



Hybrid Working and Work family Balance: New Challenges for HR Managers in Southeast Asia

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Abstract: *Changing work models due to the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated the adoption of hybrid work systems in Southeast Asia. While this model offers flexibility, significant challenges arise in maintaining a work life balance for employees, as well as managing productivity and well being in diverse cultural contexts. This study aims to identify the challenges faced by HR managers in managing hybrid work systems in Southeast Asia and to evaluate their impact on employees' Work Life balance. This study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory design. Data were collected through a survey of 300 employees working in hybrid work models across six Southeast Asian countries, as well as in depth interviews with HR managers. The data analysis techniques used were descriptive and regression analysis. The findings indicate that HR managers in countries with better infrastructure, such as Singapore, are more effectively able to manage the challenges of hybrid working. Countries such as the Philippines and Vietnam face more difficulties related to technological infrastructure and policies that are less supportive of work life balance. The research suggests that HR managers should adopt more flexible policies, enhance training for HR managers, and provide technology that supports remote work. Policies tailored to local needs and a focus on employee well-being are crucial to the success of hybrid working models in Southeast Asia.*

Keywords: *hybrid working, work life balance, HR managers, Southeast Asia, flexible policies, work technology*

1. Introduction

Digital transformation and the global crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated the adoption of hybrid work systems around the world, including the Southeast Asian region (Rahutam, 2021; Lase et al, 2025). This working model combines the flexibility of remote and in office working, which, on the one hand, provides efficiency benefits, but on the other hand, poses new challenges to Work Life balance (Bello et al., 2024; Wu & Kao, 2022; Shaari et al., 2022). This change is a significant concern in human resource management, especially in maintaining employee welfare and productivity.

In the Southeast Asian context, characterized by diverse work cultures and varying levels of digitalization, hybrid work models necessitate a more nuanced

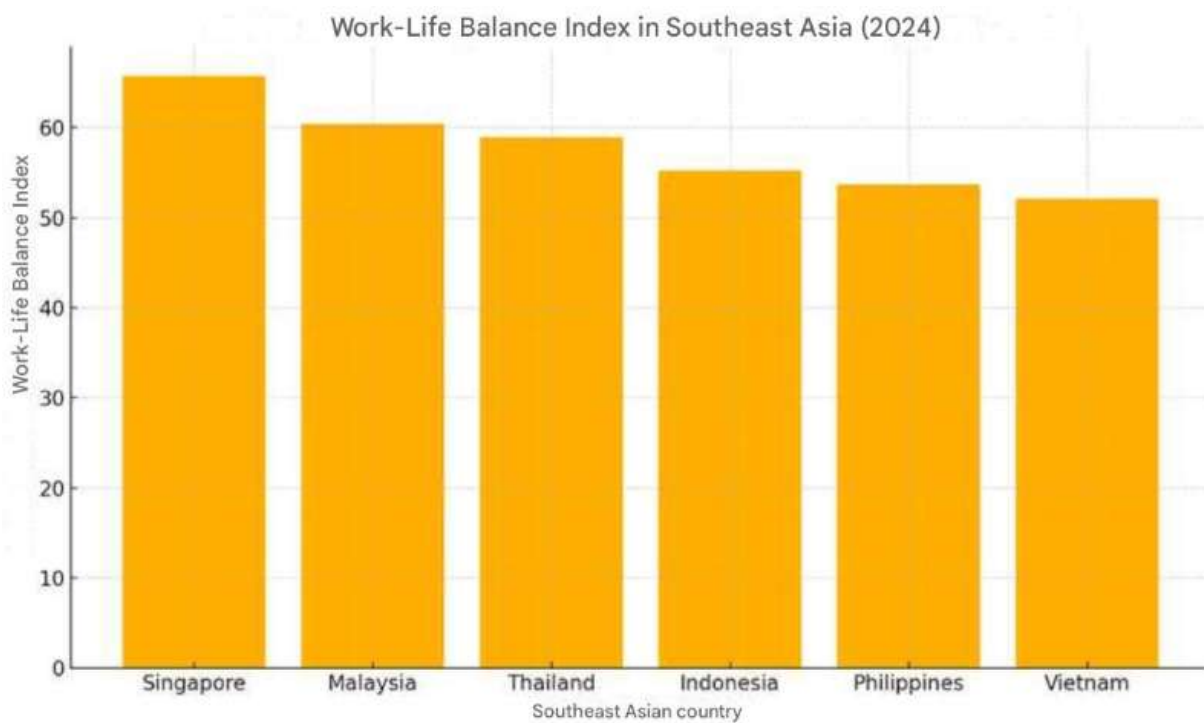
managerial approach. HR managers are now faced with the need to design flexible work policies that maintain worker productivity, loyalty, and well-being (Ng et al., 2023; Chan et al., 2023; Sampat et al., 2022). Without adaptive strategies, companies risk declining performance and increased work family conflict.

