

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY TO EVALUATE THE EFFECT OF STRESS ON
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN HYBRID WORK SETTINGS WITHIN
PROJECT MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS IN AZERBAIJAN.

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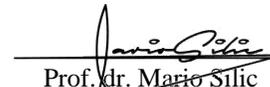
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**THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED BY ALL PROJECT MANAGEMENT
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Abstract

The rapid expansion of hybrid work models has introduced a new performance pressure for employees, which is a combine physical, social, technological, and psychological stressor. While these organizations view hybrid systems as efficient, they also focus on create unique challenges in project driven environment. The study investigates how work environment, team dynamics, job roles, reliance structures, and technological factors jointly shape employee performance. Through the examination of these constructs together, the research advances at understanding of hybrid stress performance dynamics in a complex organizational context. Theories used were Job Demand Control model, Person-Environment Fit theory and the Social Exchange Theory.

A quantitative approach was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to 373 employees engaged in a hybrid project management setting at Azerbaijan the instrument measured five constructs, such as work environment, team dynamics, job roles, reliance structures and technological factors in relation to employee performance. The descriptive statistics established distributional patterns while the correlation and regression analysis assessed both bivariate relationship and unique predictor effects. Data triangulation enhanced internal validity by integrating descriptive as well as correlational multivariate evidence across the stress performance framework.

The findings indicate a strong positive correlation between employee performance and work environment ($r=0.843$), team dynamics ($r=0.857$) and technological factors ($r=0.824$). Job role ($r=0.136$) and individual reliance ($r=0.225$) indicated weaker association but remained significant. Regression analysis revealed high model fit ($R=0.927$) while the team dynamics ($\beta=0.424$) and work environment ($\beta=0.400$) exerted the strongest effects with reliance, role clarity and technological contributing incrementally.

The study concluded that hybrid stress is a multidimensional factor which game and work environment emerging as the most influential performance levers. While technology is strongly linked to performance but shares variance with the contextual and social conditions. Furthermore, role clarity and reliance patterns though weaker predictors, remain important for resilience in hybrid work. The model's explanatory strength indicates robust construct representation. The

organizations therefore must prioritize supportive environment, adaptive technological integration and effective collaboration to enhance employee performance in hybrid models.

List of Abbreviations

EP : Employee Performance

IR : Individual Reliance

JR : Job Role

TD : Team Dynamics

TF : Technological Factors

WE : Work Environment

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed the business environment globally prompting organisations to adopt flexible work models, such as remote or hybrid, where such shifts are specifically prominent within the project management industries (Ahamed, 2023). It has been identified that flexible work arrangements are necessary to maintain productivity and efficiency (Ahamed, 2023). According to Hampel-Milagrosa (2020), this type of transition has gained a momentum in Azerbaijan, specifically within the project-based organisations which strive to have a balance in their operations continuity with the employee well-being.

As per Choudhury (2021), the transition of hybrid work models has reshaped the modern organisational structure within the project-driven industries as well furthermore the hybrid is blending it the remote and in-office work arrangements, which have been adopted Worldwide in order to improve the work-life balance. Adding to such, Wang (2021) indicated that in Azerbaijan, the project management organisations significantly embraced the model to maintain the operational efficiency after the Covid 19. Moreover, the hybrid work introduces stress, including isolation, communication difficulties, and role ambiguity, which indicated diverse effects to employee performance (Wang, 2021).

While the project failures work in Azerbaijan often have provided strict deadlines with multistakeholder coordination and requirement for high team collaboration this factor has made it highly sensitive to the employee performance levels. According to Fritz (2015) stress being excessive and unmanaged would lead burnout with reducing productivity and decreasing job satisfaction. Adding to such Allen (2015) mentioned that the effects pronounced in hybrid work environment where the boundaries within the work and personal life could create challenges when trying to maintain focus and motivation.

Apart from the demand for the reliance growth upon the hybrid models there is limited empirical research that has explored the impact of stress on employee performance under a specific work setting specifically in Azerbaijan. Therefore, the study aims to address this geographical gap by examining the relationship between stress and performance within the hybrid work environment in the project management organisations.

Furthermore, the study focused on the impact of stress on employee performance within the hybrid work environment in project management organisations at Azerbaijan. The area of research is significant due to the increment of adoption in hybrid work models after the Covid 19 pandemic. As per Gartner (2021) 82% of business leaders have planned to allow remote work at least for a certain time frame that highlighting the global shift of work structures. Furthermore, PWC (2022) mentioned in Azerbaijan it has been reported 64% of the organisations have implemented the hybrid work arrangements in order to maintain their productivity and increase the employee satisfaction.

However, this work flexibility has introduced new stressors, including digital fatigue, lack of direct supervision and blurred work life boundaries which impact employee performance (Supriyadi, 2025). Additionally, the project management sector is characterized by deadline-driven tasks and strong collaboration with teamwork that is vulnerable to such effects (Urton, 2021). Overall, understanding of how such stress influences the performance in context it is requires to develop effective organisational strategies that help to support the system.

The motivation of conducting this research extends from growing to the relevance of hybrid work environments an increase in the concern about the work surrounded with employee well-being and performance. With the continuous use of hybrid work models mainly due to the Covid 19 pandemic, several organisations worldwide including Azerbaijan have adopted the flexible work arrangements to increase the work efficiency and reduce operational costs. But this shift has introduced unique challenges, including increased stress alongside its impact on employee performance.

While the project management setting includes collaboration, communication and meeting deadlines that also have led to stress and affecting the decision-making including productivity, and overall team performance. According to the American Psychological Association (2021) 67% of employees reported increased stress levels due to the remote work conditions. Furthermore, it includes technological difficulties, blurred work, isolation and boundaries. Additionally, in 2022 the International Labor Organisation (ILO) highlighted the importance of mental health at work and emphasized unmanaged stress leading to burnout, increasing absenteeism and reducing performance.

Through the understanding of the relationship between performance and stress the hybrid work environment has critically formulated evidence-based strategies which would support the employees unable to maintain their productivity (Vaishnavi, 2025). Therefore, the research aims at to bring forth the knowledge by focusing upon the Azerbaijan's project management industry and to provide insights for the organisations to create supportive work cultures along with sustainable hybrid models.

The research is required for industrial practice and academic knowledge advancement specifically within the context of evolving vibrant work models According to the project management organisations it has been identified that effective collaboration and communication are required to increase productivity as these factors directly relate to stress. Also, it is necessary to understand how stress impacts employee performance in order to implement sustainable workforce strategies. A 2022 WHO/ILO report WHO Guidelines on Mental Health at Work and its corresponding WHO-ILO Policy Brief states that stress at work due to depression and anxiety leads to the extinction of about 12 billion man-days a year and, consequently, the economic loss of almost 1 trillion dollars worldwide. This alarming figure highlighted the urgent requirement for organisations to prioritize employee health and to implement flexible and remote working setting strategies.

From the project management industry perspective these insights within the research could help the managers and the human resource professionals in Azerbaijan to design better stress management interventions that promote employee well-being and maintain high performance in work environment. It also consists of a framework to develop the training programs, wellness initiatives and organisational policies which would help to address the unique challenges in the hybrid work setting.

Academically the study contributes to the limited empirical literature that examines performance and stress within the hybrid work environment in the project management context. Through such application and comparison of established theoretical models including Job Demand Control Model and Pearson Environment Fit theory. The research enhances understanding of work-related stress in the modern workplace. It also supports advancements in theoretical development and practical applications.

1.2 Research Problem

The transition to hybrid work arrangements particularly within the Azerbaijan project management industry has introduced significant stress and challenges that have impacted employee performance (Sari, 2025). According to Mutebi (2022) the hybrid work provides flexibility, but it has increased the workload and created communication difficulties and role ambiguity. Also, Mustajab (2024) observe that the employees are continuously facing transition between the remote and in office work which has made it difficult for them to maintain work life balance and team collaboration. Maintaining work life balance is necessary for the success of project completion. While the statistical data have indicated that severity of these challenges specifically Rahman (2022) indicated 45% of the hybrid workers have reported high stress levels and 65% are struggling to maintain boundaries within their professional and personal life which has diminished the engagement and productivity. Futhermore, Ahmen (2024) noted that various project-based organisation in Azerbaijan are struggling to meet the deadlines and maintain quality standards due to stress-related performance issues.

Additionally, gender stress in hybrid work arrangements has indicated several specific problematic areas which significantly impact on employee performance in Azerbaijan project management sector. As Rahman (2020) indicated role ambiguity indicator 58% of employees in project-based roles reported uncertainty about their responsibility when working remotely which has led to a decrement of productivity and accountability. Furthermore Mustajab (2024) mentioned that the critical problem is within the communication breakdown and 63% of the employees indicating that virtual meetings lack clarity and lead to misunderstandings . This has also impacted on the decision-making process delaying project timelines through reducing team cohesion.

Moreover, increment in workload has indicated 49% of the hybrid workers in the project-based environment experience poor task management and with the extended working hours are unclear about deadlines (Ahme, 2024). Furthermore, the work life imbalance as indicated is a growing issue with 65% of the employees struggling to establish boundaries with their professional and personal life causing emotional strain and disengagement (Rhaman, 2020).

Furthermore, technological stresses are also creating a critical problem. This aspect has been identified by Naysmmith (2024) where 21% of hybrid workers in Azerbaijan experiencing stress due to unstable Internet with poor digital tools and lack of information technology support.

Overall challenges have not decreased job satisfaction and engagement, but have threatened successful and timely delivery of the projects which ultimately impact organisational competitiveness. Additionally, Naysmmith (2024) noted that unaddressed relational stresses contributed to absenteeism, burnout and decrease in the job satisfaction that impact on the project success rate. Ultimately, poor stress management negatively affects both employee well-being and organisational competitiveness which has increased the difficulty in work atmosphere. These issues remain underexplored in existing research have not yet been explored with different forms of stress that affect the key performance metrics including job engagement and job satisfaction in the project management industry. Understaining these dynamics is necessary to understand such dynamics to design an effective interventions.

The intention of this study is to fill the gap of a theoretical understanding by the empirical way to see the different sources of stress coming from the hybrid work arrangements and the impact of stress on the performance of the employees, more particularly on the project management sector in Azerbaijan, by focusing on job engagement and job satisfaction measures.

Furthermore, hybrid work provides increasing work flexibility but has simultaneously presented psychological and operational stresses which include inconsistency, communication barriers, workload imbalance, isolation and difficulty in transition with the office and home working environment (Mutebi, 2022). Furthermore, the stressors associated with hybrid work arrangement are highly impactful on the project-based settings with the deadlines and precision which are critical factors along with collaboration. Although there is a growing global literature upon the hybrid work and employ well-being, a clear research gap exists in the Azerbaijan context with the project driven industry. According to Rahman (2020) 45% of the hybrid employees have experienced stress and 65% have already faced blurred work like boundaries. However, the local data and the industry- specific insights remain largely unexplored . While Ahmad (2024) emphasized that the project teams in Azerbaijan have already reported difficulties in maintaining the performance and the deadlines with the hybrid models and this has indicated an urgent requirement for targeted solutions.

With the identification of specific stresses that significantly impact on employee engagement and employee satisfaction whether research focus on contributing the designing more effective organisational strategies to increase their employ having a better work life balance and

productivity in Azerbaijan work environment. Therefore, the problem statement is “What are the effects of stress on employee performance in hybrid work settings within the project management organisations in Azerbaijan?”

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The initial purpose of the research is to critically evaluate effects of stress on employee performance within the hybrid work settings in Azerbaijan’s project management organisations. As for the post pandemic workforce increasingly embraced hybrid models which blend remote and office space work, and it is necessary to understand the implications of these changes on employee well-being and performance since it has become essential for both academic inquiry and managerial practices. The study aims at generating empirical evidence to explain in how various stressors impact upon productivity along with engagement and job satisfaction in project driven environments.

The significance of the research lies within its contextual relevance where Azerbaijan like many emerging economies rapidly adopted hybrid work arrangements after Covid 19 without a comprehensive understanding of their psychological and operational consequences. According to PWC (2022) 64% of the organisations in Azerbaijan have implemented the hybrid work models to increase flexibility and efficiency. However, Rahman (2022) revealed that 45% of the hybrid employees have reported elevated stress levels while 65% are struggling to maintain work life boundaries which has led to decrease the engagement and increase the burnout. These figures have underscored the urgent need for localised empirical research to examine how such stresses influence employ performance in project-based sectors where deadlines and collaborations are critical success factors.

Globally the data further highlighted the magnitude of this issue, such as the World Health Organisation (2024) estimated that the work-related stress contribute to over USD 1 trillion in productivity losses annually. Similarly, the American Psychological Association reported that 67% of employees are experiencing heightened stress during the pandemic primary due to the isolation along with technological fatigue and blurred professional boundaries (Abramson, 2022). These stressful conditions have been left unmanaged and led to absenteeism along with low morale and decline in job satisfaction whereas all of which compromise organisational competitiveness and project outcomes.

From a critical aspect where prior research has established general link between stress and performance, much of the literature has focused upon the traditional and fully remote work environment in Western context. There still remains a significant empirical gap to understand the relationship with hybrid models to develop economies including Azerbaijan where infrastructure, leadership practices and cultural expectations differ substantially. Therefore, the purpose of the research extends beyond descriptive analysis where it aims at contributing to both theory and practice by identifying the specific stresses while measuring their impact on performance and proposing contextually relevant management strategies. By integrating the frameworks including Job Demand Control Model and Person Environment Fit Theory the research critically advanced the disclosure on sustainable hybrid work design which help the organisation to balance flexibility with employee well-being and to achieve their long-term productivity and resilience.

Specific aims

Aim 1: To identify the key factors which cause stress in hybrid working models within the Azerbaijan's project management organisations.

The aim focuses on uncovering the major sources of stress which emerge from the hybrid work arrangements including communication barriers to workload imbalance as well as technological difficulties and role ambiguity. Understanding these factors, it is necessary because hybrid work introduces both flexibility and new psychological pressures. While the project management organisations in Azerbaijan's which operate under strict deadlines and high collaboration demands have faced distinct challenges when employees alternate between the remote and in office work. By identifying these stresses in this local context, it allows the organisations to develop tailored interventions that address specific workforce realities rather than relying upon the general global trends.

The reason for such aim is where the stress in hybrid work arises from multiple sources, including extended working hours, unclear expectations and digital fatigue which are among the most common stressors (Mutebi, 2022). In project driven environments these pressures are amplified due to the dependency on team-based coordination and timely deliverables. For example, the frequent virtual meetings and unstable Internet connections could reduce the productivity as well as increase the frustration specifically in developing economies where digital infrastructure is still maturing.

Aim 2: To examine the relationship between stress factors and employee performance.

The aim is to establish the nature and strength of the relationship between stress and performance outcomes. It focuses on investigating whether specific stress factors such as workload pressure or communication breakdowns directly impact or influence on performance metrics including motivation, engagement or efficiency.

The reason for such aim is to identify the relationship between stress and performance is complex. As per the job demand control model, the employees perform best when the job demands are balanced within adequate control and support. Excessive or chronic stress could lead to disengagement or absenteeism and reduce creativity. Therefore, understanding the relationship in Azerbaijan context allows the project managers to determine which stresses have the most significant negative impact, enabling better resource allocation towards mitigating those issues.

The benefit is it curbs in establishing the relationship and provides actionable data to optimize the performance management system. For example, the Microsoft (2022) Hybrid Work Report indicated that the employees experienced moderate levels of stress coupled with autonomy exhibited a 25% increase in productivity when compared to those under Manage pressure (Microsoft, 2022). Similar data driven insights can empower Azerbaijan organisations to design the workload policies which maintain motivation without overburdening employees and aligning human capital management with strategic goals.

Aim 3: To develop practical recommendations for managing work stress and improving employee performance in hybrid environment.

This aim emphasizes translating research findings into actionable strategies. An organisational policy is to increase developing and performance simultaneously. The reason for such aim is theoretical understanding is valuable, practical application ensures that research benefits organisations directly. The project management environments are dynamic while it requires flexible yet structured approaches to maintain productivity under stress.

The benefit is by developing practical recommendations it will enable organisations to implement solutions such as wellness programs, flexible scheduling, improved digital infrastructure and leadership training focused on empathy and communication. For example, PwC Azerbaijan launch a hybrid Wellness initiative that incorporated mindfulness sessions with digital

detox training and mental health counseling (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2023). This program led to higher retention rates and reducing absenteeism. Similarly, companies including Unilever introduced the Flex Time programs which balance autonomy with accountability and increase employee satisfaction globally (Unilever, 2020).

1.4 Significance of the study

This research holds great importance as it at the same time enriches the knowledge of the academic world and the practical side of dealing with stress and employee performance in hybrid work environments, particularly in the Azerbaijani project management sector. As companies all over the world are gradually adopting flexible working arrangements, the hybrid model has turned out to be one of the most important characteristics of the contemporary office. Nevertheless, this change has brought about certain hardships that are still not explored thoroughly in the case of emerging markets. Through the focus on Azerbaijan the study fills a critical empirical gap. This provides localized insight into how the stress impact upon employee performance and organisational outcomes in project driven industries.

From the academic perspective the research expands to the existing literature on occupational stress and performance by contextualizing it within hybrid work frames. The previous studies (Wang, 2021; Choudhury, 2021) have explored hybrid work benefits including flexibility and autonomy but they have overlooked the psychological and operational burdens which accompany these arrangements, particularly in industries where collaboration and tight deadlines are in place. Studies integration of the job demand control model and the Person Environment Fit Theory adds theoretical depth which allows for multi dimension analysis of how job demands as well as autonomy and environmental compatibility influence the performance outcome under stress. Through the empirical testing these frameworks in Azerbaijan the research contributes to the global disclosure on hybrid work sustainability and cross cultural organisational psychological.

The practical aspect is the study holds significant value for project management organisations in Azerbaijan where 64% of the firms have adopted hybrid models post Covid 19 (PWC, 2022). The high stress levels including digital fatigue and communication breakdowns threaten employee engagement with productivity and retention factors which are vital for project success. According to American Psychological Association 67% of the employees globally have

reported increment of stress under hybrid conditions while the International Labor Organisation links the unmanaged stress to decline productivity and rising absenteeism. In regard to the project management industry, where delayed deadlines on team miscommunication could jeopardize the multimillion-dollar contracts whereas understanding and mitigating stress is a strategic necessity rather than a welfare concern.

Additionally, the study aims to generate outcomes that inform evidence based on human resource practices including the development of wellness initiatives, digital collaboration training and stress management programs that tailored to hybrid work settings. Organisation such as BP Azerbaijan and PWC have already initiated flexible scheduling and mental health programs but the empirical data on the effectiveness remains limited. This research provides that empirical foundation needed which enabled the organisation to refine such interventions for measurable impact.

Overall, the study's significance extends beyond the immediate managerial relevance, contributing to the development of sustainable and resilient hybrid work cultures in Azerbaijan and similarly emerging economies which ensure employee well-being and high performance in an evolving global work environment.

1.5 Research Objectives and Questions

In this section, we have highlighted the objectives of the research. To achieve these objectives, we have stated four main research questions.

Research objectives

The main objective of the research is to evaluate the effects of stress on employee performance in hybrid work settings within the project management organizations in Azerbaijan

The specific objectives of the research are :

1. To identify the key factors that cause stress in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations.
2. To measure the relationship between key factors that cause stress and employee performance in Azerbaijan's project management organisations.
3. To understand the impact of stress on employees' performance in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations.

4. To make conclusions and recommendations to successfully manage work stress to increase employee performance in Azerbaijan's project management organisations.

Research questions

1. What are the key factors that cause stress in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?
2. What is the relationship between key factors that cause stress and employee performance in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?
3. What is the level of the impact of stress on employees' performance in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?
4. What conclusions and recommendations to successfully manage work stress to increase employee performance in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?

The development of research questions is guided through the requirement to systematically investigate in how stress affects employee performance within hybrid work environments in Azerbaijan project management organisations. Each of these questions is structured to address a critical aspect of this relationship which ensures that the study provides actionable and comprehensive insights.

The first question is designed to identify the primary stressors which emerge from hybrid work arrangements such as role ambiguity to workload imbalance, technological challenges and communication barriers. It aims to investigate the key factors which cause stress through primary and secondary data collection and understanding these factors is necessary to develop targeted intervention which increases employee well-being and prevent burnout.

The second question seeks to empirically test the correlation between stressors and performance metrics. This allows the research to determine whether specific stress dimensions have stronger or weaker effects on performance and contributes to evidence-based policy formulation.

The third question extends to analyzing by quantifying the magnitude of stresses influence which offers managers data-driven insights to prioritize interventions. This aligns with the

theoretical models which emphasize balancing job pressure and employee autonomy to optimize the performance.

The fourth question focuses on translating the findings into practical organisational strategies and by addressing this question, the study ensures the research applicability to human resource management and project governance.

Collectively these questions are designed to bridge the empirical gap in Azerbaijan's project management industry, enabling organisations to better understand, measure and mitigate stress in hybrid work settings. The outcome will benefit the industrial practice by improving employee well-being and productivity while also contributing academically by advancing the localized knowledge on hybrid work dynamics

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A brief overview of Employee Stress

Workplace stress has been a central concern of organisational psychology where the scholars have identified it as a key determinant of both employee well-being and organisational performance. Munoz (2025) defines work stress as a form of physical and emotional strain that emerges when the individual coping capacities are exceeded by the occupational demands. Such conceptualization highlights stress as a multidimensional construct with physiological, psychological and behavioral influences the productivity and health outcomes. Furthermore, Munoz (2025) study importantly situates stress as a mediating factor links employee mindset to performance outcomes and introduces the notion that fostering a growth-oriented mindset may help employees reframe from stressors as opportunities for development. This positive psychological perspective contributes to the evolving understanding of resilience in the organisational environment. However, the study's limitation lies in lacking contextual variation as it does not account for structural and cultural differences across geographical and industry settings.

Saleh (2023) presents a complimentary yet more empirical perspective by investigating workplace stress in Malaysian manufacturing firms using quantitative analysis through SPSS. The findings indicate a statistically significant correlation between high stress levels and negative organisational outcomes including employee turnover and absenteeism. The study is methodological rigor, rooted in a large sample size and statistical validation increases its credibility and practical applicability. Furthermore, its context specifically limits external validity where the findings from manufacturing industries in Malaysia may not be transferable to service oriented or hybrid work settings. Saleh's (2023) study predominantly adopts a deficit-based approach that focuses on detrimental consequences of stress rather than exploring the potential adaptive mechanisms or organisational buffers.

By building upon these limitations Munoz (2025) extends the psychological dimension by suggesting that stress could have dual effects depending on the cognitive frame. The research has proposed that employees with a growth mindset are more capable of transforming stress into motivation and learning. This factor aligns with broad theoretical frameworks in positive organisations scholarship yet empirical support for such cognitive mediation remains limited.

Additionally, the study narrows its focus on individual level coping mechanisms neglecting systematic and technological factors that are increasingly relevant and contemporary in the workplace.

The literature review reveals a critical gap in understanding stress within hybrid work environments where a context that has become predominant following the Covid 19 pandemic. As Supriyadi (2025) noted, the hybrid models introduce unique stressors including digital fatigue, blurred work life boundaries and communication fragmentation which are not sufficiently captured by traditional stress theories. Apart from the growing prevalence of hybrid arrangements globally the existing studies have rarely explored how these structural changes influence the stress dynamics and performance outcomes.

The gap is specifically pronounced in project-based industries and regional contexts such as Azerbaijan where the hybrid work adoption intersects with the cultural expectations and infrastructural limitations. Present research tends to overemphasize Western or manufacturing focus perspectives which overlook cross cultural and sector specific nuances. Therefore, examining stress in project management organisations operating under hybrid models in Azerbaijan is not only timely but essential for developing the localized evidence-based strategies.

While the existing scholarship provides valuable insight into workplace stress it remains predominantly grounded in traditional, office-centric paradigms. Future research is required to integrate psychology along with technological and contextual dimensions to address the evolving realities of hybrid work. By situating the present study within this gap, it contributes to theoretical advancement and practical understanding about how stress operates in the modern, flexible work environment.

