

Factors affecting the choice of hybrid working: an empirical study of interns in economic in Hanoi

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Abstract: Hybrid working has become an increasingly popular flexible work arrangement that enhances productivity and work-life balance. However, prior studies have primarily focused on full-time employees in developed countries, while interns remain underexplored, particularly in emerging economies such as Vietnam. This study aims to identify the factors influencing the choice of hybrid working among economics interns in Hanoi. A mixed-method approach was employed, in which qualitative interviews were conducted to refine the measurement scales, followed by a quantitative survey of 298 interns. The data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS, applying exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM). The results indicate that career development opportunities, work performance, and work-life balance have significant positive effects on hybrid work choice, with career development opportunities exerting the strongest effect. Based on these findings, the study suggests that organizations should design hybrid work models that support professional development, enhance performance, and maintain work-life balance for interns. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence that interns prioritize career development over work-life balance when choosing hybrid work, thereby extending research in the context of developing countries.

Keywords: income diversification, rural households, consumption expenditure, Central Vietnam, Simpson index, Tobit model, 2SLS

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In the context of rapid digital transformation and globalization, hybrid working (HW) has emerged as an increasingly prominent work arrangement that combines remote and on-site work. This model has attracted significant attention due to its flexibility, enabling employees to maintain high work performance while achieving a better work-life balance. In Vietnam, many large corporations such as FPT, Viettel, VNG, and Microsoft Vietnam have adopted hybrid working since the COVID-19 pandemic as a sustainable adaptation strategy. At the same time, this model has become an important tool for attracting high-quality human resources in the global labor market. However, this trend also raises concerns about potential “brain drain” in Vietnam, as young workers may be drawn to more flexible and professional working environments offered by foreign companies.

Despite its strong potential, the adoption of hybrid working in Vietnam remains relatively limited compared to other countries in the region. According to Glints and Monk's Hill Ventures (2023), only 11% of enterprises in Vietnam have implemented hybrid working, compared to 63% in Singapore and 59% in Indonesia. Notably, economics interns represent a promising group with strong adaptability, innovative thinking, and technological competence, yet their access to hybrid working opportunities remains constrained.

A growing body of recent research (2024-2025) has increasingly focused on hybrid working, particularly in the post-COVID-19 context where work arrangements continue to evolve rapidly. Rather than viewing hybrid work as a temporary response to the pandemic, recent studies emphasize its role as a long-term and sustainable work model. For instance, Bloom et al. (2024) provide robust experimental evidence showing that hybrid working improves employee retention while maintaining productivity levels. Similarly, Gibbs et al. (2024) find that hybrid work arrangements enhance employee adaptability, collaboration, and innovation in knowledge-based environments.

Recent empirical findings also highlight the positive effects of hybrid working on both organizational and individual outcomes. Hybrid work has been shown to increase productivity by reducing commuting time and enabling greater autonomy in task management (Bloom et al., 2024). In addition, it contributes to improved employee well-being and job satisfaction, as workers are better able to balance professional and personal responsibilities (International Workplace Group, 2024; OECD, 2025). Furthermore, hybrid working is particularly attractive to younger and early-career workers, as it offers flexibility while still supporting opportunities for learning and career development. Recent labor market reports indicate that hybrid work has become increasingly common in internships and entry-level positions, reflecting the changing preferences of Generation Z in the modern workforce (NACE, 2025).

In the Vietnamese context, research on hybrid working has also gained increasing attention. For example, a global survey by Cisco shows that hybrid working has significantly improved employee well-being, work-life balance, and performance in Vietnam, with 70% of employees reporting enhanced work quality and 86% reporting improved physical health. However, most existing studies have primarily focused on general employees rather than specific groups such as interns.

From a research perspective, most studies on hybrid working have been conducted in developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, where technological infrastructure and organizational practices differ significantly from those in developing countries like Vietnam. As a result, directly applying findings from these contexts may lead to limitations. Furthermore, existing studies in Vietnam, such as Hoang Thuan Thien (2022), remain largely descriptive and lack in-depth empirical analysis of the factors influencing hybrid work choice.

