

A Systematic Literature Review of Hybrid Working: Trends, Challenges, and Future Directions

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of digital technology and the post-pandemic transformation of work have accelerated the adoption of hybrid working as a flexible model that combines remote and on-site work arrangements. This study aims to systematically review and analyze the existing body of research on hybrid working in order to identify key trends, research gaps, and future directions. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method was employed to synthesize prior studies and to evaluate the theoretical and practical implications of hybrid working for organizational productivity, employee well-being, and management practices. Complementing the SLR, a bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer and data from the Scopus database was conducted to map the distribution of publications, collaboration patterns, and scholarly impact within this research domain. The results indicate that research on hybrid working has expanded significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic, with a primary focus on digital transformation, employee engagement, and work-life balance. However, notable gaps remain, particularly in studies addressing leadership adaptability, organizational culture transformation, and the long-term sustainability of hybrid work models. Overall, the findings provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of hybrid working research and offer valuable insights for policymakers, organizational leaders, and scholars seeking to design effective, inclusive, and sustainable hybrid work systems.

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INTRODUCTION

Conducting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on the hybrid working variable is essential for advancing both theoretical understanding and practical applications in the modern workplace. As hybrid work becomes a defining feature of post-pandemic employment structures, an SLR enables researchers to systematically identify contextual, population, and methodological gaps that remain in existing studies (García-Peñalvo, 2022; Nyoni et al., 2025). Through its structured synthesis of empirical findings, an SLR provides evidence-based guidelines for policymakers and organizations in developing sustainable hybrid work practices, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises adapting to digital transitions (Maity & Lee, 2025). Moreover, employing hybrid analytical techniques, such as machine

learning and statistical modeling enhances the rigor and accuracy of synthesized insights (Briki et al., 2024) SLRs also play a crucial role in clarifying conceptual and terminological ambiguities, promoting a shared understanding of hybrid collaboration spaces and the technological requirements that underpin them (Hirschmann et al., 2025).

Beyond methodological contributions, systematic reviews facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of long-term and regional differences in hybrid work implementation, supporting the development of adaptable and context-specific strategies (Maity & Lee, 2025). Additionally, insights derived from such reviews inform organizational strategies that balance employee productivity, engagement, and well-being while managing the challenges of “always-on” digital cultures (Arunprasad et al., 2022). Finally, SLRs contribute to a multi-level understanding of hybridity management, helping organizations identify tensions and develop strategic frameworks to navigate complex work arrangements (Bianchi et al., 2023). In essence, conducting a systematic review on hybrid working is not merely an academic exercise it is a necessary step toward creating evidence-based, resilient, and human-centered hybrid work environments for the future. As hybrid working reshapes organizational structures, it is crucial to examine the psychosocial job demands and resources that influence employee well-being and performance (Jaß & Mache, 2025).

An SLR provides a robust foundation for further research, offering evidence-based insights into the impact of hybrid working conditions on employee health outcomes and serving as a valuable reference point for developing health-promoting workplace practices. Moreover, hybrid work models have been shown to enhance productivity by improving employee satisfaction, reducing commuting time, and fostering work-life balance critical success factors particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (Maity & Lee, 2025). Despite its benefits, conducting SLRs in this domain presents challenges due to the complexity and potential bias inherent in manually reviewing the rapidly expanding body of hybrid work literature (David & Gelbard, 2025). Nonetheless, such reviews play a vital role in supporting evidence-based managerial decision-making by providing insights into employee preferences and guiding organizations in selecting appropriate hybrid-working strategies (Munnich et al., 2025).

Current trends in hybrid work research highlight the integration of technological and motivational strategies through hybrid transformational leadership, which enhances employee confidence, commitment, and organizational culture (Fernando Pauca Quispe & Analy Fernandez Hurtado, 2025). Furthermore, emerging studies emphasize the significance of workplace well-being, exploring how hybrid environments influence burnout, engagement, and organizational commitment using models such as the Job Demands–Resources framework (Telu & Kumar, 2025) Overall, conducting a systematic literature review on hybrid working is not only valuable for consolidating fragmented research but also for advancing theoretical understanding and guiding evidence-based policies that promote sustainable and adaptive work environments.

