
Guest editorial: Learning in hybrid workplace: past, present and future

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The concept of “hybrid workplace” starts gaining more attention in the new normal on post-pandemic scenario (Mortensen & Haas, 2021). Hybrid also implies that individuals are operating within diverse settings, with some working from their homes and others from the office, each environment possessing undeniable distinctions (Mortensen, 2023). The hybrid workplace combines the merits of two existing workplace models to ensure workplace learning and productivity – work-from-home and physical office (Edmondson & Mortensen, 2021). While work-from-home provides the flexibility and operational costs reduction, the physical office model ensures effective interaction and cohesion among the stakeholders. Many organizations post-COVID adopted the hybrid workplace model, which allows employees to work both from the office and home based on the instructions and procedures of the organization. The learning in such a hybrid workplace also emerges as a pioneering concept as it encompasses learning and adapting with the changing environment. This may emerge as both an opportunity and challenge. As an opportunity, the hybrid workplace may provide more creative, innovative ideas and more engaged employees. As a challenge, the hybrid workplace may face difficulties in learning transfer and technology interventions. Crafting a hybrid work environment that actively promotes innovation demands a degree of purposefulness that may have been absent in the established practices of traditionally co-located firms (Gratton, 2023).

Seven papers in the special issue, *Learning in hybrid workplace: past, present and future*, discuss the study findings on how various learning philosophies play a significant role in hybrid workplaces. The goal of this special issue on learning in the hybrid workplace is to bring together academics and industry professionals from a variety of disciplines to address the benefits and difficulties of learning in the hybrid workplace. To preserve employee and organizational performance, it was important to create strategies and practices for efficient learning in a hybrid workplace. The goal of the special issue was to examine how different parts of the individual, team and organizational levels facilitate learning in hybrid workplaces while also considering the societal and ethical ramifications of these efforts. The special issue’s overall objective was to deepen understanding of various viewpoints on learning in hybrid workplaces and to offer insightful information to scholars, practitioners and policymakers who are trying to solve these issues.

Work engagement and employee performance might be difficult to manage in a hybrid workplace because direct employee monitoring is hampered. Employees, on the other hand, experience greater autonomy because they are free to work remotely and at any time (flexible work). The first article in the special issue titled “The Future of Work: Work Engagement and Job Performance in the Hybrid Workplace” by Naqshbandi, Kabir, Ishak, and Islam (2023) discussed the work engagement and performance aspects of the hybrid workplace while considering the two dimensions of the hybrid workplace: flexible work and telework. Their findings showed a positive relation between flexible work and job performance and engagement. Additionally, they discovered that the association between flexible work and job performance was mediated by work engagement.



The social support emerged as one important aspect during the hybrid work scenario, as the support from the family and workplace have equal roles. Likewise, work-life balance and life satisfaction of employees are also questionable as the boundaries of family and office always overlap in hybrid work. The article by [Mishra and Bharti \(2023\)](#) entitled “Exploring the Nexus of Social Support, Work-Life Balance, and Life Satisfaction in Hybrid Work Scenario in Learning Organizations” studied the relationship between social support, work-life balance and life satisfaction in a hybrid work situation. They discovered that social support dimensions, work-life balance and life happiness were all positively correlated with hybrid work. Additionally, social support and work-life balance were found to have mediating roles in the links between hybrid work and both life satisfaction and work-life balance, respectively.

The implications of training and development are noteworthy to understand while considering the hybrid work models. The scope of training and development in the form of physical or in-person and online training will be an ambiguous parameter to reach in a decision about it in the hybrid work. In the paper titled “Training and development in the hybrid workplace,” [Suravi \(2023\)](#) discussed the training and development innovations among companies. The paper describes a new method to training and development in the context of the hybrid workplace using the ADDIE and Kirkpatrick training models. The research reinforces that to ensure effective training, organizations need to adopt or adapt changes considering their importance, and hence, the paper discusses such innovations and approaches with the help of standard models.

Blended learning environment mixes the traditional classroom education and online learning. In the blended learning environment, multimedia has commendable role in knowledge acquisition among students. This provides not only recreational learning but also psychological benefits. The article entitled “Psychological expedient of multimedia in blended learning and metamemory satisfaction” by [Saini and Baba \(2023\)](#) explored the psychological measures of the learners and their perception of multimedia learning. The study found that multimedia applications use is connected with their critical thinking perception about themselves and learning attitude. Moreover, learner attitudes also impact blended learning and the satisfaction of metamemory.

The emergence of intensified hybrid workplace arrangement during the post-COVID-19 scenario also coupled with its effect on team learning. The work titled “Hybrid workplace: current status, positives, negatives, challenges, and team learning” by [Oppong Peprah \(2023\)](#) adopted a mixed approach to examine whether the organizations practice hybrid workplace arrangement even after the pandemic restrictions were eased. It also describes the bright and dark side of the hybrid workplace also defines the challenges that companies face to implement the hybrid workplace. The study also examines the efficiency of team learning in the hybrid workplace. The study revealed professional service firms are implementing hybrid workplaces even after the ease of pandemic restrictions. Among the bright side of hybrid workplaces implementation, the study found the opportunity to spend time with families and in dark side reflected the loss of corporate identity and loneliness feeling. The challenges of implementation include the lack of an ergonomic workplace and apt technology for remote working.

Individuals and entities should actively contribute to this trend, as learning organizations require a culture of continuous learning. The article titled “Building and nurturing a learning culture: a cross-dynamic and interactional perspective” by [Alves and Thiebaut \(2023\)](#) delved into the interplay between the organizational and individual levels. At the organizational level, factors include resources for learning, organizational structure and support, while at the individual level, it involves self-directed learning. The study used a

Delphi panel and conducted semi-structured interviews with HR managers as its primary research methods. Their findings revealed that even non-learning organizations experienced advantages during the COVID-19 era by fostering learning dynamics and creating a learning-friendly environment.

High-Performance Work System (HPWS) is a significant factor in organizational success because it transfers managerial accountability for improving corporate performance to employees. By integrating organizational strategies with HR strategies, it generates a synergistic effect that enhances performance. The article titled “High-Performance Work System and Learning Orientation in Offline, Online, and Hybrid Workplaces: The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment” authored by [Yadav, Yadav, and Vihari \(2023\)](#), investigated the role of the HPWS in shaping learning orientation by testing a model on 360 respondents from the IT sector in India. The results indicate that affective commitment mediates the relationship between HPWS and learning orientation. Furthermore, this mediation was found to be positive and significant in hybrid and offline workplace settings, while it was found to be insignificant in the online workplace setting.

Conclusion

The hybrid workplace, which blends physical office spaces with remote work, represents a dynamic shift in the way organizations operate. In this transition to a hybrid work model, it becomes imperative for organizations to prioritize psychological safety and work-life balance for their employees. Achieving this balance is facilitated through the thoughtful incorporation of technology support and comprehensive training programs, both of which contribute to enhancing the overall employee experience and organizational efficiency. By recognizing the challenges associated with this transition and actively preparing for them, organizations can position themselves for successful implementation of the hybrid workplace. These studies featured in this context emphasize the paramount importance of adapting to this evolving work paradigm. Their insights provide valuable guidance not only to academic researchers but also to industry professionals who are tasked with navigating the shifting landscape of work. As organizations continually seek to optimize their performance and stimulate innovation within the framework of hybrid work environments, understanding and proactively addressing these challenges will be fundamental to their sustained success and growth in the future.

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