In this study, "economics interns" are defined as undergraduate students, typically in their final years, who are undertaking internships in economics- or business-related fields. These internships may be either paid or unpaid and are intended to provide practical experience, skill development, and career orientation. This group is particularly important because their early work experiences can significantly shape their future career decisions and work preferences.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the key determinants influencing the choice of hybrid working among economics interns in Hanoi. By focusing on an underexplored group in a developing-country context, this study contributes to the existing literature on hybrid working and provides practical implications for

organizations in designing more effective hybrid work policies, as well as for students in orienting their careers more effectively.

1.2 Research objectives

This research is conducted to identify the determinants for hybrid working mode choice of interns in economic field in Hanoi. This research is also aiming at proposing some strategies for businesses in Vietnam to effectively implement HW mode and recommendations to help students develop and orient their careers in future fruitfully

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Hybrid working

Hybrid working is increasingly conceptualized as a structured and flexible work arrangement that integrates both on-site and remote working, rather than a simple alternation between two locations. Recent studies emphasize that HW enables employees to adjust not only their work location but also their work schedules to better align with individual and organizational needs (Hobbs & Mutebi, 2023; Laurant & Jonasson, 2024). More importantly, contemporary research highlights that the essence of hybrid working lies in optimizing productivity and work outcomes through flexibility, rather than merely providing spatial freedom (Brouge, 2024; Bloom et al., 2024). Therefore, HW should be understood as a strategic work design that enhances efficiency while accommodating evolving workforce expectations.

2.1.1. Benefits of Hybrid Working

Recent empirical evidence (2024-2025) increasingly supports the positive effects of hybrid working on both organizational and employee outcomes. Bloom et al. (2024) demonstrate that hybrid work significantly improves employee retention without reducing productivity, suggesting that flexibility does not compromise performance. In addition, hybrid working enhances employee well-being and job satisfaction by enabling better work-life balance and reducing commuting-related stress (International Workplace Group, 2024; OECD, 2025).

From an organizational perspective, hybrid working also contributes to cost optimization and operational efficiency. Reports from global organizations indicate that firms adopting hybrid models can reduce overhead costs, particularly those associated with office space and infrastructure, while maintaining workforce productivity. These findings reinforce the argument that hybrid working is not only an employee-centered benefit but also a sustainable strategic approach for organizations.

2.1.2. Determinants of Hybrid Working Choice

Rather than being driven by a single factor, the choice of hybrid working is shaped by a combination of perceived job resources and individual expectations. Prior studies suggest that flexibility, work-life balance, and organizational support are among the most critical determinants influencing employees' preferences for hybrid work arrangements (Bloom et al., 2024; OECD, 2025). In addition, opportunities for career development and effective communication are particularly important for early-career individuals, who require both flexibility and professional guidance.

For interns, these factors become even more significant due to their transitional position between education and full-time employment. Therefore, understanding how these determinants interact is essential for explaining interns' intention to adopt hybrid working.

2.2. Characteristics of Economics Interns

Economics interns, particularly those belonging to Generation Z, represent a workforce segment with distinct preferences shaped by digitalization and evolving career expectations. Recent studies indicate that Gen Z workers place a strong emphasis on flexibility, meaningful work, and opportunities for continuous learning (NACE, 2025). Compared to previous generations, they are more likely to value work arrangements that allow autonomy while still providing structured support and career development pathways.

Moreover, as individuals at an early stage of their careers, interns face higher levels of uncertainty and require environments that facilitate both skill development and social interaction. Hybrid working, when effectively implemented, can meet these needs by combining flexibility with opportunities for collaboration and mentorship. This makes HW particularly relevant for economics interns, who are in the process of forming their professional identity.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

To explain the determinants of hybrid working choice, this study adopts an integrated theoretical framework based on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. Unlike prior studies that apply multiple theories in a fragmented manner, this research focuses on these two complementary perspectives to provide a coherent explanation.

