

The factors impacting the intermediating variable of employee engagement toward employee performance in a hybrid working model

Employee
performance in
Hybrid
working model

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors impacting the intermediating variable of employee engagement toward employee performance in a hybrid working organization in Bangkok, Thailand.

Design/methodology/approach – This study uses secondary data analysis and an archival study; the primary data were gathered from 370 employees who are working in a hybrid model environment in a private agricultural machinery company. To construct a new conceptual framework, this study adopted four frameworks from the previous research.

Findings – Perceived organizational support and trust and respect in the organization are found to have a significant positive impact on employee engagement. Moreover, there is a significant positive impact of the employee engagement on employee performance in a hybrid working model.

Research limitations/implications – For hybrid work environments, the research focused mainly on the emotional themes of perceived support, trust and respect in the organization. Therefore, there would be many factors that could possibly affect those dependence variables in any environment, which will have to be investigated more in future research. Either in the organization or in the company, many departments and business units operates for the company, but the researcher specifies only the business units or departments that now use the hybrid working model.

Practical implications – This study focuses on a case study of an agricultural machinery company, which likely produces different results than other industries, other industries may produce different results.

Social implications – Hybrid working models can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, potentially leading to increased stress and burnout. Organizations should prioritize work-life balance and employee well-being by promoting flexible schedules, encouraging breaks and time off, and providing resources for mental health support.

Originality/value – The organization which is operating among a hybrid working model, the increasing of perceived organizational support and trust and respect level, has positively increase the employee engagement toward enhancing the employee performance.

Keywords Employee engagement, Employee performance, Perceived organization support, Trust and respect, Hybrid working model

Paper type Research paper

JEL Classification — D22, D24, M10

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1. Introduction

The world has been dealing with an unprecedented crisis: the COVID-19 virus pandemic, which has had a significant impact on human normal life. COVID-19 is still with us in 2022, people learned to live with the theme of “the new normal.” The organization’s leaders have come up with a plan to keep the organization flexible and agile in uncertain situations. In response to employee satisfaction, human resource departments implemented a hybrid working model strategy; these are not only for protecting their employees from the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to address the needs of work-life balance in terms of mental-health issues, pursuing to reduce stress and burnout from heavy traffic jams during commutes to workplaces. The presence of positive work environment perceptions and feelings can support higher productivity that generates product innovation and reduces the quit rate (Harter *et al.*, 2003). The trend of remote working can be described using the key hybrid work statistics and the future of work, which showed that 74% of U.S. companies are using and implementing a permanent hybrid working model; 44% of U.S. employees prefer a hybrid working model, compared to 51% of employers; 63% of high-growth companies use a “productivity anywhere” hybrid working model; 55% of employees want to work remotely at least three days a week; and 59% of employees are more likely to choose an employer that offers remote work opportunities over one that doesn’t (McCain, 2022). Do employees feel engaged and supported by their organizations, even if they work in hybrid organizations? Employees’ voices are important in increasing beneficial outcomes and driving business growth (Perlow and Williams, 2003). The voice can bring fresh ideas from all levels of the organization, and those ideas might raise the performance. This argument prompted the researcher to conduct further research into the factors influencing employee engagement that are required to boost employee performance during a combination of remote and on-site workplace working.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Perceived organizational support*

Perceived organization support (POS) is an employee’s perception regarding the extent to which their employer values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). In the social exchange between employees and employers, organizational commitment is the equivalent of employees’ commitment to the organization, though it is based on employees’ perceptions rather than the organization’s perspective. It can be said that employees’ presumption concerning the organization’s commitment to them (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986) Belief about the organization’s commitments is what employees think to pursue from their interactions with other members who are seen as representatives of the organization; attributions about those members and interactions are then extended to the entire organization (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). The most used measure is the survey of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), of which there are many versions. For example, “The organization cares about my opinions”. Organizational support supposes that to determine the organization’s willingness to reward increased effortful working and to respond to employees’ socioemotional needs, employees increase their beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their dedication and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). The organizational support theory (Shore and Shore, 1995) explains how an organization responds to rewarding more work effort and reserving emotional support for employees who know that the organization cares about their contributions and well-being.

