexibility practice nor an inherently harmful source of strain. Its consequences depend on the quality of work design and on whether flexibility becomes usable control or unmanaged permeability. The literature has grown rapidly and is organized around hybrid and remote work, work-life balance, employee well-being, telework, burnout, and flexible-work design. Yet technology-specific demands remain less integrated than general strain outcomes, leaving an important theoretical gap between the recognition of burnout and the explanation of how digital work produces it. The Hybrid Work Demands-Resources and Employee Well-Being Framework addresses this gap. It explains how autonomy, reduced commuting, support, digital competence, and fit activate motivational and recovery pathways, while technostress, coordination load, boundary permeability, availability pressure, and isolation activate health-impairment pathways. The central implication is that organizations should stop treating the number of office days as the primary design variable. Sustainable hybrid work depends on voluntariness, predictability, task-location fit, synchronization, digital governance, and inclusion. Research that measures these qualities with longitudinal and causal designs can move the field from broad debate toward evidence-based hybrid-work architecture.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement:
The bibliographic dataset was retrieved from Scopus on 3 June 2026. The cleaned data, thesaurus file, coding framework, and analytical outputs are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to Scopus licensing restrictions.

Ethics Approval:
Ethics approval was not required because the study analyzed published bibliographic records and did not involve human participants or personal data.

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement:
Ryan Basith Fasih Khan: Conceptualization, methodology, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, writing - original draft, writing - review and editing.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies:
During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used generative AI-assisted tools solely for language refinement (grammar, clarity, and phrasing) and document formatting. Generative AI tools were not used for study selection, data extraction, abstract coding, bibliometric analysis, or development of the conceptual framework or propositions in this single-authored study; all such steps were performed exclusively by the author. The author reviewed and edited all AI-assisted language outputs and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Appendix A. Exact search strategy

TITLE-ABS-KEY(("hybrid work*" OR "hybrid working" OR "hybrid workplace*" OR "remote work*" OR telework* OR "work from home" OR "working from home") AND (employee* OR worker* OR workforce OR "knowledge worker*") AND ("employee well-being" OR "employee wellbeing" OR "workplace well-being" OR "workplace wellbeing" OR "occupational well-being" OR "psychological well-being" OR "job-related affective well-being" OR "mental health" OR burnout OR "emotional exhaustion" OR technostress OR "digital fatigue" OR "digital overload" OR telepressure OR "work-life balance" OR "work-life boundar*" OR "work-family conflict" OR "job stress" OR "job satisfaction")) AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2027 AND NOT TITLE-ABS-KEY(student* OR "hybrid learning" OR "blended learning" OR "online learning" OR telehealth OR telemedicine OR patient*)

Appendix B. Structured synthesis codebook

Table B1. Coding domains and examples

Domain	Illustrative concepts
Job resources	Autonomy, schedule control, flexibility, reduced commuting, organizational support, leadership support, social support, digital competence, work-arrangement fit
Job demands	Technostress, digital overload, meeting load, coordination complexity, workload, availability pressure, isolation, boundary permeability
Positive mechanisms	Perceived control, engagement, need satisfaction, work-life enrichment, psychological detachment, meaningful work
Negative mechanisms	Emotional exhaustion, digital fatigue, work-family conflict, loneliness, distress, psychological withdrawal
Outcomes	Employee well-being, mental health, job satisfaction, work ability, productivity, retention, turnover intention, organizational citizenship
Boundary conditions	Occupation, task interdependence, hybrid intensity, voluntariness, predictability, gender, caregiving, career stage, culture, leadership, home workspace