

**FROM CUBICLES TO COUCHES: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
HYBRID WORKPLACE, ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT,
WORKPLACE ANXIETY AND JOB ENGAGEMENT**

by

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Abstract

Although hybrid workplace arrangements are increasingly touted as beneficial for employee engagement, less is known about when and why such structural flexibility may produce unintended consequences under conditions of resource threat. Drawing on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study develops and tests a moderated mediation model to examine how hybrid workplace (HW) structures influence job engagement (JE), contingent on the effects of workplace anxiety (WA) and mediated by organizational, political engagement (OPE). We propose that while HW represents a valuable contextual resource, its effects on engagement are not uniformly experienced; instead, psychological anxiety may activate compensatory behavioral strategies that alter these outcomes.

To test this framework, we conducted a time-lagged survey of N= 152 white-collar employees across Bangladesh's manufacturing and telecommunications sectors who work in a Hybrid workplace setup. Consistent with predictions, results indicate that HW positively predicts OPE, with the effect significantly more substantial under high WA. Furthermore, OPE mediates the interaction between HW and WA in predicting JE, such that the indirect effect of HW on JE via OPE is amplified when WA is high. These findings suggest that anxious employees in hybrid settings may engage politically as a resource-preserving response, paradoxically undermining engagement.

Theoretically, this study extends COR theory by illustrating how structural resources and resource threats interact to shape political engagement and impact overall employees' job engagement.

Keywords: Hybrid workplace, post-pandemic, workplace anxiety, organizational political engagement, job engagement, conservation of resource theory.

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List of Abbreviations

HW	Hybrid Workplace
WA	Workplace Anxiety
OPE	Organizational Political Engagement
OPP	Organizational Political Perception
JE	Job Engagement
COR	Conservation of Resource Theory

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The shift toward flexible work arrangements was accelerated by the COVID-19 epidemic, which brought about a significant change in working habits. Among these, the hybrid workplace (HW), a concept that uses digital technologies to combine remote and in-person work, has become a popular post-pandemic work arrangement (Smith & Lee, 2023). Long-held beliefs about productivity, visibility, and teamwork have been upended by this change, which has radically reshaped where, when, and how employees interact with their work (Halford, 2005; Milenko et al., 2021; Salleh & Rajah, 2023). In line with changing demands for work-life balance and well-being, employees now describe hybrid work environments as providing flexibility and autonomy (Lund et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020).

Although the advantages of HW are well known and include better time management, less stress from commuting, and increased employee satisfaction (Giovanis, 2019; Hill et al., 2003), the effects on employee behavior and psychology are still complicated. According to a McKinsey global survey, more than half of workers preferred hybrid models over typical office environments, and 30% of workers would think about leaving their jobs if they had to return on-site (Alexander et al., 2021). These results highlight the increasing need to look at both the psychological sensations HW evokes and its functional success. The constant worry, trepidation, or uncertainty in completing tasks, evaluating one's performance, or comparing oneself to others is known as workplace anxiety (WA) (McCarthy et al., 2016; Zeidner & Matthews, 2005).

Although WA is not new to organizational research, little is known about how it manifests in hybrid situations. The effects of worry on concentration, emotional weariness, and job performance have long been recognized by academics (Eysenck et al., 2007; Fay & Sonnentag, 2002; Ford et al., 2011). Employees may feel more vulnerable to being ignored or

underappreciated in HW settings, where there is less physical visibility and performance reviews can be unclear (McDonald et al., 2008; Call et al., 2015). Organizational political engagement (OPE)—strategic actions taken to safeguard or improve one's standing at work, frequently by forming alliances or using informal influence—may be triggered by this worry (Ferris et al., 2000; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991).

The current study addressed the lack of studies that included HW, WA, and OPE in a single model despite these theoretical links. Because they are physically separated from the workplace, employees in remote or hybrid settings are less likely to participate in organizational politics, according to earlier research (Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Fonner & Roloff, 2010). Even in decentralized or virtual contexts, however, new research indicates that political behaviors may reappear when employees are anxious about losing resources because they want to keep control, visibility, and growth (Salleh & Rajah, 2023). In this way, HW could paradoxically be a double-edged sword, promoting independence but also triggering workplace anxiety that impedes participation and teamwork.

This study actively closed this crucial gap by investigating how and under what conditions hybrid workplace arrangements affect employees' job engagement (JE), especially in the presence of workplace anxiety and organizational political engagement. This study frames WA as a moderator, a psychological signal of perceived resource threat, and OPE as a mediator, a behavioral mechanism aimed at resource conservation drawing on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), which holds that people are motivated to acquire, retain, and protect valued resources.

This study aims to investigate whether and how workers in HW contexts act politically when their WA levels are high and how this influences their degree of job engagement. The

study specifically looks at how OPE operates as a mechanism for how HW and WA interact to affect JE. Furthermore, this study examines the relationship between HW and OPE in light of theoretical ambiguities in the currently available literature. It finds that while moderate levels of HW promote engagement, ambiguity regarding performance visibility may cause political engagement in situations where workplace anxiety is high (Fonner & Roloff, 2010).

This research addresses the following questions: (1) Does hybrid work improve or impair employee job engagement? (2) Under what condition (WA) and mechanism (OPE) do detrimental effects on job engagement arise in HW setup?

To address the research questions of the present study, we employed a time-lagged survey design involving N= 152 employees from the manufacturing and telecommunications sectors in Bangladesh, all working under a hybrid workplace arrangement. We use a time-logged survey to collect the data to mitigate common method bias. The results provided empirical support for the proposed moderated mediation model grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Specifically, hybrid workplace practices were positively associated with organizational political engagement. Moreover, workplace anxiety significantly moderates this relationship, such that the positive association between hybrid work and organizational political engagement was stronger under higher levels of workplace anxiety. Additionally, organizational political engagement mediated the interactive effect of hybrid work and workplace anxiety on job engagement, revealing a more substantial adverse indirect effect on job engagement when workplace anxiety levels were high. These findings underscore the complex role of workplace anxiety in shaping employee experiences within hybrid work environments.

This study contributes to the body of literature in a number of ways by tackling these issues. First, by pinpointing WA and OPE as important explanatory processes, it advances

empirical knowledge of how hybrid workplace arrangements impact employees' job engagement. Second, it advances COR theory by presenting political participation as a means of resource protection, especially in the face of workplace anxiety, rather than as deviant behavior. Third, it presents a fresh viewpoint on hybrid work, questioning the belief that these settings naturally lower political behavior and boost well-being. Lastly, it offers managers and organizations practical advice on creating hybrid workplace policies that balance autonomy, accountability, flexibility, and structure.

By doing this, this study reframes the hybrid workplace as both a risk and an opportunity. Although it provides tools to promote job engagement, it can also lead to workplace anxieties that encourage employees to participate in organizational politics, which ultimately undermines the results that hybrid work aims to improve as a way for employees to engage with their jobs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Due to the worldwide pandemic, there has been a significant change in workplace norms and structures. The hybrid workplace setup has become the new standard, causing a move away from traditional in-person office settings and toward more flexible and remote work models that enable employees to work from any location (Chen et al., 2023). The growing popularity of remote work and, more recently, the Hybrid Workplace (HW), an archetype that blends the structure and collaboration of traditional office settings with the flexibility of remote work, are at the center of this change (Milenko et al., 2021; Oygür et al., 2022). Although remote work was first used as a crisis response strategy in all organizations during the pandemic, its long-term use has completely changed how businesses function and workers engage with their jobs.

During the height of the epidemic, several studies highlighted the benefits of remote and hybrid work, especially regarding workplace engagement, psychological well-being, and employee autonomy (Schulze et al., 2023; Giovanis, 2019). Psychologically, the option to work from home gave many workers a renewed sense of control over their surroundings and schedules, which has been demonstrated to improve work-life balance and lower stress (Darouei & Pluut, 2021; Sardeshmukh, Sharma, & Golden, 2012). These findings are supported by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which proposes that increased autonomy and flexibility act as job resources that mitigate the effects of job demands and boost motivation and job engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This is also consistent with the current study's drawing theory, which is COR theory, which states that employees experience higher levels of job engagement when they have access to resources like autonomy and flexibility (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001).

Only a small number of studies have examined the long-term psychological and behavioral effects of hybrid models in the post-pandemic workplace, even though the literature generally supports the short-term benefits of remote and hybrid work, especially during times of crisis (De Lucas Ancillo, del Val Núñez, & Gavrilá, 2020). Many organizations are investigating hybrid models as a long-term structure rather than just a short-term fix as the pandemic fades, and they rethink the nature of work in the future. There are advantages and disadvantages to this change. Although hybrid models give workers freedom and autonomy, they can also lead to uncertainty about corporate culture, performance standards, and visibility (Choudhury, Foroughi, & Larson, 2021; Bloom et al., 2015).

The need for flexible work schedules has only increased. More than half of employees questioned by Alexander et al. (2021) said they would like to work remotely at least three days a week after the pandemic, and about 30% said they would think about changing employment if they had to return to full-time, on-site work. This increased employee expectations highlights a more significant cultural movement toward employee-driven flexibility and autonomy. To balance efficiency with employee satisfaction and well-being, the Hybrid Workplace has become a popular paradigm for businesses and employees (Naqshbandi et al., 2023).

Even while it is becoming increasingly common, the hybrid workplace is still poorly understood, particularly in terms of how it impacts interpersonal relationships and employee behavior. At the same time, most of the existing research focused on the operational or technological aspects of hybrid work, such as task management, cybersecurity, and communication tools, while paying less attention to the other aspects, which include workplace anxiety, trust, and performance visibility (Moglia et al., 2021) which has been acknowledged in the present study. Employees in hybrid environments frequently worry about how peers and

supervisors will see their work, particularly when working remotely for long periods. As workers try to stay relevant and recognized, this perceived invisibility may cause workplace anxiety, lower motivation, or even lead to political behavior or strategic self-presentation (McDonald et al., 2008; Salleh & Rajah, 2023).

The differences in how employees experience hybrid work depending on personal and environmental characteristics are another topic that needs more research. For instance, whereas some workers do well in settings that allow them to be autonomous, others could find it challenging to deal with a lack of structure, a blurring of the lines between work and family life, or limited access to organizational assistance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). These arguments create the need for a different view of hybrid work, which views it as a dynamic experience influenced by relational, organizational, and psychological elements rather than just a static model.