2.2 *Trust and respect*

Trust theory is the idea that trust is foundational for higher functioning in all human systems; it regularly flows from our families and friendships to our work team and organization.

Gibb (1972) found that the more trust there is in a group or organization, the more creative, innovative, dynamic and effective the people are. There are two types of respect, according to Rogers and Ashforth (2014): generalized respect and particularized respect. Generalized respect is the sense that “we” are all valued in the organization, whereas particularized respect is the sense that the organization values “me” for my attributes, behaviors, and achievements. Bilginoglu and Yozgat (2019) also found that trust and respect were beneficial to the organization.

2.3 Employee engagement

There are many terms of engagement that connect to the organization, including “work engagement,” “job engagement,” “personal engagement,” “staff engagement,” and just “engagement” (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). Describes more than 50 different versions of engagement, and there may be more. Referring to Kahn’s original (1990), “employee engagement is the personal expression of self-in-role.” Someone is engaged with their work when they can express their true selves and are willing to devote their personal energies to effectively performing in order to achieve the goals of their jobs. Since then, engagement has been defined as the resistance of burnout (Maslach and Leiter, 1997), as well as a special optimistic psychological state.

2.4 Employee performance

The performance could normally be defined as multidimensional. It would be something that is both the fulfillment of the outcome and the work done to achieve the goal (Kahn, 1990). The visible behaviors could be job activities related to expectations and ways to achieve the individual goal, team goal, or organizational goal (Campbell *et al.*, 1993). It emphasized the behaviors, not just the outcome (Murphy, 1989). On the other hand, it is possible to consider that the dominant method that measures employee performance would consist of behavior and evaluation of behavior, and there are many varied factors involved in measuring job performance according to the common factors, which could not contribute to the best theme to evaluate and rate the employee’s performance (Motowidlo *et al.*, 1997).

2.5 Hybrid work offers employees’ well-being

Hybrid work has the potential to offer a higher level of flexibility, a better work-life balance and a more tailored employee experience. Some companies announce remote working for four weeks each year and offer the policy of “work from wherever.” Their employees have the flexibility to work from any location they prefer (Dowling *et al.*, 2022).

2.6 The relationship between respect and employee engagement: the dimensions of employee engagement

The Conference Board published an article titled “Employee engagement: A review of current research and its implications” that derived from some studies conducted by Towers Perrin, Gallup, Blessing White, the Corporate Leadership Council and others. Trust, the nature of the job, employee and company performance, growth opportunities, pride in the company and the relationship among group members were identified as key drivers of employee engagement.

2.7 The relationship between respect at work and employee engagement: V-5 model employee engagement

The V-5 Model works with the definition of “variables assimilated” in relation to the value element, producing variables for “respect at work,” which is the feeling of acceptance at work

by their supervisors, subordinates and colleagues because their actions at work are valued (Kumar, 2021).

2.8 The relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance

Perceived organizational support (POS) is important because it is associated with many job attitudes and behaviors. POS is strongly connected to lower burnout and stress and higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017; Rockstuhl *et al.*, 2020). POS is modestly connected to higher job performance and moderately associated with fewer citizenship behaviors, especially those that benefit the organization rather than other individuals (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017; Rockstuhl *et al.*, 2020). POS is strongly associated with lower intentions to leave and moderately associated with actual turnover (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017; Rockstuhl *et al.*, 2020).

2.9 The relationship between the hybrid working model and employee engagement and performance: a new way of working impacts engagement, exhaustion and perceived performance

Antecedents of engagement during the forced remote working period showed that the employees declared themselves engaged during the forced remote working period and preferred to stay in the organization in favor of a good work-life balance that would contribute to working engagement and reduce their exhaustion. However, the employees felt their performances dipped during the telework. Therefore, it must be implemented both through teleworking and at the workplace by setting the schedule. As a result, they can easily access colleagues and supervisors and contribute toward shaping a more favorable perception of self-performance (Giauque *et al.*, 2022).