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees develop positive attitudes and behavioral intentions when they perceive that organizations provide valuable support. In the context of hybrid working, factors such as organizational support and work-life balance can be interpreted as organizational investments that encourage reciprocal commitment from employees. This mechanism is particularly relevant for interns, whose early work experiences strongly influence their future career decisions.

Complementing this view, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) explains how job characteristics influence motivation and well-being. Hybrid working can be understood as a system that enhances job resources—such as flexibility, autonomy, and reduced commuting time—while alleviating certain job demands. According to this model, increased job resources lead to higher motivation and stronger intention to engage with a given work arrangement.

By integrating SET and the JD-R model, this study argues that key factors, including flexibility, work-life balance, and organizational support, function as critical job resources that positively influence interns' intention to choose hybrid working. This integrated approach not only strengthens the theoretical foundation of the study but also addresses the lack of theory-driven research on hybrid working in the context of interns in emerging economies such as Vietnam

3. Research Model and Research Hypothesis

The research model for this study is built on the basis of synthesizing the underlying theories mentioned in the previous section. In parallel, the proposed model also inherits from the conceptual model of Lauring et al. (2024) on the nature and consequences of HW. This model describes the theoretical ecosystem around three

levels: Dynamics - the rotation between hybrid working forms, Multidimensionality - the multidimensionality of influencing factors, and Multilevel nature - the role of influencing factors from individuals to organizations. This structure helps to clearly orient the identification and classification of variables in the study.

This research model proposal also references recent empirical studies on factors affecting hybrid work (see Table 1) to ensure both academic and practical applicability. The proposed research model includes three groups of independent variables: interaction quality, support policies, and job characteristics. These factors affect three intermediate variables: work-life balance, development opportunities, and work performance, which in turn affect the choice of a hybrid work model (hybrid work choice).

Table 1. Key factors influencing the choice of HW

Element	The authors
Work-life balance	Bhat, Zahid Hussain, Uqba Yousuf, & Nuzhat Saba (2022), Chafi et al. (2021), Peprah (2024)
Efficiency	Baumann & Marcum (2023), Duta Mustajab (2024), De Vincenzi, C., Martina Pansini, Bruna Ferrara, Ilaria Buonomo, & Paula Benevene (2022), Allen et al. (2024)
Job characteristics	Vroom (1964), Wheatley et al. (2024)
Development opportunities	De Vincenzi, C., Martina Pansini, Bruna Ferrara, Ilaria Buonomo, & Paula Benevene (2022), Duta Mustajab (2024), Allen et al. (2024), Baumann & Marcum (2023)
Quality of interaction	Duta Mustajab (2024), Annanya & Hemakumar (2023)
Support policy	Duta Mustajab (2024), Galanti, T., Ferrara, B., Benevene, P., & Buonomo, I. (2023), Wheatley et al. (2024)

Source: authors' summary

High-quality workplace interactions are expected to function as a critical social resource that enhances employees' ability to manage work and personal roles. From the perspective of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, effective interactions can reduce psychological strain while increasing emotional support, thereby facilitating better work-life balance. In addition, Social Exchange Theory suggests that positive interpersonal experiences foster a sense of belonging and reciprocity, which further strengthens employees' well-being. Empirical studies support this argument by showing that supportive communication and interaction quality improve both satisfaction and balance (Bian et al., 2024; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Interaction quality positively affects work-life balance.

Beyond well-being, interaction quality also plays a crucial role in enhancing work performance. In hybrid environments, where physical distance may limit direct supervision, effective communication and interaction become essential mechanisms for coordination and knowledge sharing. According to the JD-R framework, such interactions serve as job resources that enable employees to perform tasks more efficiently and reduce the negative effects of isolation. Prior research confirms that high-quality interaction-through both face-to-face and technology-mediated communication-improves job performance (Golden et al., 2008; Demerouti et al., 2001). Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: Interaction quality positively affects work performance.