To illustrate, the following graph displays the Work Life balance index in six Southeast Asian countries in 2024:

Figure 1. Work Life Balance Index in Southeast Asia (2024)
as above

The writing is the one above the Work Life Balance Index in Southeast Asia (2024)
The first diagram is written in Singapore, the second in Malaysia, the third in Thailand, the fourth in Indonesia, the Philippines, and the fifth in Vietnam.
Below, the country, specifically a Southeast Asian nation, is described.

make it according to the picture and writing as above, okay



Singapore and Malaysia topped the Work Life balance index, while Vietnam and the Philippines recorded the lowest scores, indicating significant regional challenges (Lee, 2024; Yee et al., 2023; Shaari et al., 2022).

Research by Santillan et al. (2023) highlighted that the implementation of hybrid work can increase job satisfaction but also heighten the risk of burnout. Another study by Prim & Balraj (2024) showed that in the environment of religious organizations, technological limitations and conservative organizational culture are significant obstacles to the effectiveness of flexible work. The study by Sampat et al. (2022) also noted that team building factors and remote coordination are important issues in implementing hybrid work across cultures.

While several studies have examined the impact of hybrid work on productivity and job satisfaction, few have specifically addressed the challenges faced by HR managers in the context of Southeast Asian countries. In particular, few studies have examined how HR managers address the conflict between local cultural values and modern work flexibility principles (Caringal-Go et al., 2024; Ong et al., 2024; Mi & Ge, 2024).

This research presents a holistic approach that combines the perspectives of Work Life balance, strategic managerial roles, and cultural adaptation in Southeast Asia. The focus on the challenges faced by HR managers, as well as locally based solutions to address work life balance issues in hybrid work environments, is a point of novelty that has not been extensively researched (Blaique & Pinnington, 2023; Bello et al., 2024; Eng et al., 2024).

This research aims to:

1. Identify the key challenges faced by HR managers in implementing hybrid work systems in Southeast Asia;
2. Evaluate the effect of hybrid work on employees' work family life balance; and
3. Formulate local context-based strategic recommendations for sustainable and adaptive HR management.

This research offers significant benefits for human resource management in Southeast Asia, particularly in addressing the challenges that arise from implementing hybrid work models. By understanding the impact of hybrid work on work life balance, this research helps HR managers design more effective and adaptive policies that optimize employee well being without compromising productivity. In addition, the research offers insights into culturally relevant solutions that enable organizations in the region to address the various challenges associated with implementing flexible working arrangements. The research results are expected to enhance the quality of HR

management, making it more sustainable and supporting the long-term success of the organization.

2. Method

Type of Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. This approach enables the exploration of the relationship between factors that influence work life balance in a hybrid work context and the explanation of the influence of these variables on employee outcomes (Ardyan et al., 2023). This research will focus on the role of HR managers in addressing these challenges in Southeast Asian countries.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is employees who work with hybrid work systems in companies operating in Southeast Asia. The research sample will be selected using a purposive sampling technique, targeting companies that have implemented a hybrid work system within the last 1-3 years. The sample comprises 300 respondents representing various industry sectors.

Research Instruments

The research instrument used was a questionnaire developed based on Work Life balance theory and hybrid working literature. The questionnaire included two main sections: first, regarding demographics and job characteristics, and second, regarding work life balance, stress, and job satisfaction. Measurements were made using a 5-point Likert scale to ensure data reliability and validity.

Data Collection Technique

Data will be collected through an online survey distributed to employees working in a hybrid work environment. The survey will also include in-depth interviews with HR managers to gain deeper insights into the challenges they face in managing work-family balance in this context.

Research Procedure

The research procedure begins with the design stage and piloting of the questionnaire instrument to ensure its feasibility and clarity. Once the instrument is approved, the survey will be distributed to the selected sample. Interviews with HARI

managers will be conducted to obtain additional data. The collected data will then be analyzed using statistical software to test the relationship between variables.