2.1.1 Stress management techniques

The management of workplace stress has become a vital factor for organisational concerns specifically as the work environment evolves into hybrid formats combining remote and onsite structures. Scholars including Worthen (2023) and Robinson (2024) have provided foundational insights about stress management techniques although their focus remains primarily on traditional work environments. Worthen (2023) explains about the clinical approaches to stress management emphasizing cognitive behavioral therapy, social support systems and structured interventions targeting maladaptive thought patterns. These methods are grounded in evidence-based psychology which demonstrated measurable reductions in burnout and anxiety levels. The

strength of this approach lies in its clinical precision and empirical validation, as it allows for a clear assessment of effectiveness. However, the study medicalised orientation tends to overlook the organisational culture and structural contributors to stress, as it assumes stress to be an individual pathology rather than a systematic phenomenon.

In contrast, Robinson (2024) adopts a holistic framework which emphasizes lifestyle oriented and preventive strategies including exercise, mindfulness and self-care routines. This alignment with the contemporary Wellness paradigms promotes resilience and sustainable performance. Robinson (2024) highlights self-regulation along with emotional intelligence and lifestyle alignment, representing an important shift from reactive to proactive stress management. Nevertheless, a critical limitation of this approach is within its reliance on individual agency, as it assumes employees possess the autonomy and resources to engage in Wellness practices and assumptions that may not hold true to complex, hybrid or high demand work environments.

Both the scholars Worthen (2023) and Robinson (2024) converge on the importance of early intervention and individualized coping mechanisms where they have recognising that stress management cannot follow a uniform model. However, neither of them adequately contextualizes these strategies within the hybrid work paradigms a structure that introduces new psychological and logistical challenges including digital fatigue to isolation and weakened the team cohesion. The absence of such contextual adaptation limits the applicability of the existing frameworks in the contemporary organisations.

Furthermore, the traditional models have emphasized either therapeutic or lifestyle-based solutions whereas hybrid work environments demand an integrative approach with the combination of organisational policy reforms along with digital workload management and cultural adaptation. The lack of research exploring multi-dimensional strategies specifically in project management context within the developing regions including Azerbaijan underscores a significant gap in the literature. Therefore, this study positions itself to extend existing knowledge by evaluating how stress management strategies operate within the hybrid work arrangements in project management organisations. By bridging the clinical along with holistic and contextual perspectives the research will contribute to developing adaptive as well as culturally responsive frameworks that enhance employee well-being and organisational performance in the world modern workplace.

2.1.2 Stress levels across work settings

According to Bui (2021) and Satata (2022) they provided foundation and analysis about how contextual variables shape the employees stress experiences but both review critical limitations in capturing the emerging complexity specifically in the hybrid work environments.

Satata (2022) examined the office space employees and found that stress predominantly stemmed from the supervision intensity with the interpersonal conflict and rigid performance monitoring. These stressors are rooted in the hierarchical control systems while the physical immediacy of managerial oversight which could amplify the psychological pressure and reduce autonomy. The study consists of strength in its detailed exploration of workplace dynamics and its emphasis on organisational policy reforms as mitigative strategies. However, the limitation is within assuming physical co-presence as a universal constant overlooking the transformation of employee experiences under hybrid or flexible work conditions.

In contrast, Bui (2021) identify that remote work and key stressors including social isolation as well as technological independence and the erosion of work life boundaries are the major factors. The findings highlighted that the digital communication overload and constant connectivity contributed to virtual fatigue which negatively influences productivity and emotional well-being. Bui's (2021) research provided valuable insight into individual coping strategies which emphasize upon personal time management and psychological resilience. However, the study of individualistic focus underplays the structural and organisational factors including the inadequate managerial support or unclear expectations which often exacerbate stress within the remote employees.

Both the scholars converge on the role of job clarity and social support as protective factors against stress. However, the research remains compartmentalized, examining either office or remote context in isolation. With the hybrid work model becoming dominant post pandemic model the primary understanding fails to capture the fluid and overlapping stresses which characterize blended work arrangements (Supriyadi, 2025). In the hybrid models the employees navigate inconsistent communication norms, fluctuating supervision and challenges in maintaining the cohesion between onsite and remote teams. Psychological tension between the autonomy and accountability are further complicate the stress management in this setting (Munoz, 2025).

Therefore, the critical research gap lies in understanding how stress manifests within hybrid work models specifically in project management organisations where the deadlines along with coordination and client expectations intensify the cognitive demands. In Azerbaijan's rapidly developing project management sector the hybrid models are increasingly adopted towards the absence of localized empirical research restricts the development of effective stress mitigation frameworks. Through the integration of both Bui (2021) and Satata (2022) the current study seeks to examine this stress as a multifaceted construct influenced by structural and technological dynamics as well as interpersonal aspects. The approach will not only address the neglected intersection between the office-base and remote work conditions but also contribute towards the formulation of evidence-based strategies to manage stress in hybrid environment, enhancing both employee well-being and organisational performance.

2.1.3 Factors that influence the impact of stress on performance in hybrid work environment

Understanding the relationship between stress and performance has long been a central point for the organisational behavior research but the emergence of the hybrid work structures has introduced several complexities to this dynamic. Scholars such as Smeet (2019), Jurek (2021), Lucan (2022), Qic (2023) and Murray (2024) have explored different determinants of workplace stress which consists of workload intensity, role ambiguity, job design, technology dependence and team dynamics. While each study provides valuable insights for specific stresses with collective limitation lies in the lack of integration across the multifaceted hybrid work environment where a structure blending with remote and office-based practices which fundamentally reshaping employee experiences.

While Smeet (2019) examined about the coping mechanism and personality traits which emphasize on how emotional regulations and resilience influence their employee's ability to manage drugs. The study strength lies within recognizing the subjective nature of stress perception, but it remains limited by neglecting structural or environmental variables that interact with personal coping capabilities. Jurek (2021) has further expanded the view by exploring "Technostress" arising from the digital overload and constant connectivity whereas in the hybrid settings the reliance on digital communication platforms is unavoidable. These findings are increasingly relevant where the study demonstrated that digital fatigue could reduce concentration as well as collaboration quality and ultimately job performance. However, the research did not

account for variations in organisational digital culture management which support both of which can mediate stress outcomes.

Lucan (2022) study has focused on workload pressure in hybrid models which reveal that unclear task boundaries and fluctuating workloads contribute highly to burnout and diminishing motivation. Similarly, Qic (2023) and Murray (2024) have identified poor communication due to role ambiguity whereas the key mediators between stress and performance being highlighted. Their work has underscored that employees often experience conflicting expectations across virtual and physical settings leading to psychological strain and reducing task efficiency. The studies have collectively affirmed that hybrid stress is not merely additive but interactive which arises from the intersection of human as well as technological and organisational dimensions.

However, a critical limitation across these researchers has been fragmented whereas each study isolates one or two stresses such as technological or interpersonal or workload related without analyzing the combined effects within hybrid systems. Such compartmentalization restricts theoretical advancement and practical application. For example, the hybrid employees may simultaneously face digital fatigue along with weak managerial communication and blurred work life boundaries where all of which interact to undermine the cognitive performance and job satisfaction (Supriyadi, 2025).

Occasionally most of the existing studies are concentrated with Western and technological macho economies limiting the contextual general aspect. Specific dynamics of project management organisations are emerging in the markets such as Azerbaijan remaining under explore. The project-based work is inherently deadline driven and interdependent, which highlights the susceptibility of high stresses such as coordination breakdowns to unequal workload distribution. Without empirical insights into such localized challenges the organisation's risk adopting ineffective stress management strategies which derive from the foreign context. The research aims to provide a holistic context specific analysis in how the multiple stress factors collect collectively influenced the employee performance within Azerbaijan's hybrid project management industry. Through the integration of psychology such as individual coping to technological such as digital stress and organisational role clarity along with communication and workload dimensions, it seeks to fill the identified literature gap. Ultimately this approach contributes to developing a more comprehensive understanding of the stress of hybrid work which

guides the managers towards adaptive interventions which sustain both the employee well-being and organisational productivity within the evolving world of work.

2.1.4 Job demand control model

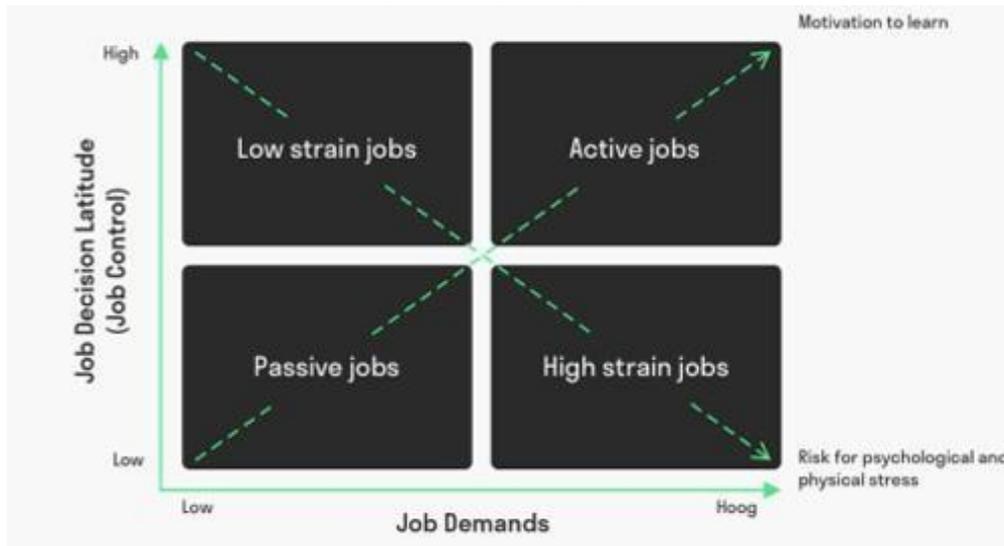
The job demand control model was introduced in 1979 by Robert Karasek and remains a cornerstone of occupational health psychology which provides a framework to explain how job-related stress emerges from the interaction between job demands and the degree of control employees have upon their tasks (Negussie, 2016). According to the model the job demands encompasses the psychological pressure of work including Berkeley to time constraints and cognitive intensity while the job control or decision latitude refers to the extent to which employees can influence the task and utilize their skills (Kain, 2010). The dual dimensional perspective provides a nuanced understanding of why individuals exposed to similar workloads may experience differing stress levels depending upon their autonomy and decision-making network.

While Kain (2010) and Gameiro (2020) have extended Karasek's framework into diverse occupational contexts which yielding valuable insight into its applicability and limitations. Kain's application of the model in relation to the healthcare sector revealed that high job demands coupled with limited engine making authority are strongly correlated with the burnout and reduce job satisfaction. This has supported Karasek's assertion which lack of control amplified the psychological burden of demanding work. However, Kain (2010) also highlighted that the structural autonomy embedded in organisational design can buffer stress and increase employee resilience. The studies empirical strength lies in its rigorous measurement of demand control variables, yet it tends to underrepresent the interpersonal and emotional aspects of job stress which are increasingly relevant for the modern hybrid work environment.

In contrast, Gameiro (2020) applied the job demand control model within academic settings, emphasizing the mediary role of social support. The findings indicate that collegiate relationships and manager empathy can mitigate the diverse impact of high job demands even in situations where control is relatively low. The interpretation expands to the model into a three-dimensional framework where the job demand controls support reflecting upon the evolving understanding of occupational stress in a collaborative work culture. Nonetheless Gameiro's (2020) study, like Kain's (2010) is context specific where its generalizability to hybrid or digitally mediated environment remains limited.

Figure 2.1

Job Demand Control Model (Gameiro, 2020)



Critically while the job demand control model has proven robust across industries, but it underestimates the contemporary stresses such as digital overload as well as blurred work boundaries and role ambiguity prevalent in hybrid work systems (Supriyadi, 2025). Additionally, it assumes a linear relationship between control and stress where the recent evidence suggests non-linear and context dependent dynamics. Therefore, applying the framework to hybrid physical management practice including Azerbaijan present an opportunity to reassess the relevance under modern work conditions. Integration of technological, social and cultural dimensions it could advance the model's explanatory power and guide interventions to promote both employee well-being and performance in a complex and flexible work environment.

2.2 A brief overview of employee performance

Employee performance remains a central construct for organisational psychology and management research where it reflects the degree to which individuals effectively contribute to the organisational objectives through collaboration, quality, innovation and efficiency (Hermina, 2019). With the global work structures evolving the performance is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional concept which is shaped by both personal and contextual factors which include mental well-being as well as motivation along with leadership and the working environment. Scholars such as Hermina (2019) and Zhenjing (2022) have explored the intricate relationship

between stress and employee performance from distinct methodological and disciplinary perspectives which provide complementary insight yet leaving notable contextual gaps.

Hermina (2019) approaches the performance through a managerial lens which employed qualitative methods to examine how workplace stress undermines job satisfaction along with motivation and efficiency. The study indicated that high stress levels can diminish intrinsic motivation and corporative behavior leading to lower productivity and morale. Furthermore, Hermina (2019) advocated structural interventions including leadership development to workload redistribution and improving communication to increase both performance and employee well-being. This systems orientated view effectively acknowledge in the organisational roots of stress but provide limited consideration of individual psychological resilience and coping variations within employees.

In contrast, Zhenjing (2022) employed quantitative psychological informed approaches which identify mental health as a mediating factor between stress and productivity. Employees experiencing high psychological strain exhibit reduce concentration and creativity which directly impairs task performance. Zhenjing (2022) emphasizes upon mindfulness and psychological support as critical coping mechanisms that increase performance outcomes. While the empirical rigor strengthens the studies generalized ability to focus on individual coping strategies tends to underplay the influence of structural and cultural dimensions of work design.

Apart from differing methodologies both studies converge on the consensus that stress exerts a significant negative effect on employee performance. Neither of the studies fully consider how these dynamics operate within hybrid work environments where the boundaries between professional and personal life are blurred, and communication occurs across digital and physical spaces. The hybrid model has introduced unique stressors including digital fatigue along with inconsistent supervision and social disconnection which can exacerbate performance challenges (Murray, 2024; Supriyadi, 2025). Consequently, a critical research capers is regarding in how stress and performance interact in hybrid project management organisations specifically within emerging economies such as Azerbaijan. Through the integration of both psychological individual copying and mental health and managerial includes leadership to workload and communication dimensions the present study seeks to construct a holistic understanding of employee performance. Such integrative approach enables the identification of strategies that simultaneously increase

productivity and preserve well-being within dynamic and technological aspect mediating work environment.

2.2.1 Factors contributing to negative employee performance

Employee performance is considered a multi-dimensional construct which is influenced by personal organisation and social factors. In contemporary research it has highlighted that optimal performance often arises due to the combination of structural psychological and relational stresses. According to Avr (2023) and Sesay (2023) have contributed significantly to understand about the determinants of negative employee performance which identify factors including weak communication, unsupportive work environments, ineffective leadership, unclear job roles, organisation misalignment, team dynamics, individual reliance and technological challenges. While both of these studies have examined the stress related performance declines where they differ in scope and focus providing contemporary insight into workplace dysfunction.

Avr (2023) primarily emphasizes upon the internal organisational factors specifically which lack of feedback mechanisms with anti-expectations and poor managers' support. The study demonstrates that when employees do not receive the required guidance and clarity regarding responsibilities as well as motivation and engagement decline, which reduces productivity. Furthermore, the findings align with established organisational behavior literature which links to role ambiguity and insufficient performance feedback to job dissatisfaction and burnout (Jong, 2016). However, the study focuses on conventional office settings and thus limits its applicability to contemporary hybrid work environments whereas digital communication and remote collaboration have introduced additional complexities.

In contrast, Sesay (2023) highlighted the institutionalized structural shortcomings that impair employee performance specifically in high intensity work roles. The researcher identified communication breakdowns along with misaligning organisational policies and inadequate resources allocation as the major contributors to performance decline. Furthermore, the research focused on ineffective communication as well as the obstruction it creates in task completion but also noted the morale, team cohesion and trust which are essential for high performance outcomes. While the study emphasized organisation level interventions, it complements where it focuses on internal manager practices and reinforces the notion that performance is shaped by both the macro level and the micro level factors.

Both studies Avr (2023) and Sesay (2023) have converged on the critical role of communication along with leadership and workload in influencing employee performance. While the ineffective communication arising from unclear directives along with delayed feedback through fragmented channels has emerged as a consistent stressor that undermines the collaboration and reduces efficiency. Leadership quality further moderates the employee outcomes with lack of supportive or transformational leadership amplifying negative effects of high job demands and ambiguous roles furthermore excessive workload and insufficient road clarity exacerbate the cognitive and emotional strain which impairs the focus while digital making and productivity is also in place.

Apart from the contributions a major limitation of these studies is the absence of analysis within hybrid or project-based work environment has been focused on. Hybrid models have introduced a unique stressors such as digital fatigue along with blurred work life boundaries and Azincrohn's communication which are amplifying or interact differently with the established performance factors. Additionally, the project-based roles in the dynamic organisation setting need coordination along with row negotiation and adaptivity which are not captured in the traditional office centric frameworks.

Therefore, the research addressed the critical gap by examining how communication as well as leadership and workload stress collectively impact employee performance in hybrid project management organisations in Azerbaijan. By contextualizing known performance determines with a hybrid and project-based framework the study provides targeted insights for designing interventions that increase both employee well-being and organisational productivity. Through understanding the interaction of these factors, organisations can implement evident based strategies ranging from digital collaboration optimizing to leadership development and workload management tailoring to the demands of modern flexible work environment.

2.2.2 Work environment

The work environment is considered as a pivotal road to shaping employee performance while influencing motivation along with engagement and overall productivity. The research consistently demonstrated both structural and psychological aspects of work environment which could either increase or impair performance outcomes. While Burbar (2021) and Zhenjing (2022) provide valuable insight to how negative work environments contribute to diminishing the employee performance albeit from different perspectives.

Burbar (2021) examine about the organisational factors such as toxic leadership along with lack of motivation and inadequate managerial support. The study revealed that these elements create this engagement in environment leading to decrease in morale and lowering the productivity levels. Furthermore, the research has underscored the importance of structural and cultural interventions where it emphasized the need for supportive leadership along with clear organisational policies and adequate resources. The strength of the research is in its organisational liver perspective providing actionable insight into management practices. However, the critical limitation is in its minimal consideration of the psychological mechanisms which mediate how the employees experience these stresses. The emotional and cognitive responses to workplace challenges remain underexplored where it leaves the captain understanding the individual level and process that translate environmental condition into performance outcomes.

In contrast, Zhenjing (2022) focused upon the psychological dimensions of work environment which examine how stress impacts upon mental health and subsequently employee performance. By using quantitative methods, the study has identified the emotional restraint and psychological strain as a significant mediator between the negative work climate and producing productivity. Furthermore, the work highlights the individual experience of stress emphasizing upon the copay strategies and mental health interventions as the critical components for sustaining performance. Also, the study narrows the focus on psychological factors which overlook the structure and manager contributors which limit its applicability to comprehensive organisational improving strategies.

Collectively these studies have indicated a clear tension in the literature with structured and managerial insights providing guidance for organisational reform while psychological analysis has revealed the internal processes affecting employee performance. However, neither of the studies addresses the unique challenges possessed by hybrid work settings where the employee negative both digital and physical environment experience blurring work life boundaries and facing fluctuating supervision. Furthermore, the hybrid work introduced new stressors including digital fatigue with isolation and communication fragmentation which interact with traditional workplace stresses to reverse performance in the complex ways (Suproyadi, 2025).

The gap has underscores the necessity of examining the work environment factors specifically in the hybrid project-based context. Understanding how structural conditions,

leadership quality and psychological stress intersect in such setting is necessary to design intervention which increase both employee well-being and performance. To investigate these dynamics in Azerbaijan's hybrid project manager organisations the current study looks at integrates organisational and psychological perspectives which provide holistic and context specific understanding of how the work environment shape in the performance.

2.2.3 Team dynamics

Team dynamics are considered as the central to understanding the employee performance since collaboration along with communication and shared responsibility defines how effectively individuals work within the organisational structures. While stress within the team interactions mean widely identified as major factors which undermine the productivity releases in per engagement. Xu (2021) and Prasad (2024) have explored the relationship between stress and team dynamics but approach the fridge the issue from different lenses which provides complementary insight while revealing important gaps in literature.

Prasad (2024) emphasized upon structural and managerial dimensions of team performance which focus specifically on poor collaboration along with role ambiguity and internal conflicts. It has been demonstrated that unclear job roles often lead to overlapping responsibilities which in turn foster competition, confusion and inefficiency. Internal conflicts and insufficient collaboration have been indicated as intensifying stress levels within teams and ultimately diminishing the performance outcomes. The strength of the study is the contribution towards the practical orientation which highlights the actionable organisation strategies such as clarifying job roles and improving leadership communication along with establishing conflict resolution mechanisms. However, the study pays limited attention to the psychological process which underpins stress including emotional regulation and interpersonal contagion which play a crucial role to determine how team members experience and respond to collaborative challenges.

In contrast, Xu (2021) adopts a psychological lens by investigating the phenomena of emotional contagion within teams. The findings indicated that the stress experienced by individual members does not remain isolated, but it spreads through collective interaction which reduces the overall moral and group productivity. This aspect has underscored the importance of emotional dynamics which shape the team performance as negative emotions and stress could create a cycle of disengagement and reduce collaboration. It also provides valuable theoretical contribution to

understanding group behavior where the study is limited by its focus on psychological mechanisms without adequately considering the structure or the organisational context which creates conditions for stress in the first place.

Overall, both studies illuminate how stress within the team operates across different levels in structural and psychological manners, but they fall short of addressing how these dynamics unfold in a hybrid work environment. Hybrid project teams are characterized by dispersed members working across the digital and physical spaces facing additional challenges such as misalignment of communication with digital fatigue and difficulties in establishing trust without regular face-to-face interaction. Research outside these studies has suggested that hybrid teams often experience weakening of social bonds and delays in conflict resolution and highlighting the role of ambiguity due to the reliance upon virtual collaboration platforms (Davai, 2022). These indicate stress within teams but the literature has not sufficiently integrated the realities into an analysis of team dynamics. Furthermore, the project-based hybrid organisations including Azerbaijan's growing management are amplifying these issues because employees work under strict deadlines, shifting team composition and diverse stakeholder pressures. Stress in such contexts may stem not only from interpersonal conflict but also from emotional contagion along with structural complexities within the project work, mainly the resource allocation and rapidly changing objectives.

Recent research seeks to address these shortcomings through examining how stress manifests in hybrid project teams in Azerbaijan, integrating both the structural insights of Prasad (2024) and the psychological perspective of Xu (2021). By situating team dynamics within the hybrid and project-based framework, the study provides a more holistic understanding of how stress undermines employee performance while it identifies practical strategies to foster collaboration and resilience in complex organisational environments.

2.2.4 Job role

Job stress is specifically regarded as a central factor that influences employee performance with implications which extend from individual well-being to the overall organisational productivity. The literature has repeatedly indicated stress arising from role ambiguity, role conflict and work overload, negatively impacting motivation and focus. Daniel (2019) and

Chen (2022) provide a distinctive complimentary insight into such aspects though both remain limited in addressing hybrid work environment.

Daniel (2019) indicates a practical organisational perspective by emphasize upon role ambiguity along with work overload as primary stresses which reduce the employee efficiency. When the employees lack clarity in their responsibility or even when they face conflicting expectations from multiple supervisors their ability to prioritize and perform effectively deviate. Similarly, when workloads exceed reasonable limits the employees experience reduce concentration and highlight burnout risks, leading to lower output quality along with the study providing actionable recommendations for organisation intervention including clear job descriptions and improving role alignment with more effective workload distribution. However, this valuable manager insight focuses primarily on structural stressors without exploring their psychological manifestation or long-term effects upon employee engagement.

In contrast, Chen (2022) approaches job role stress from a psychological and behavioral framework by examining emotional exhaustion. The researcher demonstrated that row related stress contributes directly to decreasing engagement which withdrawal behaviors and reduces organisational commitment. The study has highlighted how stress acts not only as a cognitive barrier but as an emotional burden which erodes resonance and undermines productivity. This type of deeper analysis contributes to understanding the mechanisms through which job stress translates into poor performance. Although it is less oriented towards organisational strategies limiting its practical applicability for managers .