Supportive organizational policies are conceptualized as institutionalized job resources that can significantly influence employee well-being. From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, when employees perceive that organizations provide support through flexible policies, training, and technological resources, they are more likely to reciprocate with positive attitudes and engagement. In hybrid contexts, such support also mitigates the negative effects of social isolation and enhances psychological well-being (Wang et al., 2021). Moreover, these resources directly contribute to improving employees' ability to balance work and personal life. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Supportive policies positively affect work-life balance.

In addition to well-being, supportive policies also play a strategic role in shaping employees' long-term career outcomes. Drawing on the JD-R model, organizational support in the form of training, technology, and flexible arrangements enhances employees' access to developmental resources, thereby promoting both skill acquisition and career advancement. This aligns with Social Exchange Theory, where employees respond to such investments with increased motivation and commitment. Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Supportive policies positively influence personal and career development opportunities.

H5: Supportive policies positively affect work performance.

Job characteristics, particularly autonomy, recognition, and person-job fit, are considered key job resources that influence both performance and development outcomes. According to the JD-R model, these intrinsic aspects of work enhance motivation and enable employees to utilize their capabilities more effectively. When employees perceive alignment between their roles and personal values, they are more likely to achieve higher performance and pursue long-term career growth. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Job characteristics positively influence development opportunities.

H7: Job characteristics positively affect work performance.

Work-life balance is a central outcome that directly shapes employees' preference for hybrid working arrangements. As hybrid work provides flexibility in time and location, it enables individuals to better manage competing demands between work and personal life. From both theoretical and empirical perspectives, improved work-life balance is associated with stronger preferences for flexible work models (Wang et al., 2021; Masuda et al., 2012). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8: Work-life balance positively affects hybrid working choice.

Similarly, perceived opportunities for career development are expected to influence employees' choice of hybrid working. When individuals believe that hybrid arrangements do not hinder but rather support their professional growth, they are more likely to adopt such work models. This is particularly relevant for early-career individuals, who prioritize both flexibility and advancement opportunities (Palmer, 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Development opportunities positively influence hybrid working choice.

Finally, work performance is also a key determinant of hybrid working choice. Employees with higher performance are more confident in managing flexible work arrangements and are more likely to prefer environments that allow them to optimize productivity. In hybrid contexts, where autonomy and technology play a central role, performance becomes both an outcome and a driver of work model preference (Baumann & Marcum, 2023; Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H10: Work performance positively affects hybrid working choice.

