

Virtual Communication in A Hybrid Workplace: Impact on Team Effectiveness

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Entered: October 03, 2025

Revised : October 29, 2025

Accepted : November 07, 2025

Published : November 28, 2025

ABSTRACT

Hybrid work arrangements have transformed communication and collaboration systems in organizations, particularly in Indonesia where digital transformation accelerated rapidly during the pandemic. Virtual communication has emerged as the main mechanism for coordinating tasks, sharing knowledge, and maintaining interdependence among geographically distributed team members. This study employed a systematic literature review approach to examine the role of virtual communication, digital leadership, and organizational culture in shaping team effectiveness within hybrid workplaces in Indonesia. Findings indicate that balanced synchronous-asynchronous communication, clarity of expectations, and psychological safety enhance collaborative performance, whereas communication overload and unequal digital readiness hinder productivity. Furthermore, leaders who adopt empathetic, coaching-based, and outcome-oriented approaches foster stronger engagement and trust in hybrid teams. Organizations that develop adaptive communication norms, invest in digital capability building, and implement equitable hybrid work policies tend to achieve higher team cohesion and performance. This study highlights the importance of integrating technological, human, and cultural dimensions to optimize hybrid work effectiveness in emerging economy contexts.

Keywords: *digital leadership, hybrid workplace, team effectiveness, virtual communication.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation and reshaped how organizations structure work and collaboration. The hybrid workplace, which combines remote work with in-office attendance, has transitioned from an emergency measure during the crisis into a sustainable post-pandemic model. In Indonesia, the Microsoft Work Trend Index (2023) shows that 74 percent of employees prefer hybrid work as a long-term system, and 51 percent of companies have formalized hybrid arrangements as part of workforce transformation. This shift indicates that effective collaboration in the modern era



no longer depends solely on physical proximity but on the ability of organizations to facilitate seamless communication among geographically dispersed team members.

Virtual communication has become the central element determining team effectiveness in hybrid environments. Digital platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack now mediate most work interactions and decision-making processes (Deloitte, 2023). Although the technology provides flexibility, research also warns that poorly designed virtual communication can create misunderstandings, blur role clarity, and weaken trust among team members. PwC Indonesia (2022) emphasises that the use of communication platforms in Indonesian organizations has risen by 320 percent since 2020, yet many teams still struggle with interaction overload and inconsistent coordination. Meanwhile, Kim and Park (2022) found that digital communication barriers may decrease team effectiveness by up to 27 percent when not supported by appropriate strategies. These trends show that structured communication is indispensable for successful hybrid collaboration.

Hybrid work requires thoughtful orchestration of synchronous and asynchronous communication. Virtual meetings provide immediacy and support interpersonal connection, while emails and project-management applications enable flexible coordination. Maruping et al. (2021) highlight that each mode plays a different function in work processes and should complement one another. Gibbs et al. (2021) further confirm that hybrid teams that successfully balance synchronous and asynchronous communication achieve higher collaborative performance than those relying on a single approach. In Indonesia, Anwar and Nugroho (2023) report that organizations that create clear digital communication systems and virtual collaboration guidelines experience a 31 percent increase in team effectiveness, especially in technology and higher education sectors. These findings reinforce the need for an integrated communication structure that enhances efficiency and accuracy of digital interaction in hybrid work ecosystems.

The quality of interpersonal relationships and trust is another defining factor in determining virtual collaboration success. Trust is a fundamental foundation for teamwork, and building trust becomes more complex when members work from different locations with limited face-to-face interaction. Mortensen and Haas (2022) explain that virtual teams require more structured interactions, higher communication frequency, and greater transparency to develop initial trust compared to in-person teams. In Indonesia, Raharjo (2023) finds that open communication practices, frequent feedback, and leader involvement in informal online discussions increase employee trust and engagement. This pattern shows that communication that is relational rather than merely informational is critical for strong hybrid collaboration.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping hybrid team effectiveness. Communicative, adaptive, and empathetic leadership has been shown to increase engagement and collaborative performance in remote and hybrid work settings (Dirani et al., 2020). Leaders in hybrid teams are expected to clarify

expectations, provide emotional support, and ensure shared understanding of goals across digital channels. Tang and Lee (2021) emphasize that collaborative leadership styles and emotional intelligence elevate employee motivation in virtual environments. In Indonesia, Prabowo and Hidayat (2022) report that leaders who cultivate open communication cultures and fair task distribution improve hybrid team effectiveness by 36 percent. These insights show that digital leadership requires strong interpersonal capacity in addition to technical capability.