In summary, although the literature mainly recognizes the advantages of hybrid work arrangements, little is known about how they affect employees' job engagement when workplace anxiety and organizational political engagement are present, particularly in post-pandemic environments where hybrid structures are becoming the new way of workplace. Because of this disparity, there is a pressing need for empirical study that examines how hybrid work influences outcomes such as job engagement and the circumstances and methods by which these impacts manifest. In order to close this gap, the current study looks at how organizational political participation and workplace anxiety function as important explanatory factors in the context of a hybrid workplace.

2.1 Hybrid Workplace (HW)

The hybrid workplace setup, which combines remote and in-office work arrangements, has become a worldwide accepted strategic response to the demands of a post-pandemic workforce in the context of the new normal. Depending on the nature of their work, personal preferences, and company needs, this approach allows employees to split their time between working remotely and on-site (Amigoni, 2021; Naor et al., 2022). Christel Kraemerer first proposed the idea of flextime in the 1970s (Kane, 1976). Since then, it has changed dramatically due to the development of digital technologies, cloud computing, and virtual communication tools, allowing asynchronous and real-time work across time zones and geographical boundaries (Moglia et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic sparked the broad acceptance of hybrid work. Organizations swiftly adopted virtual infrastructures to continue operations when employees were forced to work from home due to health and safety concerns. The effectiveness of remote work during the pandemic showed that many roles could be carried out effectively without constant physical presence, even though it was first thought to be a temporary solution. Consequently, hybrid workplace models are currently being adopted as long-term agreements that strike a compromise between individual autonomy and flexibility and organizational efficiency (Choudhury, Foroughi, & Larson, 2021; Wang et al., 2020).

The idea that hybrid work improves employee autonomy, psychological health, and workplace engagement is supported by established literature. According to Giovanis (2019), who bases this claim on the COR theory, which defines resource gain (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), having flexible work arrangements helps employees better manage their time and resources, enhancing work-life balance and overall satisfaction. According to Bakker and Demerouti's

(2017) Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, autonomy and flexibility are job resources that increase motivation and reduce burnout. Hybrid work environments, which provide employees with flexibility over their work schedule, location, and methods, offer these resources. This flexibility has been connected to higher job engagement and motivation (Surma et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Additionally, employment that provides a hybrid workplace setup can support inclusive employment practices by accommodating employees with assigned duties or preferences for quieter work environments (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Since workers view their freedom as an indication of their employers' empowerment and trust, this approach frequently also promotes increased organizational commitment (Becker, Belkin, Tuskey, & Conroy, 2022). These elements support better retention rates, organizational citizenship practices, and increased work satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Despite these advantages, the mixed workplace has disadvantages. Researchers have voiced concerns about the potential for employee isolation, reduced visibility, and disconnects in communication in hybrid teams (Choudhury et al., 2021; McDonald et al., 2008). Most of the time, employees who work in a hybrid setup may feel isolated from their teams or less visible to management, which could impact their prospects of promotion or recognition and create workplace anxiety. These problems are particularly apparent in business cultures where success or dedication is correlated with visibility (Bloom et al., 2015).

Furthermore, there can be a lack of clarity on the availability of the policies, performance standards, and how to properly balance flexibility and accountability in a hybrid work setup (Naqshbandi, Kabir, Ishak, & Islam, 2023). It can be challenging for managers to effectively lead hybrid teams, especially with no clear structures and communication standards. For distant

workers, hybrid arrangements may result in unequal access to resources, higher cognitive demands, and coordination issues if proper leadership and supportive structures are lacking (Salleh & Rajah, 2023).

Additionally, increasing research shows that not every employee gains the same advantages from mixed work arrangements. Some people find that hybrid models increase stress instead of lowering it, particularly those who have high levels of workplace anxiety (WA). Anxious workers may fear being missed or misunderstood if performance is assessed on output rather than visibility, particularly in remote work environments where informal feedback and acknowledgment are less common (McCarthy et al., 2016; Zeidner & Matthews, 2005). Due to this concern, employees may resort to compensatory behaviors to recover control and relevance.

Despite these new worries, there is still little scholarly research on the psychological effects of hybrid labor, particularly in the post-pandemic period, which our study focuses on. Few studies have examined how psychological states like workplace anxiety affect employees' behaviors and results in these contexts, despite many emphasizing the technical and operational advantages of hybrid work (Call et al., 2015; Salleh & Rajah, 2023). This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining how workplace anxiety may interact with hybrid structures to influence organizational behavior and job engagement.

The hybrid workplace (HW) is thus positioned in this thesis as a key contextual element that influences employee experience. In particular, it looks into how workplace anxiety and HW interact to affect behaviors like organizational and political engagement (OPE) and, eventually, job engagement (JE). Thus, it advances a more complex view of hybrid labor by recognizing its advantages and the potential psychological hazards that it may provide in specific situations.

2.2 Workplace Anxiety (WA)

According to McCarthy et al. (2016) and Zeidner & Matthews (2005), workplace anxiety (WA) is the experience of ongoing trepidation, worry, or nervousness that people have in connection with their job duties, performance reviews, or interpersonal encounters at work. This type of anxiety is usually task-oriented and results from workers' fears of not performing up to par or receiving unfavorable feedback from peers or superiors (Eysenck et al., 2007). WA is categorized as a strain symptom, a psychological reaction that happens when people believe that their job resources, such as growth and autonomy, are in danger and that job demands do not align with their coping skills (Jex, 1998). It is strongly linked to more general concepts like evaluation anxiety, occupational stress, and dread of a poor evaluation, all of which can have a significant impact on the behavior and general well-being of employees.

The sensation of workplace anxiety has become even more complex with the rise of hybrid work environments (HW) at the height of the pandemic. According to Giovanis (2019) and Wang et al. (2020), HW setup provides better autonomy, flexibility, and work-life balance, all of which are linked to reduced workplace stress and anxiety and higher levels of job engagement. However, the shift from conventional, face-to-face communication creates invisibility, especially for remote workers who feel anxious about whether their contributions are being recognized or how their performance is being viewed (McDonald et al., 2008; Bloom et al., 2015). This visibility gap becomes particularly troublesome in corporate environments where in-person face time is associated with commitment and skill (Cooper & Kurland, 2002).

It has been demonstrated that WA considerably lowers motivation, increases burnout, and impairs cognitive performance (Eysenck et al., 2007; Ford et al., 2011). High levels of workplace anxiety might make it harder for employees to focus, make decisions, or keep up

productive relationships as they face a threat to their growth in the organization. This can result in withdrawal symptoms, a drop in creativity, or decreased involvement (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Due to fewer opportunities for informal reassurance, feedback, or social support—which usually operate as a buffer against anxiety in face-to-face situations—these effects might be exacerbated in hybrid work settings (Allen et al., 2015; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012).

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which holds that people are driven to get, hold onto, and safeguard valuable resources, including time, recognition, autonomy, and job possibilities, can also be used to conceptualize WA (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). According to this viewpoint, anxiety is an indicator of perceived resource threat as well as a symptom of stress. Employees may worry about losing their professional status, chances for career progression, or social capital in hybrid work contexts when access to important stakeholders may be unequal, and performance visibility is reduced. Overperformance, excessive self-monitoring, and involvement in organizational politics are compensatory behaviors that might be triggered by these anxieties and are intended to protect resources (Ferris et al., 2000; Eldor, 2016).

Although WA is acknowledged as a stressor in traditional workplaces by a large portion of the present literature, less empirical attention has been paid to how WA works in hybrid work situations, especially in the post-pandemic age. Hybrid work introduces new behavioral norms and performance measures, but they might not be consistently enforced or adequately explained. Workers may experience increased anxiety due to this uncertainty if they are unsure of how their contributions are evaluated or meeting expectations (Choudhury et al., 2021; Salleh & Rajah, 2023). Additionally, less visible employees may feel anxious at work, which could exacerbate impact performance and engagement.

Beyond personal stress, WA has ramifications in hybrid environments. By encouraging self-defense or politically motivated actions, anxiety can also have an impact on more general workplace dynamics. According to research, anxious people may participate in organizational political engagement (OPE) to gain more attention, win over decision-makers, or strategically control perceptions in settings where they believe their contributions are in jeopardy (Ferris et al., 2000; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). In this sense, WA may indirectly influence the corporate atmosphere and employee engagement by encouraging competitive rather than cooperative behaviors.

Few research has empirically examined how WA moderates the effects of hybrid work on participation or how it could incite organizational, political engagement as a resource-conservation tactic. This is an important aspect given the increasing acceptance of hybrid workplace setups and the heightened attention paid to workplace well-being. Thus, this study closes a significant gap in the literature by examining WA as a moderating condition that influences how workers view and respond to mixed work environments.

In conclusion, although WA is a psychological concept that has been extensively explored, little is known about how it influences employee behavior in mixed work environments. According to this concept, high levels of workplace anxiety in the setting of HW may turn the sense of autonomy from strength into weakness, leading workers to participate in organizational politics to protect opportunities, increase visibility, and maintain job satisfaction. The study adds to a more thorough understanding of how psychological aspects affect the success or failure of hybrid work arrangements by examining these dynamics.

2.3 Organizational Political Engagement (OPE)

Individual actions intended to persuade others to accomplish one's or a group's goals, frequently through unofficial or informal ways within the workplace, are referred to as organizational political engagement (OPE) (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). These actions may not always be in line with official organizational goals, but they are thought to be required to obtain resources, power, or visibility. These behaviors include impression management, favoritism, alliance formation, information control, and strategic self-promotion (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). OPE usually stems from employees' views of organizational politics (POP), which is the conviction that social connections and self-interest have a greater influence on workplace decisions than merit (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

There is some disagreement in the literature regarding the hybrid workplace (HW). On the one hand, several academics have contended that because HW arrangements lessen the need for social capital for development, physical presence, and informal interactions, they may lessen exposure to organizational politics (Hill, Ferris, & Mårtinson, 2003; Cooper & Kurland, 2002). This viewpoint holds that because they have fewer possibilities to participate in political activities, remote or hybrid workers are less likely to do so, and the nature of remote communication channels (such as emails and scheduled video calls) tends to restrict informal political maneuvering.