This study focuses on exploring the current landscape of Hybrid Working research and evaluating the ongoing relevance of this topic as a focus for future research. This study also reviews the evolution of the academic discourse on Hybrid Working and aims to identify how

this work can contribute to leadership theories and organizational practices. The research questions posed are:

1. RQ1: Is the exploration of Hybrid Working a subject that continues to hold significance for future scholarly inquiry?
2. RQ2: What is the present allocation of research investigations related to Hybrid Working?
3. RQ3: What are the theoretical and practical implications from the perspective of future research?

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Bibliometric Analysis to answer the research questions related to the hybrid working variable. The systematic literature review method is appropriate for synthesizing existing research and helps to identify gaps, trends, and future research directions while providing evidence-based insights that can influence organizational policy, practice, and future studies. This approach ensures that the conclusions are drawn from a broad and representative sample of studies, highlighting key areas that require further exploration (García-Peñalvo, 2022)

The bibliometric analysis complements the SLR by quantifying the distribution and impact of publications related to hybrid working. Using VOSviewer and the Scopus database, this study will analyze publications on hybrid working across various journals, focusing on articles published up until October 20, 2025. This methodology enables a comprehensive mapping of the evolution of hybrid working research and provides a deeper understanding of its development, emerging themes, and directions for future research.

METHODS

Assesses literature to discern trends, patterns, and key research entities within a discipline. Using frameworks such as PRISMA, this approach ensures a comprehensive and replicable literature examination, providing a clear and transparent picture of the topic being studied (Chotisarn & Phuthong, 2025; Hadi et al., 2020). The inclusion criteria established were: (1) articles published up until January 31, 2025, (2) publications in English, and (3) focusing on the topic Hybrid Working. Bibliometric analysis was performed using VOSViewer, visualizing bibliographic data to analyze citation networks, author collaborations, and co-occurring keywords, revealing the intellectual structure and dynamics of the research field. The combination of bibliometric analysis and systematic review helps researchers synthesize empirical findings and map the landscape of research activity, including identifying key contributors and emerging trends (Ni & Abdullah, 2025). The integration of both approaches provides a comprehensive understanding of the development, historical flow, and future direction of the research field, making it highly beneficial in interdisciplinary studies for gaining deeper insights (Marzi et al., 2025; Wang & Yi, 2025). Bibliometric analysis is also used for strategic purposes in scholarly publication, introduced by Bertrand et al. (1970) to evaluate scientific journals based on their economic weight.

The preliminary phase in this scholarly examination involves the selection of keywords, which can be accomplished through a macro methodology (top-down), progressing from expansive search trajectories to more narrowly defined studies and topics. Consequently,

after evaluating the limitations inherent in prior research and the scarcity of studies addressing Hybrid Working, this investigation incorporates the keyword "Hybrid Working" as a focal point within the article's title, abstract, and keyword sections. Furthermore, the Scopus database is employed by researchers for a myriad of investigational purposes, including the execution of literature reviews, identifying subject-matter experts, and monitoring research trends.