Organizational culture also significantly influences virtual communication. A culture that supports flexibility, transparency, and innovation encourages proactive interaction and collaboration. Schein and Schein (2021) claim that adaptive cultures strengthen hybrid work transformation and digital collaboration. In the Indonesian context, organizational cultures that prioritise results-based assessment, autonomy, and technological support have proven effective in maintaining employee satisfaction and productivity during the hybrid transition (Wicaksono & Lestari, 2023). Conversely, cultures resistant to digital change create communication friction and decrease work performance. This indicates that hybrid work success is not only a technological shift but also a transformation of communication values within organizations.

Nonetheless, hybrid work in Indonesia still faces structural and cultural challenges. BPS (2023) acknowledges disparities in digital infrastructure between urban and rural areas, which hinder smooth virtual communication, particularly in public sector and educational institutions. In addition, Nabila and Sutanto (2022) report that some Indonesian organizations retain traditional hierarchical management that discourages autonomy and open communication, leading to workload misalignment and digital burnout. These barriers suggest that hybrid system optimization is not solely dependent on the availability of technology but also on digital literacy and cultural readiness.

Given the complexity of hybrid communication dynamics, a deeper conceptual understanding is needed to explain how communication, leadership, and culture interact to affect collaboration. International studies have discussed virtual teams, but important scientific gaps remain. Research by Gibbs et al. (2021) focuses on coordination in remote teams but does not address leadership and cultural challenges in developing countries. Dirani et al. (2020) examine leadership during the pandemic transition but do not review the long-term stabilization of hybrid work. Anwar and Nugroho (2023) explore hybrid collaboration in Indonesian technology firms yet do not examine the heterogeneity of practices across sectors. Based on this mapping, there is still limited academic evidence that comprehensively analyzes virtual communication strategies, leadership roles, and cultural factors simultaneously in the Indonesian hybrid workplace context.

For this reason, this study aims to analyse how virtual communication affects hybrid team collaboration effectiveness in Indonesian organizations by examining communication mechanisms, leadership styles, and organizational culture. The research offers scientific contribution by mapping how these three

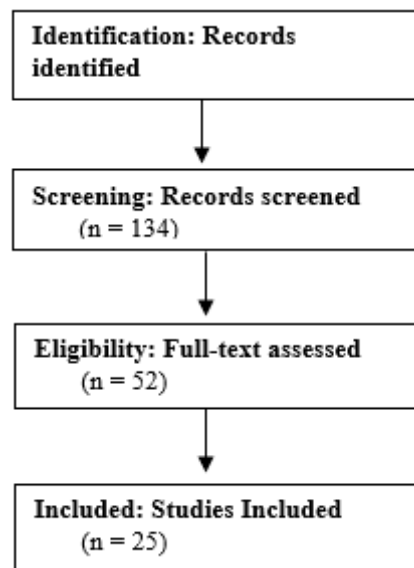
dimensions operate together to influence hybrid teamwork, reflecting collectivist cultural values, interpersonal relational dynamics, and digital adaptation patterns characteristic of Indonesian workplaces. The final goal is to provide a strategic framework and recommendations to support Indonesian organizations in building hybrid collaboration that is productive, cohesive, and sustainable in the long term.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify and synthesize scientific findings regarding the impact of virtual communication in hybrid work environments on team effectiveness in Indonesia. The use of SLR was considered relevant due to its ability to map research patterns, highlight knowledge gaps, and strengthen theoretical development through evidence-based analysis. Snyder (2019) emphasizes that SLR is suitable for structuring research trends, while Xiao and Watson (2019) note its increasing use in management and organizational behavior studies to examine emerging workplace transformations such as hybrid work and digital collaboration. With this methodological foundation, SLR was chosen to ensure that the conceptual conclusions generated are based on reputable scientific literature.