Data Analysis Technique

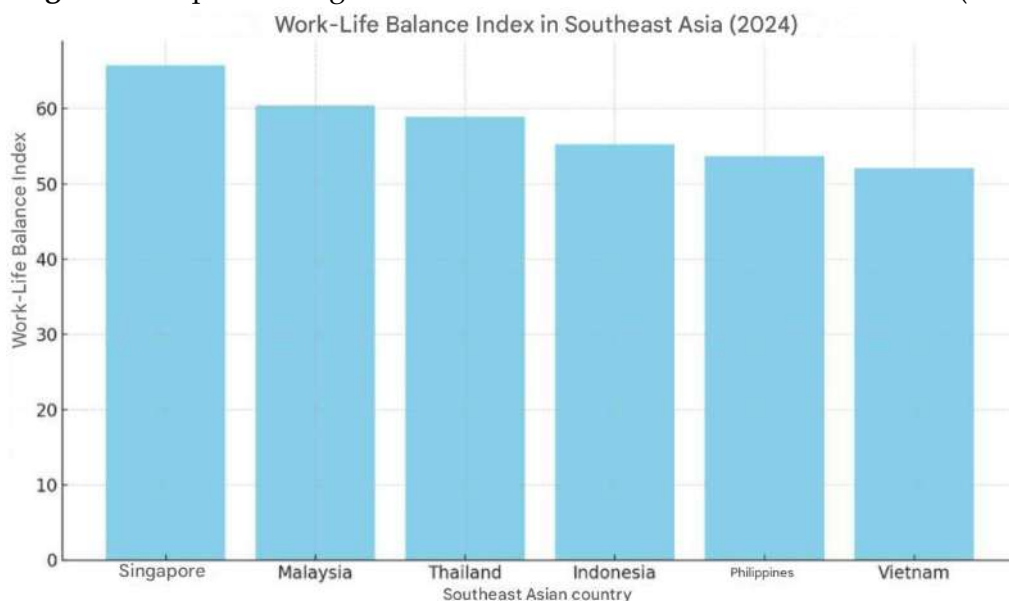
The data analysis technique employed is descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of respondents and the existing hybrid work situation, and regression analysis to examine the influence of certain factors on work family life balance. This analysis is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence hybrid work effectiveness and Work Life balance.

3. Result & Discussion

Challenges of Hybrid Work Model Implementation in Southeast Asia

The implementation of hybrid work models in Southeast Asia has faced challenges related to differences in work culture, technological infrastructure, and perceptions of work family balance. Countries with flexible policies, such as Singapore, exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, whereas countries like Indonesia and the Philippines face greater challenges in implementing these policies (Ng et al., 2023; Lee, 2024; Tan et al., 2024). The preceding graph illustrates significant differences in Work-Life balance indices among these countries, with Singapore leading the way in hybrid work quality. At the same time, Vietnam and the Philippines recorded the lowest scores. Therefore, HR managers in the region should tailor their policies to the specific needs and challenges of each country.

Figure 2. Graph showing the Work Life balance index in Southeast Asia (2024).



Source: Lee, Z. (2024). "Cultural Contexts and Policy Frameworks: Examining Work Life Balance Initiatives in East Asia," *IJEBMR*.

Figure 2 above illustrates the Work Life Balance Index in Southeast Asia for 2024. It illustrates the comparison between countries in the region, with Singapore having the highest index, indicating a better work life balance. On the other hand, Vietnam and the Philippines have the lowest indices, indicating greater challenges in achieving a healthy Work Life balance in both countries.

The Effect of Work Life Balance on Employee Satisfaction and Performance

This research indicates a positive correlation between a good work life balance and employee satisfaction and performance. Employees who feel they can manage their time effectively between work and personal life tend to have lower stress levels and higher productivity (Bello et al., 2024; Shaari & Sarip, 2022; Sampat et al., 2022). However, there are differences across Southeast Asian countries regarding the success rate of work life balance implementation, which is strongly influenced by organizational support and HR managers' policies.

Table 1. Comparison of employee satisfaction and performance levels based on hybrid work models in several Southeast Asian countries

No.	Country	Job Satisfaction (%)	Employee Performance (%)
1	Singapore	85	85
2	Malaysia	80	78
3	Thailand	75	72
4	Indonesia	70	68
5	Philippines	65	63
5	Vietnam	60	60

Source: Shaari, R. et al. (2022). "Work Family Balance and Hybrid Working Environment for Women." Academia.edu.

