

Hybrid work in the public sector: practical insights on organizational support

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Abstract

Purpose – This study explores how Indonesia’s State Civil Apparatus (ASN) interprets and constructs the meaning of hybrid work, emphasizing its symbolic, intersubjective and contextual dimensions rather than focusing solely on productivity or policy outcomes.

Design/methodology/approach – Guided by Schutz’s social phenomenology and enriched with the perceived organizational support framework and the job demands–resources model, this qualitative research involved ten ASN across multiple government institutions. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation and document analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted using ATLAS.ti to reveal both phenomenological depth and interpretive patterns.

Findings – The study identified four interrelated themes: (1) perceptions of flexibility and autonomy in hybrid arrangements, (2) dissonance between symbolic and material forms of organizational support, (3) the erosion of work–life boundaries and (4) challenges in coordination across bureaucratic levels. Organizational support is not merely understood as formal policy but is socially constructed through shared meanings, institutional rhythms and expectations.

Originality/value – This study offers a novel reframing of hybrid work as a socially embedded experience in the public sector. It contributes theoretical insight by repositioning support and well-being as co-constructed meanings. Practically, the study guides the design of hybrid work policies that align structural provisions with the lived realities of civil servants.

Keywords Hybrid work, Organizational support, Social phenomenology, Public sector, Well-being

Paper type Research article

Introduction

The global employment landscape has undergone a profound transformation due to the rapid advancement of digital technologies, evolving workforce preferences and the accelerated shift toward flexible work arrangements prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Molléri and Mohagheghi, 2024; Champagne *et al.*, 2023; OECD, 2021; Solopi, 2023). Among the most consequential developments is the widespread adoption of hybrid work models across both private and public sectors (Agbeko *et al.*, 2021). A global survey by Owl Labs (2023) reports that 81% of employees prefer hybrid or fully remote work, while a study by Logitech (2023) notes that 62% of office workers favor hybrid arrangements due to reduced transportation costs (77%), lower commuting-related stress (70%) and greater scheduling flexibility (66%). These findings emphasize the potential of hybrid work to enhance employee well-being through increased autonomy and mobility.

In the Indonesian public sector, hybrid work has been formally recognized as a strategic component of bureaucratic reform, aimed at enhancing the efficiency and responsiveness of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) (Nugraha, 2024). This recognition aligns with broader international perspectives that link hybrid work to improved public service performance and



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adaptability (Kearney and Harrington, 2025; Siddika, 2022, 2023). The Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform institutionalized this shift through Circular Letter Number 24 of 2021, which provides operational guidelines for hybrid systems during and beyond the pandemic. Supporting this policy, the State Civil Service Agency in 2022 reported that 95.7% of civil servants believe that hybrid work can enhance flexibility and service outcomes.

Despite this promising outlook, the implementation of hybrid work in the public sector remains fraught with structural and experiential challenges (Capone, 2024). In Indonesia, policy instruments aim to institutionalize hybrid work, yet gaps in cross-unit coordination, increasing digital workloads, unclear performance evaluation and unequal technological access persist, potentially undermining employee well-being due to insufficient organizational support (Nugraha, 2024; Tasrin et al., 2021). In comparison, Singapore's public service has implemented more structured hybrid protocols and performance coordination mechanisms, providing a relevant benchmark for this analysis (Bailey and Kurland, 2002). While research in Indonesia has examined causal links between hybrid work, productivity and psychological outcomes (Dara et al., 2025), these studies often overlook the subjective experiences through which civil servants interpret flexibility, support and role expectations within their organizational contexts (Hanzis and Hallo, 2024). A phenomenological approach is therefore appropriate to capture these meaning-making processes, which remain less visible in causal-analytic models.

To address this critical gap, the present study adopts an interpretive qualitative framework grounded in Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology. Schutz offers a lens to examine how civil servants construct meaning around hybrid work by focusing on intersubjective processes, typifications and symbolic representations. This phenomenological approach enables the investigation of how civil servants interpret institutional support, negotiate temporal and spatial boundaries and navigate coordination practices not only as functional elements but also as socially embedded experiences.

This study contributes to the literature in three distinct ways. First, it extends the perceived organizational support (POS) theory (Prysmakova and Lallatin, 2021) by examining how symbolic and material support are differentially interpreted within hybrid bureaucratic settings. Second, it complements the job demands–resources (JD–R) model by incorporating phenomenological insights into how job demands and resources are experienced subjectively in real time. Third, it provides empirical evidence from Indonesia, a context underrepresented in the literature, on how civil servants make sense of hybrid work. In doing so, this study bridges theoretical and practical perspectives, offering grounded recommendations for designing hybrid work systems that are not only structurally sound but also symbolically meaningful and culturally responsive.