This perspective, however, can ignore a crucial psychological component: how workplace anxiety (WA) influences employee behavior. The current study presents WA as a moderating condition that can reverse the association between HW and political behavior, which is thought to decrease it. In particular, we contend that workers in hybrid environments who experience high levels of WA might become more politically active in response to perceived

challenges to access resources, influence, or visibility. People under stress from possible resource loss—such as lessened recognition, missed growth chances, or unclear performance evaluation—may try to defend or reclaim resources through political behaviors, according to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989).

This viewpoint aligns with earlier studies that indicate political behavior frequently develops as a coping strategy when resources are scarce or unclear (Eldor, 2016; Treadway et al., 2005). The fear of being ignored or cut off from organizational power structures might result in compensatory political behavior in hybrid contexts, where employees are physically separated from important decision-makers and have fewer opportunities for casual encounters. Examples of actions meant to restore control over career outcomes include lining up with powerful coworkers, inflating accomplishments in online meetings, or disparaging others to get a job.

OPE is a two-edged sword since it can have two effects in HW settings. On the one hand, political actions can momentarily protect a person's access to resources or employment prospects, especially without official acknowledgment. However, such behavior can cause emotional tiredness, decrease teamwork, and damage employee engagement (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009; Landells & Albrecht, 2016). Favoritism, information hoarding, and covert competitiveness are a few behaviors that can create a toxic work environment, impair teamwork, and escalate interpersonal conflict all of which take away from sincere participation and dedication.

Furthermore, in hybrid environments, when staff members may already be dealing with communication obstacles, coordination issues, and a feeling of loneliness, the resource-depleting effects of political behavior are especially pertinent (Choudhury et al., 2021; Salleh & Rajah, 2023). Political techniques can demand time, mental energy, and emotional labor—resources that

may be used for more constructive endeavors. Therefore, even if OPE offers temporary psychological security or visibility, it may unintentionally deplete workers' energy and focus, which, over time, could result in poorer workplace engagement (Ferris et al., 2002; Gkorezis et al., 2014).

According to the current study, the WA employee experience degree determines the association between HW and OPE. Increased workplace concern may cause such participation as a resource-conserving mechanism, even though hybrid work may not always result in more political engagement. This nuanced perspective presents a paradigm in which workplace anxiety drives organizational political engagement, challenging previous notions that distant or hybrid employment (Cooper & Kurland, 2002).

In conclusion, OPE in the hybrid workplace is an important reaction to the perceived resource protection mechanism. By investigating OPE as a mediating mechanism that explains how workplace anxiety in hybrid contexts can affect job engagement outcomes, this study adds to the body of literature. Realizing the actual effects of hybrid work on worker performance and well-being requires an awareness of the intricate interactions among structure (i.e., HW), psychology (i.e., WA), and behavior (i.e., OPE).

2.4 Employees' Job Engagement (JE)

Over the time of management research, the most important concept in organizational behavior and human resource management is employee job engagement, also frequently called employee engagement. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), it is a pleasant, contented mental state associated with labor that is marked by vigor, devotion, and immersion. The positive opposite of burnout is job engagement, which includes sentiments of vitality, involvement, and efficacy at work (Maslach et al., 2001). Highly engaged employees have a deep emotional and

cognitive connection to their jobs, show perseverance despite adversities, and are more inclined to go above and beyond in their responsibilities (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Numerous beneficial organizational outcomes, such as improved job performance, innovation, organizational commitment, and lower turnover, are closely associated with engagement (Saks, 2006; Rich et al., 2010). Therefore, Organizations have placed greater emphasis on determining the psychological states and working situations that encourage employee engagement. One such circumstance that has surfaced in recent years is hybrid work (HW), which provides workers with flexibility, autonomy, and control over their workplace—resources that are very compatible with the engagement-promoting elements included in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) paradigm (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Data from recent studies support the notion that HW has a good impact on employee engagement. According to Surma et al. (2021), hybrid work arrangements help employees manage their time and personal obligations by lowering everyday pressures like commuting and increasing job engagement. Similarly, Giovanis (2019) observed that schedule and location flexibility increase intrinsic motivation and engagement. Additionally, workers are more likely to feel appreciated, empowered, and psychologically invested in their work when they believe their bosses trust them and give them autonomy, which is frequently the case in HW systems (Becker et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, even with these advantages, employee job engagement in hybrid workplace contexts is not certain. Recent studies indicate that the benefits of HW may be compromised under some psychological situations, particularly high levels of workplace anxiety (WA). As mentioned earlier, WA can make workers question their work, worry about their visibility, and fear they will not be given opportunities inside the company (McCarthy et al., 2016; Zeidner &

Matthews, 2005). These issues are especially pertinent in HW settings, where there are fewer in-person encounters and less informal input. Workers who experience WA might view flexibility as a source of uncertainty and perhaps danger rather than a benefit, undermining the very engagement HW aims to foster (Salleh & Rajah, 2023).

Employees with high WA may try to preserve their psychological resources by putting in less effort or emotionally removing themselves from their work. These are signs of low job engagement, drawing from the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). They would instead focus their energies on organizational political engagement (OPE) to protect their performance and growth, which could further exhaust the mental and emotional resources required for actual participation (Ferris et al., 2002; Eldor, 2016). OPE in these situations becomes a moderating behavioral reaction to worry and a competing demand that reduces engagement by taking away from task-focused attention.

Furthermore, studies reveal that actions that drain resources, such as internal competitiveness and impression management, can negatively impact employee engagement. According to Chang et al. (2009), political behavior eventually lowers employees' psychological availability for work, even though it may be advantageous soon. Employees may suffer from emotional tiredness, cynicism, and decreased dedication—all indicators of disengagement—when they feel pressured to act selfishly out of worry or fear of being invisible in HW contexts (Maslach et al., 2001; Kacmar et al., 2007).

Therefore, rather than being a direct positive correlation, the relationship between HW and job engagement depends on behavioral reactions like OPE and psychological characteristics like WA. Under the right circumstances, HW can empower workers and increase engagement, but it can also unintentionally set off anxiety-driven coping mechanisms that eventually reduce

engagement. These complex interactions have not yet been fully explored in the literature, especially in post-pandemic hybrid situations where psychological vulnerability and structural flexibility interact.

Consequently, this study aims to determine if organizational political engagement mediates the association between increased workplace anxiety and the impact of hybrid work on employee job engagement. Doing this advances a more complex view of job engagement that considers not just the structural aspects of work (like HW) but also the behavioral and psychological factors that affect how workers relate to their jobs in modern environments.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

This chapter aims to establish the theoretical foundation of this research and explain the hypotheses tested in this study. This chapter is based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001, 2011), a widely used resource theory for stress and motivation literature. COR theory provides a comprehensive lens to understand how individuals react to perceived threats to valued personal and organizational resources. By integrating COR theory with emerging literature on hybrid work environments, workplace anxiety, and organizational political engagement, this chapter outlines a series of interrelated propositions that explain how modern work structures influence employee engagement.

3.1 Hybrid Workplace and Employee Job Engagement

A hallmark of post-pandemic organizational design, the hybrid workplace (HW) model combines aspects of in-office and remote work, giving workers flexibility in deciding when and where to work (Choudhury et al., 2021). The model has gained popularity because it can improve work-life balance, increase autonomy, and reduce commuting stress—all strongly associated with job satisfaction and engagement (Barbour et al., 2021; Surma et al., 2021). In many instances, employees now request hybrid options as a requirement for joining or staying with an organization (Alexander et al., 2021).

A key determinant of employee performance and well-being, job engagement is described by Schaufeli et al. (2002) as a pleasant, rewarding condition relating to one's work that is marked by vigor, devotion, and absorption. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), engaged workers are more dedicated to their companies, creative, and productive. Therefore, modern firms have made increasing work engagement a strategic focus.

A convincing framework for comprehending how the HW model affects employee job engagement is provided by the Conservation of Resources (COR) hypothesis. According to COR theory, people work hard to get, safeguard, and preserve important resources like time, independence, social support, and emotional vitality (Hobfoll, 1989). People feel motivated, involved, and well-being when resources are abundant; on the other hand, they feel stressed, anxious, and burned out when resources are endangered or disappear (Hobfoll, 2001; Treadway et al., 2005). The ability to work flexibly, control one's environment, and personalize one's schedule are resource-enhancing factors that can positively affect employee job engagement in the context of HW.

Employees in hybrid models report higher levels of autonomy and satisfaction, according to studies, particularly when they feel their workplace meets their personal and professional needs (Giovanis, 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model states that flexibility and autonomy are significant job resources that support COR theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). According to Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), employees with more autonomy over their jobs are more likely to feel intrinsic motivation, promoting higher engagement at work.

These empirical and theoretical underpinnings indicate a favorable correlation between job engagement and HW.

Therefore, we set our first hypothesis for this study:

H1a: A hybrid workplace is positively related to employee job engagement.

3.2 Hybrid Workplace and Organizational Political Engagement

Organizational political engagement (OPE) is the term used to describe discretionary acts that influence colleagues to achieve individual or group goals, often informally or indirectly

(Ferris et al., 2002). These behaviors can include self-promotion, favoritism, withholding information, forming alliances, and other strategic acts that may not be in line with organizational goals but are believed to be necessary for personal advancement (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). Even while it's frequently seen negatively, political participation can also be understood as a calculated coping strategy when resources are limited or unstable.

Due to less in-person connection and informal communication, previous research has suggested that distant or hybrid work arrangements decrease chances for political behavior (Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Ellison, 2004). There may be fewer opportunities for employees not physically present to be exposed to or participate in office politics. It is assumed that employees are shielded from the political climate of traditional office settings by distance and flexibility.

However, by applying knowledge from COR theory, this study takes a more nuanced stance. Although it may decrease exposure to traditional politics, HW may enhance perceived risks to vital resources like visibility, influence, and leadership access. Employees may act politically as a compensatory response to regain control or guarantee recognition when they are unsure of how their work is being assessed or whether they are "seen" by supervisors, particularly in a virtual or asynchronous setting (McDonald et al., 2008; Bloom et al., 2015).