Both studies agreed that the job role stress is a critical determinant of employee performance but it's a separation of perspectives where the organisational in Daniel (2019) and factor in Chen (2022) indicated the fragmented nature of the existence scholar. Both have not adequate address how these stresses manifest the hybrid work environment where the job role often fluid and boundaries are being blurred. In hybrid project management organisation's role ambiguity is indicated as responsibilities being divided between onsite and remote work. While the role conflict may also emerge from misaligning communication between disperse teams. Workload could also become intensified due to always on digital cultures where the employees face pressure to remain constantly available across multiple platforms.

Emerging research suggests that hybrid employees often juggle overlapping tasks with limited supervisory clarity which creates conditions for increasing stress (Vaishnavi, 2025). Additionally, digital communication gaps indicated role misunderstandings while the boundaries between the professional and personal spaces amplify workload pressures. Systematic investigation of such dynamics in project-based organisations remains underdeveloped.

By taking into consideration Daniel's (2019) practical insight and Chen's psychological perspective within the realities of hybrid work, the current research aims at providing holistic understanding about the job role stress in Azerbaijan's hybrid project management organisations. Such an approach provides both theoretical depth and practical relevance which help in bridging the critical gap in the energy channel providing timely insight into energy stress in a rapidly evolving work environment.

2.2.5 Individual reliance

Individual reliance encompasses self-reliance, self-regulation and adaptability which has emerged as a significant determinant of how employees experience and respond to different stress at workplace. Frimanson (2021) and Barinua (2022) highlight its centrality in shaping performance outcomes, though from different perspectives. The findings reinforce the importance of individual responsibility and coping strategies, revealing a gap in literature regarding how reliance operates in hybrid work settings specifically with the project-based organisations.

Barinua (2022) focused on the organisation implications of self-reliance and argues that employees with low reliance display reduced motivation and adaptability. This has led to negativity affecting outcomes such as collaboration along with productivity and innovation. From this perspective reliance is framed as a personal resource that increases resilience against the workplace stresses that enable employees to remain goal focused apart from challenges. However, the study provided a strong link between reliance and organisation outcomes, but it lacked attention to the cognitive processes or emotional mechanism underlying this relationship. The framework largely treats reliance as a behavior trait, offering limited insight into how reliance could be developed or supported through organisational interventions.

In contrast, Frimanson (2021) examined reliance within the domain of cognitive and emotional regulation, highlighting how employees with poor self-regulation under stressed experience indicating burnout with reduced task efficiency and reduced problem-solving

abilities. These analyses contribute to psychological depth by connecting reliance to coping capacity along with emotional resilience and decision making under pressure. However, the study focuses on individual-level dynamics, providing limited actionable insights for organizational stress mitigation.

Both studies Frimanson (2021) and Barinua (2022) converged on the affirmation that reliance plays a mediating role in managing stress and performance. Employees with high reliance perform better under demanding conditions, whereas those with lower reliance are more vulnerable to stress-related declines in productivity.. The studies also reveal fragmentation in the literature where focus upon organisational performance outcomes and fragments and indicated about the cognitive emotional process. Neither of them addresses how reliance operates in hybrid work context where the stressors include in digital overload with blurred boundaries and fragmented communication are increasingly prevalent (Singh, 2022).

In hybrid project management organisations, individual reliance may be even more critical for employees required to independently work on structure tasks along with regulating digital fatigue and maintaining focus apart from limited direct supervision. The reliance upon self-manage in decentralized environment determines not only personal productivity but also team cohesion and project success. The present scholarship does not adequately account for these dynamics, underscore the need for context specific research. The study therefore contributes by examining how individual reliance function upon Azerbaijan hybrid project management organisations which integrate both the psychological regulation emphasize upon Frimanson (2021) and the organisation adaptability stress by Barinua (2022). By bridging these aspects, the research addresses a key gap and increased understanding of how reliance shape stress performance relationship in modern hybrid work environments.

2.2.6 Technological factors

Technology is one of the major contributors to hybrids and introduces unique stresses which significantly affect employee performance. Bourlakis (2023) and Sharma (2024) investigated the technological challenges which employees face through they approach the issue from different perspectives. The findings underscore the critical role of digital demands which shape the workplace stress while it highlighted the limitations in current scholarship specifically regarding hybrid and project-based work environment.

Bourlakis (2023) identifies the constant digital connectivity and the rapid pace of technological change as the major contributor for digital fatigue. The employees have been exposed to continuous notification along with virtual meetings and multitasking across platforms often report reduced concentration which declines output and difficulty in maintaining work like boundaries. Such behavior focuses on highlighting the experiential aspects of digital stress framing technology as a driver for cognitive overload and performance decline. However, the research work remains large descriptive, offering limited strategies for how organisations could mitigate the digital fatigue in high pressure project-based environment.

Sharma (2024) compliments this perspective by examining the techno stress specifically arising from the system complexities and insufficient training where the study links inadequate digital preparedness to job dissatisfaction along with anxiety and declining motivation. Unlike Bourlak (2023), Sharma (2024) highlights practical solutions such as digital literacy programs, Structured training and system simplification to help the employees adapt to technological demands. The contribution is valuable as it connects with the technological stressors to actionable interventions. However, the analysis of Sharma still assumes a traditional and office-based context and does not fully cater with the distinct challenges of hybrid structures including asynchronous communication, along with virtual collaboration and reliance on project management platforms.

Both of the studies Bourlakis (2023) and Sharma (2024) emphasize upon technology induced stress negatively impacted stress upon performance However, gaps remain; neither of the studies explicitly address the compound stresses of hybrid work where the employees juggle remote isolation along with fragmented communication and digital overload alongside high project demands. In Azerbaijan's project management organisations where hybrid work is rapidly expanding post pandemic the challenges are specifically pressing. Employees require not only technical competence but also resilience to manage digital fatigue along with role ambiguity and virtual collaboration. Therefore, the study extends existing scholarship by situating technological stress within the hybrid and project-based context of Azerbaijan. Through the integration of behavioral insights and solution-oriented approaches from the different studies it aims at providing holistic understanding of how technology shapes stress and performance while it provides context specific recommendations specifically for managing digital demands in hybrid project environment.

2.2.7 Contrasting outcome of employee performance in hybrid work setting

The hybrid work setting has emerged as one of the most significant workplace transformations in recent years which provides employees with the flexibility to alternate between onsite work and remote work. However, different researchers have different perspectives on its impact on employee performance such as Alkoud (2023) and Mustajab (2024) provided contrasting information that collectively reveals the dual nature of the hybrid work. As Alkoud (2023) underscores the risk of isolation and reduction of collaboration these provide different perspectives that underline the complexity of hybrid models and the contextual factors which determine their success.

Mustajab (2024) presented a largely optimistic account for hybrid work emphasizing upon the role of autonomy and flexibility to improve their employee performance. According to Mustajab reduction of workplace distractions including noise and interruptions typically within the traditional office environment allows the employees to focus more effectively and leads to higher productivity. Additionally, the ability to design personalized schedules supports better work life balance which in turn increases job satisfaction. Also, effective leadership and structured communication channels are crucial factors which ensure that autonomy does not devolve into disconnection. These views indicate with self-determination theory that persists the autonomy and competence which foster intrinsic motivation and improve performance outcomes. With further case studies from global technology such as Microsoft's hybrid model, which was introduced during posts, pandemic reinforce such claims to demonstrate how structural flexibility could sustain high engagement and efficiency.

In contrast, Alkud (2023) provided a more cautionary analysis which identified the negative consequences of hybrid work on employee performance. In the central point to this perspective is the issue of isolation where the employees work remotely are extended for a time frame which may feel disconnected from the colleagues and organisational culture. This also reduces interaction and hinders collaboration along with creativity and informal knowledge sharing which are crucial factors to support innovative work environments. Furthermore, communication breakdowns have been caused by reliance on digital platforms has exaggerated misunderstanding and reduced team cohesion. These challenges are linked with decrement of motivation along with lowering trust and ultimately diminishing performance. The evidence from

the financial service company in the Middle East for example has shown for excessive reliance on remote work contributed to decline teamwork effectiveness and employee morale.

Apart from these contrasting aspects both Mustajab (2024) and Alkoud (2023) converge on central argument where the organisation's support and a deputy leadership could deceive in shaping hybrid work outcomes Mustajab's findings have suggested that leaders must provide clarity along with fairness and trust to unlock the hybrid work benefits. While Alkoud (2023) stress upon the leaders need to actively mitigate isolation and communication challenges. Such convergence highlighted leadership style and organisational adaptability not hybrid work itself are the primary determinants of performance outcomes.

Critically such divergent findings have signaled the necessity for further research into hybrid models specifically within project-based organisations. In such setting where collaboration along with rapid decision making and innovation are vital where the tension between autonomy and collaboration has become more pronounced. Within the Azerbaijan project-based industry for example providing a unique context where cultural norms leadership practices and technological infrastructure could shape the hybrid work outcomes differently from the western context typically within being studied. The contrasting outcomes identified by Mustajab (2024) and Alkoud (2023) illustrated that hybrid work is neither inherently beneficial nor determiner. It has more impact on employee performance depending upon the interplay of organisational support along with leadership practices and contextual factors. Future research needs to focus on developing balance as well as context sensitive strategies which minimize flexibility and productivity while minimizing the disengagement and isolation.

2.2.8 Person environment fit theory

Personal Environment fit theory provides a value framework to understand how the compatibility between individuals and their work environment which influence stress along with satisfaction and performance. The theory also conceives with an alignment between personal characteristics including values as well as attitudes and abilities along with workplace conditions. These factors forced the positive outcome while misfit could increase stress and reduce effectiveness (DeCooman, 2022). Within the hybrid and project Bayes work environments where the conditions are fluid and demand constantly shift between the person environment becomes specifically relevant for analyzing employee well-being and performance.

DeCooman (2022) emphasizes that congruence between an individual's attitude and the organisation context could increase job satisfaction along with motivation and productivity. The misalignment however results in disengagements, potential turnover and stress. For example, the employees who were in autonomy could thrive in flexible hybrid arrangements while those who seek structure may experience anxiety and lose coordinated environments. Zhang (2024) has expanded this discussion by highlighting the evolving and dynamic nature of the fitness. He argued that the person's environment fit is not a static condition, but it needs continuous adaptation chair between employees and organisations specifically in context which is shaped by technological advancements and flexible work models. Such dynamic view is critical for hybrid setting where role expectations along with communication patterns and collaboration tools are in constant flux.

The dimensions of person environment fit, along with person job fit, person organisation fit, person group fit, and persons supervisor fit are all interconnected with stress and performance outcomes. For example, a job fit ensures that employee skills are being aligned with role demands which reduce role stress and errors (Zhang, 2024). Person organisation fits connect values and culture which is vital for sustaining motivation in remote or hybrid context. Similarly, person group and person supervisor fit shapes the collaboration and support structure both of which could buffer stress in disperse teams.

The benefits of strong person environment fit include reduced stress along with high engagement and improving task performance where the outcomes are supported by both DeCooman (2022) and Zhang (2024). Accurate assisting compatibility has become a challenge where the individual values and organisational environment are both dynamic and with multidimensional factors. Furthermore, the diversity initiatives complicate the notion of fit as it is too narrow to focus risk reinforcing the homogeneity and excluding the value of our perspectives. However, in the hybrid settings these limitations are pronounced that foster fit for one employee such as autonomy and which would create misfit for another such as desire for structure. As for this research the Person Environment Fit theory provides a lens of examining how employees in Azerbaijan hybrid project-based organisations could manage stress and performance it also highlights the need to understand not only static compatibility but also continuous adaptation to evolve hybrid work demands. Therefore, for future research we must focus on strategies that would

foster dynamic person environment that balance flexibility as well as diversity and organisational goals in hybrid environments.

2.3 A brief overview of hybrid work setting

The hybrid work setting is defined as a flexible arrangement by employees who divide their time between remote work and onsite presence which obtain prominence in the post pandemic era (Lauring, 2024). The model is framed as a response to the evolving workforce expectations along with technological advancements and organisational pressure to balance productivity with employee well-being. While the existing scholarship has highlighted both the opportunities and challenges literature reveals tension in how hybrid work is conceptualized and operationalized across work settings.

Mustajab (2024) emphasizes upon the positive potential of hybrid work linked to improving productivity as well as increase in job satisfaction and reducing destruction. The flexibility is portrayed as a central advantage which enables employees to align work schedules with the personal rhymes and thereby boosting engagement and efficiency. The study emphasizes the importance of effective leadership which suggests that managers who adapt their styles to hybrid context could provide autonomy with clear goals and supportive feedback and could unlock significant gains in both individual and organisational performance. Such optimistic factor reflects why the narratives within human resource management which position hybrid work as a sustainable alternative to traditional office-based models.

In contrast, Lauring (2024) Provided a more critical perspective which highlighted the structural challenges of hybrid work That issues including communication breakdowns to digital fatigue and blurred work life boundaries being identified as key stresses undermining the benefits of flexibility. While the author acknowledges the autonomy as a benefit but argues that without the organisation's support and careful design policies the hybrid work is risking inequalities between remote and onsite employees. Such perspective reflects the concern identified in a product occupational psychology literature where hybrid work is increasingly associated with the risk of isolation along with role ambiguity and performance inconsistencies (Suproyadi, 2025).

Both health studies Mustajab (2024) and Lauring (2024) cover upon the necessity of organisations support as strong leadership may become in the mediating factor for hybrid success. However, their divergence Mustajab's optimistic against Lauring's caution indicated the

fragmented nature of the current hybrid work scholarship. One of the strengths of Mustajab's (2024) work is the recognition of the hybrid work being potential to increase employee satisfaction when managed effectively. But the limitation is within the underplaying of the systematic barriers to equitable implementation. In contrast, Luring provides a valuable insight into structural challenges but does not fully explore how these might overcome using tailor leadership or innovative technological solutions.

The literature has underscored the absence of context analysis whereas much of the scholarship remained generalized often grounded with the Western corporate environments with limited attention to vibrant working projects based regional industries such as Azerbaijan's project management sector. The project-based organisations have faced unique pressure with tight deadlines along with interdependent cars and cross functional collaboration which amplify the stress within hybrid arrangements. While the communication barriers along with workload distribution and digital coordination challenges may even more acute to their context where failure to manage stress effectively could directly undermine the project success.

Therefore, the present study seeks at addressing such gaps by situating hybrid work within the Azerbaijan's project management organisations. Through the critical engagement with both Mustajab's (2024) productivity focused lens and Luring's (2024) structural critique it aims at developing a balanced framework which could recognize both opportunities and risks in the hybrid setting. Such perspectives not only contribute to the academic disclosure but also provide practical insight for the organisations to navigate the complexities of hybrid models in high pressure and project-oriented environments. The hybrid work indicated a double-edged paradigm which provided flexibility and autonomy while introducing new stressors that could reduce cohesion and performance. By understanding psychological organisation aspects, it is necessary to design hybrid strategies to have a balance between these two for the organisation effectiveness.

2.3.1 Effects of hybrid work on employee performance

The hybrid work has emerged as a dominant organisational model which provides opportunities and challenges for the employee Performance. Castaneda (2022) and Kusumawati (2024) provided contrasting perspectives which reflected the ongoing debate within organisationorganisational and occupational research. Both of these studies Castaneda (2022) and Kusumawati (2024) have agreed upon the hybrid arrangement that reshaped work dynamics will

diverge in their emphasis. While Kusumavati (2024) highlighted the advantages of flexibility and autonomy while Castaneda underscore the risk of isolation and communication breakdowns.

Kusumavati (2024) argued that the hybrid models when they have been managed it increases employee productivity and satisfaction. While flexibility enabled employees to have a balance between personal and professional responsibilities which reduce stress and increase motivation. Autonomy has also been identified as a critical enabling system which allows workers to design their schedules and environment in a way that could optimize the focus and efficiency. With these findings and aligning with human capital theories they laid upon the importance of empowerment and self-determination as indicated a sustaining performance. However, Kusumawati (2024) indicated a persuasive case for hybrid benefits where the analysis risk overstating the universal advantages without sufficiently considering the organisational cultural variations. For example, the employees in high pressure project waste environments may face constraints with limiting the flexibility of full flexibility. (Kusumavati, 2024).

In contrast, Castaneda (2022) emphasizes the negative dimensions of hybrid work specifically communication caps and employee isolation The study indicated how to reduce face to face interaction and how it could weaken the collaboration along with trust and engagement which ultimately undermining performance. The findings also echo the social identity and team cohesion theory suggest that weaker interpersonal connections could erode group effectiveness. Castaneda (2022) strengthen within the drawing attention of structural barriers that organisations could undecided. However, the study does not fully explore the adaptive strategies including the digital collaboration platforms with leadership interventions of hybrid team building activities that might mitigate the challenges.

Both perspectives indicated the notion that organisational support and effective implementation are decisive in shaping performance outcome in hybrid settings but most existing research by Castaneda (2022) and Kusumawati (2024) remain focused upon generalized corporate context rather than specific industries such as project management organisations in regions like Azerbaijan. Project based environments pose distinct challenges such as intensive deadlines along with cross functional collaboration and reliance on digital tools intensify both opportunities and risks of hybrid work. Therefore, the study aims at building upon the inside of the two authors by situating the hybrid performance relationship within the unique project management context of

Azerbaijan through the integration of both positive and negative dimensions the research will develop a more balanced and practical understanding about how vibrant arrangements influence the performance while providing context specific recommendations to increase benefits and minimize drawbacks.

2.3.2 Relationship between stress and employee performance in different work settings

The relationship between stress and employer performance is broadly debated in the organisational research with scholars providing both constructive and detrimental perspective. Bui (2021) and Altindag (2020) provided contrasting aspects which highlighted the complexity of the relationship specific across different work settings. However, both studies agreed upon stress significantly influences performance where they diverged on whether its effects can be positive.

Bui (2021) mentioned moderate levels of stress could act as performance increases where stress when managed within an optimal rate serves as the motivator by increasing alertness along with focus and energy. Thereby supporting high levels of productivity. This aspect aligns with Yerkes Dodson Law he suggested that performance influence up to a certain threshold after which it begins to decline Bui's (2021) findings are specifically relevant in high place environments including sales or project management where deadlines and others create urgency that could mutate creativity and efficiency. However, a limitation of this perspective is its failure to account for individual differences in stress tolerance which constitutes moderate stress for one employee may overwhelm another making the findings less university applicable.

In contrast, Altindag (2020) emphasize upon the denim impact of prolong or excessive stress linking it to burnout and reducing productivity along with absenteeism. In Bui's highlighted how chronic stress erodes mental health along with the motivation and weakening organisation commitment. These insights aligned with occupational health psychology which underscores the long-term risk of unaddressed workplace stress. Unlike Bui's (2021) focus on stress as a motivator led that stresses the unsuitable nature in the current stresses specifically in roles of demanding constant collaboration along with completism making and customer engagement. A strength of active girls' approach is the acknowledgment of the organisation cost of unmanaged stress, but it has overlooked the short-term performance boost observed in high pressure environments.

Both studies Bui (2021) and Altindag (2020) have illustrated the dual reality where stress is both a potential catalyst and a threat to employee performance depending upon intensity on its

duration and context. Bui (2021) highlights the situation benefit of short-term stress while Altindag (2020) cautions against its enduring consequences. In contrast, points to the need for further research into healthy stress strategies specifically with hybrid work settings where new stresses digital fatigue along with communication breakdowns and blurred work life boundaries complicate the traditional understanding of stress performance dynamics. While stress cannot be wholly eliminated the organisation must identify optimal levels and introduce proactive interventions to balance the motivation pressure with employee well-being. In such context specific insights are necessary in industries including project management by the demands of hybrid models amplifying both the opportunities and risk of stress.

2.3.3 Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory provides an influential framework to understand about the worthless behavior by conceptualizing the interactions as transaction where the individuals seek to increase their benefits while minimizing the cost. In regard to organisational context the theory has highlighted the significance of reciprocity along with trust and mutual obligation to shape the employee employer relationship (Ahmad, 2023). Specifically relevant for hybrid work environments to balance it between organisations support and employee contribution that is continually negotiated.

Chernyak-Hai (2018) has emphasized upon the adaptability of social exchange theory in relation to evolving employee autonomy and expectations. In regard to modern organisations the employees demand not only dubbed in financial rewards but also requiring recognition as well as respect opportunities for growth and flexibility. By adapting the social exchange theory Chernyak-Hai (2018) indicated how exchanges intend beyond the tangible benefits including the intangible dimensions such as psychological safety and autonomic. Ahmad (2023) builds on this aspect by examining the emotional psychological exchanges and argued upon that modern workplace increase the depend on cost emotional reciprocity and inclusion. Together both perspectives reaffirm the relevance of set while recognizing the requirement for evolution in hybrid and project-based settings.

The dimensions of social exchange theory relevant to organisational contexts consist of reciprocity which is the expectation that the employee effort will be rewarded for fair treatment as well as opportunities or resources. The second is trust rather confidence that the other party will

fulfill their obligations in the exchange that is essential for flexible and remote work environment. 3rd is commitment where the long-term orientation toward maintaining mutually beneficial relationships. Fourth is perceive fairness which is the extent to that employees believe the balance of cost and benefit in is equitable.

When applying for helping project-based organisations, such dimensions highlight how employees evaluate exchange differently depending upon the work context. For example, autonomy and flexibility in hybrid settings could be perceived as rewards but combination with weak leadership of poor communication led to unbalanced and disengagement as well as stress (Ahmad, 2023).

The benefits of applying social exchange theory are evident with its explanatory power for employee motivation and performance. When the employees perceive exchanges as fair and beneficial they are more likely to indicate loyalty, innovation and discriminatory effort (Chernyak-Hai, 2018). In the hybrid environment social exchange theory explains why the organisation supporting digital tools and manager trusts are necessary to sustain the productivity and employee well-being (Ahmad, 2023). This also underscored that the importance of psychological benefits including recognition and belonging could counteract isolation in remote work.

However, the limitations of the theory must also need to be highlighted such as theory risk the oversimplifying workplace interactions by framing them strictly for transactional terms potentially neglecting the intrinsic motivations including values and purpose (Chernyak-Hai, 2018). Another would be assumptions being rational, but employees may not always evaluate cost and benefits logically specifically under stress (Ahmad, 2023). Another is imbalances in the exchange where when employees perceive high effort, but low reward would lead to disengagement and employee turnover this is specifically a problem in hybrid work setting where lack of visibility and unequal resource distribution could intensify the perception of unfairness.

For the personal study the stress and performance within hybrid project-based organisations in Azerbaijan the social exchange theory provides a useful lens to analyze how employees balance their perceived costs including stress, role ambiguity and workload with rewards including autonomy, recognition and flexibility. At the same time, it has highlighted the risk of imbalance via excessive demands without adequate support eroding trust and engagement. Further the research needs to refine the social exchange theory for hybrid context through the

integration of psychological and cultural factors which shape the exchange perception across the diverse work environment.

2.4 A brief overview of project management organisations

The project management organisations play a critical role in ensuring that the organisational objectives are achieved within defined constraints of scope along with budget and time. As per Mansa (2021) the traditional foundation for project management emphasizes the structured methodologies including Waterfall or PRINCE2 where planning risk control and resource allocation form the core. From such perspective success depends heavily on strategic alignment of resources and maintaining a hierarchy of responsibilities including structured approach having long provided predictability specifically in industries including construction and manufacturing where the rigid timelines and budgets are in place.

In contrast, Ilka (2024) emphasizes upon shifting the dynamics of project management organisations in response to the digital transformation and evolving industry demands rather than focusing only on technical execution. While Ilka Stress upon the growing importance of soft skills including collaboration adaptability and leadership agility specifically as organisations adopt agile methodologies. With the hybrid and digitalized work structures, which has become a norm where project management requires not only technical expertise but also the ability to navigate communication across distributed teams and shift the client expectations. This aspect reflects a move away from the rigid methodologies toward flexible iterative models that are better aligned with the contemporary organisational realities.

Both Mansa (2021) and Ilka (2024) have agreed upon the foundational importance of communication planning and leadership, but they are emphasized on these factors differ. While Mansa (2021) indicates success in the systematic frameworks and resource control and Ilka (2024) situates it in innovation, adaptability and human capital management. The divergent have underscored a wider debate within the literature where the project management organisations are required primarily to adhere to tested methodologies or evolve rapidly in response to disruptive forces including digital tools, hybrid work practices and globalization.