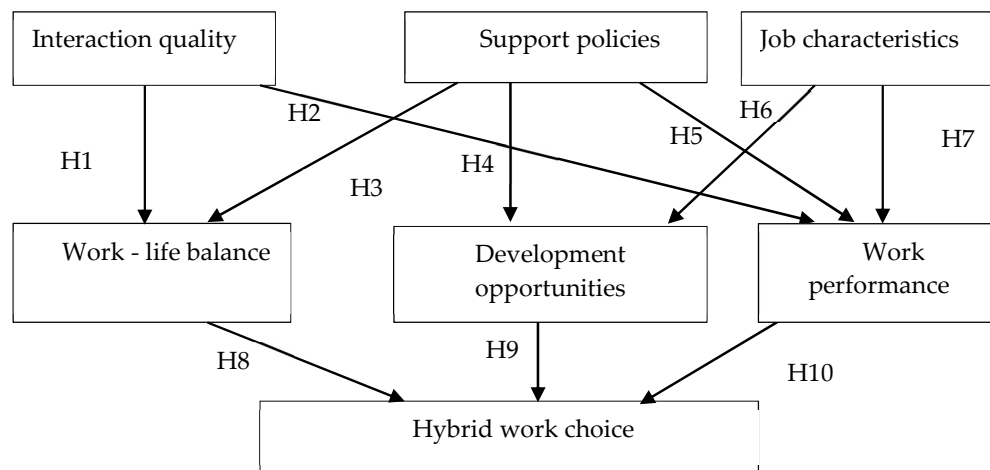


Figure 1. Proposed research model

4. Research Methods

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research to ensure comprehensive exploration and empirical validation of the proposed model. The qualitative phase was conducted through in-depth interviews with experts and economics interns to identify and refine key constructs related to hybrid working. This step was essential to ensure that the selected variables and measurement items were contextually appropriate for the Vietnamese labor market. Insights from this phase contributed to the development and adjustment of the research model as well as the survey instrument. Prior to the official data collection, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents to assess the clarity, relevance, and consistency of the questionnaire, and minor revisions were made accordingly.

The quantitative phase was carried out using a structured online survey targeting intern students from economics-related universities in Hanoi. The sample size was determined based on methodological recommendations and practical considerations. Following the rule of thumb of at least five observations per measurement item, a minimum of 220 valid responses was required. To analyze the data, a multi-step procedure was applied. First, Cronbach's Alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Next, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the underlying factor structure. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then employed to validate the measurement model and

assess construct validity. Finally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized relationships and evaluate the overall model fit. To minimize the risk of common method bias (CMB), several procedural remedies were implemented, including ensuring respondent anonymity and carefully designing questionnaire items to reduce ambiguity and social desirability bias. In addition, Harman's single-factor test was conducted as a statistical assessment.

All measurement items were adapted from well-established scales in prior studies to ensure content validity. Specifically, interaction quality was measured using items adapted from Golden et al. (2008), focusing on communication effectiveness and connectedness. Work-life balance was measured based on Brough et al. (2014), capturing the balance between work and personal life. Supportive policies were adapted from Allen et al. (2013), reflecting organizational support for flexibility, training, and technological resources. Job characteristics were measured using the Work Design Questionnaire developed by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), including autonomy and task-related attributes. Work performance was assessed using the scale developed by Koopmans et al. (2014), focusing on task performance. Finally, hybrid work choice intention was adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2003), measuring individuals' intention to adopt hybrid working arrangements. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

5. Research Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

The study surveyed more than 500 students studying in the economics academic programs of universities in Hanoi, such as Foreign Trade University, National Economics University, the School of Economics of the University of Science and Technology, University of Commerce, and Banking Academy, during the period from December 2024 to March 2025. The number of collected questionnaires is 345. The returned and usable questionnaires are 298, accounting for 87%.

Table 2. Description of study sample characteristics

Characteristics (sample n=298)	Frequency	(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	154	51.7
Female	144	48.3
<i>Year Student</i>		
Year 1	11	3.7
Year 2	10	3.3
Year 3	98	32.9
Year 4	179	60.1
<i>Field of study</i>		
Business administration	60	20.1
Business analysis	52	17.5
Finance - Banking	44	14.8
Industrial management	31	10.4
Accountant	31	10.4

Marketing	47	15.8
Logistics and SCM	29	9.7
Other	4	1.3
<i>Part-time experience</i>		
Was or is working part-time	28 3	95.0
Not part-time yet	15	5.0
<i>Job position in the enterprise</i>		
Intern	289	96.7
Official employee	9	3.3
<i>Understanding Hybrid Working</i>		
Have knowledge of HW model	163	54.7
Have not learned about the HW model yet	13 5	45. 3

Source: authors' survey

Of the total 298 valid questionnaires, 51.7% of the students who responded were male; male students accounted for 51.7%; students majoring in Business Administration accounted for the largest proportion, followed by students majoring in Business Analysis (17.5%), Marketing (15.8%), and students majoring in Supply Chain Management and Logistics accounted for the smallest proportion (9.7%). The students are mainly in the 4th year (60.1%) and 3rd year (32.9%). This is reasonable because students who do internships at enterprises usually do so at the end of the 3rd and 4th years of university. Among the students surveyed, 95% have had experience working part-time; 97% have done internships at enterprises. The high percentage of students participating in part-time jobs as well as doing internships at enterprises reflects the growing trend of students wanting to work to increase their income as well as develop their professional skills and gain more experience. In addition, 54.7% of students have learned about or experienced the hybrid working model, showing great interest among students in flexible forms of work.