According to COR theory, when individuals perceive potential resource loss—even in a seemingly resource-rich environment like HW—they are motivated to protect or regain those resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Eldor, 2016). Political engagement may, therefore, emerge as a resource-preserving strategy, especially under psychological strain. HW may inadvertently produce a dual feeling in this situation. While providing flexibility and autonomy, it may also

heighten the demand to demonstrate one's value, especially for workers who feel alienated or invisible.

Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1b: A hybrid workplace is positively related to employee organizational political engagement.

3.3 Moderating Role of Workplace Anxiety (WA)

According to McCarthy et al. (2016), workplace anxiety (WA) is the emotional tension, worry, and fear associated with job performance and evaluation. Employees frequently have fewer possibilities for peer connection, informal feedback, and supervisor visibility in hybrid work situations, which might increase concern about job security and performance (Zeidner & Matthews, 2005). Anxiety serves as a psychological signal that indicates the possibility of resource loss, according to COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001).

This study proposes that WA moderate the link between HW and OPE. Although HW promotes resource gain such as flexibility and autonomy, not every employee may benefit equally from these advantages. Suppose they believe their contribution is not adequately visible or recognized. In that case, people with high WA may interpret the same setting differently, viewing flexibility as a risk or threat toward their goal rather than empowerment (Salleh & Rajah, 2023).

These people might be more inclined to act politically to protect or reclaim resources under danger, such as recognition, acceptance, or career progression chances (Eldor, 2016; Hochwarter, 2012).

On the other hand, workers with low WA might be less inclined to view HW as dangerous and more assured of their capacity to handle ambiguity. For many, hybrid employment's

independence increases motivation and lessens the need for employee engagement in organizational politics.

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Hybrid workplace and workplace anxiety will interact to influence employee organizational political engagement, such that the relationship between HW and OPE will be stronger when workplace anxiety is high rather than low.

3.4 Mediating Role of Organizational Political Engagement

Although OPE is frequently examined, this study views it as a mediating mechanism that connects job engagement and HW, particularly when WA is elevated. According to the COR theory, people may shift their focus from engaging in productive labor to engaging in protective behaviors (politics) when their resources are threatened. These political actions drain the emotional and mental resources that might usually sustain job engagement, even while they may protect short-term visibility or influence (Chang et al., 2009; Landells & Albrecht, 2016).

Using the Conservation of Resource Theory (Hobfoll, 2001), we contend that workers' reactions are moderated when they see hybrid work demands as threats or challenges (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). OPE manages perceived risks because people with high WA are more prone to view ambiguity in hybrid work as a danger. Over time, this shift in focus from task-related engagement to political navigation leads to a decline in job engagement (LePine et al., 2005).

Consequently, we suggest that OPE mediates the relationship between job engagement and HW, especially when WA is high.

The following hypotheses are presented:

H3a: Hybrid workplace and workplace anxiety will interact to influence employee job engagement.

H3b: The interactive effect of hybrid workplace and workplace anxiety on employee job engagement will be mediated by organizational political engagement, such that the indirect effect will be negative when workplace anxiety is high rather than low.

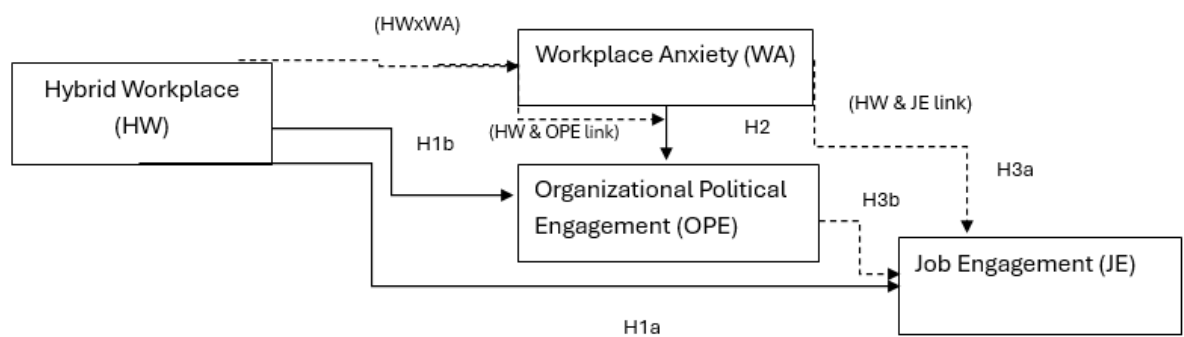


Figure 1: Theoretical Model of Current Research

Chapter 4: Method & Result Analysis

4.1 Research Design

The primary research is based on a quantitative (survey questionnaire) method as it allows numerical measurement and in-depth exploration. The secondary research has been conducted through journals, books, and newspaper articles. The respondents are white-collar employees working in hybrid workplaces set up from the Manufacturing and Telecom industries in Bangladesh. The survey sample size is $N=152$ individuals to examine the relationship between hybrid workplace arrangements, organizational, political engagement (OPE), workplace anxiety (WA), and job engagement (JE), framed through the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). The design was selected for statistical testing of a moderated mediation model, evaluated using Hayes' PROCESS Macro Model 7 (Hayes, 2018). The primary goal was to test how workplace anxiety moderates the relationship between hybrid workplace and organizational political engagement, and whether OPE mediates the effect of hybrid workplace on job engagement under varying anxiety levels.

4.2 Participants and Sampling

The final sample consisted of $N=152$ working professionals employed in hybrid workplace settings in Telecom and Manufacturing industries in Bangladesh. In the manufacturing industry, hybrid work arrangements were more common among administrative, managerial, and support staff who had access to digital infrastructure and flexible scheduling. These roles typically included HR officers, finance personnel, operations coordinators, and mid-level managers positions that allowed for partial remote work while still requiring occasional on-site presence. While for telecom we have covered all employees as they mostly work in hybrid set up despite the positions. The eligibility criteria are clearly communicated with the

participating organizations that highlighted the discrepancy. A two-stage consent process is followed to recruit the participants which require approval from both the organization and the individual. Following approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Northern British Columbia, we contacted the Human Resources departments of relevant organizations via email to obtain formal permission to invite their employees to participate in the study (appendix 2), after getting their organizational consent and approval from REB we proceed with collecting participants consent.

After acquiring the consent from the participating organizations, prospective participants received an information letter along with a Microsoft Forms link to submit their individual consent which is anonymous and voluntary. The form detailed the research objectives, possible risks and benefits, confidentiality protocols, and emphasized that participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were asked to review the information and provide informed consent electronically through Microsoft Forms (Appendix 2).

Only after receiving their consent to participate in the survey a link of the survey is shared, which was hosted on SurveyMonkey. This ethically guided and structured recruitment process ensured voluntary participation and compliance with institutional ethical standards.

We have employed a time logged survey to avoid single-source bias. We have conducted a four-phase survey. To reduce potential common method bias (CMB), the data collection was conducted in four temporally separated phases, each spaced approximately one week apart. This time separation was intended to psychologically distance participants from earlier responses, thereby minimizing consistency motif and demand characteristics (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Each phase focused on a distinct construct: hybrid workplace experience (Phase 1), workplace anxiety (Phase 2), organizational political engagement (Phase 3), and job engagement (Phase 4). While

multi-phase survey designs are commonly used to reduce CMB, a four-phase structure was selected to maximize construct separation and reduce participants' ability to cognitively link predictor and criterion variables. Each time we have collected each variable such as phase one Hybrid workplace, phase two workplace anxiety etc.

Then, the summary of the collected data is demonstrated with descriptive statistics, and the confirmatory factor analysis. The present study also analyzes the multiple correlation analysis and Cronbach alpha which is discussed in the result section. The study model is a moderated-mediation; therefore, to test the hypotheses present study use Hayes method (model- 7) proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) which indicate the indirect effect of HW on JE through OPE moderated by WA.

4.3: Procedure

The data was collected through an online survey administered via survey monkey. The participating organization and the Participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the purpose of the study, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. The study received ethics approval from the University of Northern British Columbia Research Ethics Board.

To address potential common method bias (CMB), both procedural and statistical remedies were implemented (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Richardson et al., 2009). Procedurally, the study ensured anonymity, used validated scales, introduced temporal separation in survey distribution, and included an unanticipated moderator variable (Workplace Anxiety) to reduce response pattern bias (Evans, 1985; Lai et al., 2013; Schmitt, 1994).

Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was conducted using exploratory factor analysis (Principal Axis Factoring) in SPSS. The first unrotated factor accounted for 46.17% of the total

variance (Eigenvalue = 1.847), which is below the 50% threshold commonly associated with CMB concerns (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Fuller et al., 2016). The emergence of multiple factors with eigenvalues >1 further supports the absence of a dominant single factor, suggesting that CMB is unlikely to pose a significant threat to the validity of the results.

4.4 Measures

All measures used a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) unless otherwise noted. Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) ranged from .810 to .883, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Hybrid Workplace (HW): Hybrid Workplace (HW) was assessed using nine items adapted from multiple validated sources to comprehensively capture the dimensions of work-life balance, autonomy, and the benefits of work-from-anywhere arrangements in hybrid settings. Items related to work-life balance were adapted from Brough et al. (2014), items reflecting autonomy were taken from Morgeson et al. (2005), and items addressing the efficiency and psychological well-being aspects of work-from-anywhere flexibility were drawn from Chaudhuri et al. (2022). Example items include: "I currently have a good balance between the time I spend at work and the time I have available for non-work activities in a hybrid setup," "I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work," and "The work-from-anywhere option provides employees flexibility for choosing their workplace."

Workplace Anxiety (WA): Measured with eight items from McCarthy and Goffin's (2004) Workplace Anxiety Scale, adapted for the workplace context (e.g., "I worry that my work performance will be lower than that of others at work").

Organizational Political Engagement (OPE): Measured using six items adapted from Hochwarter et al. (2003), organizational political perception reflecting strategic behaviors aimed

at navigating organizational politics (e.g., “Individuals are stabbing each other in the back to look good in front of others”).

Job Engagement (JE): Assessed using the nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006), which captures vigor, dedication, and absorption (e.g., “I am enthusiastic about my job”).

Control Variables: To account for individual differences, several control variables were included in the model: gender, education, tenure, and industry. Gender differences are relevant as prior research has shown women may experience greater work-home role conflict (Eagly, 2009). Education and tenure were included to control career stage and experience, which could influence political engagement and job commitment (Gaines et al., 1997). Including these demographic controls ensures a more accurate estimation of the main effects.