A critical limitation in both studies was the gap between theoretical models and the real-world application although the structure provided clarity True the methodology is but may lack flexibility in fast paced digital environments. Many organisations struggle to integrate the best of

both approaches while they face challenges in upskilling project managers balance technical expertise with interpersonal competencies.

This has highlighted the necessity for future research into how project management organisations could merge flexibility with the digital adaptation. The training programs which emphasize both methodological rigor and adaptive soft skills will also provide a most sustainable model where the hybrid project management organisations specifically in the emerging contexts including Azerbaijan bridge the gap has become a critical factor to achieve long term resilience, innovation and performance.

2.4.1 Relationship between stress and key performance indicators

As per Altindag (2020) emphasize upon the detrimental effects of excessive stress the research has indicated how high-pressure environments contribute to decreasing productivity lead into disengagement along with absenteeism and high turnover rates. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the role of organisational culture where it suggested that when workplace structures fail to manage pressure effectively stress undermines the long-term sustainability of key performance indicators outcomes. These factors align with occupational health psychology literature which consistently links with the unmanaged stress to poor employee well-being and declining performance metric speed.

In contrast, Ali (2023) takes more nuance approach to identify the circumstances where well managed stress could act as a motivator increase in short term focus and targeted achievements along with measurable key performance indicator gains. With the focus on individual coping strategies including mindfulness to self-regulation and resilience training Ali (2023) demonstrated how moderate stress could activate performance improvements. However, the reliance upon personal responsibility raises questions about sustainability as an unmanaged organisational structure may contribute to increase in the systematic stresses leading to eventually having burnout despite short term performance boosts.

Together with the studies highlighting a dual impact of stress on key performance indicators when excessive or unmanaged stress damages the engagement and attendance which

reduces long term outcomes and will manage and harness effectively it could increase the short-term focus and reserve. The contrast between Altindag (2020) organisational level response and Ali's (2023) individual level strategies underscoring the requirement for a balanced framework that integrates systematic organisations support with the personal coping mechanisms.

The limitation is where both Altindag (2020) and Ali (2023) focus on traditional workplace structures without accounting for hybrid or project-based environments that stress may differ greatly. For example, the digital fatigue communication breakdowns and blurred work life boundaries are common in hybrid models which may interact differently with the key performance indicator outcomes compared to office-based context. Therefore, this gap reinforced the requirement for future research to explore the stress key performance indicator dynamics within the hybrid project management organisations where performance indicated are critical to client delivery and stakeholder trust.

2.4.2 Stress levels associated with the hybrid work models in project management

The hybrid work models have become increasingly prevalent for project management which provides both opportunities for employee well-being and risk of stress. While Pholoshi (2023) highlighted the psychological benefits of hybrid arrangements specifically flexibility and reduction of curb biotin stress along with greater autonomy in task management These factors could be increased the employee satisfaction and concentration which are critical for project-based organisations and often operate under tight deadlines. But philosophy also identifies challenges such as technological barriers along with digital overload and blurred work like boundaries that can generate new forms of stress not accounted for in traditional workplace models. Importantly the study underscores the role of the organisation support through clear communication leadership and digital infrastructure to mitigate the stresses.

In contrast, Santillan (2023) emphasizes time management and coordination difficulties as the central stresses within the hybrid project teams. While it acknowledged improvements in work life balance Santaliya (2023) argued that the inconsistent communication and role ambiguity could reduce effective collaboration and increase stress levels. Unlike Pholoshi (2023) who prioritizes organisational responsibility Santaliya (2023) places great emphasis upon individual discipline and adaptability as coping mechanisms. Such divergent reflect wider debates in stress literature via

stress management should be addressed primarily through systematic organisational changes and through increasing individual resilience.

Pholoshi (2023) and Santaliya (2023) both have converged on the view that hybrid work models provide psychological advantages but only when structure and behavior challenges could manage them effectively. The key tension is within balancing autonomy with coordination and flexibility with accountability. But a notable limitation of both Pholoshi (2023) and Santaliya (2023) work is their general treatment of hybrid work without deep contextualizing about project management.

Project based environments often indicate stress due to strict timelines along with client demands and independent workflows suggesting that stress dynamics could be more acute than in other sectors. This has indicated a gap with the requirement for further research to examine stress levels specifically within hybrid project management organisations in regions like Azerbaijan where hybrid models are still evolving. This inquiry could also generate context specific strategies integrating the organisation's support with individual adaptability to reduce stress while ensuring successful project delivery.

2.4.3 Work engagement model

The work engagement model has obtained significant attention in organisations psychology which provides insight into how personal and organisational factors could shape employ enthusiasm along with performance and resilience. Bakkar (2014) presents engagement through the lens of the Job Demand Resources framework where the personal resources such as emotional intelligence along with optimism and psychological capital buffer the negative effect of job demands while fostering motivation and commitment. By emphasizing upon the role of psychological capital Barker (2014) demonstrated that engagement is not only solely determined by external factors but also by individual cognitive emotional strengths which allow employees to thrive even under high pressure conditions.

In contrast, George (2021) Focus upon organisational factors which highlight the importance of structural support along with motivating work requirements and leadership practices to cultivate engagement. The study indicated that employees who perceive strong organisation backing including communication along with recognition and development opportunities report higher levels of enthusiasm and low burnout rates. Since Barker (2014) emphasized upon internal

psychological attributes George (2021) highlighted the systematic condition that either facilitate or hinder engagement. Together these perspectives have underscored that employee engagement emerges from combination of individual residents and organisational structures.

Both Barker (2014) and George (2021) agree that engagement increases performance outcomes by increasing job satisfaction, commitment and creativity while it produces turnover and absenteeism. However, a critical limitation is that the analysis is largely based upon traditional work environment. Neither has it adequately addressed the evolving workplace structures such as hybrid work models where engagement dynamics may shift due to digital communication blurred work life boundaries and flexible schedules. For example, while job resources remain vital in hybrid setting, they are now consisting of digital infrastructure virtual team provision remote leadership which are the factors unexplored in current engagement literature.

The gap indicated requirement for research into how the work engagement model operates within the hybrid and project-based environments. In such aspect balancing personal and psychological resources with organisation digital support system could be crucial to sustain engagement. Such integration would not only increase employee well-being but also make sure that consistent performance is demanding for industries including project management by engagement directly impact upon deadline adherence and stakeholder satisfaction.

Work engagement model refers to the psychological state in which the employees display dedication, vigor and absorption in their work. Dimensions such as vigor indicate energy and resilience (Vinarski Peretz, 2023). Dedication indicates commitment and pride and absorption indicate deep focus which reflects the degree to which individuals are emotionally and mentally invested in their job roles. The benefit include higher productivity, job satisfaction creativity and reduced turnover as engaged employees contribute towards obtaining organisational goals effectively (Li, 2023). Furthermore, engagement fosters resilience and lowers burnout while increasing well-being. However, the limitations would be its overemphasis on either personal or organisational factors. For example, Job demands resources model highlighted resources that may overlook wider structural inequalities or hybrid work challenges (Vinarski Peretz, 2023). It relates to the current study where the model has explained how both internal strengths such as psychological capital and external factors such as organisation support and leadership interact to the influence of employee motivation and performance in the evolving work environment.

2.5 Conceptual framework

By using global and local empirical studies conceptualization is developed according to the stress factors that have been identified through different studies. The relationship with employee performance is further discussed and then the conceptual framework is developed.

2.5.1 The relationship between work environment and employee performance

The relationship between the work environment and employee performance has been a central aspect in organisational research since it was highlighted in several studies such as Burbar (2021) and Zhenjing (2022). Both studies covered on the view that empower workplace conditions exert a significant negative influence upon performance outcomes. Burbar (2021) emphasized upon toxic leadership and lack of manager support as the source of underperformance which present empirical evidence with a statistically significant correlation of ($p < 0.05$). This has been suggested that the relation and cultural dynamics within the workplace are critical to shape employee motivation and output. In contrast, Zhenjing (2022) focused upon more heavily on the psychological dimensions, arguing that environments characterized by stress and lack of psychological safety lead to diminishing productivity with a stronger statistical significance of $p < 0.01$. This factor highlighted the direct mental health implications of unhealthy organisational climates.

Critically, both studies have identified a negative impact where it emphasizes may differ such as Burbar (2021) indicate about the declining performance within structural and leadership failures whereas Zhenjing (2022) foregrounds employee developing and stress response. Together these factors have underscored the multifaceted nature of workplace environment where both leadership practices and psychological climates need to be accounted for. However, the limitation arises in the translation of these findings across industries as well as cultural context. Burbar (2021) leadership focused model may not fully capture the hybrid or remote work dynamics while Zhenjing (2022) psychological emphasis may understate the structural inequalities such as resource allocation and career progression barriers.

This study is contributed by highlighting the employee performance is not solely an individual attribute but considered as a systematic outcome shaped by the organisation's support mental, health conditions and leadership quality. However, the gaps remain in understanding how evolving models of work specifically hybrid and digitize project environment. Further research is

required to integrate structural, psychological and cultural factors to design work environment which promotes sustainable performance. Therefore, the literary suggests that defective performance management requires a balanced approach which helps in building supportive leadership structures while ensuring psychological well-being and aligning birthplace resources with employee needs to mitigate stressors and optimize productivity.

2.5.2 The relationship between team dynamics and employee performance

The relationship between team dynamics and employee performance has been recurrently examined in the organisational research Scholars such as Xu (2021) and Prasad (2024) provided valuable empirical insight both of the studies can form a statistically significant relationship underscore in the theme interaction directly in the productivity and performance outcomes. Prasad (2024) highlighted the poor collaboration with unresolved conflicts and unclear role expectations to diminish employee performance which reported a significant negative effect of $p < 0.05$. My findings highlighted that the structural and relational dimensions of teamwork, specifically in high pressure environments we have misalignment, and tension could quickly erode efficiency and innovation.

In contrast, Xu (2021) shifted the focus on the psychological and emotional aspect of team dynamics indicating that emotional contagion whereas stress and negative spread across team members correlates strongly with reducing to group morale and overall performance at $p < 0.01$. Such perspectives highlighted how workplace emotions and interpersonal relationships could create repo effects that extend beyond individual employees and affect collective outcomes.

Both Xu (2021) and Prasad (2024) converge on the critical role of effective team dynamics in sustaining productivity, though they diverge in their emphasis such as Prasad (2024) prioritizes role clarity and conflict resolution mechanism. Xu (2021) underscore the emotional climate and shared effective states. Together such findings illustrated the multifaceted nature of the input where structural criteria and emotional well-being must be managed.

A critical limitation of both studies upon their reliance on traditional workplace contexts, leaving gaps in understanding how such factors evolve within the hybrid models. The remote collaboration tools and reduction of face-to-face interaction along with asynchronous communication interactions may amplify the challenges such as role ambiguity, emotion disconnection and miscommunication. This underscores the importance of further research to reinvestigate theme

dynamics in digitalized project environments, where new patterns of collaboration emerge. Overall, the literature indicated that strong team dynamics characterized by clear roles along with open communication, emotional balance and trust are indispensable for optimizing employee performance. For further research, it must be extended where these insights into hybrid work models integrate structural and psychological factors to develop frameworks which sustain high performing teams in modern organisations.

2.5.3 The relationship between job role and employee performance

The relationship between employee performance and job role has been widely explored in regard to organisational research and highlighted how clarity, role expectation and alignment shape individual productivity. Job role stress has long been identified as a critical factor which shapes the employee performance outcome with role ambiguity and overload consistently linking to reducing productivity. Daniel (2019) and Chen (2022) provided empirical evidence confirming the determiner impact of unclear or conflicting responsibilities upon employee performers through their studies emphasizing on different mechanisms and context.

Daniel (2019) identified a statistically significant negative correlation of ($p < 0.05$) between role, ambiguity employ output and role conflict. The find reveals how unclear or overlapping job responsibilities weaken the employee's focus but increase errors and ultimately reduce overall performance. This aligns with wider organisational behavior theory suggests that the structural criteria provide employees with the cognitive resources to manage tasks effectively. Daniel (2019) work therefore emphasized upon the importance of clear role definitions and accountability structuring in sustaining performance.

While Chen (2022) extended this argument by focusing on the psychological consequences of role stress. The study used both behavior and psychological measures and indicated that role stress significantly contributes to emotional exhaustion and disengagement ($p < 0.01$). The employees experiencing persistent role conflict or overload are more likely to report reduce in motivation and lowering job satisfaction, ultimately impairing productivity. Unlike Daniel (2019) structural approach Chen (2022) highlights how unresolved job role stressors erode psychological will be which indicated that performance declined not only because of the task misalignment but also due to reduce of engagement.

Both studies established job role clarity as an essential factor for maintaining high employee performance. While the limitations were their focus on traditional work environment. In regard to hybrid and project-based settings such as those increasingly adopted in Azerbaijan job role stress may manifest in unique ways. The remote coordination virtual communication and shift of responsibilities across projects could amplify ambiguity and conflict which complicate task ownership and accountability. Neither Daniel (2019) or Chen (2022) address how hybrid structures influence these stresses, highlighting a significant gap for further research. While Daniel (2019) emphasized structural clarity and Chen (2022) stressed upon psychological outcomes, but both covered on the importance of addressing job role stress to safeguard performance. Further research is required to examine these dynamics within hybrid work context to develop adaptive role definition and support mechanism which ensures sustained productivity.

2.5.4 The relationship between individual reliance and employee performance

Researchers such as Frimanson (2021) and Barinua (2022) indirectly address the relationship through their focus on self-reliance where both studies identify significant positive correlation between individual autonomy and performance. While Barinua (2022) emphasize upon decision making and adaptability as the key outcomes of self-reliance on employees ($p < 0.05$) and Frimanson (2021) highlighted the self-regulation and coping strategies under stress which sustained high productivity and satisfaction ($p < 0.01$). Both studies provided evidence that suggested job performance is not only type of skill and task but also to the way employees perceive and enact their roles.

However, job clarity emerges as a central dimension where employees who understand their responsibilities along with expected outcomes and authority tend to exhibit strong commitment and efficiency while role ambiguity and conflict undermine motivation and create stress. These factors align wider with organisation behavior literature which links with the role of misalignment to reduce engagement, turnover and absenteeism. The findings Frimanson (2021) and Barinua (2022) reinforce the idea that individual reliance compensate for gaps within the structure role support, but such reliance cannot fully replace clear role definition.

Role complexity and adaptability where the dynamic environments registrar revelations may concentrate innovation whereas flexible rules encourage creativity and responsiveness. The tension has indicated the requirement for organisations to balance role clarity with role adaptability

specifically in settings such as project management or hybrid work models where boundaries are offered fluid. A key limitation in the studies was the limited scope where neither directly investigates job role dynamics within the hybrid or project-based work structure which overlap task as well as virtual collaboration and shift responsibilities could excel by role ambiguity. This gap highlighted the necessity for future research which addresses how role design and adaptability impact upon performance in evolving workplace models. However, the literature demonstrated that job rules are foundational to employ performance with clarity and adaptability aligning month of serving as critical drivers. The organisations must design roles that not only match employee capabilities but also adapt to change of work environment which ensures both individual and organisational success.

2.5.5 The relationship between technological factors and employee performance

Technological factors have emerged as a double-edged sword within the contemporary workplace which provides productivity gains but also generates new stressors that undermine performance. Bourlakis (2023) and Sharma (2024) both provided empirical evidence indicating significant negative relationship between technology related challenges and employee performance through emphasizing different dimensions about the problem.

Bourlakis (2023) highlighted the psychological strain from digital overload and constant connectivity. The study reports that continuous information flows along with notifications and multitasking pressure leading to information fatigue, significantly decreases employee efficiency ($p < 0.01$). These factors suggested that technology while designing to facilitate communication and speed contribute to cognitive exhaustion and reduce task focus via overuse. Bourlakis (2023) frames this issue as a primary behavior and psychological noting how unmanaged digital demands could reduce creativity along with concentration and output.

In contrast, Sharma (2024) emphasized upon the organisation shortcomings specifically the role of complex technological systems and insufficient training. The study identifies technological stress as a critical outcome linked to job dissatisfaction, anxiety and decreasing productivity ($p < 0.05$). Unlike Bourlakis (2023) who focused on digital saturation at an individual level Sharma has focused on system-level barriers including inadequate digital literacy programs along with insufficient Technical Support and poorly designed platforms These organisations fail

to create environment where employees feel ill equipped to adapt leading to disengagement and lowering morale.

Apart from the differences both studies converge on the argument that unmanaged technological factors divers affect employee performance. Dashad limitation lies in focus on traditional work environment without considering the emerging hybrid and project-based environment. While the hybrid models characterized by disperse teams, the reliance on virtual tools and asynchronous collaboration intensify both digital overload and system complexity. The employees in such an environment provide juggle multiple platforms along with time zones and communication channels compounding the risk of burnout and disengagement. These gaps have revealed the relevance of further research specifically in project management organisations in Azerbaijan where hybrid models are increasingly prevalent. Through the exploration of technological stresses and manifesting these contexts further studies could provide targeted strategies including improvement of digital infrastructure, workload management system training initiatives to balance the benefits of technology with sustainable employee performance.

2.6 Literature gap

The existing literature provided an extensive insight into how stress, team dynamics, work environment, job roles, individual reliance and technological factors shape employee performance. Studies such as Daniel (2019), Burbar (2021) and Zhenjing (2022) demonstrated that her workplace conditions along with role ambiguity and psychological stresses negatively affect productivity. While Bourlakis (2023) and Sharma (2024) highlighted the challenges of digital overload and techno stresses While Xu (2021) and Prasad (2024) emphasize upon the critical role of team dynamics. Frimanson (2021) and Barinua (2022) established the positive link between self-reliance and adaptability. Overall, these studies confirm that organisational structure, technological adaptation and psychological resilience significantly influence the performance outcomes.

However, a clear gap exists in applying such findings to hybrid and project-based work settings in Azerbaijan most of the review studies are grounded in traditional or general workplace atmosphere which neglects the unique stressors and opportunities presented by hybrid work models including communication barriers, role ambiguity, digital fatigue and demand for continuous adaptability. Furthermore, theoretical frameworks such as Job demand control model,

Pearson Environment Fit Theory and Social Exchange theory provided explanatory value where they require updating the reflection evolving digitalized and flexible work structures. The study addresses these gaps by exploring stress performance relationships in Azerbaijan's hybrid project management organisations which provide timely and context specific insight.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of Research Problem

The emergence of hybrid work arrangements specifically in Azerbaijan's project management industry has introduced significant challenges along with the opportunities specifically in relation to employee stress and employee performance. While these hybrid models provide flexibility and autonomy but they simultaneously create psychological and operational stresses including workload intensification, role ambiguity, communication breakdowns and blurred work life boundaries (Mutebi, 2022; Mustajab, 2024). Statistical evidence has indicated the severity of these issues such as 45% of hybrid employees reporting high stress levels and 65% struggling to separate their personal professional life leading to reduced productivity and engagement (Rahman, 2020; Ahmad, 2024).

The specific stresses highlight particular problematic areas in project-based environments such as 58% of employees citing role ambiguity when working remotely, reducing accountability while 63% highlighting communication failures in the virtual meetings, delaying decision-making and undermining collaboration (Mustajab, 2024). Furthermore, the extended working hours and poor task clarity contribute to emotional expulsion with 49% of reporting has been increased while workload pressure. The technological barriers including unstable Internet and inadequate information technology support exacerbate stress with 41% of employees experience in digital strain (Naysmmith, 2024).

Despite the growing global literature on hybrid work the limited empirical evidence exists in the Azerbaijan project management context specifically regarding how these stresses affect the key performance matrix including job satisfaction and engagement. Addressing such gap is necessary to develop daily strategies to safeguard employee well-being and ensure project success while strengthening the organisational competitiveness in an evolving hybrid work environment.

3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

The research operationalizes three key theoretical frameworks such as Job Demand Control model, Social Exchange theory and the Work Engagement model to investigate the relationship between employee performance and stress in the hybrid project management industry in Azerbaijan.

First the Job Demand Control model is operationalized through the variables including workload intensity, decision making autonomy and time pressure. The survey items use like a scale to measure perceived job demand including deadlines and multitasking against the job control which is autonomy in planning task This captures the balance between the strain and control in shaping stress outcomes.

Secondly, Social Exchange theory is applied to measure the reciprocal dynamics between organisations and employees. It constructs including organisational support, recognition, fairness and trust being assessed to evaluate with the employees perceived balance exchanges. These indicators, including “my organisation supports me when I face difficulties in hybrid work” operationalizes the reciprocity and psychological rewards.

Thirdly, work engagement models are integrated to capture employee engagement dynamics such as dedication, absorption and vigor. The operational license uses service scales adapted through Bakkar (2014) and George (2021) which focus on both personal resources such as resilience and self-reliance and the organisational resources including manager support and team collaboration.

Critically each of these models provide explanatory power via the integration addresses a gap by linking structural, psychological and relational factors. These multidimensional operationalization makes sure that the robust testing of stress performance dynamics in hybrid work context move beyond the single theory limitation.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the research is to critically examine in how stress factors influence employee performance within the hybrid project management organisations in Azerbaijan As the global literature indicated the diverse effects of role ambiguity, job demands, poor team dynamics and technological overload (Daniel, 2019; Sharma, 2024) the findings remain underexplored specifically in hybrid work models and within the developing economies.

The study seeks to bridge the gap by testing the established theories such as Job Demand Control model, Social Exchange theory and the Work Engagement model in the Azerbaijan context. The purpose is not only to diagnose but to identify stresses and their performance outcomes along with prescriptive and providing evidence-based recommendations for project

managers. Apart from the prior research that isolates single variables, the study integrates structural and relational along with psychological factors.

Specific Aims

- Identifying the key stressors in the hybrid work setting of Azerbaijan's project management organisations which include workload, imbalance role, ambiguity communication breakdowns and technological challenges.
- Measure the relationship between the identified stresses and performance of the employees indicated including engagement, productivity and job satisfaction.
- Examining the impact of stress on employee outcomes in a hybrid work which highlights both psychological well-being and operational efficiency.
- Critically assessing the organisation of practices to manage hybrid stress to determine gaps and weaknesses.
- Providing practical and evidence-based recommendations to reduce stress and improve performance in project-based organisations in Azerbaijan.

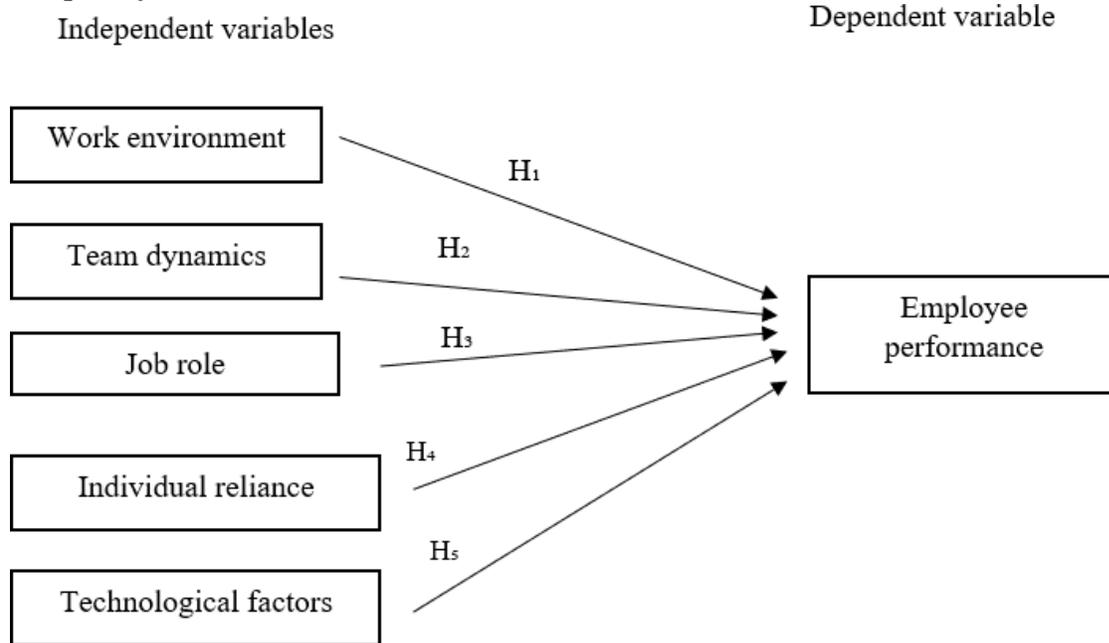
Research Questions

1. What are the effects of stress unemployed performance in hybrid work settings within the project management organisations in Azerbaijan?
2. What are the key factors that cause stress in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?
3. What is the relationship between key factors that cause stress and employee performance in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?
4. What is the impact of stress on employees' performance in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?
5. What recommendations to successfully manage work stress to increase employee performance in Azerbaijan's project management organisations?