The data collection process involved systematic searches of articles published between 2015 and 2024 across Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar. Keyword combinations included hybrid workplace, virtual communication, team effectiveness, digital leadership, and hybrid work Indonesia. The screening stages were carried out through title, abstract, and full-text assessment, referring to inclusion criteria such as publication in peer-reviewed journals, relevance to virtual collaboration and leadership, and empirical or theoretical suitability for the Indonesian context. Meanwhile, conference papers, reports, and non-academic publications were excluded, following literature selection standards outlined by Kitchenham et al. (2020). The complete summary of database search results and selection criteria is presented in the Database and Search Results table and the Inclusion–Exclusion Criteria table.

A total of 25 relevant studies passed the eligibility screening and were included in the analysis, as listed in the List of Included Studies. The selected literature was analyzed using thematic coding to identify patterns related to synchronous–asynchronous communication, digital leadership, organizational culture, and collaboration outcomes in hybrid workplaces. Thematic analysis was chosen because it enables the identification of conceptual relationships within complex socio-organizational settings, as emphasized by Braun and Clarke (2021). The final synthesis was carried out narratively to generate a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of hybrid team effectiveness in the Indonesian context.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dynamics of Virtual Communication and Collaborative Processes in Hybrid Teams

The transformation of communication patterns in hybrid teams has changed the way members collaborate, share knowledge, and make decisions. Virtual communication is no longer a temporary alternative, but has become a permanent structure of modern organizations, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digitization of work systems in Indonesia. Communication in hybrid teams combines synchronous interactions, such as video meetings and conference calls, with asynchronous communication via email, instant messaging apps, and project management platforms. This communication model supports time efficiency, flexibility, and cross-location coordination, but it also poses challenges to message clarity, interpersonal relationships, and team goal alignment. Gibbs et al. (2021) found that teams capable of balancing both forms of communication are more adaptive and effective in digital work environments. In Indonesia, the adoption of integrated digital communication is increasing rapidly, especially in the education, technology, and finance sectors (Anwar & Nugroho, 2023), indicating that the hybrid model is not just a trend but a fundamental change in organizational structure.

The main strength of virtual communication lies in its ability to expand access to collaboration and accelerate knowledge transfer through digital platforms. Applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Slack, and WhatsApp for Business have become key tools in supporting cross-location interactions. A study by Marlow et al. (2022) shows that teams with strong technological skills and the ability to utilize digital collaboration features including document sharing, screen sharing, and shared whiteboards, perform better in complex task collaboration. In Indonesia, research by Wicaksono and Lestari (2023) reinforces these findings, concluding that the smoothness of digital adoption is directly

proportional to the effectiveness of collaboration, as long as organizations provide digital communication training and clear communication protocol guidelines. However, internet access and digital infrastructure gaps between regions still create barriers, especially for cross-regional hybrid teams, as shown by the BPS (2023) report on national connectivity disparities.

In addition to technological factors, clarity of communication is a critical component in determining the effectiveness of hybrid teams. Without structured communication, misinformation and multiple interpretations often arise due to the limitations of non-verbal cues in digital communication. Mortensen and Haas (2022) emphasize that message ambiguity is more common in virtual work, so team leaders need to emphasize explicit communication norms, such as clarity of context, responsibilities, timelines, and expectations for quality results. In Indonesia, research by Rachmawati et al. (2023) shows that hybrid teams with detailed communication guidelines including check-in schedules, role distribution, and main communication channels, successfully reduced role conflicts and increased team productivity by 29%. These findings confirm that virtual communication is not just a matter of medium, but an integrative system that requires strategic management.

However, excessive digital communication can also potentially hinder the effectiveness of collaboration. The phenomena of communication overload and Zoom fatigue are now real challenges in hybrid work environments. According to research by Wang et al. (2023), high-intensity online meetings result in decreased energy, reduced concentration, and decreased emotional engagement among team members. A similar situation occurs in Indonesia, where Kusumawardhani & Fahmi (2023) found that employees who attend more than five virtual meetings a day experience an 18% decline in productivity due to cognitive fatigue. To overcome this, organizations need to establish a meeting-light culture protocol, ensuring that virtual meetings are only held when necessary, and utilizing asynchronous communication for non-urgent discussions.