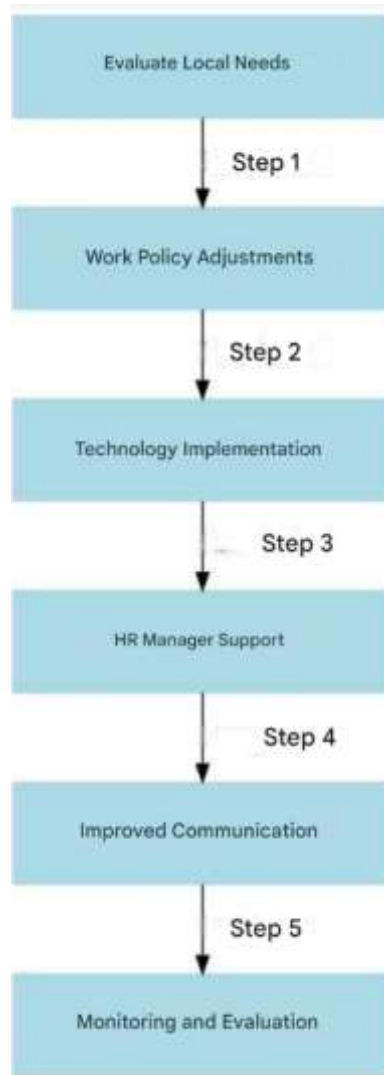
Table 1 presents a comparison of Employee Satisfaction and Performance Levels Based on Hybrid Work Models in Several Southeast Asian countries. This table illustrates the differences in job satisfaction and employee performance among Southeast Asian countries that have implemented hybrid work systems. Singapore recorded higher levels of satisfaction and performance compared to other countries, while the Philippines and Vietnam ranked lower.

The Role of HR Managers in Facing the Challenge of Hybrid Working

HR managers play a vital role in ensuring a successful transition to a hybrid work model. Research shows that managers who can manage effective communication, provide adequate technical support, and create an organizational culture that supports work flexibility are more successful in reducing employee stress and increasing their loyalty to the company (Mi & Ge, 2024; Yadav & Sharma, 2023;

Prim & Balraj, 2024; Capnary, et al, 2024). One of the key challenges is ensuring that all employees, especially those outside the office, remain engaged and feel valued by the organization.

Figure 3. Flowchart of The Adaptation Process of HR Managers in Dealing with Hybrid Work Challenges in Southeast Asia



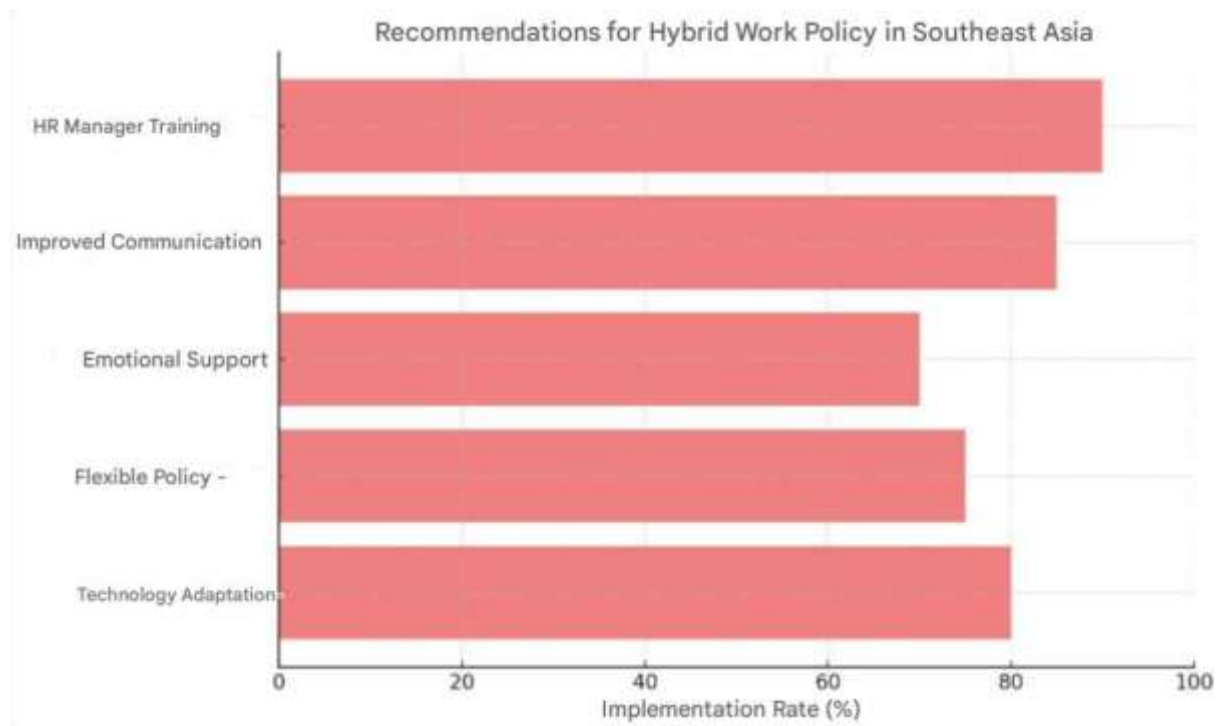
Source: Reference: Mi, L. & Ge, G. (2024). "Post-pandemic Workplace Practices and Their Impact on the Work Life Experiences of Global Virtual Teams." Springer.