Hypotheses

Figure 3.1

Conceptual framework



H₁: There is a relationship between work environment and employee performance.

H₂: There is a relationship between team dynamics and employee performance.

H₃: There is a relationship between job role and employee performance.

H₄: There is a relationship between individual reliance and employee performance.

H₅: There is a relationship between technological factors and employee performance.

3.4 Research Design

Research philosophy

Research philosophy is referred to the set of beliefs and assumptions in regarding how knowledge is created as well as interpreted and apply in a study (Jansen, 2023). The three dominant philosophies in social science and management research are positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. Positivism considered as the reality is objective and measurable which emphasize upon structured methods including service and statistical analysis (Jansen, 2023). While interpretivism in contrast recognizes the socially constructed nature of reality and focuses upon

the subjective experience through qualitative aspects pragmatism integrates both these factors that argue the choice of methods should depend upon the research problem rather than the rigid adherence to one philosophy (Martela, 2015).

The study adopts pragmatic philosophy since it best accommodates the complexity of stress in hybrid work environment. With the combination of positivist methods such as structured questionnaires with interpretivist insight from the secondary qualitative data the pragmatism provides both depth and breadth (Martela, 2015). It turns out within the practical aspect with flexibility and the ability to generate actionable findings. But pragmatism could present challenges including methodological complexities and the risk of overextension. This could be used to mitigate by aligning with research tools which are closely with objectives and employing triangulation to increase reliability and validity (Martela, 2015).

Research approach

A research approach could be referred to the overall plan and procedure in conducting a study that encompassed the assumptions, techniques and methods for data collection, analysis and for interpretation (Taherdoost, 2022). Widely, the research approaches are classified into inductive and deductive approaches. The deductive approach starts with the existing theories or the hypothesis which are then tested through the empirical observation to confirm or to decline them (Taherdoost, 2022). In contrast, the inductive approach begins with specific observation or data from which the patterns are identified to develop new theories or a conceptual framework (Taherdoost, 2022).

The study adopts a deductive research approach in order to build on existing theories which are related to stress and employ performance in hybrid work environments then DOSA examine through the structural empirical data collection. The deductive approach is more suitable since it allows hypothesis to be tested and to use of standardized survey questionnaires which provide clarity and measurable results to support the objectives. However, it consists of limits such as discovering of novel inside outside the predefined hypothesis (Taherdoost, 2022). In order to mitigate this the study complements quantitative data with qualitative secondary to capture wider contextual understanding and to support the comprehensive analysis of stress factors and performance outcomes.

Research design

The research design is referred to the overall blueprint or strategy which guides how a study is conducted that integrates different components including data collection, analysis and interpretation in a coherent and logical manner (Kennedy-Clark, 2019). The research designs are generally classified into three main types such as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The exploratory design investigates gaining primitive insight into a problem while the descriptive design aims at describing the characteristics of a phenomena and explanatory design investigates the casual relationships between the variables (Kennedy-Clark, 2019).

This study uses mixed method research design with a combination of quantitative data from the structured survey questionnaires with qualitative insight from secondary sources that include empirical studies. The mixed method approach is specifically suitable to examine complex phenomena including stress and employee performance in hybrid work environment which allows for both statistical analysis and deeper contextual understanding. The benefits of designing include comprehensiveness along with triangularization of findings and enhanced validity of results. But the limitations would be the significant amount of time along with effort and resources required for data collection and analysis (Kennedy-Clark, 2019). Overall, the mixed method research design ensure alignment with the research objectives and provide actionable insight to the relationship between stress factors and employee performance.

Research strategy

The research strategy is referred to the overall plan of action which outlines how a study will be conducted to address the research questions and achieve the objectives (Ponto, 2015). It guides the selection of data collection methods as well as analysis and the interpretations of the findings. The common resource strategies consist of experimental, survey, case study, ethnography, action research and archival research. The experimental strategies consist of text cause and effect relationships under the control conditions survey method collects the standardized information from the large population while case studies explore phenomena in depth within a specific context (Ponto, 2015). Ethnography focusses upon culture and social practices while action research aims at solving actual problems collaboratively (Ponto, 2015). The archival research analyzes the existing records and data sources (Ponto, 2015).

This study used survey-based research strategy with the target on the project managers in leading project management organisations in Azerbaijan such as AzPMA, BakuPMC and SGS. The survey uses structured questionnaires to collect the quantitative data while the secondary sources provide qualitative insight. The strategy benefits from the research by efficiently gathering standardized data from a sample and allows generalizable findings. The limitations consist of potential response bias and non-response issues (Ponto, 2015). Such limitations will be mitigated through careful questionnaire design with clear instructions and validation with secondary data to increase the reliability and depth of the analysis.

Research choice

The research choices refer to the approach adopted to combine or select within different research methods to address the study's objectives effectively (Curry, 2019). The common research choice consists of mono method, mixed method and multimethod approaches. The Mono method approach uses a single method either quantitative or qualitative for the data collection analysis (Curry, 2015). A mixed method approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods that consists of a comprehensive understanding by combining numerical data with contextual insight (Curry, 2015). The multi method approach consists of multiple techniques within the same research paradigm either quantitative or qualitative to increase the robustness of the findings (Curry, 2015).

The study uses a mixed method of research choice with the combination of quantitative survey questionnaire with secondary qualitative data from the medical studies. The quantitative survey captures the metro word trends in regard to stress and employee performance in hybrid work settings while the secondary qualitative data provides deeper insight into contextual factors which influence these outcomes. The choice increases the validity and reliability of the findings using data triangularization that allows both breadth and depth of analysis (Curry, 2015). The limitations consist of being time consuming and resource intensive (Curry, 2015). This is mitigated through carefully selecting relevant and high-quality secondary sources to complement and validate the primary data.

Time Horizon

Regarding research methodology the time horizon is considered as the time frame over which data is collected and the study is conducted (Matza, 2016). The two main types of research time horizons commonly applied are cross sectional and longitudinal. The cross-sectional time horizon consists of collecting data at a single point in time which provides a snapshot of variables and their relationships in a specific context The design is often used to assess the present conditions along with patterns or associations. (Matza, 2016).

The study selects a cross-sectional horizon, which gathers data at a single point in time to evaluate the present levels of stress and their impact on employee performance in the hybrid project management organisations in Azerbaijan. The approach is more suitable since it provides faster data collection with quicker insights and efficient use of resources while still meeting the research objectives (Matza, 2016). But the limitations would be the inability to capture the long-term trends and evolving patterns of stress and performance (Matza, 2016). Apart from this it effectively supports the study focus on present day challenges within the hybrid work environment.

3.5 Sampling technique

Sampling is considered as the process of selecting a representative subset of a population to generate valid insight without studying in the entire group (Chauvet, 2017). Widely, the sampling is divided into probability and non-probability methods. In probability sampling technique it consists of simple random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and systematic sampling which ensure each member has a known chance of being chosen (Chauvet, 2017). These methods increase generalizability and reduce bias, but it requires a large resource and detailed population of data (Chauvet, 2017).

In contrast non-probability sampling method consists of purposive, quota, convenience and snowball sampling which are based on research judgment and accessibility (Chauvet, 2017). While these are less generalizable, they are also cost effective and allow for targeted exploration of specific groups.

For this research purposive sampling is more suitable since it enables the selection of project managers in Azerbaijan's project-based organisations who directly experience hybrid work challenges however the benefit lies within gathering rich and context specific insight from

knowledgeable participants that aligns with the research objectives (Chauvet, 2017). However, the limitations include reduction of generalizability as the findings may not be present in all industries (Chauvet, 2017). This could be mitigated by ensuring diversity in company size and industry to increase validity.

3.6 Population and Participant Selection

The research population is referred to as the entire group of individuals who share common characteristics which are relevant to the study. For this research the population consists of project managers and employees working in hybrid work models within the project-based organisations specifically in Azerbaijan. According to Rivermate (2025) there are approximately 12,000 project managers across organisations in Azerbaijan such as AzPMA, BakuPMC, Encotec, SGC, KTB and MECC. By studying the entire population, it would be impractical in terms of time as well as cost and accessibility

Therefore, a sample size of 373 participants in calculating using 95% of confidence level and 5% of margin of error (Sample Size Calculator, 2024). This ensures a statistically reliable representation of a broader group.

The participant's selection is guided by purposive sampling which focuses on project managers and employees who actively engage in hybrid work settings. The participants are best positioned to provide insight into stressors and the effect on performance in projective and context. Through the purpose of sampling, it limits the generalization and ensures diversity across company size as well as industry and experience level that strengthens the representativeness and validity of these findings. Therefore, this election strategy directly reflects the population most affected by the hybrid work stress making it align with the studies objectives.

3.7 Instrumentation

The research uses a survey questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection with structured into three parts such as an introduction with consent then demographic questions and Likert scale items which address the key variables. Such design aligns with the studies deductive approach and enables the testing of the theoretical assumptions specifically on stress and employ performance in hybrid project-based environment. Also, the use of closed ended questions and standardized like a scale increase the reliability to ensure consistency across responses while also facilitating quantitative analysis and statistical testing (Bhandari, 2021).

However, instrumentalization questionnaires are not without limitations since the low response rates may affect representativeness while ambiguous or misinterpreted items could also compromise validity specifically without researcher clarification. Additionally, the reliance upon self-reported data risks the social desirability bias where the participants provide perceive per favorable answers rather than truthful reflections. To mitigate the challenge is the questionnaire undergoes a pilot testing with 5% of the sample size which is 19 to ensure clarity of wording and incorporate anonymity to encourage honest responses. Overall, the instrument helps in balancing efficiency with rigour but requires careful design to maximize reliability and validity.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection indicates a crucial stage that ensure the reliability and validity of the findings requiring a systematic planning to align with the study's objectives (Bhandari, 2020). For this research survey questionnaire is distributed through Google Forms as the primary method supplemented with secondary qualitative evidence from empirical studies. The procedure consists of pilot tests with 18 participants to evaluate clarity and to reduce ambiguity and refine questions where this step is necessary to increase the instrument's reliability and to avoid response bias.

The concept forms will ensure that ethical compliance while distribution through WhatsApp and email referrals facilitate cost effective and rapid reach. However, the convenience-based approach risks sampling bias where the participants are recruited through personal networks potentially reducing the generalizability. Furthermore, the self-reported data raises concerns of social desirability bias via the respondents may under report stress or overstate their performance.

Apart from the challenges the approach is more suitable for hybrid work settings where the digital distribution increases accessibility and efficiency with the combination of quantitative server data with secondary evidence strengthen the data triangulation provides both numerical trends and contextual understanding (Bhandari, 2020). Overall, such procedure balances efficiency with cost effectiveness and depth but demands careful design and participant diversity to reduce bias and increase validity.

3.8.1 Data Management

Data management consists of the systematic handling along with storage and proceeding process of collected information to ensure accuracy, accessibility and security through the research

process (Bhandari, 2020). For the study quantitative survey data and qualitative secondary data are organized as well as coded and stored digitally in securing the folders with password protection to maintain confidentiality. Each participant is designing a unique identifier to anonymize the responses and prevent identification which ensures ethical compliance.

Data integrity is also maintained through regular backups and verification checks to avoid loss or corruption. While proper documentation of data collection procedures ensures reproducibility and transparency. Then data analysis, the data will be imported into SPSS for statistical processing. With the clear labeling of variables to facilitate regression correlation and reliability testing. The qualitative data from secondary sources such as Xu (2021), Daniel (2019), Frimanson (2021), Chen (2022), Barinua (2022), Bourlakis (2023), Prasad (2024), and Sharma (2024) will be systematically coded and categorized to align with the conceptual framework. With effective data management it increases validity, reliability and credibility of the findings while protecting the sensitive information.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis consists of systematic examination and interpretation of collected data into the extract meaning insight to align with the research objectives (Romesburg, 2019). For this study quantitative survey responses are entered into SPSS which is a widely used statistical software to organize as well as process and analyze the data efficiently. SPSS provides a user-friendly interface that is suitable for regression, correlation and analysis of variance although it has limited customization compared to program-based tools such as Python.

Reliability awareness testing is conducted first to ensure consistency measurement and accuracy of survey instruments. Regression analysis is used to identify the relationship between independent stress factors and dependent employee performance outcomes that highlight the impact magnitude of predictors (Romesburg, 2019). While ANOVA is used to compare group means to determine significant differences across the demographic and organisational categories (Webster, 2018). The correlation analysis is the strength and direction of association between variables to support the hypothesis testing (Kumar, 2012).

Furthermore, graphically and tabular representations are used to present results clearly with contextual interpretation provided alongside references for empirical literature. Increases the

transparency with rigor and credibility of findings while it allows practical implications for hybrid work performance management to be drawn.

3.9.1 Reliability and Validity of the Study

Reliability

Reliability is referred to the consistency and stability of the research instrument to produce similar results under consistent conditions (Aykanat Girgin, 2016). For this study reliability is ensured through pilot testing of 5% of the sample as in internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha for Likert-scale items. A high alpha (≥ 0.7) will indicate that the survey items consistently measure stress factors and employee performance. Furthermore, standardized administration procedures and clear instructions will minimize the measurement errors and increase reliability.

Validity

Validity addresses if the instrument accurately measures the intended constructs (Aykanat Girgin, 2016). Content variety is achieved using expert reviews of server questions which ensure alignment with theoretical constructions including job stress as well as hybrid work and dynamics and performance outcomes. Construct validity is tested using factor analysis to confirm that the measured variables reflect the underlying concepts. By ensuring reliability and validity strengthens the credibility as well as accuracy and generalizability of the findings with Azerbaijan hybrid project management context.

3.10 Ethics

The ethical considerations are central to maintaining the integrity and credibility of any recent study (Harris, 2020). For this study the participants are provided with informed consent clearly explaining the purpose of research as well as procedures along with their potential risks and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any point without consequences. The confidentiality and data protection is ensured by anonymizing the responses and using referral numbers rather than personal identities alongside secure data storage of data collection. The researcher also adheres to principles of transparency and impartiality which avoid any form of bias or coercion or deception during data collection analysis. The approval from the relevant Ethics Committee will be obtained to guarantee compliance with international ethical standards. Furthermore, the accurate citation and acknowledgement of secondary sources uphold the

academic integrity and validity. Such ethical measures are necessary to protect participants as well as to maintain trust and ensure reliability and credibility of the research outcomes in Azerbaijan's hybrid project management context.

3.11 Research Design Limitation

While the mixed method research design provides a comprehensive approach to the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data it carries inherent limitations (Kennedy-Clark, 2019). The time and resource intensity is significant since collecting server data from project managers and reviewing secondary sources requires careful coordination and extended effort which could cause delays in the research timeline. Another would be data integration challenges that would arise when combined in numerical survey results with qualitative insights specifically creating difficulties in interpreting findings. Furthermore, the cross-sectional nature of the design limits the ability to capture long term trends or changes in stress levels and employee performance overtime affecting the generalizability. The reliance on self-reported data could introduce biases including exaggeration or underreporting of stress and performance issues. Apart from these limitations, careful planning along with triangulation and robust data analysis techniques could mitigate risk and increase the reliability and applicability of the study outcomes.

3.12 Conclusion

The methodology chapter systematically outlined the approach for evaluating the effects of stress on employee performance in hybrid work settings in Azerbaijan project management organisations. The chapter address the research problem emphasizing upon the stresses such as role ambiguity, communication challenges, workload imbalance and technological factors. A pragmatism research philosophy was adopted integrating both with positive and interpretivist perspective to justify the mixed method design. Furthermore, the deductive approach allowed the testing of the theoretical construct using structured survey questions with secondary qualitative data providing contextual insight. The purposive sampling strategies and participant selection ensure representation from the key project management and ethical consideration including informed consent and confidentiality with voluntary participation means strictly applied. With a sample size of 373 the data collection is conducted, and analysis method includes regression, correlation and ANOVA testing to describe the relationship between variables and also ensured reliability and validity testing. The limitations such as potential self-report biases with resource

intensity and generalizability consists of were acknowledged. Overall, the methodology provided a robust and ethical framework to examine the impact of hybrid work stress upon employee performance.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter unveils the empirical results of the research in a defined order that reflects the analytic workflow. A normative analysis is the first step in the investigation where reliability and validity measures are reported along with the pilot study. The entire instrument refinement process is described in this section, comprising of internal consistency checks, item performance reviews, and evidence gathered to support content and construct adequacy which implies that the final survey used for the main data collection is both stable and fit for purpose.

Next, the chapter proceeds to the descriptive analysis. The first thing it does is to show the demographic features of the participants so that the context of the sample is established. This consists of age distribution, gender balance, organisational tenure, and experience with hybrid working. Then, it presents descriptive statistics for each construct used in the research, showing the measures of central tendency and dispersion allowing the reader to see overall levels and variability before any relationships are examined. These descriptive results combinedly provide the factual baseline upon which later inferences are interpreted.

Ultimately, the chapter talks about inferential statistics which are used to evaluate the propositions of the study. Correlation analysis is the first step in this process which aims at spotting the direction and strength of bivariate associations between each stress-related area and performance of employees. Next, it calculates a multiple linear regression model to determine the individual contribution of each predictor with the rest being constant, giving model fit and coefficient tests as part of the report. At the end of the inferential section, formal hypothesis testing is done, and it is specified for each hypothesis whether the evidence supports or denies it, according to the set criteria. What is presented as a multi-stage procedure is in fact a simple way of ensuring that the measurement quality, sample profile, and statistical relationships are communicated both transparently and coherently.

4.2 Reliability and validity

The quality of the measurements was a prerequisite for basing the conclusions of the study on reliable evidence and not on the error of the instruments. Reliability testing during the pilot stage determined the internal consistency by means of coefficient alpha and item-total correlations. This confirmed that the items in each construct were yielding similar results and

pointed to any weak indicators for either refinement or elimination. Validity testing ensured that the instrument was measuring the intended concepts. Content validity was ensured through expert review with respect to the study's conceptual framework. Construct validity was verified through factor-analytic checks including sampling adequacy and factor loadings to ascertain the existence of a coherent dimensional structure. Convergent validity was signified by the presence of strong within-construction loadings and average variance extracted being above the commonly accepted thresholds.

Table 4.1

Reliability

Item Reliability Statistics			
	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
WE	2.58	0.346	0.783
TD	3.23	0.637	0.869
JR	2.58	0.346	0.783
IR	2.51	0.389	0.777
TF	2.57	0.357	0.849
EP	2.51	0.389	0.777

Reliability is the measurement instrument's ability to produce consistent and trustworthy results: it is the degree to which the instrument produces similar outcomes under the same conditions and reduces random errors to the minimum extent. In survey research, the most commonly used indicator for measuring internal consistency is Cronbach's alpha, which evaluates how closely related the items intended to measure the same construct are. Acceptable, good, and excellent values for α are conventionally set at .70, .80, and .90 respectively. In this research, the alpha coefficients varied from 0.777 to 0.869, hence the reliability across all constructs was ranged acceptable to very good.

Moreover, regularly carry out item–total correlations as well as “alpha if item deleted” diagnostics to ensure that each item makes a positive contribution to the scale. Reliability has many types, namely internal consistency, test–retest (stability over time), and inter-rater equivalence—each one tackling a different source of potential measurement error. A highly reliable measurement is not a valid measurement, but it is a condition for validity: unstable scores cannot properly represent the underlying concept. Interpreting alpha requires the assumption of approximate one-dimensionality and tau-equivalence; thus, the reliability evaluation is accompanied by factor-analytic checks to determine the coherent structure prior to the application of correlations, regression, and hypothesis testing.

Table 4.1

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

χ^2	df	p
Inf	15	<.001
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		
	MSA	
Overall	0.5	
WE	0.5	
TD	0.5	
JR	0.5	
IR	0.5	
TF	0.5	
EP	0.5	

Bartlett's test of sphericity was highly significant ($\chi^2 \approx \infty$, $df = 15$, $p < .001$) and thus rejected the null hypothesis of an identity matrix for the inter-item correlation matrix. In other words, the items are sufficiently correlated to warrant factor extraction instead of just treating them as uncorrelated. However, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is 0.50 for the total and 0.50

for each construction (work environment, team dynamics, job role, individual reliance, technological factors, and employee performance).

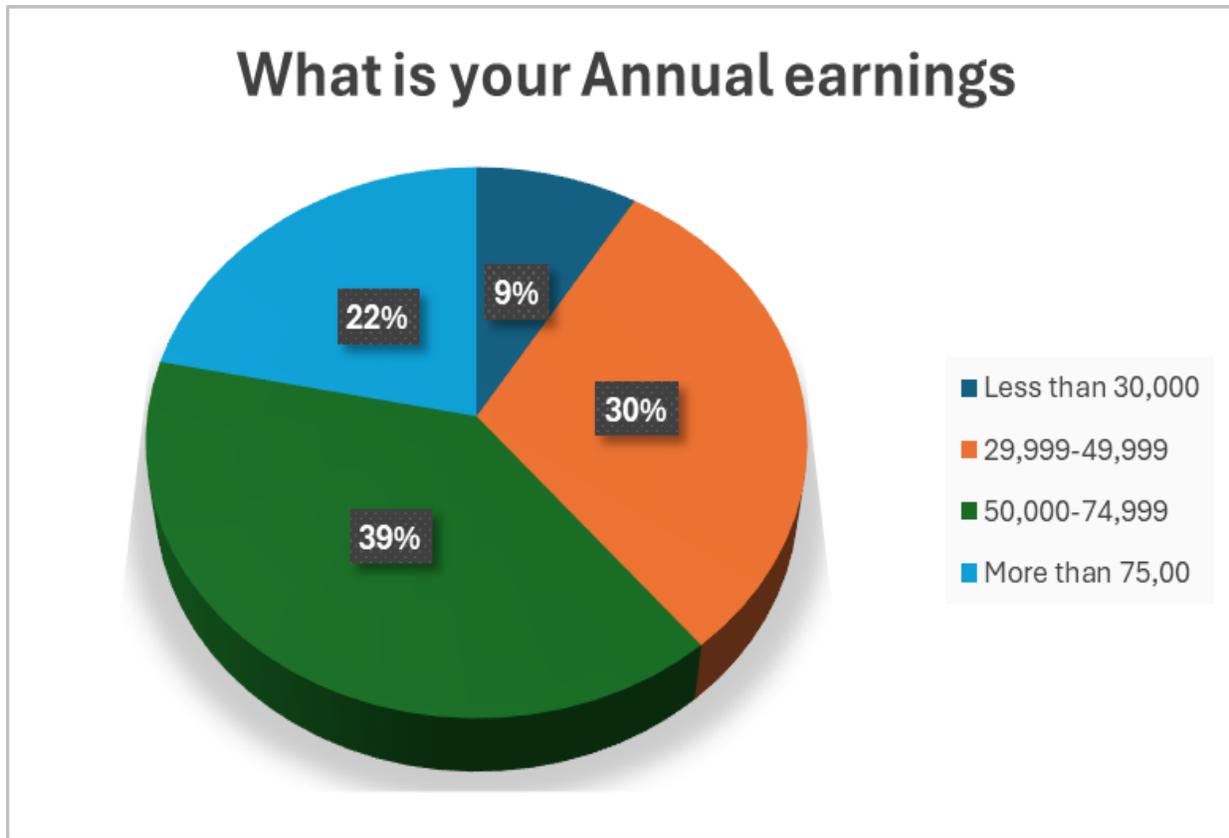
A KMO value of 0.50 represents the lower limit of the range that is “barely acceptable,” which means that the amount of variance shared among the items is rather small and the common factors are only weakly delineated. The combined conclusion of these outcomes is that an exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis is possible but should be done with caution. The actions that follow are suggested: to examine the item wording for conceptual overlap, to remove or revise items that are weak, and, if possible, to increase the number of items for each construct or the sample size to enhance the communalities. Reporting communalities along with factor loadings will reveal whether each scale has formed a cohesive latent structure.