Literature review

Hybrid work in the public sector context

Hybrid work has emerged as both a structural and cultural response by organizations to the accelerated development of digital technologies and the evolving socio-professional landscape in the post-pandemic era (Molléri and Mohagheghi, 2024; OECD, 2021; Solopi, 2023). While such arrangements offer greater flexibility, they also introduce specific challenges for civil servants, including increased digital workloads, coordination difficulties, ambiguous performance evaluation criteria and reduced opportunities for in-person interaction (Asada et al., 2023; Tasrin et al., 2021). Within the Indonesian bureaucratic context, which continues to rely heavily on traditional work patterns, these challenges underscore the urgent need for organizational frameworks that are both adaptive and empathetic (Buick et al., 2022, 2024).

Perceived organizational support (POS)

POS refers to the extent to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, both emotionally and instrumentally (Al Riyami *et al.*, 2024). Empirical studies indicate that robust organizational support, manifested through clear communication, equitable access to resources, recognition of employee contributions and work–life balance policies, plays a vital role in reducing the risk of employee exhaustion and strengthening both commitment and productivity among civil servants (Alzadjali and Ahmad, 2024; Sinnaiah *et al.*, 2023; Kröll *et al.*, 2021).

Job demands–resources (JD–R) model

The JD–R model by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) provides a valuable framework for understanding how the balance between job demands and available resources affects employee motivation, stress levels and overall psychological well-being (Al Riyami *et al.*, 2024; Chowhan and Pike, 2023). Within the hybrid work environment, an imbalance, particularly where high digital demands are met with insufficient organizational support, can result in overwork, decreased job satisfaction and eventual burnout (Dara *et al.*, 2025; Barber, 2019). For civil servants, these challenges often extend beyond routine administrative burdens to encompass emotional and relational strains tied to performance expectations and the complexities of hybrid bureaucracy.

Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology

While quantitative frameworks help identify structural patterns, they often overlook the lived experiences of civil servants. Schutz's social phenomenology offers a valuable lens for interpreting how individuals construct meaning from hybrid work (Sundari *et al.*, 2024). Schutz differentiates between the sphere of pure perception, unfiltered experiences such as handling digital tasks or flexible schedules and the sphere of pure symbols, where meaning is shaped through social interactions, organizational norms and workplace culture (Parkin *et al.*, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2022). This perspective aligns with recent scholarship emphasizing the importance of lived subjective experience in navigating hybrid environments, where meaning-making processes are shaped not only by structural conditions but also by the evolving interplay between individual agency and organizational contexts (Bancou, 2024).

In this view, civil servants' understanding of hybrid work is embedded in their social lifeworlds, encompassing institutional structures, interpersonal dynamics and symbolic interpretations of policies and values (Padma, 2025). This framework (see Figure 1) allows researchers not only to describe hybrid work as experienced but also to analyze how it is socially constructed and responded to within specific contexts (Rengganis *et al.*, 2024).

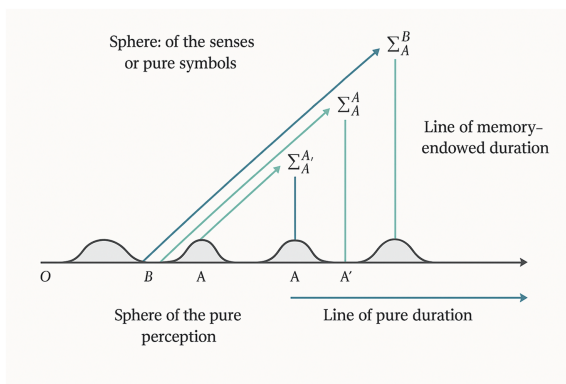


Figure 1. Phenomenological perspectives of Alfred Schutz. Source: Husserl (1991)

Moreover, Schutz’s notion of temporal consciousness explains how present experiences are interpreted over time. The “line of pure duration” reflects immediate experience, while the “line of memory-endowed duration” reveals how individuals retrospectively assign meaning (Husserl, 1991). This temporality is crucial in understanding how civil servants form evolving perceptions of organizational support and workplace meaning based on cumulative experience and reflection (Sundari *et al.*, 2024; Rengganis *et al.*, 2024).

Integrating theoretical frameworks

This study integrates three complementary theoretical perspectives, POS (Al Riyami *et al.*, 2024), the JD–R model (Chowhan and Pike, 2023; Dara *et al.*, 2025; Barber, 2019) and Schutz’s social phenomenology (Sundari *et al.*, 2024; Parkin *et al.*, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2022; Padma, 2025; Rengganis *et al.*, 2024), to construct a multidimensional analytical lens. While POS and JD–R provide structural insight into the pressures, demands and support mechanisms embedded in hybrid work systems, Schutz’s phenomenology offers an interpretive framework for understanding how civil servants assign meaning to these experiences.