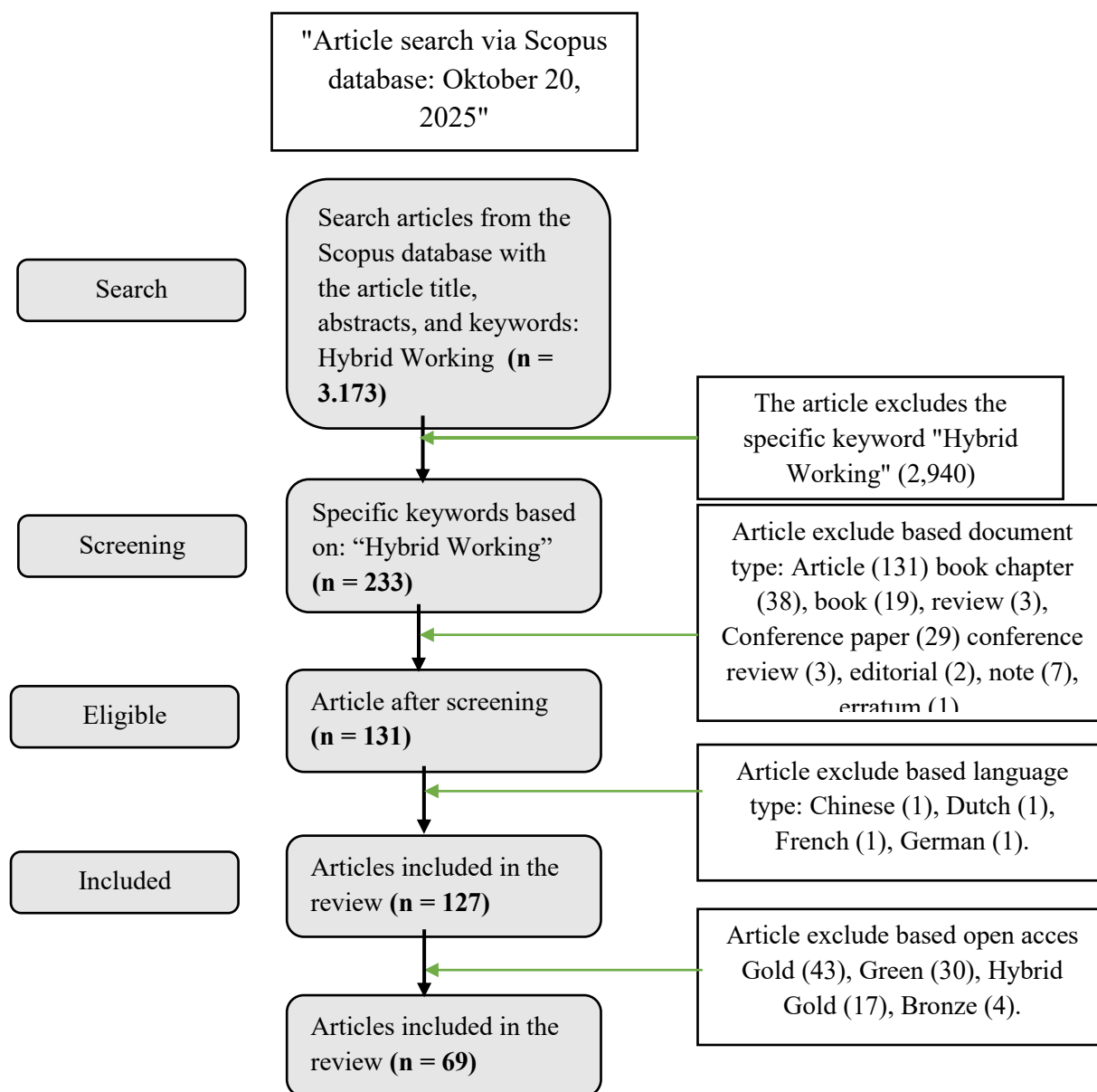


Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review information flow using PRISMA

According to the search outcomes retrieved on October 20, 2025, from the Scopus database utilizing the article title, abstract, and keywords: Hybrid Working across diverse academic disciplines, spanning from the earliest publication in 2019 to the most recent in 2025, the total number of articles about Hybrid Working is 3,173 documents (refer to Figure

1). Following these findings, a screening process filters documents according to their classification. Articles are eliminated based on the document type: Article (131) book chapter (38), book (19), review (3), Conference paper (29) conference review (3), editorial (2), note (7), erratum (1), and non-English (4), and Article exclude based open acces Gold (43), Green (30), Hybrid Gold (17), Bronze (4). culminating in a total of 69 documents. After screening and categorizing by document types, a total of 69 articles were retained for further analysis in this study. This document is then further analyzed in this study to answer *RQ1: Is the exploration of Hybrid Working a subject that continues to hold significance for future scholarly inquiry? RQ2: What is the present allocation of research investigations related to Hybrid Working? RQ3: What are the theoretical and practical implications from the perspective of future research?*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study focus on findings from 69 articles in the Scopus database on Hybrid Working. This data is sourced from identifying the number of articles published, publications throughout the years, and journal sources. This study will also highlight the most influential elements in Hybrid Working, including the authors, affiliations, and the countries involved.

RQ1: Is the exploration of Hybrid Working a subject that continues to hold significance for future scholarly inquiry?

(Gurusamy & Visithra, 2025; Innstrand et al., 2022; van Gelder et al., 2022) According to data retrieved from the Scopus database, the development of hybrid working research has occurred over the past few years, particularly within the last decade. Scholarly work on Hybrid Working comprises 69 articles, suggesting that investigations into Hybrid Working remain comparatively scarce, as illustrated in Figure 1. The exploration of Hybrid Working commenced its progressive development during the last decade, specifically from 2021. The inaugural study was executed by (Barmeyer et al., 2019) and was entitled "When the 'well-oiled machine' meets the 'pyramid of people:' Role perceptions and hybrid working practices of middle managers in a binational organization," which signified the advent of the term now recognized as Hybrid Working. At present, the evolution of research on Hybrid Working has begun to captivate a substantial number of scholars, concentrating on aspects such as organizational adaptability, digital work design, work-life balance, employee productivity, job satisfaction, and work engagement (Innstrand et al., 2022; van Gelder et al., 2022). Furthermore, Hybrid Working has been found to contribute significantly to employee well-being, organizational resilience, and competitiveness in the dynamic digital era (Wheatley et al., 2024)