4.3 The demographic information

The following section illustrates the demographic data that has been acquired for the study. Since the research was regional specific and industry professionals that have worked in hybrid working environments and more importantly project management field was crucial .demographic data was essential to not only identify the profile of the participants it was to ensure that participants had the relevant working experience in order to comment on the key areas related to the study let's focus.

Figure 4.1

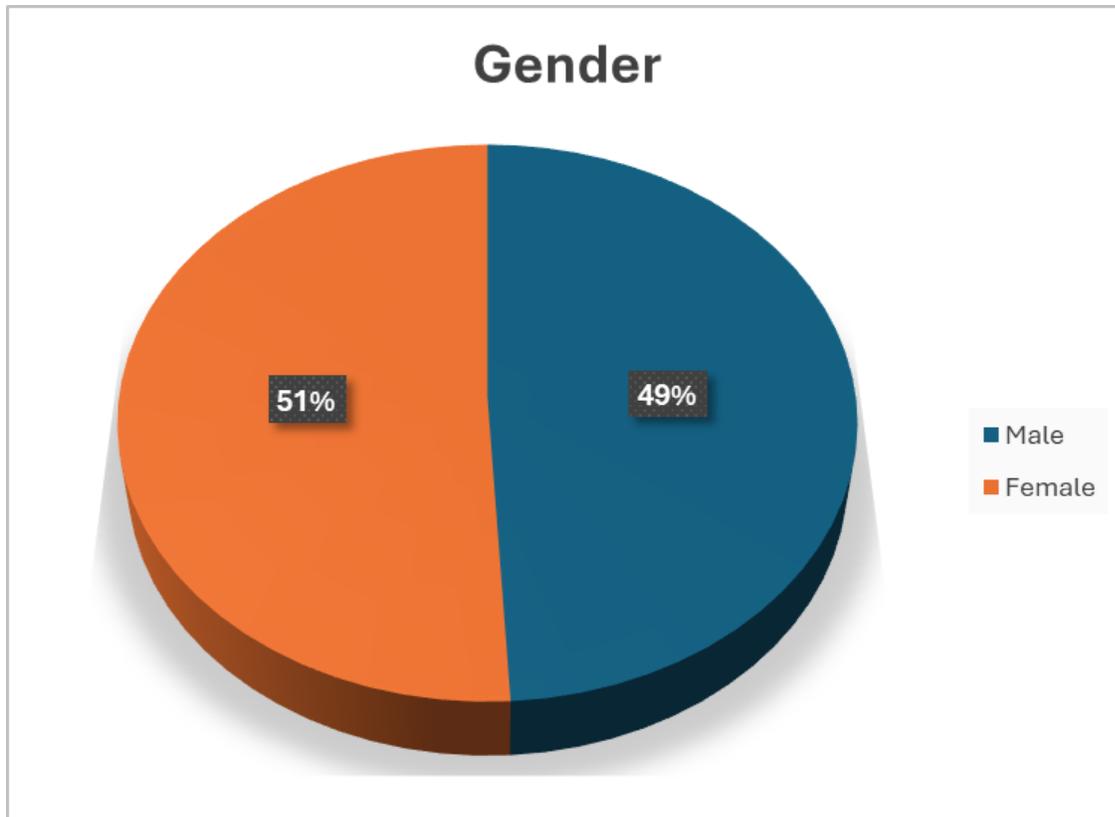
Annual earnings



The majority of respondents belong to the middle-income category. The biggest portion of them (39%) gets £50,000–£74,999 and then comes 30% with incomes from £29,999 to £49,999. Those who earn more than £75,000 make up 22% of the sample, whereas just 9% declare their income to be less than £30,000. In general, the sample population is tilted towards middle to upper-middle wages, indicating the participants' relatively strong purchasing power and stable financial situation, thus, they can spend on non-essential goods and services.

Figure 2.2

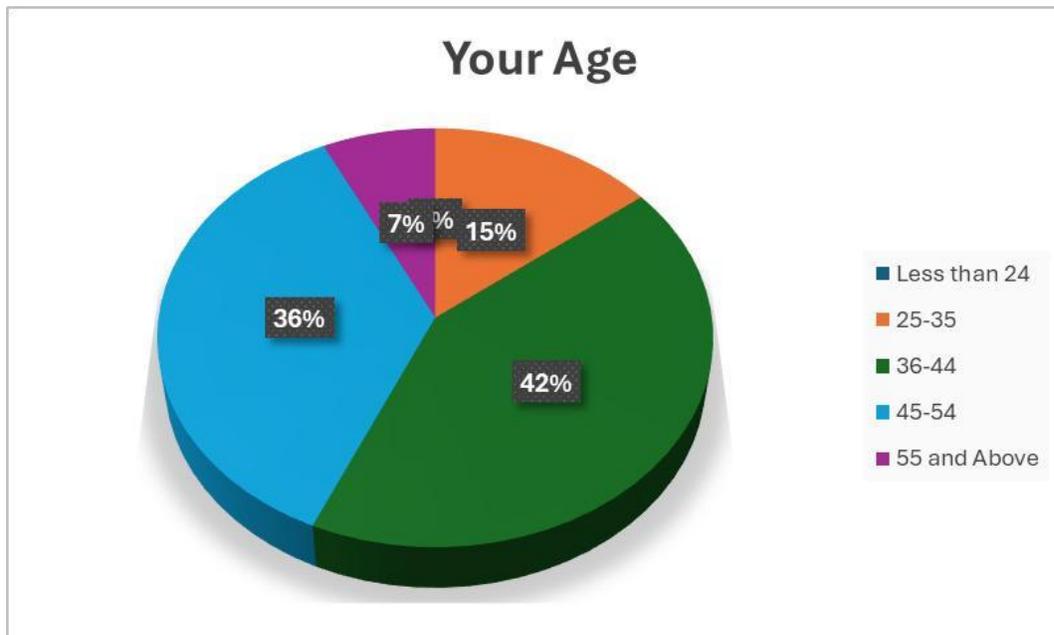
Gender



The sample is nearly perfectly gender-balanced, with 51% being female and 49% being male. Such a close representation greatly minimizes the danger of gender-related sampling bias and at the same time, allows for the making of valuable comparisons across different groups. The results are hardly influenced by the predominance of one gender, thus making the study easier to apply to the whole population. Still, the minor differences may signal the demographic subtleties rather than the structural imbalance in the whole case.

Figure 4.3

Age

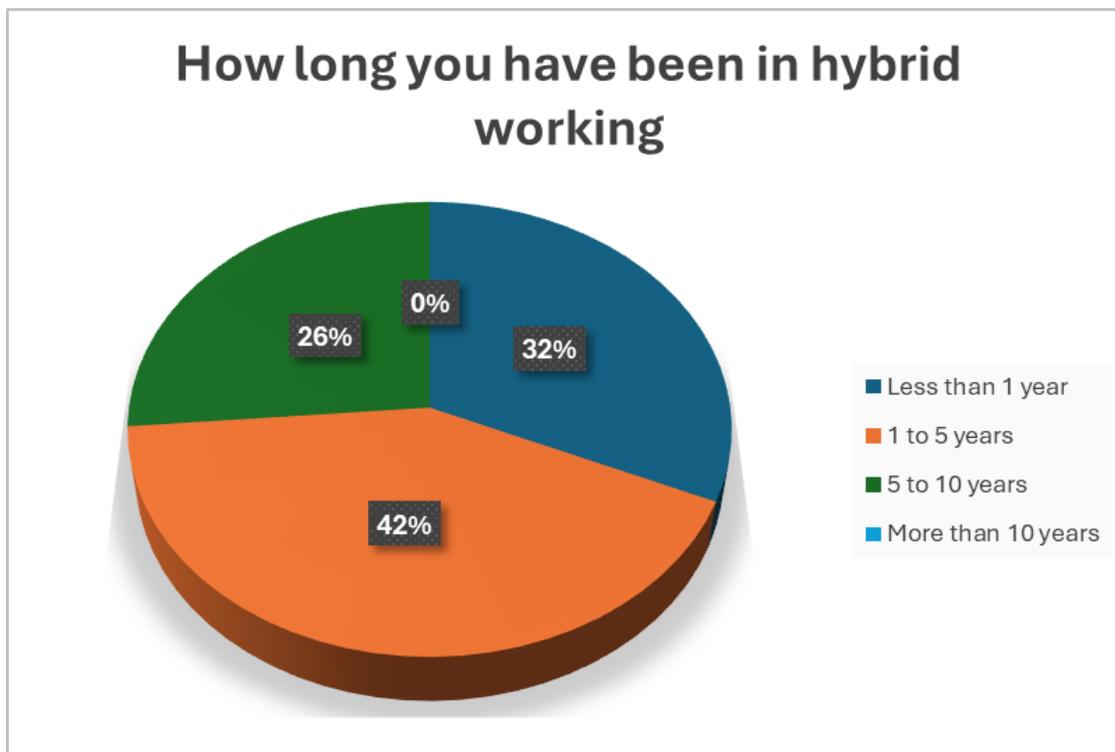


Most of the people who answered the survey are at the midpoint of their careers; 42% of the respondents were 36–44 years old, and 36% were 45–54 years old. The 25–35 age group makes up 15% of the total, while the 55 and older group is only 7%; respondents younger than 24 are so few that they are almost not counted at all.

This skewness points to a sample that has a lot of accumulated work experience, relatively stable incomes, and extensive authority in making decisions, which are all possible determinants to the preferences and risk tolerance. Thus, the results may be mostly common to middle-aged cohorts rather than to early-career or late-retirement groups. The fact that younger and older groups are not sufficiently represented should be recognized as a potential cause of sampling bias, particularly for behaviors that vary with lifecycle stage.

Figure 4.4

How long you have been in hybrid work setting

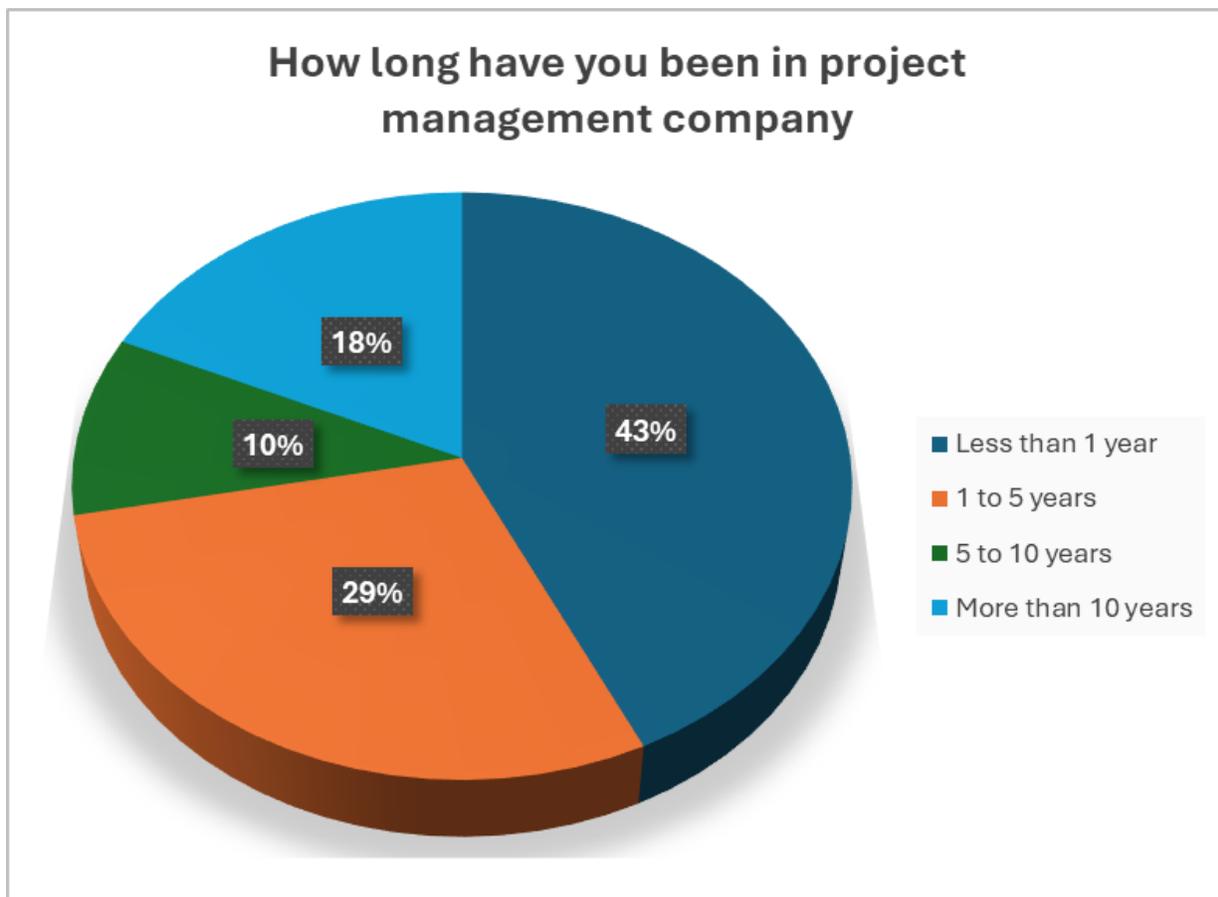


The sample shows long experience with hybrid work. The majority of the respondents have 1 to 5 years of experience (42%), next are those with less than 1 year (32%) and those with 5 to 10 years (26%); no one admits to having worked more than 10 years under this scheme. This pattern indicates a level of familiarity that is enough for making informed decisions but at the same time still shows quite recent adoption.

Thus, the attitudes are likely to reflect the consolidation stage of hybrid practices rather than early trial periods, long-term institutionalization or disappearance. The analyses should thus take cohort effects into account: the outcomes may be due to learning curves and policy maturation over the last five years, with little evidence on very long-run impacts.

Figure 4.5

How long have you been in project management company



The duration of employment in project management companies mostly ranges from short to medium. The majority of the employees have been with the company for less than one year (43%), 1-5 years (29%) is the second-largest segment. People tend to stay longer at their places less: 18% count more than 10 years and only 10% speak about 5-10 years.

The above numbers represent a scenario where the workforce is new, internal mobility has taken place, or the sector has experienced churn. The interpretations of the organisational practices and hybrid-working policies are probably based on the very first socialization and change-adoption phases rather than the long-standing institutional memory. It is recommended to consider the tenure effects in the analyses because the cultures, productivity and retention incentives may be

perceived differently by newcomers, established staff and legacy employees, thus being the major reason for the differences in the views.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The dataset was examined using descriptive statistics to present the main characteristics of the data succinctly and to show the distribution of responses clearly before any inferential analysis was done. For the research on hybrid working models, the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum were calculated for the various factors such as Work Environment, Team Dynamics, Job Role, Individual Reliance, Technological Factors, and Employee Performance (N = 373).

The meaning reflects the average level of agreement on each construct, and the standard deviation indicates the extent of disagreement around that mean score. The minimum and maximum define the range of scores that have been witnessed. Together, these measures indicate the general levels at which the conditions and performance are perceived, as well as the points where the opinions of the respondents are most similar or most different within the hybrid work context.

Table 4.2

Descriptive

	WE	TD	JR	IR	TF	EP
N	373	373	373	373	373	373
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	2.55	2.60	2.54	2.56	2.55	2.54
Standard deviation	0.436	0.522	0.357	0.391	0.445	0.459
Minimum	1.20	1.20	2.00	2.00	1.20	1.20
Maximum	4.00	4.20	3.60	3.60	4.00	4.00

The average values of the variables are grouped together, ranging from 2.54 to 2.60 on what appears to be a five-point agreement scale, suggesting a moderate level of approval across all constructors. Performance of employees gets an average score of 2.54 and a standard deviation

of 0.459, which shows that the perceptions are moderately dispersed around a level just below halfway of the overall performance rating.

The factors of work environment and technology both have a mean of 2.55, with the standard deviations being 0.436 and 0.445 respectively, which suggests that their central tendency and variability are the same as those of employee performance. Team dynamics have the highest average of 2.60 but also the largest dispersion of 0.522, hence respondents have different opinions about team experience, but the differences are slight. Job Role has the same average as 2.54 but the lowest standard deviation of 0.357, meaning that the opinions about the clarity and design of roles are quite similar and strongly held among the respondents. Individual Reliance has a mean of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 0.391, reflecting relatively low variability.

The observed minimum and maximum give more indications to type of response recorded. The lower boundary for Work Environment, Technological Factors, Team Dynamics, and Employee Performance can be set at approximately 1.20, which is the same as the lowest composite scores resulting from averaging multiple items rated on a one-to-five scale.

On the other hand, Job Role and Individual Reliance have lower bounds of 2.00 which might suggest that the lower end of the range is limited, perhaps due to the nature of the items, the respondents' reluctance to give lower ratings, or the way the composite was put together. The highest scores vary from 3.60 for Job Role and Individual Reliance to 4.20 for Team Dynamics, implying that very high ratings are not usual for role design and reliance, while a portion of respondents report even more favorable team experiences.

4.4.2 Correlation and regression analysis

Correlation and regression analyses were carried out to reveal the connection between workers' performance and the quality of the workplace in hybrid working scenarios. Correlation demonstrates the direction and strength of relationships between Work Environment, Team Dynamics, Job Role, Individual Reliance, Technological Factors, and Employee Performance identifying which factors are in sync.

Regression builds on this by calculating the individual effect of each predictor while the others are kept constant, thus distinguishing overlapping influences typical in organisational contexts. Both methods not only disprove or prove relationships among factors but also rank

them according to importance when examined together. Evidence obtained from these analyses directs interventions that are based on evidence, thus allocating resources to the most powerful drivers of performance.

Table 3.4
Correlation

		EP
WE	Pearson Correlation	0.843
	N	373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
TD	Pearson Correlation	0.857
	N	373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
JR	Pearson Correlation	0.136
	N	373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
IR	Pearson Correlation	0.225
	N	373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
TF	Pearson Correlation	0.824
	N	373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001

The correlation between Work Environment and Employee Performance reveals a value of 0.843, which clearly falls under the strong positive relationship category according to the criteria used. The conclusion from this correlation is that those workers who have favorable physical and psychological conditions, sufficient resources, and excellent organisational climate will be the ones reporting highest performance. This correlation is not only strong but also statistically significant as indicated by the p value being < .001; thus, the measures aimed at the enhancement of workspace adequacy, safety, and supportive policies are likely to be accompanied by positive performance outcomes.

Team Dynamics correlation with Employee Performance is 0.857 and is a strong positive relationship which is also significant at $p < .001$. The finding indicates that communication quality, trust, and collaboration among team members are the main factors that determine performance. Sharing information openly and resolving conflicts in a friendly manner seem to create an environment where people can perform very effectively. Therefore, initiatives that

promote psychological safety and inter-departmental teamwork are likely to result in significant improvements in performance.

Job Role has a correlation of 0.136 with Employee Performance, which indicates a weak positive relationship and is significant at $p < .001$. Employees' understanding of their roles, freedom to decide how to do their jobs, and workload management are important factors; however, their performance association is limited in this study. The effect of statistical significance is taken to be the relatively large sample size; in practice, job design improvements may yield benefits where confusion or misfit is pronounced, but performance shifts should not be assumed that big.

Individual Reliance has a correlation of 0.225 with Employee Performance, which is a weak positive relationship at $p < .001$. The elimination of single-point-of-failure risks through training, documentation, and sharing knowledge seems to be slightly correlated with better performance.

Technological Factors give a correlation of 0.824 with Employee Performance, which is a strong positive relationship at $p < .001$. The reliability, usability, and excellent integration of tools are all closely tied to performance. Therefore, initiatives to cut down on downtime and improve compatibility are likely to result in stronger employee outcomes.

The results are bivariate and do not consider the shared variance among the predictors. As such the subsequent multivariate analyses along with collinearity diagnostics were used to help in determining the unique contribution of each factor.

Table 4.4***Linear Regression***

Model Fit Measures		
Model	R	R²
1	0.927	0.859

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=373

ANOVA Test					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
WE	3.093	1	3.0931	103.0	<.001
TD	5.433	1	5.4328	181.0	<.001
JR	1.019	1	1.0186	33.9	<.001

Model Coefficients - EP					
Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients	SE	Standardized coefficients Beta β	t	p
WE	0.4214	0.0415	0.4	10.151	<.001
TD	0.373	0.0277	0.424	13.453	<.001
JR	0.2162	0.0371	0.168	5.825	<.001
IR	0.225	0.0332	0.192	6.77	<.001
TF	0.1725	0.0398	0.167	4.331	<.001

The Employee Performance Prediction Multiple Regression Model reported a very high overall fit. The R correlation between the observed and the predicted values is equal to 0.927, and the coefficient of determination (R²) is equal to 0.859. This means that roughly 86% of the variance in Employee Performance can be accounted for by the combined effects of Work Environment, Team Dynamics, Job Role, Individual Reliance, and Technological Factors. In models of this caliber, the omnibus F statistic typically checks if the predictors as a whole contribute to the predictions beyond the intercept-only baseline; considering the extremely high R and R² values and the statistically significant coefficient tests below, the overall model is clearly significant.

The evidence for the contribution of individual predictors remains the same regardless of the t and p values. Team Dynamics has the largest standardized effect and so with beta equal to 0.424 and a t value of 13.453, $p < .001$. After controlling other predictors, this means that the relationship with Employee Performance remains strong and positive. Work Environment comes in second, beta equal to 0.400 with a t value of 10.151, $p < .001$, and once again the independent contribution is large. Individual Reliance boasts beta equal to 0.192 with a t value of 6.770, $p < .001$, and Job Role shows beta equal to 0.168 with a t value of 5.825, $p < .001$. Technological Factors present beta equal to 0.167 with a t value of 4.331, $p < .001$. The consistent pattern of predictors being $p < .001$ suggests strong evidence that each factor positively contributes to performance when considered with the others.

The unstandardized coefficients reflect these effects in the original measurement scale. The one-unit increase in Work Environment corresponds to an estimated increase of 0.4214 units in Employee Performance, while other predictors are held constant. The rest of the corresponding numbers are 0.3730 for Team Dynamics, 0.2250 for Individual Reliance, 0.2162 for Job Role, and 0.1725 for Technological Factors. The estimates are coupled with relatively small standard errors, thus providing support for the precision in the coefficient estimates.

The tests based on ANOVA reported for individual predictors are still consistent with these findings. The case of Work Environment has an F value of 103.0 and $p < .001$, in the case of Team Dynamics F is 181.0 and $p < .001$, lastly Job Role has $F=33.9$ and $p < .001$. Together with the coefficient tests these F values mean that each of these predictor's accounts for a statistically significant portion of variance in Employee Performance. The thumb rule for the overall assessment of R, R^2 , F, t, and p values is that they cooperate in supporting a well-fitting model in which team processes and work conditions have the strongest unique influence while role design, reliance structures, and technology contribute positively and additionally.

4.4.4 Hypothesis

The hypotheses dealt with the stress domains in five areas, the performance of employees in hybrid project management organisations, and the shared explanatory power of these domains.

Table 4.5***Hypothesis***

Hypothesis	Measurements	Outcome
H ₁ : There is a relationship between work environment and employee performance.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₂ : There is a relationship between team dynamics and employee performance.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₃ : There is a relationship between job role and employee performance.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₄ : There is a relationship between individual reliance and employee performance.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₅ : There is a relationship between technological factors and employee performance.	P<.001	Accepted

H1: -The hypothesis is confirmed. Work environment has a strong bivariate correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.843$, $p < .001$). The multiple regression has a high and significant standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.400$, $t = 10.151$, $p < .001$), which indicates that there is an independent contribution after controlling for other domains.

H2: -This hypothesis gets support from the data. The dynamics of the teams show the strongest bivariate connection ($r = 0.857$, $p < .001$) and the biggest unique effect in the multivariate model ($\beta = 0.424$, $t = 13.453$, $p < .001$). Also, ANOVA reveals this substantial effect of team dynamics ($F = 181.0$, $p < .001$) further.

H3: -The hypothesis is confirmed. The effect is the smallest of the five but still reliable from a statistical point of view. The zero-order correlation is positive ($r = 0.136$, $p < .001$) and the standardized regression coefficient remains significant when other predictors are considered ($\beta = 0.168$, $t = 5.825$, $p < .001$). ANOVA results suggest a significant contribution ($F = 33.9$, $p < .001$).