4.5: Data Screening and Preparation

Prior analysis, the dataset was screened for missing responses, careless answering, and outliers. A total of N= 175 responses were initially collected through the online survey. After data screening, 23 cases were removed due to excessive missing values (i.e., more than 20% of items unanswered) or evidence of straight lining, which was identified by respondents providing the same response across all items in a scale. The final sample included N= 152 valid cases, resulting in an effective response rate of 86.9%.

All retained cases were checked for univariate normality using skewness and kurtosis values, and no severe violations were found. Before creating interaction terms, continuous predictor variables were mean-centered to reduce multicollinearity. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha), and bivariate correlations among the main variables were computed using SPSS shown in Table 1.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

All research procedures adhered to the ethical guidelines of the University of Northern British Columbia Research Ethics Board. Participants provided informed consent prior to survey participation. Data was collected anonymously and stored securely in encrypted digital formats. No identifiable personal data was retained, and participation was voluntary with the right to withdraw at any time.

4.7 Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the empirical results of the study and interprets the findings in light of the proposed hypotheses. The analysis is grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), which posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 26 and AMOS 26. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the measurement model. Reliability and correlations were assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Pearson's correlation matrix. Hypotheses were tested using Hayes' PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 7), which allows for simultaneous testing of moderated mediation models (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

This model tests how the hybrid workplace (HW) affects job engagement (JE), with organizational political engagement (OPE) as a mediator and workplace anxiety (WA) as a moderator. Additional statistical diagnostics and procedural remedies were applied to ensure the robustness and reliability of findings.

4.8 Scale Validation and Model Fit

To assess construct validity, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 26. The hypothesized four-factor model, comprising hybrid workplace (HW), workplace anxiety (WA), organizational political engagement (OPE), and job engagement (JE), exhibited an

acceptable fit to the data: ($\chi^2(424) = 647.790$, CFI = .903, TLI = .887, RMSEA = .059).

Following Kline's (2015) recommendations, we made theoretically justified modifications by allowing residual covariances between selected items within the same construct to improve model fit.

To evaluate discriminant validity, we compared the hypothesized model to five alternative models, each combining two of the four constructs. These included a model combining a. HW and OPE ($\chi^2(466) = 1304.71$, CFI = .591, TLI = .565, RMSEA = .109), b. a model combining WA and JE ($\chi^2(471) = 1523.66$, CFI = .487, TLI = .460, RMSEA = .122), c. a model combining OPE and JE ($\chi^2(447) = 1245.83$, CFI = .587, TLI = .570, RMSEA = .109), d. a model combining HW and WA ($\chi^2(486) = 1608.81$, CFI = .453, TLI = .441, RMSEA = .124), and e. a model combining both HW with OPE and WA with JE ($\chi^2(482) = 1804.27$, CFI = .355, TLI = .337, RMSEA = .135). Therefore, the four-factor model demonstrated superior fit compared to all alternative models, each of which showed significantly worst fit indices (CFI < .60 and RMSEA > .10). These results support the discriminant validity of HW, WA, OPE, and JE as distinct constructs.

Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeded the recommended 0.50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and all squared inter-construct correlations were lower than the AVE values, providing further support for discriminant validity. Collectively, these analyses confirm the measurement model's adequacy and validate the use of the four-factor structure in hypothesis testing.

4.9 Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations among the main variables are presented in Table 1. Of the participants, 31.6% held a bachelor's degree, 67.8%

obtained a master's degree, and 0.7% held a PhD degree. The majority of participants were male (67.8%). The average age fell into the 31–40 years category ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 0.67$, on a 4-point scale), and the average organizational tenure was in the "more than 5 years" category ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.98$). Cronbach's alpha values for all multi-item scales are reported on the diagonal in Table 1. Internal consistency for all constructs was acceptable, with alpha values ranging from .810 (Hybrid Workplace) to .883 (Workplace Anxiety) exceeding the commonly accepted cutoff of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). While all values fall below the .90 threshold, thereby avoiding concerns of item redundancy (Boyle, 1991; Clark & Watson, 1995), they indicate strong reliability for the measurement of each construct. These findings support the internal consistency of the established scales used in this study.

These values provide preliminary insight into the respondents' overall experiences in hybrid workplaces. Notably, the moderate levels of WA and OPE highlight the psychological and political complexities of the HW structure, which merit further exploration in subsequent hypothesis testing.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities

Variable	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Hybrid Workplace	5.55	0.89	.81	—								
2. Workplace Anxiety	3.90	1.40	.88	.01	—							
3. Org. Political Engagement	4.07	1.48	.84	.27**	.44**	—						
4. Job Engagement	5.45	0.87	.83	.50**	.14	.42**	—					
5. Age	2.12	0.67	—	-.05	-.09	-.04	-.03	—				
6. Gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female)	1.32	0.47	—	.07	-.01	-.10	-.18*	.02	—			
7. Education	1.69	0.48	—	-.15	-.01	.08	-.03	.14	.03	—		
8. Industry (1 = Manu, 2 = Telecom)	1.27	0.45	—	-.06	-.10	.00	-.12	-.13	.02	.08	—	
9. Tenure	3.25	0.98	—	-.06	-.09	-.10	.15	.40**	.03	.01	-.14	—

Note. N = 152. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; α = Cronbach's Alpha. $p < .05$ (*), $p < .01$ (**). Internal reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are reported on the diagonal in parentheses. Gender: 1 = male, 2 = female; Age: 1 = 21–30, 2 = 31–40, 3 = 41–50, 4 = 51 and above; Education: 1 = bachelor's degree, 2 = master's degree, 3 = PhD; Industry: 1 = manufacturing, 2 = telecom; Tenure: 1 = less than 1 year, 2 = 1–3 years, 3 = 3–5 years, 4 = more than 5 years. $p < .05$, $p < .01$, * $p < .001$.

4.10 Hypothesis Testing

We tested our conceptual model using Hayes's (2013) PROCESS macro (Model 7), which allows estimation of conditional indirect effects in a moderated mediation framework. This model is consistent with our theoretical foundation rooted in Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that individuals are motivated to conserve, protect, and invest resources. In this context, we conceptualized hybrid workplace (HW) flexibility as a valuable contextual resource gain, workplace anxiety (WA) as a resource threat condition, and organizational political engagement (OPE) as a resource conservation element and job engagement (JE) was positioned as the ultimate outcome reflecting personal resource investment in work. All models controlled for age, gender, education, industry, and tenure to isolate the effects of the focal variables.

H1a: Hybrid Workplace and Organizational Political Engagement

To test Hypothesis 1a, a simple regression analysis was conducted with HW as the predictor and OPE as the outcome. The results revealed a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.482$, $SE = 0.133$, $t = 3.61$, $p < .001$), supporting the hypothesis. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = .29$) indicates a moderate effect size. This suggests that employees working in hybrid settings may feel compelled to engage in organizational politics as a means to enhance or preserve their visibility, access to resources, or influence—particularly in the absence of daily face-to-face interactions. These findings align with COR theory's assertion that individuals engage in strategic behavior to protect valued resources under conditions of uncertainty.

H1b: Hybrid Workplace and Job Engagement

Regression analysis further supported Hypothesis 1b, which predicted a positive association between HW and JE. The results were statistically significant ($\beta = .54$, $SE = 0.067$, t

= 7.86, $p < .001$), indicating that employees in hybrid settings report significantly higher levels of job engagement. This finding underscores the positive role that autonomy, flexibility, and perceived controlled by job resources identified in COR theory—play in fostering psychological investment in work.

H2: Moderating Effect of Workplace Anxiety on HW → OPE

To test Hypothesis 2, we used Hayes PROCESS Macro (Model 1) to examine whether WA moderates the relationship between HW and OPE. Results indicated a significant interaction effect ($\beta = 0.1848$, $SE = 0.0870$, $t = 2.12$, $p = .036$), confirming the hypothesis. Simple slope analysis revealed that the positive association between HW and OPE was stronger at high levels of WA ($\beta = 0.63$, $p < .001$) than at low levels ($\beta = 0.31$, $p = .048$). This finding is consistent with COR theory, which suggests that under conditions of perceived threat or resource loss (i.e., high WA), individuals are more likely to engage in compensatory behaviors such as political engagement.

H3a: Moderating Effect of Workplace Anxiety on HW → JE

Hypothesis 3a proposed that WA moderates the relationship between HW and JE. Using PROCESS Model 7 we found a significant interaction ($\beta = 0.26$, $SE = 0.091$, $t = 2.85$, $p = .005$; $\beta = .26$). Simple slope tests revealed that hybrid work had a stronger positive effect on JE for employees experiencing high levels of WA ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < .001$) compared to those with low WA ($\beta = 0.39$, $p = .029$). This finding suggests that employees experiencing workplace anxiety may derive into political engagement to reduce their workplace anxiety in hybrid workplace, from where present study brings the effect of organizational political engagement as a mediator in this model. Notably, although $\beta = 0.39$ appears in both H1b and H3a findings, it represents different

model conditions $\beta = 0.523$ in H1b reflects the unconditional main effect, while $\beta = 0.39$ in H3a refers specifically to the conditional effect under low workplace anxiety.

H3b: Moderated Mediation via Organizational Political Engagement

PROCESS Macro Model 7 was used to examine whether the indirect effect of HW on JE via OPE is conditional on levels of WA. The moderated mediation index was statistically significant (Index = 0.12, Boot SE = 0.049, 95% CI [0.03, 0.22]), providing strong support for Hypothesis 3b. Specifically, the conditional indirect effect was significant at high WA (Effect = 0.46, SE = 0.12, 95% CI [0.23, 0.70]), but not at low WA (Effect = 0.20, SE = 0.18, 95% CI [-0.16, 0.54]). This indicates that organizational political engagement increases as a strategy to protect resources primarily among those experiencing greater resource threat due to high workplace anxiety, consistent with the COR theory assertion that individuals invest in protective behaviors to mitigate perceived loss.