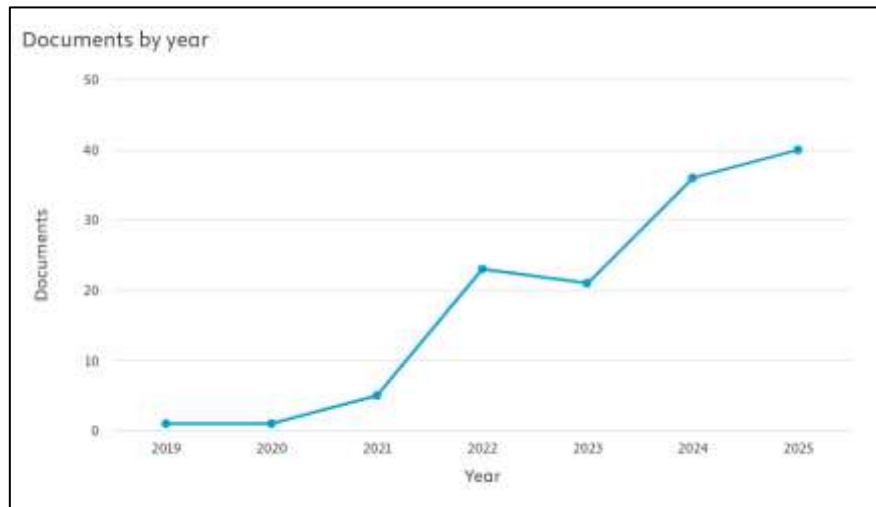


Figure 1. Number of Hybrid Working publications

Since 2019, many organizations worldwide have begun adopting digitally based flexible work models in response to global shifts in work patterns. Early studies during this period highlighted the transition from traditional office-based systems to hybrid work arrangements, marking the emergence of the concept now widely known as Hybrid Working.

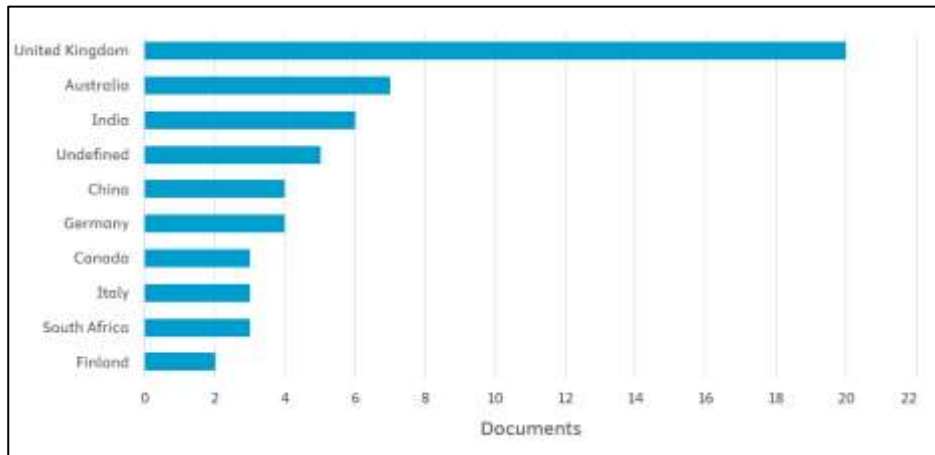
A significant increase in both the adoption and scholarly attention toward Hybrid Working was observed after the COVID-19 pandemic, as many organizations recognized the importance of flexibility and work-life balance. From 2021 to 2024, the number of academic publications related to Hybrid Working rose sharply, as illustrated in Figure 1. This upward trend reflects the growing research interest in topics such as employee productivity, engagement, digital work design, and organizational culture. Although a slight decline can be seen in 2025, the overall interest remains strong, emphasizing the continued relevance of Hybrid Working in discussions of digital transformation and organizational sustainability in the post-pandemic era.

RQ2: What is the present allocation of research investigations related to Hybrid Working?