3. Aim and research questions

The study aims to empirically determine the factors influencing the intermediation of employee engagement on employee performance toward a hybrid working model. There are three questions to examine in this research, listed below:

- RQ1.* Do the employees think how much they think their company supports them has a big effect on how engaged they are in a hybrid working model?
- RQ2.* Do employees believe that being trusted and respected has a significant impact on their level of engagement with a hybrid working model?
- RQ3.* Does the level of engagement of employees have a big effect on how well they do their jobs, even if they are working toward a hybrid model?

4. Method

This study is based on quantitative research that focused on a private agricultural machinery company which is operating toward a hybrid working model and is located in Bangkok. The employees in this private organization were selected as participants in this research due to the fact that not all departments or employees work toward a hybrid working model. The researcher decides to use a nonprobability sampling method with the 370 respondents that combines purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods for consistency in finding results. In a structured questionnaire, a closed-ended question is a research instrument. Before distributing the valid questionnaire, the empirical questionnaire from previous studies and the Cronbach alpha reliability test were used to ensure that the research tool was valid.

Multiple and simple linear regression (SLR) are used in this study to test hypotheses and understand the causal relationship. The multiple linear regression (MLR) is used to evaluate the level of influence of employee engagement on perceived organizational support, trust and respect. In a hybrid working model environment, the SLR is used to assess the level of influence between employee engagement and employee performance. Hypothesis testing reveals that all independent variables are statistically significantly less than 0.05. The hypotheses are developed and are shown in [Table 1](#).

5. Result and conclusions

Overall, out of 370 respondents, the majority of employees in this study are male (186, 50.3%), between the ages of 26–41 (164, 44.3%), have a bachelor’s degree (199, 53.8%), work full-time (334, 90.3%), had an experience more than 10 years (160, 43.2%) and earn the between 20,000–50,000 Thai Baht per month (123, 33.2%). From the survey instruments, the mean and standard deviation of the intermediating variables of employee engagement toward employee performance in a hybrid working model, the highest mean is employee performance ($\bar{x} = 4.28$ SD = 0.48), followed by the hybrid working model ($\bar{x} = 4.06$ SD = 0.66), trust and respect ($\bar{x} = 4.01$ SD = 0.66), employee engagement ($\bar{x} = 3.96$ SD = 0.60) and the perceived organizational support ($\bar{x} = 3.88$ SD = 0.67).Hypotheses testing reveals that all independent variables are statistically significantly less than 0.05 as shown in [Figure 1](#). A summary of the hypotheses tested is shown in [Table 2](#).

The results of hypothesis testing using MLR and SLR expose the strength of variables that impact employee engagement toward employee performance in a hybrid working model environment. In [Table 2](#) shows the result reveals that the first-rank significant factor that impacts employee engagement is the hybrid working model ($\beta = 0.564$), the second rank is perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0.264$), and the third rank is trust and respect in the organization ($\beta = 0.243$).

6. Conclusions

The hybrid working model is currently popular in Thailand because, following COVID-19, many employees discovered that a combination of work onsite and work online improved their work-life balance, resulting in an improvement in their mental and physical health ([Klinghoffer, 2021](#)). Therefore, the company must know what the factors are that impact the intermediary variables of employee engagement and employee performance in a hybrid

Hypothesis	Description	Statistical technique	
1	H1 _o	Perceived organization support has no significant dominant in employee engagement toward a hybrid working model	Multiple Linear Regression
	H1 _a	Perceived organization support has significant dominant in employee engagement toward a hybrid working model	
2	H2 _o	Trust and respect has no significant dominant in employee engagement toward a hybrid working model	Simple Linear Regression
	H2 _a	Trust and respect has significant dominant in employee engagement toward a hybrid working model	
3	H3 _o	Employee engagement has no significant dominant in employee performance toward a hybrid working model	Simple Linear Regression
	H3 _a	Employee engagement has significant dominant in employee performance toward a hybrid working model	