The quality of interpersonal relationships in hybrid teams is another important aspect. Trust, emotional openness, and a sense of togetherness are the foundations that support effective coordination and collaboration (Edmondson, 2019). However, these relationships are more difficult to build in a virtual space due to limited social interaction and spontaneity in informal conversations. Research by Kim & Park (2022) shows that virtual teams need more scheduled interactions and empathetic communication to build trust. In Indonesia, Raharjo (2023) found that hybrid teams that conducted virtual bonding activities, such as informal chat rooms, virtual games, or weekly reflection sessions experienced a 22% increase in trust levels among team members. This underscores the importance of non-formal interpersonal interactions in supporting collaborative dynamics.

In addition, psychological safety is an important factor in determining the effectiveness of virtual communication. When team members feel safe to speak without fear of criticism or penalty, creativity and innovation increase

significantly (Edmondson, 2019). In Indonesia, the collectivist work culture is both an advantage and a challenge. A culture of mutual respect strengthens team loyalty, but a strong hierarchical structure can lead to “silence out of respect” or power distance, reducing the courage to express opinions (Nabila & Sutanto, 2022). Therefore, digital communication strategies in hybrid teams need to accommodate cultural flexibility and encourage participatory and egalitarian communication models.

Managing knowledge sharing in hybrid teams is also a challenge. The following table summarizes key strategies for effective virtual collaboration:

Dimension	Description	Organizational Implication	Source
Clarity of Communication	Clear roles, tasks, timelines	Reduces ambiguity, avoids conflict	Mortensen & Haas (2022)
Synchronous & Asynchronous Balance	Use of mixed communication channels	Improves efficiency and reduces overload	Maruping et al. (2021)
Psychological Safety	Safe space for expression	Enhances creativity & engagement	Edmondson (2019)
Digital Literacy	Skills to utilize digital platforms	Boosts collaboration & speed	Wicaksono & Lestari (2023)

Overall, the dynamics of virtual communication in hybrid teams in Indonesia require the integration of clear communication strategies, a culture of mutual trust, and the ability to adapt to technology. When these elements are fulfilled, team effectiveness increases significantly; otherwise, collaboration becomes prone to fragmentation and miscommunication.

Leadership Approaches for High-Performance Hybrid Teams

Leadership plays a central role in determining the effectiveness of virtual communication and hybrid team collaboration. Traditional leadership that emphasizes physical control and direct supervision is no longer relevant in a hybrid work context. Instead, trust-based leadership, transparent communication, emotional support, and team member empowerment have become the new paradigm in managing hybrid teams (Dirani et al., 2020). Leaders need to adopt adaptive leadership and servant leadership styles, as well as master digital leadership competence to ensure that all team members feel supported even though they are working in a virtual space.

In the Indonesian context, leaders face unique challenges due to the national work culture, which still tends to be hierarchical and instruction-intensive. Research by Nugraha & Herlina (2023) shows that leaders in hybrid organizations who take a coaching approach which is guiding rather than controlling, achieve 33% higher employee engagement than leaders who maintain an instructional approach.

Leaders who are able to facilitate reflective conversations, provide feedback loops, and open up space for participation in decision-making create a more inclusive work environment. Conversely, authoritarian leadership styles increase psychological distance and weaken the emotional attachment of hybrid teams. Furthermore, the leader's ability to create a shared vision and set clear goals is essential to keep all team members focused.

Research by Tang & Lee (2021) reveals that clarity of work direction increases the focus and accountability of virtual teams. In Indonesia, Prabowo & Hidayat (2022) state that effective hybrid leaders set outcome-based performance indicators rather than work methods or work locations, thereby giving employees autonomy while maintaining performance. This approach is in line with the concept of a results-driven culture, which is increasingly important in digital transformation. In addition to communication strategy, leaders' emotional intelligence plays an important role in creating positive interpersonal relationships in virtual spaces. Leaders who are empathetic and able to read the emotional dynamics of their teams digitally are more effective at maintaining employee motivation and engagement (Tang & Lee, 2021). Research by Dirani et al. (2020) shows that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of leadership success in virtual teams. In the Indonesian context, Raharjo (2023) found that leaders who actively check on the emotional state of their employees and provide digital mental health support are successful in reducing the burnout rate of hybrid teams.