By combining these perspectives, the study transcends surface-level explanations and instead focuses on how meaning is actively constructed in everyday organizational life. This approach allows for an examination of not only the institutional and environmental conditions that shape well-being but also the subjective, socially mediated processes through which employees make sense of those conditions. To explore civil servants’ well-being within hybrid work systems more holistically, the study develops an integrative conceptual framework that synthesizes the three theoretical approaches. The POS and JD–R models serve as structural lenses through which aspects such as perceived organizational support, job pressures and access to resources can be analyzed. These frameworks illuminate how institutional configurations and organizational policies influence employee stress, motivation and overall well-being.

In contrast, Schutz’s phenomenological approach foregrounds the interpretive dimension of workplace experience. It highlights the role of social interaction, cultural norms and personal biography in shaping how employees perceive and respond to institutional structures. By emphasizing that meanings are constructed intersubjectively through daily interactions and symbolic interpretations, this perspective reveals how civil servants engage with and internalize their hybrid work realities.

Figure 2 depicts the integrated conceptual model, illustrating the progression from objective organizational structures (captured by POS and JD–R) to the subjective, experiential

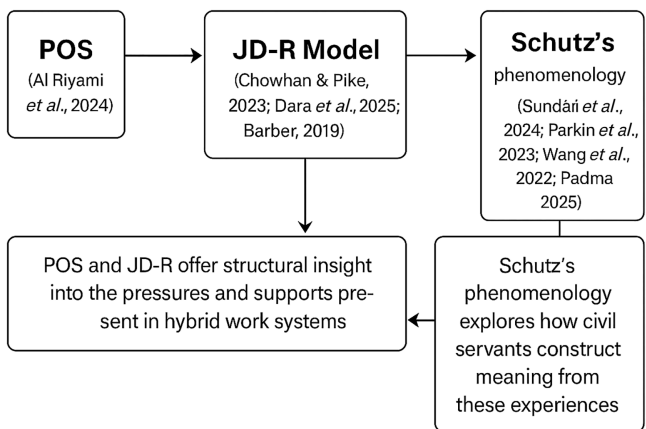


Figure 2. Integrated framework of the study. Source: Authors’ own creation

realm (analyzed through Schutz's phenomenology). This synthesis enables a comprehensive, layered analysis that connects formal systems of organizational support with employees' lived experiences, ultimately providing a richer understanding of how perceptions of well-being are formed and sustained within hybrid bureaucratic settings.

Methods

This study employed a social phenomenological approach grounded in the work of Schutz (1967) to explore how ASN interpret their hybrid work experiences and their perceptions of organizational support. Schutz's framework emphasizes that individual experiences are socially situated and shaped by ongoing interactions within institutional and cultural contexts (Barber, 2019).

This theoretical orientation provides a robust foundation for understanding how meaning is constructed, interpreted and embedded in the routines of everyday organizational life. Figure 3 outlines the research process, structured around five core components: philosophical orientation, data collection, data analysis, validation strategies and ethical considerations. This visual representation illustrates how Schutz's interpretive lens informed each phase of the study, from empirical fieldwork to analytic interpretation using qualitative tools.

Participants and sampling techniques

The participants in this study were Indonesian civil servants who had been engaged in hybrid work arrangements for a minimum of six months to one year. This inclusion criterion ensured that participants had sufficient experience with hybrid systems to provide reflective and meaningful insights. In total, ten participants ($n = 10$) were recruited. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to identify individuals whose experiences were relevant to the research objectives. Relevance was determined by their job position, involvement in hybrid work implementation, and routine engagement in both in-person and remote work modalities. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, that is, when no new themes or patterns emerged from subsequent interviews (Bekele and Ago, 2022).

Data collection procedures

Data were gathered using two primary methods: in-depth, semi-structured interviews and participatory observations. The interviews explored how participants perceived, navigated and responded to hybrid work systems and the organizational support available to them. The interview guide was developed based on the POS framework (Prysmakova and Lallatin, 2021) and the JD-R model (Chowhan and Pike, 2023). To complement the interviews, participatory observations were conducted in both digital settings (e.g. virtual meetings) and in-person

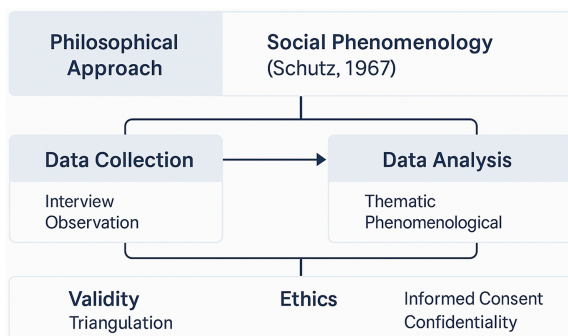


Figure 3. Research design based. Source: Authors' own creation

environments. These observations captured behavioral patterns, nonverbal interactions and communication styles that might not have been fully conveyed through verbal accounts. In addition to the empirical data, relevant policy documents, particularly Circular Letter No. 24 of 2021 issued by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, were reviewed to contextualize how hybrid work arrangements have been formally regulated in Indonesia's public sector. These documents served to triangulate and enrich the firsthand narratives of the participants.