The analysis of the distribution of Hybrid Working research in the 69 articles was executed by categorizing the articles according to classifications such as nation, region, affiliation, source, and author, with a constraint of solely the top 10 articles in each classification. Acumen regarding the allocation of scholarship pertinent to Hybrid Working will be advantageous for scholars and practitioners in elucidating the forthcoming research agenda, particularly in the sustainable advancement of the Hybrid Working paradigm.

Based on the analysis of the distribution of scholarly publications on Hybrid Working categorized by nation or geographical area, it is evident that the United Kingdom dominates the field with 20 articles, indicating substantial academic attention toward the implementation and impact of hybrid work systems in this region. This is followed by Australia with 7 articles and India with 6 articles. Meanwhile, the United States contributes 5 articles, with other countries such as China, Germany, Canada, Italy, South Africa, and Finland each contributing between two and four publications. This distribution demonstrates that the

Hybrid Working phenomenon has become a global research focus, primarily driven by developed nations that have been early adopters of digital technologies and flexible work systems. However, the growing number of publications from developing countries also indicates an expanding interest and relevance of this topic worldwide, particularly in adapting work practices in the post-COVID-19 era. (see Figure 2).



Source : Scopus database

Figure 2. Number of articles by country or territory (top 10 country)

The allocation of scholarly inquiries pertinent to Hybrid Working as categorized by nation or territory reveals the preeminence of the United Kingdom with the highest number of publications, followed by the United States, Germany, and the Netherlands. In the Asian region, Indonesia, China, and Vietnam also demonstrate notable contributions, reflecting the growing interest in Hybrid Working within developing economies undergoing rapid digital transformation. Additionally, countries such as Australia, Finland, Sweden, Italy, and France have made significant academic contributions to this field, indicating a balanced research focus between Western and Eastern contexts. These findings highlight that Hybrid Working has gained attention not only in highly digitalized nations but also across various regions, underscoring its global relevance in the post-pandemic work landscape. Researchers further analyzed the interrelationships between these countries using VOSviewer software, which visualizes patterns of collaboration and co-authorship networks. The results demonstrate strong linkages between the United Kingdom, the United States, and several European and Asian nations, signifying that Hybrid Working research has evolved into a truly global discourse bridging multiple cultural and economic perspectives (see Figure 3).

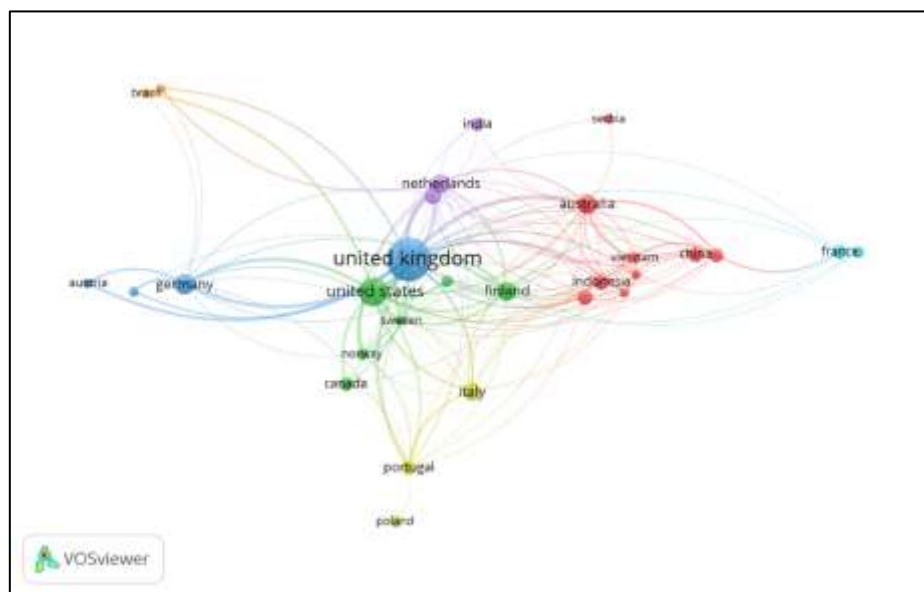


Figure 3. Network Country Visualization

The visualization shows that the United Kingdom and the United States hold central positions in the global Hybrid Working research network, demonstrating strong collaborations with European countries including Germany, Sweden, Finland, Italy, and Portugal. Asian countries such as Indonesia, China, Vietnam, and India form a separate cluster, reflecting rising interest in Hybrid Working within rapidly digitalizing economies, while Australia appears as a bridging node linking Western and Asian networks. These patterns underscore that Hybrid Working has evolved into a global discourse adapted across diverse cultural and economic contexts.