H4:-The association is supported. The correlation between the two variables is modest but significant ($r = 0.225$, $p < .001$). Even when team dynamics are accounted for, the individual

reliance still adds unique explanatory power to the multivariate model ($\beta = 0.192$, $t = 6.770$, $p < .001$), indicating that this factor is of incremental value beyond team and environmental conditions.

H5: -The correlation between the two variables is high ($r = 0.824$, $p < .001$). The unique effect diminishes the more the team dynamics and the work environment are considered but still remains significant ($\beta = 0.167$, $t = 4.331$, $p < .001$), which means there is a net positive association in the full model.

4.5 Triangulation of the Results

The process of triangulating data points not only strengthens trustworthiness but also the comprehensibility of the findings as it links up the proofs coming from different aspects. On the other hand, descriptive statistics introduce the empirical area by spotting the place where the central tendency and dispersion are located. Correlation illuminates the way and the strength of the movement among the constructions, thus disclosing the factors that are moving with the performance. Regression afterwards quantifies the unique input from each predictor while keeping the others at a constant level, thus treating the overlap which can obscure the significant effects. All that being said, this layered strategy lessens the chance of being biased by a single method, it also makes the internal validity even stronger, and it even brings a more detailed explanation of the patterns seen in hybrid work. With respect to our study, triangulation gives us consistent and convergent evidence to support the later claims concerning experience and performance.

Work Environment (WE)

The average of 2.55 points to conditions that can be viewed as moderately favorable, that is, neither strongly positive nor negative. The relationship between Work Environment and Employee Performance is expressed by the correlation coefficient of 0.843 which is a strong positive relationship indicating that everyday working conditions are perceived capabilities to perform. In regression analysis Work Environment fairly help with unique contribution 0.400 standardized coefficient and 0.4214 unstandardized estimate, t is 10.151, p is less than .001. This overlap in descriptive, correlational, and multivariate evidence promotes WE to be a primary contextual influence. For the research, the finding means that the physical and psychosocial conditions that workers face in the home and office locations are closely connected to the outcomes, thus, environment is emphasized as a practical lever when trying to explain experiences and effectiveness in hybrid work arrangements.

Team Dynamics (TD)

Team Dynamics has the highest average with 2.60, which means that team experiences were quite favorable in general compared to the other variables. The correlation with Employee Performance is 0.857, meaning that there is a strong positive relationship between the two. In the multivariate model, TD has the highest standardized coefficient of 0.424 and an unstandardized estimate of 0.3730, t equal to 13.453, $p < 001$. This convergence indicates that the characteristics of communication, trust, and coordination are not only there at the level of description but also at the level of strong predictive ability once other factors are controlled for. Time and again the results put Team Dynamics in the position of being the most powerful predictor of team processes linked with performance under hybrid working conditions.

Job roles (JR)

The average is 2.54 with fairly tight dispersion in previous descriptives, which means that the evaluations of role design were consistent but modest. The correlation with Employee Performance was 0.136, a weak positive relationship that was statistically non-trivial. In regression, JR showed a significant unique influence with a standardized coefficient of 0.168 and an unstandardized estimate of 0.2162, t was 5.825, and p was less than .001. Triangulation indicates that even when zero-order correlation is small, role clarity, autonomy, and workload alignment still contribute unique variance after controlling for other factors. For the research, this implies that architecture continues to be a pertinent cross-theory in hybrid contexts, directing how expectations are transformed into routine operations and aiding in understanding why some may carry out well even under the same environmental and technological conditions as others.

Individual Reliance (IR)

The average is 2.56, suggesting that the perceptions of coverage and knowledge distribution are neither too low nor too high. The correlation with Employee Performance is 0.225, indicating a weak positive relationship. In the multivariate model, Individual Reliance rises to a standardized coefficient of 0.192 with unstandardized estimate 0.2250, t equals 6.770, $p < 001$. Triangulation indicates that solitary reliance patterns though modestly related to performance in simple terms, they explain distinct variance once environment, team processes, technology, and role design are accounted for. For the research, this highlights the organisational risks and

pressures created by single-point dependencies in hybrid work. Managing coverage, documentation, and cross-training emerges as a concrete pathway for explaining variation in experience and performance across distributed teams.

Technological Factors (TF)

The average score is 2.55, which indicates average satisfaction with tools and infrastructure. The correlation with Employee Performance is 0.824, indicating a very strong positive relationship and hence, it can be inferred that the adequacy of the tools is very much aligned with the outcomes. In the regression analysis, Technological Factors continues to be a significant factor with a standardized coefficient of 0.167 and an unstandardized estimate of 0.1725, $t = 4.331$, $p < .001$, although its unique impact is smaller than that of team and environment after controlling for overlap. Triangulation reveals that technology has a great influence on performance in general but at the same time it is sharing this influence with social and environmental conditions. For the study this means technology is an essential infrastructure component in Hybrid work, where reliability, usability, and integration determine daily friction and also the difference in experience and effectiveness among distributed teams.

4.6 Summary

Chapter 4 laid the empirical ground for the dissertation by measuring quality, describing the sample, and calculating the connections between the study's five stress domains and employee performance in hybrid project-management organisations. The preliminary reliability and validity tests showed all multi-item constructs to be internally consistent from acceptable to very good and had factorizable that sufficed for modeling with proper caution. These steps gave the assurance that the following statistics are true reflections of the constructions rather than noise from the measurement.

The descriptive analysis illustrated a well-balanced sample with a majority of mid-career respondents and a significant amount of hybrid working exposure. Means of the constructions were concentrated around the middle of the scale, indicating conditions that are feasible but need improvement. The next step was correlation analysis, which showed positive and strong correlations between employee performance and team dynamics, work environment, and technological factors, being the three domains. Lesser, nevertheless, statistically significant, correlations were observed between job role and individual reliance.

Multiple linear regression analysis gave the principal inferential outcome. The fitted model was excellent, and it was noted that the five factors together account for a very large part of the variance that is seen in employee performance. Standardized betas showed the order of unique effects clearly after taking into consideration the overlap between the predictors. The single largest effect came from team dynamics, which was closely followed by the work environment. Individual reliance, job role, and technological factors contributed to smaller but consistent increments. The formal hypothesis tests provided evidence of positive associations for every domain and also implied that the domains combined make a significant contribution to performance variance.

The results have fulfilled Chapter 4's objective and hence have paved the way to Chapter 5. The Chapter 5 discussion will interpret the statistical findings with respect to the research objectives and the theoretical models that guided the inquiry.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to build on the data findings and discussions by bringing into context the research findings ability to accomplish the objectives. The detailed discussion of the chapter provides considerable insightful interpretations to the normative and ordinary data that was acquired in the previous chapter and relates the findings to specific academic and theoretical knowledge thereby creating a higher level of justification for the study's findings. The chapter further considers the contributions to literature and practical knowledge based on the theoretical and practical implications the findings have produced.

5.2 Impact of findings

The following section presents an impact of overall findings with relation to their relativeness in accomplishing the research objectives.

5.2.1 RO 1 -To identify the key factors that cause stress in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations.

In summary, both the primary statistics of the study and the external literature point to five stress factors, namely work environment, team dynamics, job role, individual reliance and technological factors, as the main frame for employee performance in hybrid project management organisations in Azerbaijan. The results of the descriptive analysis are concentrated around the scale midpoint (means $\approx 2.54-2.60$), which indicates that the conditions are bearable but need to be improved; on the other hand, the correlations show very strong positive relationships with employee performance for team dynamics ($r = .857$), work environment ($r = .843$), and technological factors ($r = .824$), along with smaller but still significant connections for individual reliance ($r = .225$) and job role ($r = .136$) (all $p < .001$; $N = 373$). The patterns that have been detected give an empirical map of the stress–performance area and open up the ground for theory-based interpretation.

The construction of the work environment encompasses not only the physical resources available but also the management's support and the psychological safety of the employees at both the home and the office. The findings from secondary sources are in line with the strong correlation we obtained here: unhealthy or unsupported environments reduce the level of motivation and the

output of the workers (Burbar, 2021), and unsafe psychological conditions lower productivity (Zhenjing, 2022). The studies mentioned have proven that both the structural and affective dimensions of the climate co-determine the performance in fact, the very combination represented in the work environment score of the survey ($r = .843, p < .001$). The Job Demand–Control model provides a reason behind this: if there is a high demand and at the same time the employees have no power and support, the strain will be increased hence the performance should improve significantly in hybrid work settings where the environment conditions are different by providing both resources and supportive leadership (Burbar, 2021; Zhenjing, 2022).

The dynamics within a team turn out to be the most significant factor of employee performance ($r = .857, p < .001$). Outside literature confirms the same point but from different angles. Structurally, poor cooperation, unclear handoffs, and conflicts not solved diminish the performance (Prasad, 2024). Psychologically, emotional contagion in teams transmits stress and decreases collective efficacy (Xu, 2021). The results indicate why the quality of communication, trust, and participative decision-making—features lifted by the Social Exchange Theory’s emphasis on fair, supportive reciprocity—are often the decisive levers in distributed projects where handoffs are frequent and schedule pressure is high (Prasad, 2024; Xu, 2021). The hybrid setting makes this dynamic stronger because coordination covers time zones, media, and in-person/remote boundaries; therefore, even tiny cracks in norms can lead to significant performance loss.

The factor of job roles, while weaker, is still a reliable positive predictor of employee performance ($r = .136, p < .001$). A few studies have found that role ambiguity and role conflict are practically synonymous with emotional exhaustion and decreased output (Daniel, 2019; Chen, 2022). According to Person Environment Fit theory, this is exactly what happens: misalignment of abilities, preferences, and task demands leads to greater stress and lower performance. In hybrid companies, the asynchrony of working hours, the fluidity of borders, and the use of many digital channels pose a unique challenge to the clarity of roles. Thus, the observed figures should not be interpreted as “small and unimportant,” but rather as an indication that, even in conditions where team and environmental factors are more pronounced, clearer deliverables, decision rights, and accountability standards can still produce incremental gains (Daniel, 2019; Chen, 2022).

Individual reliance on self-regulation, adaptability, and the ability to work without constant supervision has a modest correlation with employee performance ($r = .225, p < .001$). This is in

line with studies that demonstrate the importance of self-regulatory capacity and coping skills for maintaining productivity during tough times (Frimanson, 2021) as well as the facilitation of judgment and adaptability in impatient roles through higher self-reliance (Barinua, 2022). However, these authors also point out that individual resources are only partial solutions for structural deficits, being rather complements of well-considered work design and supportive environments. In hybrid project work, which requires independence, attention control, and proactive coordination every single day, individual reliance through training and coaching is thereby enhancing but not replacing team and environmental interventions (Frimanson, 2021; Barinua, 2022).

Finally, the technological factors show a strong positive correlation with employee performance ($r = .824, p < .001$). The literature has provided a good debate on the matter from both angles. Digital exhaustion is one of the major outputs from constant communication, moving from one platform to another, and pressure from notifications (Bourlakis, 2023). However, on the contrary, insufficient training and complicated systems cause irritation and hence decrease motivation (Sharma, 2024). By applying Social Exchange Theory, it is easy to understand how the same gadgets/ equipment can be either performance enhancers or hindrances: when the companies invest in the reliable infrastructure, training, and fair norms for availability, the employees get the perception of the support and they respond with their effort and cooperation; but if they do not, the same technologies become the stressors that reduce performance (Bourlakis, 2023; Sharma, 2024).

To conclude, the unified evidence presents a ranking of factors of influence on employee performance in hybrid project-management organisations as follows: the main levers are team dynamics and work environment, technological factors are the infrastructure that is necessary but its impact depends on the social and environmental support, and job role and individual dependence are less contributory but meaningful. Such a pattern is in line with the Job Demand–Control model, Person–Environment Fit theory, and Social Exchange Theory and therefore accomplishes Objective 1 by highlighting the most influential and the least influential stress domains along with the reason, through the use of convergent statistical and theoretical evidence.

5.2.2 RO2- To measure the relationship between key factors that cause stress and employee performance in Azerbaijan’s project management organisations.

The five stress domains in total during the multivariate analysis account for almost all the systematic variation in employee performance that was observed in the sample. The multiple-regression model shows a remarkable fit ($R = .927$; $R^2 = .859$) implying that around 86% of the employee performance variance is due to the synergy of work environment, team dynamics, job role, individual reliance, and technological factors ($N = 373$). The variance analysis tests on the major predictors further corroborate this picture (e.g., team dynamics $F = 181.0$, work environment $F = 103.0$, job role $F = 33.9$, all $p < .001$). Quite significantly, the standardized coefficients provide a clear hierarchical arrangement of the unique influences when all the predictors are evaluated together: team dynamics ($\beta = .424$, $t = 13.453$, $p < .001$) and work environment ($\beta = .400$, $t = 10.151$, $p < .001$) are identified as the most potent independent predictors, while individual reliance ($\beta = .192$, $t = 6.770$, $p < .001$), job role ($\beta = .168$, $t = 5.825$, $p < .001$), and technological factors ($\beta = .167$, $t = 4.331$, $p < .001$) also contributing robustly and statistically. Unstandardized coefficients represent these influences on the original scale, for example, a one-unit rise in work environment is linked to a 0.4214-unit increase in employee performance while other variables are kept constant.

Interpreting these results through established theory reinforces their explanatory power. The Job Demand–Control model predicts that team dynamics and work environment will be predominant factors due to their ability to rebalance demands through autonomy, support, and fair treatment. According to external sources, issues such as poor collaboration, weak conflict management, and unclear handoffs lead to low outcomes (Prasad, 2024), while the emotional contagion in teams intensifies the strain (Xu, 2021). Moreover, destructive leadership and lack of psychological safety led to decreases in both motivation and productivity (Burbar, 2021; Zhenjing, 2022). The fact that team processes and climate have very large, individual coefficients means that, although job design, individual coping, and tools have been taken into account, the improvement of communication norms, participation, trust, and resource adequacy will still yield the greatest marginal returns.

The job position and personal reliance coefficients, although lower than those of team dynamics and work environment, yet still significant, are directly related to Person–Environment Fit theory. Role ambiguity and role conflict have been shown to negatively affect performance and well-being (Daniel, 2019; Chen, 2022). It is thus a matter of clarifying the deliverables, decision

rights, and workload expectations that performance will still be the case even if social and environmental conditions are strong. In the same way, individual reliance, which includes self-regulation, attentional control, and proactive coordination, supports the performance that is sustained when direct supervision is intermittent, which is often the case in hybrid work (Frimanson, 2021; Barinua, 2022). The regression suggests that these two mechanisms are adding variance beyond team and environment, which means that capability building (for individuals) and role architecture (for jobs) are complementary levers rather than substitutes.

The case of technological factors demonstrates the social system that shapes the infrastructure effects. In this particular dataset, the bivariate correlation between technology and employee performance is very strong ($r = .824$), but the unique regression coefficient is smaller after including team and environment. The decrease is in line with Social Exchange Theory and the evidence from outside: the performance is raised by technology when it is accompanied by training, clear use conventions, and responsive support signals of organisational investment that foster reciprocation (Bourlakis, 2023; Sharma, 2024). In cases where the teams coordinate well and the environment is supportive, they partially mediate the impact of technology by setting norms that limit notification pressure, reduce platform switching, and routine handoffs; in the absence of those conditions, the same tools produce stress and reduce output. Therefore, the statistically significant yet comparatively modest coefficient does not underplay technology's significance; rather, it indicates that a great part of its influence is passed through team and environmental channels.

In practice, the hierarchy of unique effects offers a basis for prioritization in hybrid project-management organisations. Most importantly, team processes that promote psychological safety, inclusivity in decision-making, and conflict resolution should be the first to receive investment, then the work environment should be strengthened through resource adequacy, workload norms that are fair, and supportive leadership at both home and office sites; thereafter, the roles of workers should be clarified and reliance on individuals built through training in self-management and attentional control; finally, the technological stack should be modernized and simplified while training is structured and support is responsive. The sequence is completely in line with the observed regression pattern and with the convergent secondary literature.

By anchoring strong statistical relationships within the Job Demand-Control model, Person-Environment Fit theory, and Social Exchange Theory and aligning them with recent empirical findings the study achieves Objective 2: it quantifies how each stress domain is related to employee performance and indicates that the largest, practical gains will result from enhancing team dynamics and the work environment, with additional, dependable returns from role design, individual capability building, and technology enablement.

5.2.3 RO3- To understand the impact of stress on employees' performance in hybrid working models in Azerbaijan's project management organisations.

The research reveals that stress factors related to work environment, team interactions, job position, individual dependency, and technology have a significant and inevitable effect on the hybrid project management organisation employees' performance. The correlation of multiple factors is 0.927 while the determinant coefficient is 0.859, meaning that almost 85.9 percent of the performance difference among employees can be accounted for by the interaction of these five factors. Furthermore, the individual tests for the main predictors also reveal high values. To illustrate, the standard effect of team interaction on employee performance is 0.424 with t equal to 13.453 and $p < 0.01$. The standardized effect of the work environment is 0.400 with t equal to 10.151 and $p < 0.01$. Individual reliance, job role, and technological factors show less yet significant unique effects, with all having p -values < 0.01 . Altogether, these statistics prove that stress is not merely a peripheral correlation but rather a core driver of performance outcomes in hybrid work.

The framework and the size of these impacts are in harmony with organisational science and its theories. According to the Job Demand and Control view, high requirements of tasks and coordination together with lack of autonomy and no support will increase strain and lower performance. The unique contributions of team dynamics and work environment fit this logic very well, because communication quality, mutual trust, psychological safety, resource adequacy, and fair treatment directly reduce strain and enable focused effort. External sources confirm the same patterns. Unhealthy or unsupportive environments have a negative effect on both motivation and productivity, while the presence of safe psychological environments increases performance (Burbar, 2021; Zhenjing, 2022). Besides, emotional contagion within teams can manifest as the spread of stress and gradual erosion of the team's collective efficacy, which is exactly why team

processes are such strong performance levers in hybrid conditions that require frequent handoffs and asynchronous collaboration (Xu, 2021; Prasad, 2024).

The Person and Environment Fit perspective is the one that sheds light on the positive, as well as smaller, unique effects for job role and individual reliance. On the other hand, role ambiguity and role conflict cause uncertainty and emotional exhaustion, which in turn suppress output, especially when employees have to go through multiple channels and change routines in hybrid work. So, clarifying deliverables, decision rights, workload standards, and ownership of shared artifacts bring about incremental performance gains even when team dynamics and work environment have already been improved (Daniel, 2019; Chen, 2022). Individual reliance means self-regulation, attentional control, and the ability to adapt to occasional supervision. Training that multiplies these skills helps workers to maintain their performance when the physical presence of their supervisor is low and the coordination is spread out. Findings of the study indicate that individual reliance provides additional explanation power that is unique beyond a team and environment, thereby validating the argument that capability building at the individual level while improving structure and social aspect is not a replacement but a complementary factor (Frimanson, 2021; Barinua, 2022).

Technological factors create a complicated scenario. The relationship between technological factors and employee performance at the zero-order level is very solid, however, the unique regression effect is diminished when the variables of team dynamics and work environment are included in the model. This outcome is anticipated if technology has a dual role of direct and indirect influence. The Social Exchange theory indicates that employees return favors when organisations spend reliable infrastructure, having clear usage norms, and providing responsive training and support. In these circumstances, the same tools that possibly cause technostress could become performance enhancers. Furthermore, external sources are in line with this viewpoint. It is stated that constant connection, switching between platforms, and being under heavy notification pressure would lead to lower concentration and effectiveness, while lack of training and complicated systems would lead to lower motivation (Bourlakis, 2023; Sharma, 2024). Thus, the significant but reduced unique coefficient for technological factors suggests that a large portion of technology's impact is realized through team norms and environmental support rather than mere interaction with the technology itself.

The demographic context of the sample emphasizes the interpretation of the strong link between stress and performance. The respondents mainly belong to the mid-career group, have most of their experience in the age bracket of thirty-six to fifty-four, and the majority of them have worked in the hybrid mode for one to five years. This profile indicates that they have stable incomes, have meaningful decision rights, and are still adapting to hybrid practices rather than being already accustomed to them as a result of the long-term institutionalization. Thus, the stressors associated with coordination, climate, and tooling are very critical because the norms are still being established, and the organisational memory for hybrid work is quite limited. These factors probably intensify the practical significance of the team and environmental levers which have been pointed out in the model.

To summarize, stress being a major factor has a complex impact on employee performance in hybrid working models. Team dynamics and work environment are the main contributors which add the daily social and resource conditions that either mitigate or increase the demands. Other factors like job role clarity and individual reliance provide additional consistent improvements when they are in line with those conditions. Technology is a major infrastructure, but the performance benefit from it is dependent on the extent of its integration with the supportive social systems and clarifying the norms. The findings not just provide consistent statistical support that is in line with the current literature and theory, but they also accomplish Objective 3 by showing how and why stress, organized in five domains, translates into measurable performance outcomes in hybrid project-management organisations.

5.3 Implications

5.3.1 Implications for stress management

The findings of the study were derived from both empirical questionnaire data and literature that provided important insight regarding stress management for project management organisations which operate in hybrid work settings in Azerbaijan. The study has identified five key stress dimensions of work environment, team dynamics, job role, individual reliance and technological factors and all of which significantly influence employee performance. By addressing these factors, it could inform targeted stress management strategies to sustain engagement as well as productivity and employee well-being.

Work environment

The questionnaire results indicated that work environmental factors including workload management (6.1), home office productivity (6.2) and organisational resource support (6.3) strongly correlated with the employee performance ($r=0.843$). According to the job demand control model it highlighted high job demands in hybrid settings could increase stress if employees lack sufficient control over their work processors. Therefore stress management intervention needs to be focused on increasing autonomy while providing ergonomic and destruction free home setups. This will show us access to adequate resources. Furthermore training the managers to provide guidance and point overload distribution good mitigate stress that arise from hybrid work consistent with Burbar (2021) and Zhenjing (2022) WHO has emphasized on structural support and psychological safety as the key determinants of productivity. The policy is promoting flexible work hours and encouragement regular breaks also help the employees to maintain a healthy work balance which addresses the item 6.4 and 6.5 in the questionnaire.

Team dynamics

The team dynamics emerged as the strongest projector of employee performance ($r=0.857$). The survey has highlighted that participation in discussions (7.1), improved communication (7.2) and trust within teams (7.5) are necessary for managing the hybrid work stress. Social extent theory also suggested that the positive reciprocal interactions within the teams increase engagement whereas the poor collaboration along with unresolved conflicts and lack of cohesion increases stress as indicated by Prasad (2024) and Xu (2021). The effective stress management needs to be therefore included structural virtual collaboration sessions as well as conflict resolution mechanisms and regular team building activities even in digital formats. Through the encouragement with PS support and fostering open communication channels it ensures that employees feel valued and connected which reduces the negative impact of emotional contagion and isolation.

Job role

The job role stress included unclear responsibilities (8.2) and perceive undervaluation (8.3) affecting performance. Although to a lesser extent at $r=0.136$. While the person Environment Fit theory emphasized upon alignment between role demands and individual capabilities in mitigating

stress the stress management interventions should therefore clarify the hybrid role expectations while defining deliverables and allowing for flexible task execution (8.4 and 8.5). The managers could conduct regular check to ensure that employees understand their priorities and responsibilities while reducing parole ambiguity and preventing emotional exhaustion as indicated by Chen (2022).

Individual reliance

Individual reliance encompassed self-regulation and autonomy from (9.1 to 9.5). This supports performance at $r=0.225$ but cannot fully replace the structural clarity. The training of the employees in time management along with self-monitoring and stress coping strategies help to strengthen the resilience in hybrid settings with consistent findings by Frimanson (2021) and Barinua (2022). By promoting employee autonomy while ensuring alignment with the team objectives it could prevent burnout and maintaining engagement.

Technological factors

The technological factors which include information technology support (10.5), software efficiency (10.4) and access reliability (10.2) correlate strongly with stress ($r=0.824$). While Bourlakis (2023) and Sharma (2024) Highlighted the digital overload with insufficient Technical Support and complex systems could create cognitive fatigue while reducing productivity. Stress management should therefore focus on simplifying workflows and provide robust information technology infrastructure and offer rapid Technical Support. The training of employees to use hybrid collaboration tools effectively could further reduce the frustration and increase performance.