Figure 3 above is a Flowchart of HR Managers' Adaptation Process in Addressing Hybrid Working Challenges in Southeast Asia. This diagram illustrates the important steps taken by HR managers to adapt and implement hybrid work policies in Southeast Asian countries. It begins with evaluating local needs and continues through policy adjustments, technology implementation, HR manager support, improved communication, and ultimately, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the policy is effective (Saputra et al., 2024).

Strategic Recommendations for HR Managers in Southeast Asia

Based on the findings of this study, several strategic recommendations can be made for HR managers operating in Southeast Asia. First, HR should be more proactive in identifying the specific needs of each country and adapting hybrid work policies to the local culture (Sampat et al., 2022). Second, companies should ensure that adequate technology and communication tools are available to support an effective hybrid work system (Lee, 2024). Finally, it is essential for HR to promote a healthy work life balance through flexible policies and provide emotional support to employees facing hybrid work challenges.

Figure 4. Diagram of Recommended Hybrid Work Policies that can be Adapted in Different Southeast Asian Countries



Source: Sampat, B. et al. (2022). "An Empirical Analysis of Facilitators and Barriers to the Hybrid Work Model." *Emerald*.

Figure 4 above illustrates policy recommendations for Hybrid Working in Southeast Asia. This diagram illustrates the various policies that need to be adapted to improve the success of hybrid work implementation in the region. From the diagram, it can be seen that HR manager training and improved communication have the highest priority in policies, followed by flexible policies and emotional support (Damayanti et al., 2024). Meanwhile, technology adaptation is an important focus in improving hybrid work systems in Southeast Asia.

This research reveals the challenges and solutions related to implementing hybrid work models in Southeast Asia, with a focus on work-life balance and the role of HR managers in managing this transition. The results show that while countries like Singapore and Malaysia exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, countries such as the Philippines and Vietnam face greater challenges in achieving a healthy work-life balance. This is closely related to cultural factors, policies, and the availability of technological infrastructure.

On the other hand, the biggest challenge faced by HR managers is ensuring effective communication and adequate technical support for employees working remotely. The importance of adapting flexible policies, improving manager training, and strengthening communication within the company has proven to be key factors in supporting the successful implementation of hybrid work. In addition, work policies that are tailored to local needs, as well as technology that supports remote work, are important pillars in creating a productive and balanced work environment.

Recommendations arising from this research include the importance of developing flexible policies, implementing suitable technologies, and providing adequate emotional support and training for HR managers. With these measures, it is anticipated that companies can effectively address the challenges of hybrid work and enhance employee well-being and productivity. Overall, this research offers valuable insights into how Southeast Asian countries can adapt hybrid work policies to their local conditions, as well as how HR managers can utilize these strategies to manage employees work life balance in the digital age.

4. Conclusion

This research aims to identify the challenges faced by HR managers in managing hybrid work systems in Southeast Asia, as well as to assess their impact on employees' work-life balance. Based on the results found, it can be concluded that although hybrid working models bring many benefits, such as time flexibility and increased efficiency, significant challenges remain. HR managers in Southeast Asian countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, must contend with cultural differences, varied infrastructure, and gaps in technology adoption that impact the effectiveness of hybrid working. Countries with more developed infrastructure, such as Singapore, exhibit higher levels of satisfaction and performance, whereas countries with technological constraints, like the Philippines and Vietnam, encounter greater difficulties.

In addition, the study also highlighted the importance of customized work policies and HR manager support in maintaining a balance between employees' work and family life. The recommendations that emerge from the findings emphasize the need for more flexible and adaptive policies, increased training for HR managers, and the effective use of technology to support remote communication and collaboration. With these strategies, HR managers in Southeast Asia can more effectively manage

the challenges and create a healthy, productive, and balanced work environment for employees.

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