The results provide robust empirical support for the proposed moderated mediation framework. Hybrid workplace practices enhance job engagement both directly and indirectly by shaping organizational political engagement. These effects are further conditioned by the level of workplace anxiety. High WA strengthens both the likelihood of engaging in organizational politics and that impacts hybrid work on job engagement. In line with COR theory, the findings suggest that under threat (WA), employees pursue both resource-gaining (JE) and resource-preserving (OPE) strategies simultaneously. This dual-pathway dynamic offers a nuanced understanding of how hybrid work structures interact with individual psychology to influence work outcomes. The findings have practical implications for leaders and HR professionals seeking to manage engagement and minimize negative political behaviors in flexible work environments.

Table 2
Hypothesis Testing and Moderated Mediation Relationship

Organizational Political Engagement															
Dependent Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	β (SE)	t	p	β (SE)	t	p	β (SE)	t	p	β (SE)	t	p	β (SE)	t	p
Measure															
Constant	3.95 (.30)	12.3	.00	1.73 (1.129)	1.529	.129	3.461 (2.280)	1.518	.131	2.743 (.562)	4.879	<.001***	5.379 (1.245)	4.322	<.001***
Age	-.00 (.20)	-.23	.8	-.036 (.192)	-.188	.852	.069 (.169)	.407	.684	-.142 (.096)	-1.484	.14	-.107 (.092)	-1.162	.247
Gender	-.40 (.30)	-1.61	.18	-.401 (.249)	-1.611	.109	-.364 (.219)	-1.661	.099	-.425 (.124)	-3.425	<.001***	-.403 (.120)	-3.364	<.001***
Education	.39 (.30)	1.56	.2	-.116 (.130)	-.893	.373	-.055 (.114)	-.485	.629	.192 (.065)	2.968	.004**	.207 (.062)	3.321	.001**
Industry	.00 (.20)	-.01	.99	.390 (.250)	1.56	.121	.417 (.220)	1.895	.06	.135 (.124)	1.084	.28	.158 (.120)	1.313	.191
Tenure	-.10 (.10)	-.89	.37	-.001 (.266)	-.006	.996	.195 (.236)	.828	.409	-.142 (.133)	-1.071	.286	-.099 (.129)	-.772	.441
Hybrid Workplace	.48 (.10)	3.61	.000***	.482 (.134)	3.606	<.001***	-.261 (.379)	-.69	.491	.523 (.067)	7.862	<.001***	-.034 (.207)	-.164	.87
Workplace Anxiety							-.608 (.513)	-1.184	.238				-.699 (.280)	-2.493	.014*
Interaction															
HW × WA				.185 (.087)	2.123	.036*							.136 (.048)	2.856	.005
Organizational Political Engagement													.147 (.044)	3.335	.001**
R ²	.176			.264			.321			.376			.409		
ΔR ²				.088			.057						.034		
F	6.064***			7.950***			8.466***			17.806***			12.367***		
Index of Moderated Mediation				Index (SE)			LLCI			ULCI					
				.12 (.049)			.03			.22					

Note. N = 152. Values are unstandardized regression coefficients. SE = Standard Error. Bootstrap sample size = 5,000. Age = 21–30 years old (1), 31–40 years old (2), 41–50 years old (3), 51 and above (4); Gender = male (1), female (2); Education = bachelor's degree (1), master's degree (2), PhD (3); Tenure = less than 1 year (1), 1–3 years (2), 3–5 years (3), more than 5 years (4); Industry = manufacturing (1), telecom (2). *Interaction = Hybrid Workplace \times Workplace Anxiety. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05. Hybrid Workplace and Workplace Anxiety were mean centered prior to creating the interaction term.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study examined the effects of hybrid workplace (HW) arrangements on employee job engagement (JE), accounting for the moderating influence of workplace anxiety (WA) and the mediating role of organizational political engagement (OPE). This study, which was framed under the Conservation of Resources (COR) paradigm (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), sought to understand how resource threat and resource gain (autonomy, flexibility) interact to influence resource conservation by involving in (OPE) and secure the (JE) results. The study provides a complex explanation of employee job engagement in hybrid work settings by illustrating that everyone does not feel the advantages of HW and that WA greatly influences how these benefits materialize.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The results supported the proposed hypotheses and revealed several noteworthy patterns. First, HW was found to have a direct positive association with both OPE and JE, indicating that employees who perceive higher levels of workplace flexibility and autonomy are more likely to engage in political behavior and report higher engagement at work. These findings resonate with existing scholarship emphasizing that flexible work arrangements can increase employee motivation and commitment by supporting personal control and enhancing work-life balance (Giovanis, 2019; Wang et al., 2020).

Second, WA was found to moderate both the HW–OPE and HW–JE relationships. Specifically, the effects of HW on both OPE and JE were more potent when WA was high. This finding is especially significant because it highlights that psychological strain—often treated as a detrimental factor—can heighten employee sensitivity to contextual resources, such as HW, leading to protective and performance-enhancing behaviors. Third, the analysis demonstrated a

significant moderated mediation effect, with the indirect relationship between HW and JE via OPE being stronger under high WA. This suggests that OPE is a coping mechanism that allows anxious employees to leverage workplace flexibility to maintain or increase their engagement.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several meaningful contributions to organizational behavior and human resource management, particularly in the context of hybrid work and resource management.

First, it advances COR theory by showing that resource-rich environments like HW arrangements do not function uniformly across all individuals. Rather, the perceived utility of HW as a resource appears to depend on the psychological state of the employee. While employees with lower workplace anxiety may benefit from HW passively, those experiencing higher levels of WA may actively engage in resource-protective behavior, such as OPE, in response to protect the resources from threat of loss.

Second, the findings help reposition organizational political engagement as a strategic coping behavior rather than solely dysfunctional or manipulative act. Traditional literature has often cast political engagement in a negative light—associating it with deception, backstabbing, or self-serving motives (Ferris et al., 1989). However, consistent with emerging scholarship (Hochwarter et al., 2003; Brouer et al., 2011), this study demonstrates that political behavior can be contextually adaptive, particularly when individuals are attempting to navigate ambiguous environments or resource threats. For anxious employees working in hybrid arrangements where visibility and control may be uncertain, OPE may provide a means to retain influence and visibility within the organization.

Third, the study contributes to hybrid workplace literature, which has grown substantially since the COVID-19 pandemic. While many studies have focused on the benefits of hybrid

models—such as increased flexibility, improved satisfaction, and reduced commuting stress—few have explored the boundary conditions of these benefits. This study shows that the very features that make hybrid work attractive can also create uncertainty and role ambiguity, especially for employees already experiencing high levels of anxiety. Therefore, HW must be understood not only as a structural resource but also as a context that interacts with internal states, shaping how employees interpret and respond to their work environment.

Fourth, this study provides empirical support for the resource gain and loss spirals proposed by COR theory. Employees with higher WA are already at a perceived resource deficit. Thus, when exposed to a potentially empowering context like HW, they may be more motivated to secure their standing within the organization by engaging politically. This behavior, in turn, helps them maintain or boost their JE. This cascading process mirrors COR's assertion that resource investment is driven by the motivation to prevent further loss and secure future gains (Hobfoll, 2001).

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings have direct implications for managers, HR professionals, and organizational leaders seeking to implement or optimize hybrid work policies. First, while HW provides structural autonomy and flexibility, it does not inherently reduce stress or disengagement. Rather, its effectiveness is contingent on the psychological readiness and emotional state of the employee. Organizations should recognize that HW may introduce new stressors—such as isolation, lack of visibility, or role confusion—that could exacerbate existing workplace anxiety. As such, hybrid work initiatives should be paired with support systems that foster psychological safety, including consistent communication, performance feedback, mental health resources, and inclusive leadership practices.

Second, the fact that OPE plays a mediating role under high WA implies that managers should not automatically interpret political engagement as negative. Instead, such behavior may reflect employees' efforts to stay relevant, maintain their position, or ensure fairness in resource distribution when traditional workplace cues (like face-to-face recognition or proximity to leaders) are absent. Managers should therefore be trained to identify when political engagement stems from adaptive self-regulation rather than manipulation, and to respond with empathy and transparency.

Third, organizations must understand that promoting JE under hybrid conditions is not simply about offering location flexibility. Emotional regulation strategies, trust-building, and role clarity are essential for ensuring that all employees—especially those experiencing anxiety—can thrive. Creating a culture where employees feel secure regardless of physical location can reduce the need for defensive behaviors and instead promote proactive engagement.

Finally, the findings suggest that “one-size-fits-all” hybrid policies may be insufficient. Employees vary in their ability to navigate autonomy, ambiguity, and stress. Tailoring hybrid arrangements to match individual needs and regularly checking in on emotional well-being can help optimize both individual and organizational outcomes.

5.4 Limitations

Despite its strengths, this study has limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to make definitive causal inferences. Although theoretical reasoning and statistical techniques support the proposed direction of effects, longitudinal or experimental designs would better capture the temporal and causal dynamics among HW, WA, OPE, and JE.

Second, the study relied on very few indications that impact HW and how that impact employee's JE; however, including more areas of organizational dynamics will enrich the research more in future. Future studies could also use more behavioral indicators (e.g., performance metrics, peer ratings) to strengthen the validity of this research.

Third, the sample was drawn exclusively from the telecom and manufacturing sectors in Bangladesh, which may limit the generalizability of findings. Cultural norms around hierarchy, communication, and political behavior may differ in other contexts. For example, collectivist versus individualist cultures may interpret political behavior differently (Hofstede, 2001). Replication across sectors and cultures would enhance the external validity of the model.

Fourth, workplace anxiety was measured as a general trait in this study. However, anxiety is often situation-specific and can fluctuate depending on leadership behavior, task demands, or external stressors. Future studies could adopt experience sampling methods (ESM) or daily diary studies to better capture these fluctuations and their influence on engagement.

Fifth, due to time constraints, the sample size for the present study was relatively limited, which may restrict the generalizability and depth of the findings. The small and non-random sample reduces the capacity to fully capture the variability and potential interactions among the study variables, thereby limiting the broader applicability of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Lastly, while statistical tests indicated that common method bias (CMB) was not a serious concern specifically, the Harman's single-factor test showed that the first unrotated factor accounted for 46.17% of the total variance, below the commonly accepted 50% threshold this value is still relatively high. Ideally, variance explained by a single factor should fall between 10% and 20% to minimize the risk of CMB. Although procedural and statistical remedies were

implemented in the study (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the relatively elevated variance suggests that CMB cannot be entirely ruled out and should be interpreted as a limitation of the study.