Data analysis strategy

Data were analyzed thematically following [Braun and Clarke \(2023\)](#), incorporating a Schutzian phenomenological lens ([Greening, 2019](#)). Interview transcripts underwent open coding to capture recurring meanings, which were then organized into higher-order themes reflecting both individual and collective interpretations of hybrid work. Schutz's framework guided the analysis to uncover deeper symbolic and intersubjective layers, particularly in how participants constructed their roles, responsibilities, and organizational ties within hybrid settings. ATLAS.ti was used to ensure analytical rigor and transparency, enabling systematic code tracking, theme mapping and the generation of visual models that enriched the interpretive process.

Validation and credibility measures

To establish the trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. Triangulation was used to cross-verify insights from three data sources: interview transcripts, observational field notes and official policy documents ([Denzin and Lincoln, 2018](#)). Member checking was conducted by sharing summarized interpretations with selected participants to confirm the accuracy and resonance of the themes. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained to document key decisions, code modifications and the evolution of thematic structures, thereby enhancing transparency and enabling potential replication.

Ethical considerations

All research procedures followed ethical guidelines for qualitative inquiry ([Bryman, 2016](#)). Participants provided written informed consent after being briefed on the study's purpose, voluntary nature and confidentiality. Identities were anonymized during transcription and reporting. This methodological framework, grounded in Schutz's social phenomenology, supported by ATLAS.ti and upheld by ethical and analytical rigor, offered a robust foundation for exploring the complex meanings civil servants assign to hybrid work in Indonesia's public sector.

Results

Understanding hybrid work experiences through code relationships

To better understand how various aspects of the hybrid work experience are interrelated, a code network diagram was constructed based on the qualitative data analysis using ATLAS.ti. This visual representation ([Figure 4](#)) maps the connections between the four central themes that emerged from the interviews: perceived flexibility, organizational support, blurring work–life boundaries, and coordination challenges and their associated subtopics. Each theme reflects distinct but interrelated dimensions of how civil servants navigate hybrid work arrangements in practice.

The first theme, perceived flexibility, highlights varying experiences of autonomy shaped by institutional structures. While some civil servants benefited from increased productivity at home, others faced rigid policies and supervisory constraints, revealing that flexibility is unevenly distributed across roles and resources. The second theme, organizational support, distinguishes between symbolic forms (e.g. recognition) and material provisions (e.g. devices,

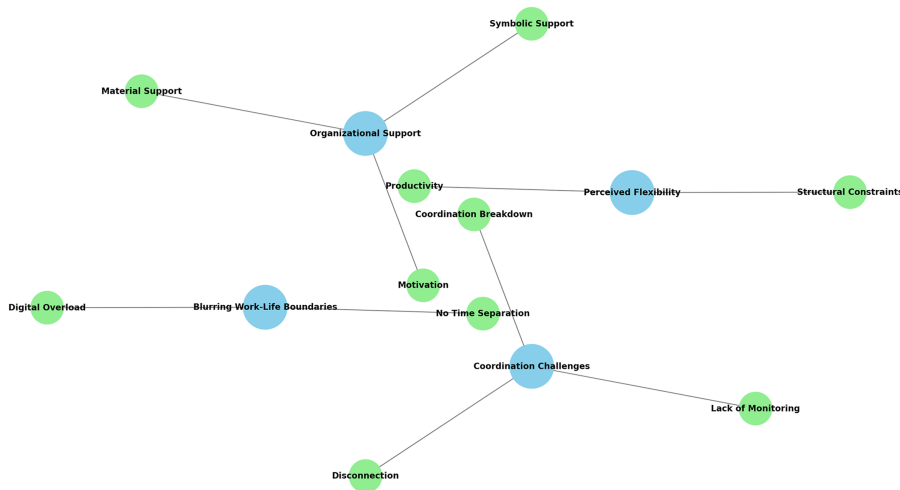


Figure 4. Code network diagram. Source: Authors' ATLAS.ti-based analysis

Internet and allowances). Though symbolic support was valued, participants emphasized that it must be reinforced with tangible resources to sustain morale, engagement and fairness.

The third theme, blurring work–life boundaries, captures difficulties in separating work from personal life. Participants reported late-night messages, meetings beyond office hours and psychological strain, indicating that unmanaged hybrid models risk eroding well-being and balance. The fourth theme, coordination challenges, reflects barriers in hybrid collaboration such as unclear communication protocols, progress-tracking difficulties and weakened team cohesion. Subthemes like disconnection and monitoring gaps expose structural limitations in managing distributed teams. Overall, the analysis shows that hybrid work is not merely a logistical shift but a socially constructed experience shaped by perceptions of autonomy, support, boundaries and connection. These interrelated themes must be addressed holistically to inform more equitable and human-centered hybrid work practices in the public sector.