Leaders must also build a communication structure that supports transparency and psychological safety. Mortensen & Haas (2022) state that regular team meetings, one-on-one sessions, and periodic updates increase team ownership. However, a balance is needed: too many meetings cause Zoom fatigue, while too little interaction leads to feelings of alienation. Therefore, leaders need to proportionally regulate the monthly cadence of formal and informal communication, as recommended by Wang et al. (2023).

In addition, hybrid leaders need to apply the principle of digital collaboration governance, which are guidelines that regulate the use of communication channels, response standards, documentation protocols, and interaction schedules. Research by Anwar & Nugroho (2023) emphasizes that Indonesian organizations that implement communication governance frameworks experience a 31% increase in team coordination. A communication governance framework is necessary to create operational clarity and avoid conflicts of expectation in the digital space.

The following table summarizes key leadership competencies:

Table 2. Key Digital Leadership Competencies in Hybrid Teams

Leadership Dimension	Description	Key Impact	Source
Empathetic Communication	Emotional awareness & active listening	Improves motivation and team trust	Dirani et al. (2020)
Coaching-Based Approach	Supporting growth instead of controlling	Enhances engagement & autonomy	Nugraha & Herlina (2023)

Oitcome-Based Management	Focus on results, not physical supervision	Improves flexibility & accountability	Prabowo & Hidayat (2022)
Digital Collaboration Governance	Clear norms for digital teamwork	Reduces misalignment & conflict	Anwar & Nugroho (2023)

Hybrid leaders also act as facilitators of a collaborative culture. Building a culture of openness, two-way feedback, and recognition of contributions is a prerequisite for a successful hybrid team. An appreciative culture enhances the sense of belonging, which is very important in the context of remote work (Edmondson, 2019). In Indonesia, organizations that provide space for public appreciation in virtual meetings and collaborative channels have seen an increase in team morale (Wicaksono & Lestari, 2023). Thus, leadership in hybrid teams requires the integration of technical skills, interpersonal empathy, and a strategic vision for digital transformation.

Digital Work Culture, Hybrid Work Policies, and Team Effectiveness in Indonesia

Organizational culture and hybrid work policies play a central role in facilitating virtual communication and team effectiveness in Indonesia. A work culture that supports digital collaboration, information sharing, and flexibility will create a psychological climate conducive to hybrid teams. Schein & Schein (2021) emphasize that adaptive culture influences the success of structural change implementation. In the Indonesian context, organizations that emphasize the values of togetherness (collective orientation) and mutual cooperation have the potential to build stronger virtual team cohesion, provided that the culture does not hinder openness and critical feedback.

However, hierarchical cultures and a strong preference for face-to-face interaction can hinder digital adaptation if not managed with the right cultural transformation strategy (Nabila & Sutanto, 2022). Hybrid work policies in Indonesia are maturing as remote-eligible practices continue in various sectors.

Organizations are now developing hybrid work guidelines, including in-office days schedules, work location flexibility, and output-based targets. Rachmawati et al. (2023) note that companies that implement core hours, virtual meeting guidelines, and digital informal communication spaces experience a 30% increase in job satisfaction and a 27% increase in collaboration effectiveness. These policies provide a structure that helps employees avoid role ambiguity, manage work-life balance, and understand organizational expectations.

However, hybrid work also presents the risk of digital exclusion. Employees who work remotely more often may feel that they have less access to information and career development than those who are physically present more often. This phenomenon is known as proximity bias. Wang et al. (2023) found that hybrid employees who rarely come to the office are 2.1 times more likely to feel marginalized. In Indonesia, a study by the Telkom Research Institute (2023) found a tendency for leaders to promote employees who are more physically

present. To overcome this, organizations need to implement performance-based career evaluation policies and visibility protocols in digital channels.

Another challenge is maintaining team cohesion in a hybrid environment. Strong team cohesion has been shown to increase productivity, problem-solving speed, and employee retention rates (Henderson et al., 2021). In Indonesia, companies are starting trends such as weekly virtual huddles, team recognition sessions, and digital team retreats to strengthen team bonding (Kusumawardhani & Fahmi, 2023). This approach builds a sense of togetherness that prevents social fragmentation and isolation.

Furthermore, digital literacy is an important indicator of hybrid organizational readiness.

Wicaksono & Lestari (2023) show that digital training and hybrid onboarding increase the speed of adaptation for new employees. Given that the Indonesian labor market still shows uneven digital capabilities, companies need to develop scalable digital upskilling programs. Technology without competence will result in productivity gaps between individuals. Mental health is another vital area in the hybrid model.