5.5 Future Research Directions

Future research should explore the long-term consequences of organizational political engagement (OPE) under hybrid work conditions. While the present study found that OPE facilitates engagement under conditions of high workplace anxiety, prolonged reliance on such coping mechanisms may lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, or workplace cynicism over time (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Longitudinal research is needed to examine whether OPE remains a sustainable engagement strategy or whether it ultimately contributes to employee withdrawal, stress, or reduced performance outcomes in the long run (Cropanzano et al., 2003).

Additionally, future work could examine moderators that may shape the HW–OPE–JE relationship. The impacts found in this study may be contextually buffered or amplified by variables like leadership style, team cohesion, organizational fairness, and perceived supervisor support (Aryee et al., 2002; Erdogan & Bauer, 2010; Tepper, 2000). Comprehending these moderating factors would improve the development of theories and facilitate more focused workplace interventions.

Future studies ought to look into whether gender disparities affect how workers perceive and react to hybrid work arrangements. According to earlier studies, gender may influence how people view career progression prospects, visibility, and work-life balance in flexible work settings (Becker et al., 2022). In order to better tailor hybrid policies to the varied requirements of employees, it would be beneficial to examine if men and women differ in their levels of job engagement, political engagement, and workplace anxiety in hybrid workplace.

By encouraging trust, communication, and shared values, strong, encouraging, and inclusive organizational cultures may mitigate the harmful effects of political engagement and workplace anxiety (Naqshbandi et al., 2023). To better understand how firms might use culture to

improve engagement in hybrid work environments, it would be helpful to examine cultural aspects including supportiveness, communication norms, and performance evaluation procedures.

Qualitative research may also offer deeper insights into how workers understand political engagement in settings with limited visibility and structural ambiguity, as well as how they weigh the trade-offs of hybrid work. These methods would assist in revealing the underlying reasons, justifications, and anticipated results of political engagement—all of which are frequently overlooked in quantitative survey designs (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Finally, future research should explore the intersection of technology, surveillance, and trust in hybrid work contexts. As organizations increasingly deploy digital monitoring and productivity-tracking systems, employees may experience heightened pressure and a perceived loss of autonomy—factors that may trigger new forms of political engagement or disengagement (Ball, 2010; Jeske & Santuzzi, 2015). Investigating how these surveillance dynamics influence employee behavior would be particularly relevant as hybrid work becomes a long-term organizational strategy.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on hybrid work by emphasizing the conditional and interactive nature of workplace resources, particularly within the framework of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). The findings underscore that structural changes such as the implementation of hybrid work models do not exist in isolation.

Rather, their effectiveness is significantly influenced by employees' psychological states, especially the presence of workplace anxiety (WA). By exploring how hybrid workplace (HW) arrangements interact with WA to influence organizational political engagement (OPE) and, ultimately, job engagement (JE), this research adds depth to our understanding of modern work environments and the dynamic mechanisms that underpin employee behavior.

Importantly, this study challenges the prevailing notion that hybrid work is a universally positive solution. While many organizational narratives emphasize the benefits of HW—such as autonomy, work-life balance, and productivity—this study demonstrates that individual differences in emotional and psychological resilience can significantly moderate these effects. Employees experiencing elevated levels of anxiety may perceive hybrid work as ambiguous or threatening, prompting them to engage in political behaviors as a compensatory strategy to manage visibility, control, and resource access within the workplace. In this context, political engagement serves not as a dysfunctional behavior, but as a resource-conserving mechanism triggered in response to resource threats. Such findings advance the COR-based understanding that individuals under resource threat actively seek to conserve and regain resources through both behavioral and strategic efforts.

Moreover, the study provides evidence for a moderated mediation model, illustrating that the indirect effect of HW on JE via OPE is significantly stronger under high levels of anxiety.

This nuanced relationship indicates that hybrid work policies must be designed with an awareness of employee emotional states and coping behaviors. The positive impact of hybrid work on engagement is not guaranteed; rather, it is mediated and moderated by how individuals interpret and respond to their working conditions. This insight has significant theoretical implications for refining COR theory in the context of flexible work and for rethinking how organizational behavior constructs—such as political engagement—are viewed within modern, digitally mediated, and psychologically complex work environments.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the critical importance of integrating psychological and structural factors in workplace policy and management practices. Organizations that adopt hybrid work models without addressing the emotional well-being of their employees may inadvertently trigger resource-depleting conditions that reduce the effectiveness of these models. Therefore, HR professionals and organizational leaders should implement supportive infrastructures that promote psychological safety, role clarity, transparent communication, and inclusive performance recognition systems. Tailored interventions that consider both environmental design and individual needs will be essential in maximizing engagement and minimizing maladaptive coping strategies in hybrid settings.

Furthermore, as hybrid work continues to evolve from a pandemic-era necessity into a long-term organizational strategy, there is a pressing need for evidence-based policy making. This study provides empirical support for the view that flexible work arrangements must be context-sensitive and psychologically attuned. It contributes to ongoing discussions about future work design, offering insights that can inform leadership development, change management, and employee support programs in the digital era.

In conclusion, this research underscores the value of adopting an integrated approach to understanding workplace behavior—one that simultaneously accounts for structural flexibility and emotional complexity. By framing OPE as a strategic, context-dependent response to hybrid work environments under anxiety, and by demonstrating its mediating role in sustaining JE, this study provides a meaningful contribution to theory, research, and practice. Organizations that wish to cultivate a resilient and engaged workforce must go beyond logistical redesign and invest in the emotional intelligence of systems, ensuring that both human and structural resources are aligned to promote well-being and productivity in a hybrid future.

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Appendix

Appendix A: List of Questionnaires

Items for Organizational political perception: Hochwarter, Kacmar, Perrewé, and Johnson (2003)

1. There is a lot of self-serving behavior going on in my organization.
2. People do what's best for them, not what's best for the organization.
3. People spend too much time sucking up to those who can help them.
4. People are working behind the scenes to ensure that they get their piece of the pie.
5. Many employees are trying to maneuver their way into the in group.
6. Individuals are stabbing each other in the back to look good in front of others.

Items for Workplace Anxiety: McCarthy and Goffin (2004).

1. I am overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly at work.
2. I worry that my work performance will be lower than that of others at work.
3. I feel nervous and apprehensive about not being able to meet performance targets.
4. I worry about not receiving a positive job performance evaluation.
5. I often feel anxious that I will not be able to perform my job duties in the time allotted.
6. I worry about whether others consider me to be a good employee for the job.
7. I worry that I will not be able to successfully manage the demands of my job.
8. Even when I try as hard as I can, I still worry about whether my job performance will be good enough.

Item for Hybrid Workplace visibility:

Hybrid Workplace: To measure we adopt items from multiple contexts.

1. I currently have a good balance between the time I spend at work and the time I have available for non-work activities in hybrid set-up.
2. Overall, I believe that my work and non-work life are balanced.
3. I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work.
4. I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.
5. I believe that work from anywhere flexibility makes employees more efficient.
6. Remote working helps individuals work towards a common goal.

7. The work from anywhere option provides employees flexibility for choosing their workplace.
8. The work from anywhere option enables employees to spend more quality time with their families.
9. The psychological well-being of the employees includes both the emotional and mental conditions of the employees in hybrid workplace.

Item name	Questions	Journal
Work-life balance	<p>1.I currently have a good balance between the time I spend at work and the time I have available for non-work activities in hybrid set-up</p> <p>2.I have difficulty balancing my work and non-work activities.</p> <p>3.I feel that the balance between my work demands and non-work activities is currently about right</p> <p>4.Overall, I believe that my work and non-work life are balanced.</p>	<p>Brough, P., Timms, C., O'Driscoll, M. P., Kalliath, T., Siu, O. L., Sit, C., & Lo, D. (2014, March 31). Work–life balance: a longitudinal evaluation of a new measure across Australia and New Zealand workers. <i>The International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>, 25(19), 2724–2744. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2014.899262.</p>
Autonomy	<p>1.I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job</p> <p>2. I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work</p> <p>3. I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job</p>	<p>Morgeson, F. P., Delaney-Klinger, K., & Hemingway, M. A. (2005). The Importance of Job Autonomy, Cognitive Ability, and Job-Related Skill for Predicting Role Breadth and Job Performance. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>, 90(2), 399–406. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.2.399</p>
Work from anywhere promote well-being and efficiency	<p>1.I believe that work from anywhere flexibility makes employees more efficient</p> <p>2.Remote working helps individuals work towards a common goal</p> <p>3.Work from anywhere gives employees the option to work anywhere and at any time so that the firms' operations are not interrupted</p> <p>4.The work from anywhere option provides employees flexibility for choosing their workplace</p> <p>5.The work from anywhere option enables employees to spend more quality time with their families</p> <p>6.The psychological well-being of the employees includes both the emotional and mental conditions of the employees in hybrid workplace</p>	<p>Chaudhuri, R., Chatterjee, S., Vrontis, D., & Alessio, I. (2022, August 8). Work from anywhere and employee psychological well-being: moderating role of HR leadership support. <i>Personnel Review</i>, 51(8), 1967–1989. https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-02-2022-0086</p>

Item for Job Engagement: on (Schaufeli et al. (2006)

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
3. I am enthusiastic about my job.
4. My job inspires me.
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
6. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
7. I am proud of the work that I do.
8. I am immersed in my work.
9. I get carried away when I am working.

Appendix B: Survey Consent

Sample Email Script

To whom it may concern,

I hope everything is going well and find you are safe and sound. I am Akifa Rahman, a graduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC); writing this email to you to assist me with my research project regarding a survey study with the reference of Mr./Mrs. Xyz.

Project Highlights: The research study aims to clarify how Hybrid Workplace, such as flexibility in working place and hour, contribute to Employee's Job Engagement and how high Workplace Anxiety and Employee's Organizational Political Engagement impact or create detrimental effect on Employee's Job Engagement in Hybrid Workplace.

Survey Highlights: There will be a unique numerical code for your organization, and employees' responses will be matched with the code for the specific organization. In the meantime, employees working in different teams in hybrid set-up will be randomly chosen via a lottery draw. The survey procedure involves filling out an online (via SurveyMonkey) or in-person survey (if online is unavailable) that will take approximately 30 minutes. Participants may skip any questions they are not interested in answering and end the survey at any time according to their wish.