Confirming saturation across participant narratives

To assess the robustness of the qualitative findings, a saturation matrix was constructed to trace the presence of key thematic codes across the ten civil servant informants (Figure 5). This heatmap visually represents how each participant contributed to the development of the six core themes identified in the study: perceived flexibility, structural constraints, symbolic support, material support, blurring work–life boundaries and coordination challenges.

The saturation matrix shows that most participants reported all six major themes, with thematic saturation occurring around the eighth to ninth interview. For example, perceived flexibility appeared in seven cases and blurring work–life boundaries in eight. Themes like coordination challenges and symbolic support also emerged consistently across responses. This pattern confirms that no substantially new insights arose in the final interviews, indicating sufficient sample adequacy for phenomenological analysis (Vasileiou *et al.*, 2018), in line with qualitative research standards. The recurrence of themes across diverse institutions reinforces the shared nature of hybrid work experiences among Indonesian civil servants. By demonstrating cross-informant convergence, the matrix strengthens the study's credibility. This evidences that the findings are not isolated accounts but reflect common, socially constructed interpretations of hybrid work, thus validating the study's theoretical and practical contributions.

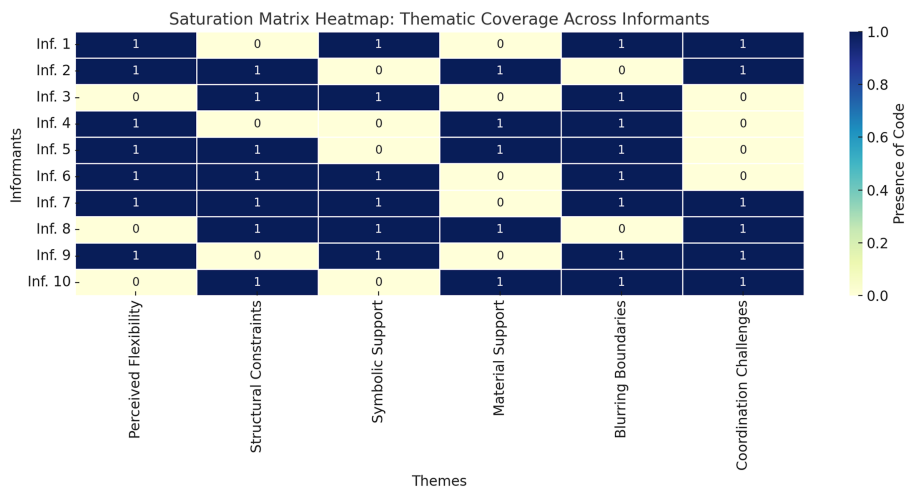


Figure 5. Saturation matrix heatmap. Source: Authors’ ATLAS.ti-based analysis

Constructing meaning from Hybrid work

The analysis was guided by Schutz’s (1967) concept of “stock of knowledge at hand” and “typifications,” enabling interpretation of how past professional experiences and institutional norms shaped present-day meaning-making in hybrid work contexts. The analysis was explicitly guided by Schutz’s concept of “stock of knowledge at hand” and “typifications,” enabling interpretation of how past professional experiences and institutional norms shaped present-day meaning-making in hybrid work contexts. The identified themes reflect intersubjective meanings and typifications shared across the organizational lifeworlds of the participants, particularly in relation to the hierarchical culture and formalized communication styles prevalent in Indonesia’s public sector. To maintain analytical clarity while preserving the richness of the qualitative narratives, a thematic summary table (Table 1) is provided below, presenting illustrative examples of lived experiences.

The quotes in Table 1 illustrate the varied experiences of civil servants in hybrid work, highlighting contrasts between autonomy and constraint, types of support, blurred temporal boundaries and coordination challenges. Collectively, they show hybrid work as both enabling and limiting, shaped by institutional policies and interpersonal dynamics.

Table 1. Thematic summary of civil servants’ hybrid work experiences

Theme	Subtheme	Illustrative quote
Perceived flexibility	Freedom vs structural constraints	“I feel more productive when working from home . . . but the policy is not fully flexible.” (Informant 6)
Organizational support	Symbolic vs material recognition	“A simple thank-you means a lot, but there is no material support.” (Informant 8)
Time boundaries	Work without limits	“There are no limits between work and rest.” (Informant 7)
Coordination challenges	Reduced social interaction and monitoring	“It becomes difficult to coordinate due to a lack of clear policies.” (Informant 10)
Source(s): Authors’ own creation		