Digital burnout, virtual social fatigue, and emotional isolation are global phenomena (Guggenheim et al., 2022). In Indonesia, Raharjo (2023) found that digital wellness programs such as no-meeting Fridays, focus hours, and online counseling effectively reduce stress in hybrid teams. Mental health is not only a personal issue but also a source of organizational productivity sustainability.

Overall, the effectiveness of hybrid teams in Indonesia depends on the alignment of organizational structure, digital leadership, adaptive work policies, and a culture of open communication. Successful hybrid models combine technology, flexibility, and a culture of interpersonal support. This transformation requires strategic investment in digital governance, human resource development, employee welfare, and a results-based performance evaluation system not location.

The conceptual framework of this study positions digital work culture and hybrid work policies as the primary drivers of team effectiveness in Indonesian hybrid organizations. A culture that supports digital collaboration, openness, and flexibility is expected to strengthen virtual communication and create a psychological climate that enables hybrid teams to function more cohesively. Schein and Schein (2021) state that adaptive organizational culture provides a foundation for successful structural change, while in Indonesia the values of collective orientation and cooperation can enhance cohesion as long as they do not suppress openness or constructive feedback. Conversely, hierarchical cultures and strong dependence on face-to-face interaction may inhibit digital adaptation if not supported by cultural transformation (Nabila & Sutanto, 2022).

Hybrid work policies reinforce the cultural dimension by providing structural clarity regarding work schedules, flexibility, and output-based expectations. Rachmawati et al. (2023) show that policies such as core hours, meeting guidelines, and informal virtual interaction spaces increase job satisfaction and collaboration effectiveness. However, proximity bias remains a

risk, as employees with lower physical attendance may feel marginalized. Wang et al. (2023) and the Telkom Research Institute (2023) highlight that organizations in hybrid settings often promote employees who are more physically present, indicating the need for performance-based career evaluation and digital visibility protocols.

In this model, digital work culture and hybrid work policies interact to shape team outcomes by influencing communication quality, cohesion, and the psychological experience of employees. Strong cohesion increases productivity and retention (Henderson et al., 2021), while digital onboarding and upskilling support readiness for hybrid collaboration (Wicaksono & Lestari, 2023). At the same time, mental health must be safeguarded to prevent burnout and virtual fatigue, which digital wellness initiatives have been shown to alleviate (Guggenheim et al., 2022; Raharjo, 2023). Ultimately, team effectiveness emerges when cultural, structural, and relational elements align to create an environment where technology, flexibility, and interpersonal support coexist rather than compete.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that team effectiveness in hybrid work environments in Indonesia is primarily shaped by how virtual communication is facilitated, led, and institutionalized within organizations. Effective hybrid collaboration depends on the balance between synchronous and asynchronous communication, clarity of work expectations, and structured communication system design. Psychological safety, digital literacy, and the sustainability of interpersonal relationships significantly reinforce the success of digital interactions. The findings highlight that technology alone is insufficient; the hybrid work model relies on the integration of communication quality, leadership, and organizational culture within the Indonesian socio-organizational context.

The practical implications of these findings emphasize the need for organizations to develop systematic virtual communication guidelines and ensure fairness in hybrid work arrangements. Investment in digital literacy programs, mental health support, and digital leadership development is crucial for maintaining employee well-being and performance. Outcome-based evaluation systems should be consistently implemented to reduce proximity bias and provide equal career opportunities for both remote and in-office workers. Organizations that align hybrid work policies with openness, collaboration, and flexibility are more likely to achieve high levels of motivation, engagement, and cohesion among team members.

Future studies are encouraged to examine sector-specific, demographic, and regional variations in hybrid work outcomes across Indonesia to enrich contextual understanding beyond the general organizational landscape. Further research may also explore longitudinal effects of hybrid communication on productivity, innovation, and employee well-being, particularly in relation to evolving digital tools and generational differences in the workforce. In addition,

cross-cultural comparisons between Indonesia and countries with different cultural orientations would be valuable to determine which elements of hybrid collaboration are universally applicable and which are context-bound, thereby contributing to the refinement of hybrid work theory and practice.

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