5.2. Data Analysis

5.2.1. Validity and Reliability Test

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Items with low or negative item-total correlations were removed to improve internal consistency. As a result, all final scales achieved high reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold ($\alpha > 0.9$). Specifically, several items were removed from the scales measuring supportive policies, interaction quality, work performance, and hybrid work choice, which significantly enhanced their reliability. In contrast, the scales for job characteristics, work-life balance, and development opportunities demonstrated strong internal consistency from the outset, and no items needed to be eliminated.

These results indicate that the measurement instruments are both stable and reliable, providing a solid foundation for subsequent analyses, including exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

5.2.2. Common Method Bias

To assess the potential issue of common method bias (CMB), Harman's single-factor test was conducted. The results showed that the first factor accounted for 34.2% of the total variance, which is below the recommended threshold of 50%, indicating that common method bias is unlikely to be a serious concern in this study.

In addition, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were examined, and all values were below the threshold of 3.3, suggesting that multicollinearity and common method bias are not significant issues. These findings, together with the procedural remedies applied during data collection, provide further support for the validity of the measurement model.

5.2.3. EFA Analysis

Performing EFA helps to validate the internal structure of the scales while ensuring the validity in measuring the research concepts. For the independent variables, six factors were extracted (KMO = 0.892; explained variance = 80.351%), and all factor loadings were greater than 0.7. For the dependent variable, one factor was extracted (KMO = 0.832; explained variance = 82.240%), with all factor loadings above 0.86. This reflects the high reliability and clear construct validity of the scale used in the study.

5.2.4. CFA Analysis

The results of CFA analysis determined that the measurement model had a satisfactory level of fit to the data, with the following goodness-of-fit indices: Chi-Square/df = 2.267, GFI = 0.816, CFI = 0.933 and RMSEA = 0.065. All regression weights were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating the important contribution of each observed variable to the latent factors. The standardized factor loadings were all high, mostly above 0.80, and the critical ratios all exceeded the threshold of 1.96. Overall, the model showed good reliability, internal consistency and stability.

5.2.5. SEM Analysis

SEM analysis results showed that IQ (Interaction quality) had a significant positive impact on WB (Work-life balance) (0.166, $P = 0.011$) and DO (Development opportunity) (0.237, $P < 0.01$). JN (Job characteristics) strongly influenced both DO (0.253, $P < 0.01$) and WP (Work performance) (0.243, $P < 0.01$). Although SP (Support policies) did not significantly influence.

WB and DO, it still contributed to WP (0.118, $P = 0.018$). WB, DO, and WP factors all directly impacted Hybrid Work Choice (HWC) with coefficients of 0.280, 0.433, and 0.371, respectively (see Table 3), with nearly 50% of the variance in HWC explained.

Table 3. Results of testing hypotheses

Hypothesis	Regression coefficient	P	Conclude
H1	0.166	0.011	Accept
H2	0.237	***	Accept
H3	0.114	0.086	Reject
H4	0.073	0.126	Reject
H5	0.118	0.018	Accept
H6	0.253	***	Accept
H7	0.243	***	Accept
H8	0.280	***	Accept
H9	0.433	***	Accept
H10	0.371	***	Accept

(***. P value < 0.001)

5.2.6. SMC Analysis

To identifying mediating variables (DO, WB, WP) on HWC, authors analyse the Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC) value. Table 4 provides indicators measuring the extent to which the latent factors explain the observed variables in the model. These values show the proportion of variance of each observed variable explained by the latent factors in the model.