Negotiating autonomy and constraint

ASN expressed a range of interpretations regarding flexibility. For some, the ability to work from home enhanced productivity and concentration. Informant 6 highlighted this benefit, stating, “*I feel more productive when working from home because it improves concentration and the atmosphere is more comfortable.*” Similarly, Informant 4 acknowledged the value of digital enablement: “*As needed, I can work from anywhere, as long as I have my Zoom and WiFi.*” In contrast, other participants emphasized structural limitations and institutional rigidity. Informant 2 expressed a preference for office-based work due to easier access to organizational data: “*I feel more productive in the office because all the data is stored there.*” Likewise, Informant 5 pointed to bureaucratic constraints: “*I still follow school rules. Working from home is limited and must be approved.*” These divergent interpretations exemplify Schutz’s (1967) phenomenological insight that the same phenomenon, in this case, hybrid working, is typified differently depending on individuals’ biographical situations and institutional contexts. What constitutes “flexibility” for one employee may be perceived as a constraint by another, depending on the structural affordances and symbolic meanings embedded in their organizational environments.

Balancing recognition and resource gaps

Participants’ perceptions of organizational support ranged from moderate satisfaction to a sense of neglect. Informant 8 expressed disappointment over the lack of material incentives: “*There is only verbal support. No material reward is given.*” Similarly, Informant 6 noted that leadership’s expressions of appreciation lacked substance: “*Appreciation exists, but it is only verbal, no concrete reward.*” In contrast, others emphasized the motivational power of symbolic gestures. As Informant 7 stated, “*A simple ‘thank you’ can motivate us and foster loyalty.*” However, some participants reported a complete absence of support. Informant 3 observed: “*No Internet assistance, no clear support policies, it has all been left to individual initiative.*” These varied accounts highlight that organizational support is experienced both as a functional resource and as a socially constructed symbol. POS theory (Prysmakova and Lallatin, 2021) reinforces this interpretation, suggesting that perceived care, more than formalized policy, plays a pivotal role in shaping employee engagement and psychological well-being.

Blurring work and personal life

A recurring theme among participants was the difficulty of separating work from rest in hybrid arrangements. Informant 5 described the collapse of time boundaries: “*My work increases, and there is no clear line to stop.*” Informant 1 echoed this sentiment: “*There is always something outside normal hours, WhatsApp messages, late Zoom calls.*” Informant 9 emphasized the mental fatigue caused by continuous digital demands: “*Even at home, work continues late. There is no mental switch-off.*” Informant 3 attributed their exhaustion to the absence of temporal structure: “*There is no real guidance for time limits. It is exhausting.*” These narratives confirm the JD-R model’s proposition that excessive demands, when unmet by adequate resources, increase the risk of burnout (Chowhan and Pike, 2023). Schutz’s phenomenology further reveals that when daily routines blur, established typifications of “work time” and “personal time” are disrupted, resulting in interpretive dissonance and psychological strain.

Shifting relational dynamics

Hybrid work arrangements also challenged traditional coordination mechanisms and team cohesion. Informant 10 remarked: “*There is technology, but no coordination rules, so collaboration becomes unclear.*” Informant 7 added, “*It is harder to track who is doing what. Everyone is on different schedules.*” Informant 1 commented on the awkwardness of virtual

interaction: “Meetings are held, but interaction feels forced. There is no rhythm.” Informant 9 highlighted a critical point: “Even though apps exist, we still struggle to coordinate; it is not just about tools. It is about flow.” In Indonesia’s civil service context, these issues are intensified by a reliance on formal meeting structures and top-down communication flows, which may not translate well to hybrid and asynchronous settings. Informal coordination channels, often crucial for resolving daily operational issues, are less effective when physical proximity is reduced. These breakdowns reflect Schutz’s emphasis on intersubjectivity, the idea that effective coordination requires shared meaning and temporal rhythm. When clear relational structures do not support hybrid work arrangements, they tend to erode these shared understandings, weakening social cohesion and group synchrony.

Theory confirmation and interpretive synthesis

The findings substantiate POS theory by showing that emotional and symbolic recognition, though limited in form, can still enhance motivation, yet such support remains inadequate in high-demand environments (Prysmakova and Lallatin, 2021; Al Riyami *et al.*, 2024). The JD–R model (Chowhan and Pike, 2023) is also confirmed through repeated descriptions of elevated workloads, resource deficiencies and deteriorating well-being. In the Indonesian civil service context, these patterns are shaped by the dual influence of regulatory compliance and socio-cultural norms such as *ewuh pakewuh* (reluctance to confront authority) and a high respect for hierarchical structures. These cultural traits can amplify the motivational value of symbolic recognition while simultaneously hindering employees from voicing unmet resource needs, thus perpetuating the gap between policy intentions and practical outcomes. From a Schutzian perspective, these findings represent more than isolated reflections. They are socially grounded interpretations, shaped through shared typifications and situated meaning-making. Each narrative reflects the dynamic interplay between institutional structures, personal biographies and evolving organizational norms.