Institutionally, research output is concentrated in leading universities. The University of Cambridge is the most productive contributor with five documents, followed by Loughborough University and Technische Universiteit Eindhoven with four documents each. Politecnico di Milano, the University of Technology Sydney, and the Department of Engineering contribute three documents, while the University of East Anglia, the University of Manchester, SINTEF Foundation, and Nottingham Trent University each add two documents to the field.

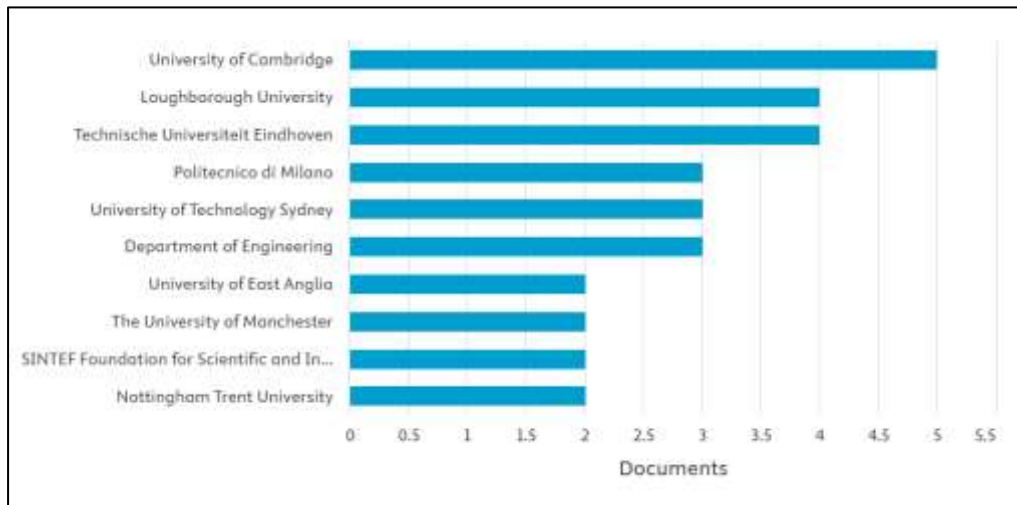


Figure 4. Network country visualization

The distribution of Hybrid Working scholarship across leading institutions shows that universities in technologically advanced nations such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, and Australia play a key role, reflecting strong links between Hybrid Working research and advancements in digital work design and flexible employment systems. In terms of publication sources, the field is dominated by *Frontiers in Psychology* with six articles, followed by *Plos One* with five articles, *Building and Environment* with four articles, and both *Nature* and *Sustainability (Switzerland)* with three articles each. Additional contributions come from *ACM International Conference Proceedings Series*, *Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, and the *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, each providing two publications. These patterns highlight the broad and multidisciplinary engagement surrounding Hybrid Working.

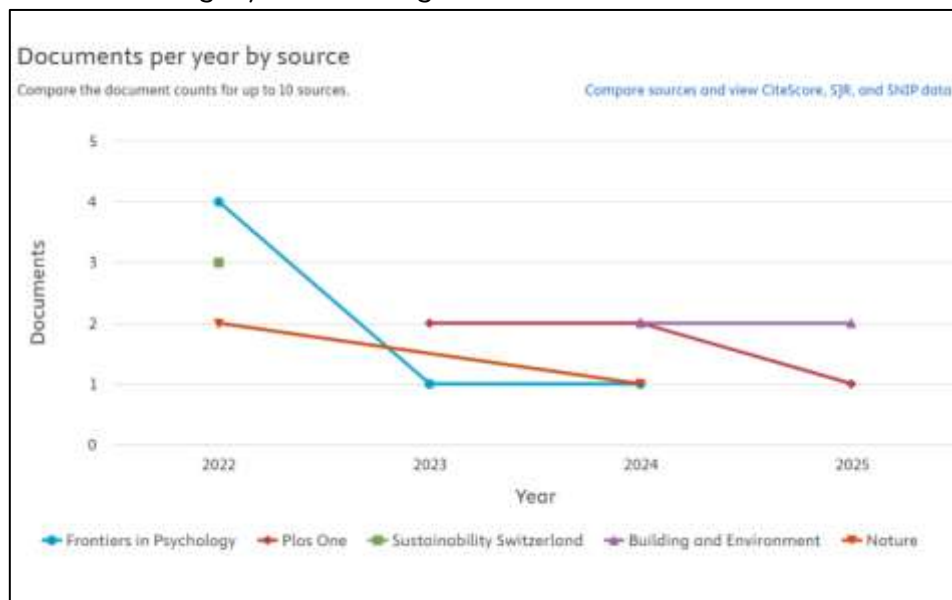


Figure 5. Number of articles by sources (top 10 sources)