Source(s): Constructed by author

Table 1. Statistical technique for hypothesis testing

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework
and the result

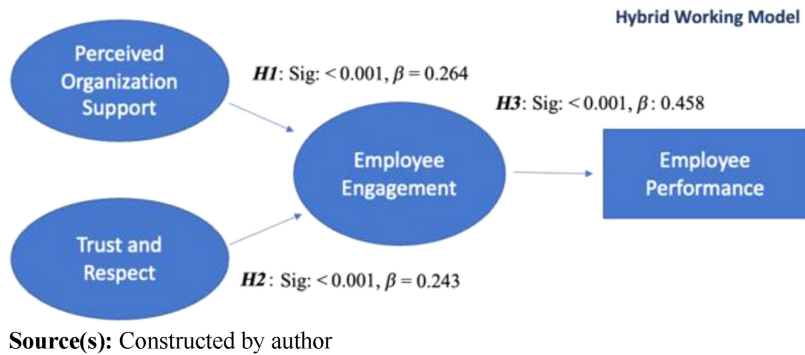


Table 2.
Summary strengths of
influence factors of
each dependent
variable

Variable	Independent	Coefficient	p-value	R squared
Employee engagement (EE)	Hybrid Working Model (HW)	0.564	<0.001	0.318
	Perceived Organizational Support (PS)	0.264	<0.001	0.212
	Trust and Respect (TR)	0.243	<0.001	0.212
Employee performance (EP)	Employee Engagement (EE)	0.458	<0.001	0.209

Source(s): Constructed by author

working model. The finding’s result could be a part of functional strategic development in terms of organizational strategies that are being formulated to achieve the objectives of both the cooperative level and the business unit level by maximizing resource productivity. Furthermore, to enhance operational strategic development in terms of allocating company resources to support operations in order to increase employee competency and productivity.

According to what was mentioned above, this research aims to explore the factors impacting the intermediary variable of employee engagement toward employee performance in a hybrid working organization in Bangkok.

6.1 The hybrid working model has positive effect on employee engagement

According to the items of the hybrid working model variable, “I think there is a positive effect on my work-life balance” which has the highest core of mean, this would explain why the employees of this company appreciated working in a hybrid model environment in terms of their perception of the positive enhancement of their work-life balance. While the employees feel “I believe that my colleagues can be trusted to be productive when working remotely” this item of the hybrid working model variable has the lowest value of the mean, thus it could be explained that comparing to other items, they feel less of trust on the colleagues about the quality during they are remotely working as well as a leader feel do not trust on the subordinates that they will have an productivity when they work remotely. It could explain that remote working has possibly eroded trust among colleagues, reducing an interpersonal communication and creating problems for aspects of managerial control (Felstead et al., 2003).

6.2 The effect of perceived organization support on employee engagement in hybrid working organization

This research’s results empirically demonstrate that perceived organizational support has a significant effect on the level of employee engagement. The significant value of POS as the

independent variable and employee engagement as the dependent variable was 0.000, which was less than 0.005. This finding illustrated that the employees' feeling that they are perceived to have support from their organization had a significant effect on their level of employee engagement. However, as the result of "*Whoever at work encourages me to keep growing*" this variable item was the lowest level on average, which would explain that the employees feel less perceived motivation whether insufficiency motivation was received from their leaders or colleagues. There is the past research found that career growth has a positive impact on knowledge workers' organizational engagement, career growth has a positive effect on affective commitment and affective commitment also has a positive effect on employee engagement. Moreover, perceived organizational support positively moderated the relationship between career growth and affective commitment (Jun-Jia and Ming-Hua, 2022).

6.3 The effect of trust and respect on employee engagement in hybrid working organization

The findings of this study empirically demonstrate that "trust and respect" have a significant effect on employee engagement. The significant value of trust and respect as the independent variables and employee engagement as the dependent variable is < 0.00 , which is less than 0.05. This finding illustrated that the employees' feeling that they are trusted and respected in the hybrid working model organization has an insignificant effect on their level of employee engagement. According to the findings of this study, the variable items "*If I shared my work problems with my direct boss, I know that he/she would respond constructively*" has the highest mean, and this can be interpreted that employees' perceived that their boss has the ability to help them when they have a problem and their bosses have the ability to handle it constructively. It can also describe how the subordinates usually give feedback to their boss and they are willing to collaborate to solve the issues among the team.