DO (Development Opportunities) has $R^2 = 0.264$, which means that 26.4% of the variance of DO is explained by the latent factors in the model. WB (Work-Life Balance) has $R^2 = 0.044$, which shows that only 4.4% of the variance of WB is explained by the latent factors in the model, indicating a weak $R^2 = 0.122$, which means that 12.2% of the variance of WP is explained by the latent factors in the model, indicating a moderate relationship. HWC (Hybrid Work Choice) has $R^2 = 0.502$, indicating that 50.2% of the variance in HWC is explained by the latent factors in the model, which indicates a strong relationship between HWC and the latent factors.

Table 4. Squared Multiple Correlations

	Estimate
DO	.264
WB	.044
WP	.122
HWC	.502

Values of R^2 indicate that HWC has the strongest relationship with the latent factors in the model, with almost half of the variance explained (see Table 4). Meanwhile, DO has a fairly high level of explanation (26.4%), while WB and WP have much lower levels of explanation, indicating a weaker relationship with the latent factors in the model.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the critical role of interaction quality in shaping both work-life balance and work performance among student interns in hybrid working environments. Consistent with prior research (Bian et al., 2024; Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017; Wang et al., 2021), effective communication and supportive interactions contribute to improved well-being and productivity. This result reinforces the argument that, in hybrid contexts where physical presence is limited, maintaining strong interpersonal connections becomes a key mechanism for reducing stress and sustaining motivation. In line with Laurant and Jonasson (2024), the present study further emphasizes that interaction quality is not merely a supporting factor but a central condition enabling interns to adapt to flexible working arrangements. Compared to previous studies conducted on full-time employees, this research extends the evidence to interns, suggesting that early-career individuals may be even more sensitive to interaction dynamics due to their need for guidance and feedback.

In contrast, the findings indicate that supportive policies do not exert a statistically significant influence on interns' work-life balance or perceived career development opportunities. This result diverges from prior

studies (e.g., Nguyen et al., 2023; Glints & Monk's Hill Ventures, 2023), which generally emphasize the positive role of organizational support in enhancing employee outcomes.

A more nuanced explanation can be attributed to the distinctive nature of internship arrangements. Unlike full-time employees, interns are often positioned at the periphery of organizational structures, with limited eligibility for formal policies such as flexible working arrangements, training programs, or career development schemes. Even when such policies formally exist, interns may have restricted access or may not be explicitly included as beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the short-term and transitional nature of internships reduces the perceived relevance of long-term developmental policies. Interns are more likely to prioritize immediate, experience-based learning outcomes such as skill acquisition, task involvement, and exposure to real work environments over formalized support systems. This aligns with the argument of Hoang Thuan Thien (2022), who suggests that early-career individuals tend to value practical engagement and experiential learning more highly than institutional support mechanisms.

Another plausible explanation lies in the issue of policy communication and awareness. Supportive policies may not significantly influence outcomes if they are not clearly communicated or if interns lack sufficient organizational socialization to recognize and utilize them effectively. In such cases, the mere presence of policies does not guarantee their impact.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the effectiveness of supportive policies in internship contexts depends not only on their availability but also on their accessibility, perceived relevance, and the extent to which they are effectively communicated and integrated into interns' daily work experiences. This insight contributes to the literature by highlighting the boundary conditions under which organizational support mechanisms translate into meaningful outcomes. However, supportive policies are found to have a positive effect on work performance, indicating that when such policies are directly linked to task execution, such as providing technological tools, training, or flexible working conditions, they can enhance productivity. This aligns with previous studies emphasizing the role of resources in improving performance (Demerouti et al., 2001; Nguyen et al., 2023). The distinction observed in this study suggests that not all forms of support are equally impactful; performance-related support appears more salient than general welfare policies in the context of internships.