The longitudinal trend in Figure five shows fluctuating publication activity from the early post-pandemic years to the mid-twenties. *Frontiers in Psychology* and *Plos One* experienced an early rise in contributions before gradually declining, while *Building and Environment* maintained steady output, indicating sustained interest in environmental and architectural dimensions of Hybrid Working. These patterns highlight the multidisciplinary nature of the field, with major journals such as *Frontiers in Psychology* and *Sustainability* emphasizing themes of employee well-being, environmental adaptation, and workplace performance shaped by human and technological factors.

In terms of authorship, contributions are evenly distributed, with no single dominant scholar. Among the top ten contributors, Appel-Meulenbroek, R.; Bardhan, R.; and Pan, J. each produced four articles, followed by Cho, T.Y. with three. Arentze, T.; Borgers, A.; Kemperman, A.; Sun, M.; Sungur, A.; and Tagliaro, C. each authored two publications. This balance indicates that Hybrid Working research is collaborative and widely shared across the scholarly community.

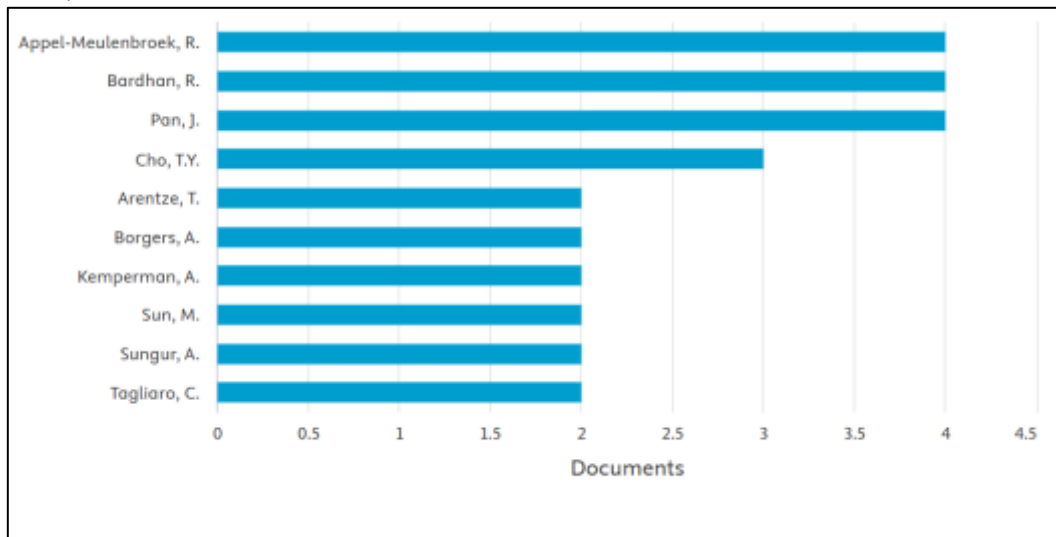


Figure 6. Count of publication by author (top 10 sources)

RQ3 Summary: Theoretical and Practical Implications for Future Research

The review of 69 Scopus-indexed manuscripts and the bibliometric visualization using VOSviewer reveals significant theoretical and practical implications for future Hybrid Working research. The metadata and bibliometric analyses help scholars identify well-studied variables as well as underexplored areas, providing a solid foundation for shaping future research directions. Practically, the insights generated through VOSviewer support organizations and HR managers in developing Hybrid Working models that are effective, sustainable, adaptive, flexible, and productivity-oriented.

As shown in Figure 7 and Table 2, the most frequent keywords include Covid-19 (429), Hybrid Working (287), Workplace (222), Work Environment (206), Hybrid Work (169), Pandemic (166), Work From Home (169), Mental Health (142), Remote Working (115), and

Job Satisfaction (103), highlighting the dominant themes shaping current and future research trajectories.