On the other hand, "*My direct boss holds me accountable when I make mistakes*" has the lowest mean among the items in the trust and respect variables; this may imply that the subordinates still do not sufficiently perceive their bosses' support them appropriately, when they make a mistake. Therefore, the company must create an organizational culture of trust and building rapport must be the first step.

6.4 The effect of employee engagement on employee performance in hybrid working organization

The findings of this study empirically supported the notion that "employee engagement" had a significant impact on employee performance. The significant value of employee engagement as the independent variable on employee performance as the dependent variable was < 0.001 , which was less than 0.05. This finding illustrated that the employees' feeling that they are engaged, even though they are working in a hybrid model organization, has a positive effect on their employee performance. According to the descriptive analysis results of this study, the variable's item of "*The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important*" has the highest level on the average of the employee engagement's items variable, indicating that the employees in this private company have been engaged in their work by the company's mission. Employee engagement requires leadership commitment through establishing a clear mission, vision and values with a dedicated heart and action-oriented service from top management (Sridevi, 2010).

The lowest average level of employee engagement in this study is "*Whoever at work encourages me to keep growing*" It is said that it is insufficient or perceived because they are encouraged by their boss and colleagues. Engagement has the potential to significantly affect employee retention, productivity, and loyalty. Besides the empowerment, employee growth and interpersonal relationships are found to be the predictors of employee engagement (Mani, 2011). A past study identified the negative relationship-based implications of employees' felt

neglect for their work meaning and subsequent organizational citizenship behaviors, even though their boss or someone else in the organization might unintentionally give insufficient attention and care to a subordinate or colleague (Kong and Belkin, 2021).

7. Recommendation

According to the results of this study, the researcher provided the recommendations to improve accordance with the results shown below.

7.1 A hybrid working model

The company must provide the necessary appropriate equipment, tools or application to response to its employees. The administrative department or administrator should promptly involve to response to the employees' requests, allowing them access to the related resources and ensuring to sufficiently provide the resources in order to accomplish their tasks within its time frame. Firstly, company leadership needs to gather and evaluate employee feedback regarding the physical workplace and input should be solicited across departments to get a complete understanding of employees' attitudes toward returning to the workplace. This phase company should generate a hybrid working blueprint and obtain feedback from its employees to improve and strengthen its operational management. Communication is critical throughout the process to create and sustain an effective work environment; listening to employee and acting on feedback will help with engagement that should be used to develop working model and the blueprint to be the efficient working model. Secondly, leaders need to confirm that everyone has the resources needed to work productively by observing from employees' feedback. Those include extending the same benefits, access to basic office supplies and training and development opportunities, for example providing online training program and exploring and providing what additional utility tools or resources are needed for those working from home so they have the same access as their in-person counterparts. The result of the above is potential business growth and increased employee morale.

7.2 Perceived organizational support

Regarding to the result showed the employees feel insufficiency perceived support from their organization during they have stressful situations or need some attention for their well-being. A previous research found that a factor correlated negatively with well-being was feeling pressure to always respond to different requests from managers, clients or team members and it is difficult in using technologies. A hybrid working model may occur the widening gap organization and employees, employees feel a lower level of perceived support from the company or suitably distributed facilities during they had stressful situations, this would be related to the they feel that the hybrid working model perhaps incurred the obstruction of communication and interactions. Therefore, the solution that would reduce this gap between the organization and employees, The company should focus on the employees' voices and strive to support and offer employee's well-being, properly reward, as well as fairly distribute the facilities. The creation of activity that as a tool to increase the employees' relationship and collaboration. In addition, it will motivate the employee from the tough time and reduce the stressful. The company may encourage employees; for example, the company may set the happy hour or happy Fridays to meet each other and have a small party during working onsite or send food delivery e-vouchers to employees during working remotely from home.