The results also underline the importance of job characteristics in influencing both development opportunities and work performance. Consistent with prior literature (Hobbs & Mutebi, 2023; Wheatley et al., 2024), jobs that offer autonomy, meaningful tasks, and alignment with personal capabilities enable interns to develop skills and perform effectively. This finding supports the argument that intrinsic aspects of job design play a more decisive role than external incentives in shaping early-career experiences. Compared to traditional views, this study highlights that job characteristics are particularly influential in hybrid settings, where self-management and independent work are more prominent.

Furthermore, work-life balance, development opportunities, and work performance all positively influence the intention to choose hybrid working. These findings are consistent with earlier studies (Masuda et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2021; Palmer, 2022) but also provide additional insights by focusing specifically on interns. The results suggest that hybrid working is not only valued for its flexibility but also for its ability to support learning, career growth, and sustained productivity. This reinforces the view that hybrid work has

evolved from a temporary solution into a strategic work model aligned with the expectations of younger generations.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it extends hybrid working research to the context of interns, a group that has received limited attention despite its growing importance in the labor market. Second, it differentiates the effects of interaction quality, supportive policies, and job characteristics, highlighting that not all organizational factors operate in the same way. Third, it provides empirical evidence from a developing country context, offering insights into how hybrid working is perceived and experienced in Vietnam. These contributions help refine existing theoretical frameworks and provide a more nuanced understanding of hybrid work adoption among early-career individuals.

7. Recommendations

From the research findings, we propose some recommendations to improve the effectiveness of implementing the hybrid working model for economics interns in the context of digital transformation and changes in work organization.

7.1. For businesses

First of all, for businesses - the place that directly implements the internship model - it is necessary to pay more attention to designing a diverse, adaptive, and learner-friendly working model. Specifically, it is necessary to build internship positions that are suitable for the capacity and readiness of students to ensure a balance between challenge and receptivity. At the same time, businesses need to invest more in mentoring and internal training activities, in which mentors play a role in guiding, providing feedback, and supporting students throughout the working process, especially when interactions mainly take place through digital platforms. In order to optimize conditions for the hybrid working model, upgrading digital infrastructure such as task assignment systems, progress management, data sharing, and internal communication is indispensable. Furthermore, support policies including support for remote working costs, flexible working space and time, and organizing networking activities need to be designed to adapt to the characteristics of interns, helping them achieve a balance between work and personal life while developing their professional capacity in a sustainable way.

7.2. For students

Internship students, the central group of the model, need to proactively enhance and perfect core competencies in a flexible working context. Critical analysis, creative thinking in problem solving, effective communication via digital platforms, and remote teamwork are key factors that help students adapt well to the hybrid model. In addition, familiarizing and proficiently using tools such as Trello, Notion, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom will help improve work efficiency and collaboration in a digital environment. Internships should be viewed by students as an opportunity to learn practical experiences to accumulate experience as well as form professional working habits, self-study, and adapt to diverse work organization models.

7.3. For training organizations

For training institutions, including universities and academies with specific majors related to economics, it is necessary to make appropriate adjustments to help students get acquainted with the hybrid working model in a real environment early. Upgrading training programs and methods towards integrating digital

skills and the ability to work flexibly is a prerequisite. At the same time, schools need to strengthen and promote partnerships with businesses that are applying the hybrid model to expand internship opportunities, bringing students closer to practical requirements. In the growing trend of remote working, in addition to the teaching role, lecturers need to perform the function of supporting, advising, and connecting students during the internship process. Looking to the future, building a connected ecosystem between schools - businesses - students on a technology platform will be a strategic step to ensure continuity and relevance in the training process.

8. Limitations and directions for further research development

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample is limited to economics students in Hanoi, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other disciplines or regions. Second, the study primarily focuses on the positive aspects of hybrid working, without fully exploring potential challenges such as social isolation or difficulties in boundary management. Future research should expand the sample scope, incorporate longitudinal designs, and examine both the benefits and drawbacks of hybrid working. Additionally, investigating the long-term impact of hybrid work on career development and skill formation would provide valuable insights for both theory and practice.

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