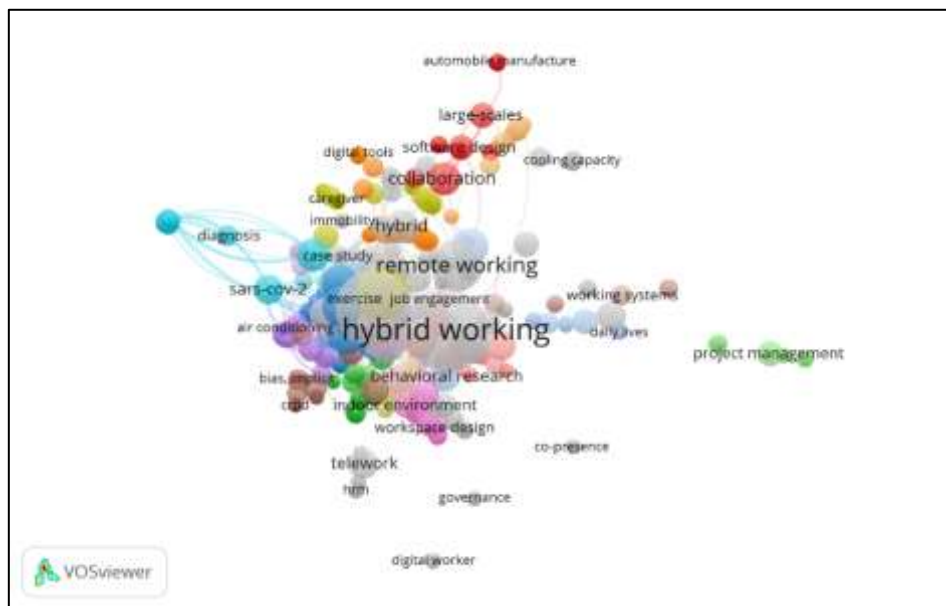


Figure 7. Co-occurrence framework and representation of key terms

The VOSviewer visualization displays a network of keywords related to Hybrid Working, illustrating how research themes cluster and connect across the literature. The largest and most central nodes, “hybrid working,” “remote working,” and “collaboration”, indicate dominant topics that frequently appear together in scholarly studies. Surrounding clusters highlight related themes such as behavioral research, job engagement, indoor environment, workspace design, digital tools, software design, telework, governance, and project management. The presence of keywords like “sars-cov-2,” “diagnosis,” and “air conditioning” reflects the strong influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on Hybrid Working research. The varying node colors represent different thematic clusters, while the node sizes indicate keyword frequency, providing a clear picture of the interconnected patterns and emerging directions within the Hybrid Working literature.

Table 1. Keywords by authors

Rank	Keyword	Total link strength
1	Covid 19	429
2	Hybrid Working	287
3	Workspace	222
4	Work Environment	206
5	Hybrid Work	169
6	Pandemic	166
7	Work From Home	169
8	Mental Health	142
9	Remot Working	115
10	Job Satisfaction	103

The mapping results reveal a key gap in earlier studies, which largely focused on developed countries and digitally advanced organizations. Future research should therefore examine Hybrid Working in developing economies and in organizations still undergoing digital transformation. Such studies would broaden understanding of Hybrid Working's impact on organizational performance, employee well-being, and productivity across more diverse contexts. Additionally, Hybrid Working may significantly enhance organizational effectiveness in developing countries by supporting digital inclusivity, economic growth, and employee welfare (Gurusamy & Visithra, 2025; Tuzcuoğlu et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This systematic review highlights the growing significance of Hybrid Working as a transformative model reshaping contemporary organizational practices. Through an extensive examination of scholarly literature, the study reveals that Hybrid Working has evolved far beyond a temporary response to global disruptions, emerging instead as a long-term strategic approach that integrates flexibility, digital capability, and human well-being. The synthesis of findings demonstrates that Hybrid Working influences a wide spectrum of organizational outcomes, including performance, employee satisfaction, collaboration, and work engagement. However, the review also uncovers a consistent imbalance in the existing body of research, which has been dominated by studies conducted in highly developed contexts with mature technological infrastructures. This limitation underscores the need for expanded inquiry within developing regions and within organizations still progressing through digital transformation. Such research is essential for capturing diverse cultural, economic, and technological conditions that shape Hybrid Working practices in unique ways. The review further emphasizes that Hybrid Working holds strong potential to support organizational resilience, promote digital inclusivity, and enhance employee welfare across varied settings. By addressing current gaps and broadening future research horizons, scholars and practitioners can better understand how Hybrid Working can contribute to sustainable, effective, and human-centered work environments.

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