Participants' privacy and safety: Participation in this survey study is voluntary, so employees may choose not to participate. If any employee decides not to participate in the study or wants to withdraw at any time, they will not be penalized. However, the results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and will be shared with you after being available in the UNBC library; kindly deliver the result to the interested survey participants. Besides, participants' responses will be confidential, and all data will be stored in a password-protected electronic format. Moreover, the study has been reviewed by UNBC Research Ethics Board (REB), which maintains research ethics protocols for research involving human participants.

Organizational and Employee Benefits: The survey study's research findings may provide an opportunity to improve individual and organizational outcomes of your organization through reviewing hybrid workplace set-up, minimizing workplace anxiety, increase employee's job engagement, and engagement in organizational politics.

However, I have attached the sample questionnaire for your review. Please see the attached.

Please let me know if you have any queries. I look forward to hearing from you soon and thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Akifa Rahman

MSc in Business Administration

School of Business, University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)

Student ID: 230154227

American & Efird Ltd- Manufacturing company:



RE: Organizational Consent to participate in an academic research



CAUTION: This email is not from UNBC. Avoid links and attachments. Don't buy gift cards.

Dear Akifa

I have received your mail. I will share this with my team to complete the questionnaire.

All the best and for your research and I hope the responses are helpful.

Let me know if any further support is required.

Thank you.

Regards,



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IA&E Bangladesh is closed on Friday & Saturday

Information Letter / Consent Form

Date:

Project Title: From Cubicles to Couches: Exploring the Relationship between Hybrid Workplace, Organizational Political Engagement, Workplace Anxiety and Job Engagement.

Who is conducting the study?

Principal researcher name: **Akifa rahman**

Program/Department/School: **MSc in Business Administration (School of Business)**

University of Northern British Columbia

Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9

Email address: **rahmana@unbc.ca**

Cell number: **(+1) 236 550 6039**

Supervisor's name and position: **Dr. Darren Brown, Assistant Professor, School of Business**

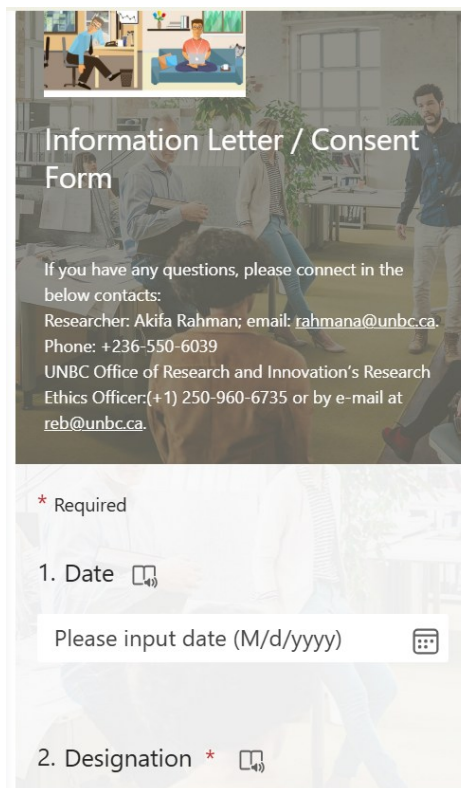
Email address: **darren.brown@unbc.ca**

The research is for a graduate degree (MSc in Business Administration) and is part of a thesis (public document). The collected data will be used for scholarly purposes only, and the researcher will be able to access it.

Purpose of Project:

This study aims to examine how and under what conditions in hybrid workplace(HW) employee's job engagement (JE) is impacted. In order to understand the driving forces underlying employee's high workplace anxiety (WA), which influence employee's organizational political engagement (OPE), we refer to Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resource (COR) theory. The core ideas of COR theory concern both resource acquisition and conservation. We want to develop and test a model that argues that the relationship between the HW and employee's JE is mediated by OPE, on a condition of high WA.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; you are in no way obligated to participate in this research. Moreover, you are free to withdraw from this study at any time and free not to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.



The form is titled "Information Letter / Consent Form" and is overlaid on a background image of people in a meeting. It includes contact information for the researcher and ethics officer. Below the contact information, there are two required fields: "1. Date" and "2. Designation". The "Date" field has a calendar icon and a placeholder text "Please input date (M/d/yyyy)". The "Designation" field has a text input icon.

Information Letter / Consent Form

If you have any questions, please connect in the below contacts:
Researcher: Akifa Rahman; email: rahmana@unbc.ca.
Phone: +236-550-6039
UNBC Office of Research and Innovation's Research Ethics Officer:(+1) 250-960-6735 or by e-mail at reb@unbc.ca.

* Required

1. Date

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

2. Designation *



September 17, 2024

Ms. Akifa Akifa Rahman & Prof. Darren Brown
c/o University of Northern British Columbia
Faculty of Business and Economics\Business

Dear Ms. Rahman & Prof. Brown,

File No: 6009451

Project Title: From Cubicles to Couches: Exploring the Relationship between Hybrid Workplace,
Organizational Political Engagement, Workplace Anxiety and Job Engagement

Approval Date: September 17, 2024

Expiry Date: September 16, 2025

Thank you for submitting the above-noted proposal to the Research Ethics Board ("REB"). Your project has been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for a period of twelve months from the date of this letter. To continue your proposed research beyond September 16, 2025, you must submit an Annual Renewal and Study Progress form at least one month prior to that date. If your research has been completed before the form is due, please submit a Study Closure form in order to close the REB file.

Throughout the duration of this REB approval, all requests for amendments and renewals, or reporting of unanticipated problems, must be submitted to the REB via the Research Portal.

Please refer to the Chair Bulletins found on the REB webpage for updates on in-person interactions with participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any questions or encounter any problems when working in the Research Portal, please contact the REB by email to reb@unbc.ca.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Neil Hanlon', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Dr. Neil Hanlon, Chair,
Research Ethics Board

Appendix C: Survey data collection

Survey: From Cubicles to Couches: Exploring the Relationship between Hybrid Workplace, Organizational Political Engagement, Workplace Anxiety and Job Engagement

Dear Respondents:

I would like to invite you to complete this questionnaire. This survey asks questions about Hybrid Workplace and under what condition it's impact your Job Engagement.

➤ Please use the following scale to rate the questions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Appendix D: List of Tables & Graphs

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities

Variable	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Hybrid Workplace	5.55	0.89	.81	—								
2. Workplace Anxiety	3.90	1.40	.88	.01	—							
3. Org. Political Engagement	4.07	1.48	.84	.27**	.44**	—						
4. Job Engagement	5.45	0.87	.83	.50**	.14	.42**	—					
5. Age	2.12	0.67	—	-.05	-.09	-.04	-.03	—				
6. Gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female)	1.32	0.47	—	.07	-.01	-.10	-.18*	.02	—			
7. Education	1.69	0.48	—	-.15	-.01	.08	-.03	.14	.03	—		
8. Industry (1 = Manu, 2 = Telecom)	1.27	0.45	—	-.06	-.10	.00	-.12	-.13	.02	.08	—	
9. Tenure	3.25	0.98	—	-.06	-.09	-.10	.15	.40**	.03	.01	-.14	—

Note. N = 152. Internal reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are reported on the diagonal in parentheses. Gender: 1 = male, 2 = female; Age: 1 = 21–30, 2 = 31–40, 3 = 41–50, 4 = 51 and above; Education: 1 = bachelor's degree, 2 = master's degree, 3 = PhD; Industry: 1 = manufacturing, 2 = telecom; Tenure: 1 = less than 1 year, 2 = 1–3 years, 3 = 3–5 years, 4 = more than 5 years. $p < .05$, $p < .01$, $*p < .001$.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing and Moderated Mediation Relationship

Table 2
Hypothesis Testing and Moderated Mediation Relationship

Dependent Variable	Organizational Political Engagement						Job Engagement					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
Measure	β (SE)	t	p	β (SE)	t	p	β (SE)	t	p	β (SE)	t	p
Constant	3.95 (.30)	12.3	.00	1.73 (1.129)	1.529	.129	3.461 (2.280)	1.518	.131	2.743 (.562)	4.879	<.001***
Age	-.00 (.20)	-.23	.8	-.036 (.192)	-.188	.852	.069 (.169)	.407	.684	-.142 (.096)	-1.484	.14
Gender	-.40 (.30)	-1.61	.18	-.401 (.249)	-1.611	.109	-.364 (.219)	-1.661	.099	-.425 (.124)	-3.425	<.001***
Education	.39 (.30)	1.56	.2	-.116 (.130)	-.893	.373	-.055 (.114)	-.485	.629	.192 (.065)	2.968	.004**
Industry	.00 (.20)	-.01	.99	.390 (.250)	1.56	.121	.417 (.220)	1.895	.06	.135 (.124)	1.084	.28
Tenure	-.10 (.10)	-.89	.37	-.001 (.266)	-.006	.996	.195 (.236)	.828	.409	-.142 (.133)	-1.071	.286
Hybrid Workplace	.48 (.10)	3.61	.000***	.482 (.134)	3.606	<.001***	-.261 (.379)	-.69	.491	.523 (.067)	7.862	<.001***
Workplace Anxiety							-.608 (.513)	-1.184	.238			
Interaction												
HW \times WA							.185 (.087)	2.123	.036*			
Organizational Political Engagement												
R ²	.176			.264			.321			.376		
Δ R ²				.088			.057			.409		
F	6.064***			7.950***			8.466***			17.806***		
Index of Moderated Mediation												
				Index (SE)				LLCI			ULCI	
				.12				.03			.22	
				(.049)								

Note. N = 152. Values are unstandardized regression coefficients. SE = Standard Error. Bootstrap sample size = 5,000. Age = 21–30 years old (1), 31–40 years old (2), 41–50 years old (3), 51 and above (4); Gender = male (1), female (2); Education = bachelor's degree (1), master's degree (2), PhD (3); Tenure = less than 1 year (1), 1–3 years (2), 3–5 years (3), more than 5 years (4); Industry = manufacturing (1), telecom (2). *Interaction = Hybrid Workplace \times Workplace Anxiety. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05. Hybrid Workplace and Workplace Anxiety were mean centered prior to creating the interaction term.

Graph 1: Sample biological mapping