7.3 Trust and respect

To increase the level of trust, firstly need to create the organization culture of trust and the building of rapport. Trust is the connection of work relationships and the key component of

organizational effectiveness. Firstly, for the creation of trust, it should start with appropriate positive communications both about work-related and nonwork-related topics. Secondly, to maintain the moral ethic, leaders must communicate ethical standards which is crucial to instilling trust in employees. Finally, listen more than speak, the leaders must listen to the employee's voices and interactively respond to increase employee's satisfaction. The important thing is that once the leaders gather the feedback by listening to their subordinates via both surveys and employee check-ins, they analyze the results to identify hotspots that show where the team is strong and where there are areas for improvement. The action must quickly take place, and building a collaborative action plan demonstrates transparency and helps employees feel valued. When the leaders show prompt responsiveness, they communicate trust, respect and empathy to employees.

7.4 Employee engagement

Employees who feel valued and appreciated by their leaders and colleagues are infinitely more likely to go above and beyond the company and hold themselves accountable for their part of a project. Firstly, the management should commit to developing the organization climate of care and concern for employees and continually identify the current organization climate, which may be derived from formal surveys or gathering the employees' feedback by discussing their roles or how they feel about their position. The leaders should raise awareness of the company's mission, values and vision by keeping the team updated on the company's values and direction. Follow by identifying motivational factors, which include realistic goals, good lines of communication, a clear workplace structure and a sense that their manager values their skills and personal qualities. Leaders should initially demonstrate their appreciation and encouragement for employees, sincerely delivering personal help.

7.5 Employee performance

Regarding to the result, the employees' feeling that they had not passionately found a new challenge in their jobs. Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. To develop the passion and self-efficacy in the workplace, this must be implemented in the company. Passionate workers are committed to continually achieving higher levels of performance and energize the workplace. It could start by creating connections; passionate people like to connect with others to help solve problems, and the company must support the spirit of exploration by meeting people with expertise and success in related areas. Creating a culture of collaboration where employee can share their knowledge and find others who have similar skills, expertise, passion and interest, then, developing a sense of purpose, which boosts passion levels. For example, a brainstorming meeting in the team to help develop the alternatives to decision making, involves solving issues and finding the solution, as well as empower leadership, would be appropriately applied in each job. Managers should inspire employees to learn and to encourage them to be growth by developing a growth mindset.

8. Research limitations and practical implications

For hybrid work environments, the research focused mainly on the emotional themes of perceived support, trust and respect in the organization. Therefore, there would be many factors that could possibly affect those dependence variables in any environment, which will have to be investigated more in future research. Either in the organization or in the company, many departments and business units operates for the company, but the researcher specifies only the business units or departments that now use the hybrid working model. Furthermore, because this study focuses on a case study of an agricultural machinery company, which

likely produces different results than other industries, other industries may produce different results.

In a hybrid working model, it is essential to create opportunities for social connections and team collaboration. This can be achieved by organizing virtual team-building activities, fostering a sense of belonging through virtual social events and leveraging technology platforms that facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing. Moreover, Hybrid working models can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, potentially leading to increased stress and burnout. Organizations should prioritize work-life balance and employee well-being by promoting flexible schedules, encouraging breaks and time off and providing resources for mental health support.

9. Further study

Further study should aim to derive more precise insights into each variable by using qualitative method and the variables in this study are the parts of element that has a significant positive relationship with the employee engagement. There are either many elements that impacting the employee engagement and employee performance and those need to further investigate for example the key motivators which possibly impact employee engagement and performance in hybrid working model or the factor that are significant moderators which sustainably strengthen the level of employee engagement in a hybrid working model. Moreover, this research examines a case study of an agricultural machinery company; therefore, studies in other industries that use a hybrid working model would help to penetrate more precisely finding. Additionally, the further study for finding the sustainability growth in terms of employee engagement and employee performance in a hybrid working environment. Furthermore, the investigation of hybrid arrangement in terms of scheduling alignment, which is needed to be analyzed what it would be maximize utilizing of flexibility time with sustainability level of engagement and employee performance toward a hybrid working organization.

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