Practical implications for hybrid work reform

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of hybrid work arrangements in the public sector, policies must balance flexibility with structure and autonomy with accountability. Drawing from the study’s findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, institutions should establish clear and consistent policies regarding working hours and performance evaluation to mitigate ambiguity and ensure fairness. Second, the provision of inclusive and equitable technological infrastructure is essential to enable all employees, regardless of rank or location, to participate fully in hybrid work. Third, organizations must implement reliable mechanisms for both symbolic and material support; while verbal recognition is motivational, it must be complemented with tangible resources such as digital tools, connectivity and allowances. Finally, relational coordination must be supported through structured communication protocols and collaborative frameworks that bridge the gap between remote and in-office employees. These reforms are critical not only for maintaining employee well-being and engagement but also for strengthening institutional adaptability and resilience in an increasingly dynamic public sector environment.

Figure 6 visualizes the frequency of key terms found in the interview transcripts, offering a lens into the dominant discursive patterns across participants. Words such as “flexibility,” “coordination,” “support,” “burnout” and “workload” emerge prominently, reflecting not only what was said but also how central these constructs were to the participants’ narratives. As Schutz (1967) notes, such recurring linguistic patterns signify the presence of a shared symbolic world through which civil servants collectively define, interpret and evaluate their hybrid work experiences. Although the term “workload” does not appear prominently in the visual size hierarchy of the WordCloud, it was recurrently coded in the data and appeared with moderate frequency in the transcript analysis. Its inclusion in the commentary reflects its thematic importance rather than purely visual prominence.



Figure 6. WordCloud visualization. Source: Authors' ATLAS.ti-based analysis

Discussion

This discussion interprets the study's findings through the lens of Schutz's (1967) social phenomenology, further integrated with the POS theory (Prismakova and Lallatin, 2021) and the JD–R model (Chowhan and Pike, 2023). Particular emphasis is placed on how ASNs construct meaning from their hybrid work experiences, not only as a function of institutional regulations but also as emergent from symbolic structures, intersubjective routines and cultural configurations within the public sector.

Reconstructing hybrid work through shared meanings

The WordCloud analysis (Figure 6) surfaced dominant keywords such as “flexibility,” “support,” “coordination” and “burnout.” From a Schutzian perspective, these terms are not merely lexical artifacts but function as symbolic anchors of shared meaning within the organizational lifeworlds of ASN. They encapsulate typifications, structured expectations of social reality collectively developed through institutional interactions and routines. For example, the divergent interpretations of “flexibility” highlight how ASN biographical situations, rank and organizational embeddedness influence their lived autonomy. This result substantiates Schutz's core proposition: that social reality is constructed through actors' perspectives, shaped by their position within institutional matrices.

Support as symbol, structure and social exchange

POS theory foregrounds the significance of perceived support in motivating employees and sustaining well-being, as supported by Errichiello and Pianese's (2021) study. However, findings from this study indicate a disjunction between symbolic acknowledgment and tangible reinforcement. Informants repeatedly mentioned receiving verbal praise without complementary material support such as Internet subsidies, remote work equipment or clear institutional policies (Informants 3, 6, 8 and 9). Drawing on Schutz's intersubjectivity, it becomes clear that recognition only retains motivational value when it aligns with collectively held expectations. When appreciation is exclusively symbolic and uncoupled from structural reinforcement, it risks being perceived as superficial or performative, thereby weakening trust in institutional commitments.

Temporal disruption and the collapse of routine boundaries

The JD–R model is empirically validated by informants' accounts of extended work hours, chronic availability, and deteriorating work-life balance. Reports of persistent notifications, evening meetings, and continuous digital labor (Informants 1, 5, 7 and 9) indicate that hybrid work has disrupted the segmentation of working and non-working time. Phenomenologically, this collapse signifies a breakdown in temporal typifications. Without institutional or symbolic markers to delineate time boundaries, ASNs experience rhythm dissonance, where routines

lose coherence and role clarity becomes diffuse. Such disruptions have profound psychological implications, as individuals struggle to maintain cognitive separation between personal and professional spheres.

Coordination breakdown as a crisis of intersubjectivity

Coordination challenges are often treated as technical problems; yet, this study reveals them as fundamentally intersubjective crises. Informants expressed recurring difficulties in aligning schedules, synchronizing tasks, and maintaining relational rhythms in hybrid environments (Informants 2, 4, 7 and 10). From Schutz’s perspective, these difficulties represent a breakdown in shared stocks of knowledge and common understanding that facilitate predictability and trust. The erosion of co-presence, asynchronous communication and lack of clear coordination protocols disturb the social synchrony that sustains team performance. Effective hybrid collaboration, therefore, requires more than digital tools; it demands renewed mechanisms of relational anchoring and mutual adjustment.

Surfacing structural gaps through lived narratives

The qualitative data reveal enduring and systemic structural inconsistencies that hinder the effective implementation of hybrid work within Indonesia’s civil service (see [Table 2](#)). Unequal access to infrastructure emerged as a recurrent issue, with several participants, particularly those from non-central institutions, reporting limited availability of essential tools such as laptops and stable Internet connections (Informants 3 and 9). Additionally, policy incoherence was evident in the form of unclear guidelines regarding eligibility for hybrid work, working hours and performance evaluation, leading to ambiguity and varied interpretations across institutional contexts (Informants 5, 7 and 10). Such misalignment between infrastructure readiness and policy clarity creates a twofold barrier, technological and regulatory, that jointly undermines the consistency and equity of hybrid work adoption in the civil service.

Moreover, participants highlighted the absence of comprehensive recognition mechanisms that integrate emotional, symbolic and material support, thereby weakening the perceived legitimacy of hybrid arrangements (Informants 6 and 8). Collectively, these findings underscore the urgency for reform efforts that extend beyond formal policy articulation toward building shared meaning, organizational consistency and equitable access in the

Table 2. Comparative overview of discussion dimensions

Dimension	Global studies	National studies	This study’s findings	References
Supporting Technology	Strong, well-distributed infrastructure	Urban-centric, uneven access	Significant distribution gaps across ASN	Molléri and Mohagheghi (2024) , Logitech (2023)
Policy and Flexibility	Structured and standardized	Vague and inconsistently applied	Unclear eligibility and irregular enforcement of hybrid policies	Buick et al. (2022, 2024) , Tasrin et al. (2021)
Organizational Support	Multidimensional (symbolic + material)	Emphasis on financial incentives	Predominantly verbal support, limited material provisions	Al Riyami et al. (2024) , Dara et al. (2025)
Hybrid Work Challenges	Burnout, work-life boundary issues	Limited emphasis on relational tools	Temporal ambiguity, psychological fatigue and coordination failure	Parkin et al. (2023) , Bancou (2024)
Source(s): Authors’ own creation				

implementation of hybrid work systems. This comparative synthesis reveals that while global and national frameworks emphasize infrastructure and incentive alignment, this study offers a more nuanced, interpretive account, highlighting the importance of symbolic consistency, social rhythm and meaning-making in the hybrid public workplace.

Extending theory through phenomenological insight

This study enriches existing organizational theories by integrating Schutz's phenomenology into the frameworks of POS and the JD–R model. While POS highlights the functional aspects of support, such as recognition and resources, Schutz reveals how such support is interpreted through symbolic structures embedded in everyday social life. Similarly, Schutz deepens the JD–R model by framing burnout not only as a result of unmet demands but also as a disruption in meaning-making processes where individuals struggle to interpret their roles, time and identity within hybrid work contexts.

From this theoretical synthesis, the study underscores the importance of designing hybrid work policies that are both structurally clear and symbolically coherent. Policy effectiveness depends not only on logistical clarity, such as defined hours and eligibility criteria but also on symbolic alignment, where tangible recognition complements verbal appreciation. In addition, relational coordination must be supported through embedded social practices like routine check-ins, peer mentoring and team rituals to maintain cohesion across hybrid formats. Well-being, in this view, must be reframed as an integrated outcome of organizational design, not an isolated intervention. Flexibility should be balanced with connection and autonomy with accountability. Institutions must embed mental health resources, inclusive values and participatory mechanisms that allow employees to co-create and continuously refine hybrid arrangements. When organizations attend to both structural and symbolic dimensions, hybrid work becomes not just a system of logistics but a lived, meaningful experience that fosters resilience, trust and engagement.

Conclusion

This study explored how Indonesian ASNs experience and interpret hybrid work arrangements through the lens of Schutz's social phenomenology. The findings reveal that hybrid work is not merely a technical adjustment but a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by symbolic meanings of flexibility, support, temporal boundaries and coordination. While theories like POS and the JD–R model remain relevant, this study extends their explanatory power by highlighting how civil servants interpret support and demands through subjective and intersubjective frames. Organizational support gains meaning not just through material provision but through alignment with social expectations, while job demands are experienced through disruptions in symbolic boundaries that structure work and personal life.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes a novel integrative framework that connects phenomenological insights with established organizational behavior theories, offering a more context-sensitive understanding of hybrid work in the public sector. Practically, this research underscores the need for hybrid work systems that address both functional infrastructure and symbolic coherence. Clear policies, inclusive technologies, meaningful recognition and relational rituals must work in tandem to create human-centered hybrid environments that foster engagement and institutional trust. The study's interpretive and qualitative design, while offering rich insights, limits generalizability. The relatively small sample and focus on post-pandemic transitions may not fully capture broader or stabilized experiences. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples, including multiple ministries and regions. Mixed-method approaches could bridge interpretive depth with statistical generalizability, while longitudinal studies could capture how hybrid work reshapes professional identity, institutional connection and long-term resilience among civil servants.

Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with participants. However, de-identified excerpts of interview transcripts and analytic summaries may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request and subject to institutional ethical approval.

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