The study indicated that stress management in hybrid work settings must adopt a multidimensional approach. Furthermore, the organisation should simultaneously address the structural work environment role, relational to team dynamics, individual to individual reliance and technological to technological factors. The practical recommendations are provided under 2.2. By linking the theoretical frameworks with empirical data, the study underscores stress is not only an individual issue but a systematic organisational challenge. With the addressing of hybrid specific stress as it ensures sustainable performance along with engagement and retention in project management organisations.

5.3.2 Applications to Practitioners

The findings of this study important application towards project management in Azerbaijan where the hybrid work seating are still being developed. Stress in hybrid modules is not considered as a one-dimensional challenge but spans around the five key dimensions. Drawing from the questionnaire items and global organisational practices, the study provides evidence-based pathways to improve the employee performance while it reduces stress.

Work environment

The question such as “Does your home office setup allow you to work productively with minimum distraction?” (6.2), indicated the importance of workspace design where the practitioners should ensure ergonomic and resource support. For example, Google provided its hybrid staff with subsidies for ergonomic chairs and high-speed Internet at home which reduces stresses associated with poorly equipped environment (Pichai, 2021). In Azerbaijan the project organisations could also replicate these through stipends home office setups and Wellness allowances. By embedding the flexibility in scheduling as seen in Microsoft’s Hybrid by design policy allows the employees to have balance of personal and work commitments to mitigate stress (Roman, 2023).

Team dynamics

Question number 7.1 which is “Are you able to participate in team discussions and decision making while working hybrid?” It indicated the role of a collaboration where team stress is often linked to communication gaps and trust deficits. For example, IBM implemented virtual agile rooms to maintain collaboration within hybrid project teams (Nosowitz, 2025). This reduces miscommunication and improves trust. Azerbaijan organisations could also use similar virtual collaboration hubs by using tools such as Slack or Miro alongside weekly in person meetups to strengthen the trust. While the social extent theory suggested that reciprocity, including managers investing effort to include remote staff helping build cohesion and reduces collective stress.

Job role

The question number 8.2 “Is your job pro clearly defined and flexible?” reflected on stress from ambiguity. For example, Deloitte tackled this by introducing hybrid rule charters explicitly defining the expectations for both in-office and remote work which reduce rural confusion and promoted accountability (Deloitte, 2023). While Azerbaijan project management firms could

implement role mapping workshops where managers and employees Co create hybrid role expectations. Additionally, Unilever’s Agile working program indicated how flexibility in tasks could have ownership reducing stress while improving engagement (Unilever, 2023). Clear roles coupled with recognition system could help employees to feel valued and secure in their contribution.

Individual reliance

Question number 9.2 “Do you require minimal supervision to manage your work in hybrid setting?” emphasize upon autonomy. While safe reliance helps in reducing stress for some without supporting it may increase the pressure. For example, SAP It has addressed this through resilience training and mindfulness programs which empower employees with self-regulation skills (Klein, 2024). Similarly, PwC UK provides mentorship schemes to balance autonomy with their guidance and ensure that employees don’t feel isolated in hybrid work environments (Buła, 2024). Azerbaijan organisations could also short resilience workshops by integrating stress management techniques including time boxing or mindfulness to ensure employees remain productive without burn out.

Technological factors

Question number 10.3 such as “Do technical issues disrupt your workflow?” underline the Digital stressors. The Accenture addresses this by investing in a centralized information technology help desk and standardizing digital tools to prevent the work overload (Microsoft, 2025). Similarly, Tata Consulting C Service has created 24/7 information technology support for hybrid employees which ensure rapid resolution of disruptions (August, 2021). For the Azerbaijan organisations where digital infrastructure may vary ensure strong VPN access along with cloud-based projectors and immediate information technology support can significantly reduce stress. Training the programs should also accompany new tools to prevent technology in their dissatisfaction.

Across organisationthe system, it is typically monitored stress that has seen measurable improvements. HSBC conducts annual well-being service to identify the hybrid work stressors and to link interventions to performance outcomes (HSBC, 2023). The project management organisations in Azerbaijan could adopt similar model by using these studies questionnaire as a

stress audit tool, whereas regular analysis of employee responses allows human resource to design interventions tailored to a specific domain including environmental or relational or technological.

The study indicated that managing stress in hybrid work environment needs multi-level interventions, such as resourcing hybrid workspaces like Google or Microsoft increase in collaboration like IBM, clarifying roles like Deloitte and Unilever, supporting individual resilience as SAP and PWC and built in robust technological systems such as Tata Consultancy Services an Accenture. For Azerbaijan project management firms adopting such practices will strengthening employee well-being and productivity. Using the questionnaire as a practical diagnostic tool, the managers could track the stress patterns as well as identify gaps and align solutions with the global based practices. In doing so these move beyond the reactive stress management toward proactive performance and increase the hybrid models.

5.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 blends the empirical findings together and assesses them in light of the study's three objectives. First, it reiterates the intent of the discussion chapter, which is to position the statistical outcomes within the existing theoretical framework and to extract their implications for future research and practice. Then, it groups the discussion in accordance with the objectives and the related research questions, leading each subsection from the numerical trends in Chapter 4 to a clarification of what those trends signify for hybrid project-management operations in Azerbaijan.

Research Objective 1 is addressed by the chapter which points out the five stress domains that impact employee performance: work environment, team dynamics, job role, individual reliance, and technological factors. The discussion gives reason for the team's dynamics and work environment to be the most prominent, the reason for technology to have a strong correlation but too often act through social and environmental conditions, and the reason that although smaller in size, job role and individual reliance remain important and feasible. The interpretation makes use of Job Demand and Control, Person and Environment Fit, and Social Exchange viewpoints to justify the observed ranking of effects and to demonstrate the interplay of structural resources, supportive relationships, role clarity, capability, and empowerment in hybrid settings.

In the case of Research Objective 2, the chapter dissects the multiple regression analysis along with formal hypothesis testing. It puts a spotlight on the very dominant overall model fit and the ranking of unique effects, and it uses that ranking to deduce which levers would result in the greatest marginal performance gains. The main point is that the quality of communication, trust, participation, and a supportive atmosphere are the main drivers, whereas role design, capability building, and technology simplification provide extra improvements when these conditions are in place.

For Research Objective 3, the chapter brings the significant effect of stress on performance as well as the strengths of those effects together in the form of the coefficients and test statistics. A coherent account of how daily coordination demands, resource adequacy, and usage norms shape outcomes in hybrid teams is provided. The chapter also points out the demographic profile of respondents and how that profile helps to interpret the strengths of relationships.

The data findings capability to address the research objectives, highlighting the main implications of the study in their impact to theoretical and practical knowledge, the foundation is laid for the concluding Chapter 6. This chapter consists of summary of all findings and discussions along with limitations of the study and recommendations for future research, Recommendations for action and an overall conclusion.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary

This empirical study that investigated the effects of stress on employee performance in hybrid work setting within the project management organisations in Azerbaijan, aligns with established organisational theories such as Job demand control model, Person environment fit theory and Social Exchange Theory. Each of these theories provided a lens to interpret the questionnaire results across the work environment where team dynamics include job role, individual reliance and technological factors.

Job demand control model emphasized upon the interplay between the job demands and employee autonomy to shape the performance outcome where the questionnaire later indicated that the work environment and team dynamics are the most salient stresses with strong correlation to employed performance ($WE=0.843$ and $TD=0.857$). Therefore, this study supports the job demand control model premise employees experiencing high job demands in hybrid contexts such as collaborative challenges and workload management require sufficient control and autonomy to mitigate stress. As per Daniel (2019) and Chen (2022) Reinforce this by indicating that role clarity and autonomy reduce the role stress as well as emotional exhaustion. While the hybrid work may amplify ambiguity. Furthermore, the multivariate regression results also confirmed that team dynamics $\beta=0.424$ and work environment $\beta=0.400$ exert the largest impact by highlighting the influence of demand control balance in sustaining the performance.

Person environment fit theory also suggested that alignment between individual capabilities and organisational demands predict satisfaction as well as engagement and performance. The questionnaire results on individual reliance ($r=0.225$) and job role ($r=0.136$) indicated that while less strongly correlated than structural factors along with autonomy, clear role expectations and self-regulations significantly affect the performance (all $p < 0.001$). As per Frimanson (2021) and Barinua (2022) emphasize that employees with high self-reliance could compensate for structural gaps consistent with the personal environment fit assertion which compatibility between preferences, skills and job requirement mitigate stress and foster productivity. However, the hybrid context has introduced novel fit challenges including remote communication barriers and blurred responsibilities that may reduce alignment unless the roles are clearly adapted.

Social Exchange theory provided insight into the relational and technological dynamics where the strong influence of team dynamics and technological factors ($r=0.824$) reflects the reciprocity included in Social Exchange theory. The employees responded positively when supporting communication and infrastructure adequately, but they experience stress and reduce performance when these exchanges are deficient. According to Bourlakis (2023) and Sharma (2024) indicated that the technological overload or insufficient support generated dissatisfaction consistent with the survey findings where the participants identified challenges in accessing resources and reliable information technology support. Similarly, cohesion trust and collaborative opportunities in hybrid teams highlighted Xu (2021) and Prasad (2024) reinforcing the social exchange theory emphasizing upon the relational obligations which influence engagement and output.

Comparatively the questionnaire findings aligned with literature which confirm that work environment and team dynamics dominate as stress factors while job role along with individual reliance contribute incrementally where the data also underscore the hybrid specific vessels absent in fire studies. Specifically remote collaboration intensifying ambiguity along with reducing the spontaneous support and increased reliance on self-regulation. Furthermore, the job demand control model emphasizes on structure autonomy while personal environment fit captures the individual adaptation and social extent theory contextualizes the relational and technological exchanges which collectively expand up to 85.9% of variance in employee performance.

When considering the research question one which focuses on key stress factors in hybrid work the study focuses only on five sources of stress in hybrid settings such as work environment, team dynamics, job role, individual reliance and technological factors as the operationalized in the questionnaire. The descriptive data indicated modus means (2.54-2.60). These numbers indicated conditions are not informally favorable. Furthermore, correlations with employee performance are strong work environment (0.843), team dynamics (0.857), technological factors (0.824) and weaker for job role (0.136) and individual reliance (0.225) confirming these as salient stress dominances in hybrid models.

The research question two focused on relationship between stress factors and performance where all five factors relate positively to employee performance. In the multivariate model ($R=0.927$; $R^2=0.859$), team dynamics ($\beta=0.424$) and work environment ($\beta=0.400$) showed the

strongest unique associations. Individual reliance ($\beta=0.192$), job role ($\beta=0.168$) and technological factors ($\beta=0.167$) Added smaller yet significant contributions. This indicator that beyond overlap the team processes and the work setting matter most. While the role designed along with reliance and technology contributed incrementally.

Research question three which focuses on level of impact on performance the model explains that 85.9% of variance in employee performance evidence with substantial explanatory power. Large t statistics for team dynamics ($t=13.453$) and work environment ($t=10.151$) highlighted their pronounced effects and reliable effects from individual reliance ($t=6.770$), job role ($t=5.825$) and technology factors ($t=4.331$) all indicated $p<0.001$. Together with the strong zero order correlations such indicate a high overall impact upon these stress domains on performance in hybrid performance management organisations.

The research question focusses on what this means for the study where the variables and the items directly reflect the study focus on stress performance dynamics in Azerbaijan's project-based hybrid context which provided a coherent empirical base to discuss how the environment role based reliance, social reliance and technological stresses linked to the performance outcomes.

The hybrid work stressed in Azerbaijan's project management organisations multifaceted relational involving environmental, relational, technological dimension and personal factors. The existence studies such as (Daniel, 2019; Chen, 2022; Frimanson, 2021 and Bourlakis, 2023) It provided robust evidence on each factor but integrating them with the hybrid specific dynamic demonstrated the requirement for deputy leadership technological support clear role design and team cohesion. The theoretical framework collectively indicated why balance demands with autonomy, fit and reciprocal exchanges being critical to sustain performance in the evolving work models.

6.3 Limitations of the study

While the empirical studies provide a valuable insight into how the stress factors shape the employee performance within hybrid work project management organisations in Azerbaijan, several limitations have been identified. These imitations affect the scope, interpretability of the findings and should guide future research directions.

Geographical and contextual boundaries

The study is being conducted within Azerbaijan where the project management organisations are still adapting to hybrid models. The organisations structure along with workplace culture and technological maturity in Azerbaijan may differ from those in countries where the hybrid work has been long established, including the United States and Western Europe. The contextual specificity restricts the generalizability of the findings to a wider global context. For example, the technological stresses may be more pronounced in Azerbaijan due to their uneven information technology infrastructure compared with highly digitalized project environments in developed countries.

Representativeness and sample selection

The research uses a non-probability sampling approach relying on personal referrals to recruit participants. Although this method provides access to the relevant project managers, it introduces potential bias. The participants may not fully represent the diversity of Azerbaijan's project management workforce specifically those in smaller firms along with government organisations or international corporations. This has limited the representativeness of the sample that makes it challenging to generalize the findings to the entire industry.

Cross sectional design

The study consists of cross-sectional capturing data at a single point of time, whereas stress and performance are dynamic constructs which fluctuate with workload or organisational changes or external pressure including economic downturns. The longitudinal design would have provided more robust picture of how the hybrid work stress evolves around overtime and cumulatively impacts upon performance. Without such temporal perspective the casualty between the stresses and performance remained tentative rather than conclusive.

Response bias and self-reported data

The primary data collection method consists of questionnaires relying on participants' self-reports. While convenient and cost effective, self-reported data being prone to socially desirable bias, recall bias and over or underestimation of stress and performance reverse. For example, the project managers may report stress to appear more competent or overstate the performance to align

with the expectations of the organisation. Additionally, since the survey was distributed using email and WhatsApp the participants may not have been equally attentive to further affecting the accuracy.

Limited scope of the variables

The study operationalizes stress through the Phi domains such as work environment, team dynamics, job role, individual reliance and technological factors. These factors are critical for stress in multifaceted phenomena influenced by other dimensions, including organisational culture, external socio-economic pressure, leadership style and individual personality traits by excluding these factors the study narrows the scope of the stressors and risks oversimplifying the complexity of the stress performance relationship.

Instrumental constraints

Although the questionnaire used Likert scales to capture the perceptions, quantitative instruments may not fully capture the nuance experience of stress. For example, the neutral response might reflect indecision with genuine ambivalence or uncertainty about the question. Furthermore, the absence of open-ended questions prevents participants from elaborating on specific triggers or coping strategies. This limits the in-depth understanding compared to mixed method or qualitative design.

Technological dependence on data collection

The survey was administered online using Google Forms which presupposes reliable Internet access and digital literacy. Participants with limited or unstable connectivity may have been excluded or discouraged from participating, introducing another layer of selection bias, specifically in organisations outside urban sectors in Azerbaijan.

Focus on project managers

The sample primarily included project managers while appropriate for the project-based organisations excludes other stakeholders including team members or coordinators or support staff. Stresses may manifest differently across the hierarchical levels, but focusing solely on managers that overlook the broader organisational ecosystem. Consequently, the findings may

oversimplify the managerial perspective while undermining the operational stress faced by non-managerial employees.

External validity and industry focus

As the study is restricted to project management organisations the results may not apply to other sectors in Azerbaijan such as education, finance or healthcare, where the hybrid models operate under different pressures. Stress and performance dynamics are highly industry specific, and limiting the external validity of the conclusions.

Statistical constraints

The study employed regression, correlation and ANOVA analyses, which established association but cannot fully eliminate the confounding variables. For example, the economic conditions, organisation size or leadership style might mediate the relationship between performance and stress but were not statistically controlled. As such, while the model explains a large portion of variance such as 85.9%, omitted variables may still influence the results.

6.4 Recommendation for Future Research

The present study provided valuable insight into how stress influences and high performance, yet several limitations highlighted opportunities for further investigation. In order to build on these findings and increase the robustness and generalizability of knowledge in this field the following recommendations for future research could be proposed.

Adopting longitudinal research designs

Future research should take a longitudinal design by monitoring employee stress and performance changes over time. First, researchers would run periodic assessments; next, they would roll out intervention programs like resilience training or leadership development; and finally, they would measure the effectiveness of these programs in productivity and well-being over time, thereby providing some real organisational insights. The main limitation of the study is cross sectional design which captures data at a single point of time. Performance and stress are dynamic phenomena which fluctuate depending upon workload or deadlines organisational change. Therefore, future studies should employ longitudinal design that tracks stress and performance over extended time. This would allow researchers to capture trends and to identify

casual relationships as well as assessing how intervention resilience training or leadership development influence stress performance in a dynamic atmosphere overtime.

Expanding sampling strategies and diversity

Researchers in the future should employ structured methods of sampling participants rather than relying on personal referrals. For instance, employees could be divided into groups such as project managers, coordinators, and team members. Then, participants could be drawn from each of the groups randomly, ensuring that findings truly represent a wider range of experiences across organisations of various sizes and industries. This method of gathering participants across multiple job levels and sectors will paint a clearer picture of how variations in stress and performance exist based on different roles and environments. Second, this makes results far more reliable, generalizable, and ultimately useful for organisations in the designing process of employee well-being strategies organisation.

Incorporating cross cultural and comparative studies

From a practical aspect, prospective studies need to compare project management organisations in Azerbaijan with their counterparts in other countries or regions. For instance, researchers may look into the differences in cultural attitudes, economic conditions, or technological resources between Azerbaijan and places like Western Europe or Asia. This would provide insight into how these different factors increase stress and decrease productivity, while at the same time being taken into consideration in the design of hybrid work models. A cross-country study will help organisations know whether challenges being faced in Azerbaijan are unique to its territory or are shared with the rest of the world. Such cross-country evidence will aid multinational companies and policymakers alike to draft hybrid work strategies that are both culturally sensitive and effective. organisation.

Broadening the scope of stress factors

In future research, the inclusion of more variables affecting workplace stress is a must. For instance, considering organisational leadership styles, organisational cultures, external economic pressures, and individual resilience may show how all these variables work together in creating stress in hybrid work arrangements. Data collection from employees at various levels in an organisation, using mixed methods-surveys and interviews-would capture objective patterns as

well as personal narratives. Such accretive analysis will deepen insight into impersonal and sprawling causes of workplace stress, so organisations would be able to design interventions for worker welfare and productivity in hybrid arrangements. organization

Employing mixed methods for richer insights

The reliance upon structured questionnaires in the study limited the ability to capture no one's It is thus recommended that future studies consider employing a mixed methods approach to grasp comprehensively stress among employees in hybrid work settings. Quantitative surveys may be used to measure how widespread and intense stress is, while qualitative methods- interviews, focus groups, or diary studies-may provide distinct accounts of the lived experience of its employees. Interweaving these different mechanisms would help researchers triangulate their data for improved validity and to enrich their findings. The end goal of working with such methodological diversification would be a broader understanding pertinent to the stress facets of work that can lend support to evidence-based interventions in organisations.

Addressing technological and remote specific stresses

Technology emerged as a significant stressor, but the study scope did not explore in detail how digital overload or inadequate information technology support or remote communication challenges have manifested across organisations. The future research could examine these stresses more closely specifically as hybrid and remote work models continue to evolve with new technologies such as artificial intelligence driven project management tools or virtual collaboration platforms.

Investigating interventions and coping mechanisms

The paragraph suggests that further studies should not only focus on sources of stress but also explore potential methods to effectively manage the stress. In good academic terms, therefore, successive research should investigate particular organisational interventions, such as flexible work arrangements, employee wellness programs, and leadership coaching, to determine which strategy is most effective in reducing stress and enhancing employee performance across hybrid, project-based settings. By moving forward to examine the comparative effectiveness of the interventions, researchers will be able to inform organisations of targeted practices that can be

implemented to foster well-being, sustain productivity, and nurture healthier, more adaptive work cultures. organisation

6.4.1 Recommendation for Action

The recommendations should be concrete and specific in nature: hence, each stress domain must be addressed by practical, evidence-based interventions. Learn how to reduce stress in the team process by setting written communication norms, holding regular virtual meetings, and training leadership on facilitation that is inclusive. For work environment stress, such will include standardizing hybrid policies, making resources available, and practicing empathic management. Technology stress is allayed through audits of IT services, platform standardization, and ongoing digital skills training. To reduce role clarity stress, role charters should be developed clearly, dashboards are used to make workload transparent, and reviews are conducted during milestones. Cross-training, skills registries, and documentation practices can reduce stress that arises from resilience issues, improving operational continuity and performance stability in hybrid project environments organisation.

The research suggests evidence-based practices to alleviate hybrid work stress, such as the development of team processes through norms, facilitation, and conflict resolution; the creation of supportive work environments by means of ergonomic help and encouragement of openness; technology stabilization through audits and training; role and responsibility clarification; and the fostering of resilience through cross-training and knowledge repositories all of which will eventually lead to better employee performance.

By prioritizing the team process improvements, it is necessary in hybrid project settings to establish written team norms covering meeting etiquette, decision making processes and response expectations it creates structural clarity (Vătămănescu, 2022). In the short-term project leaders should be trained in digital facilitation and inclusive practices which ensure remote team members are equally engaged. By rotating meeting facilitation, could also reduce dominance effects and increase participation. Over the medium time, formal conflict resolution pathways and quarterly retrospectives need to be introduced to strengthen collaboration and trust. The effectiveness of such measures could be assessed using survey responses on communication and cohesion and performance indicators including decision making speed and reduced rework.

Secondly increasing the quality of the work environment across both home and office context is necessary. With the initial diagnostic service, it could identify economic or connectivity deficits (Mockli, 2025). This should be addressed through equipment or resource provision the policy standardization regarding hybrid works such as setting core working hours and defining no meeting blocks would reduce ambiguity and support psychological safety. The managers could be trained in empathetic checking to safeguard the boundaries and reduce stress spillovers. For long term aspect organisations could institutionalize economic allowing and maintaining resource hubs for hybrid workers. The outcomes could be monitored using improvements in work- life balance and reducing absenteeism.

Technologies stabilization addresses the critical stresses identified in the study whereas immediate interventions including conducting and information technology audit to identify high impact gain points and standardize communication platforms or providing concise role-based training (Santoso, 2020). Over time the organisations could establish fast track information technology support and recurring digital skills workshops to minimize workflow destruction. The performance would be monitored through reducing information technology ticket resolution times, improving adoption rates or standardized tools and employee satisfaction with technological infrastructure.

Role architecture improvements are necessary to reduce ambiguity. By developing concise role charters which specify responsibilities or authority and performance indicators helping ensure clarity (Silvius-Zuchi, 2024). The kickoff meeting should include the role clarification sessions that are supported by transparent workload dashboards to facilitate equitable task distribution Over time role in reviews should be embedded into project milestones to ensure adaptability. The success could be evaluated using questionnaire items on clarity along with autonomy and workload manager ability alongside performance metrics such as Deadlight adherence.

By reducing single point dependencies through documentation and cross training mitigates the resilience related stress (Borissov, 2024). The immediate actions include the development of coverage notes towards critical tasks and maintaining a skills register. The cross-training initiatives and rotational shadowing schemes need to be institutionalized to increase resilience. Over the long term, with the establishment of researchable knowledge repository could institutionalize toxic

knowledge. The impact of such strategies could be measured using continuity of operations during absences and reduce emergency escalations and improved the performance stability.

Overall, these five domains provide an integrated stress management framework. A pilot implementation is chosen for project teams monitored through the key indicators including employee satisfaction from the questionnaire items, absenteeism and project delivery metrics would also allow iterative refinement. This structured and multilayered approach ensures that stresses in hybrid work arrangements systematically addressed, increase employee performance within the project-based organisations in Azerbaijan.

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research examined the effect of stress on employee performance in hybrid work setting in project management organisations at Azerbaijan addressing four research questions focused on identifying stress factors, their relationship to performance, their relative impact and their implications for organisational practice. Through the adoption of quantitative survey approach with 373 respondents and employee descriptive correlational along with recreation analysis the study produced a robust empirical model which explains how the environmental along with social, reliance, role based, and technological stresses collectively influence the employee outcomes.

The findings indicated that the hybrid stress is multisource with performance outcomes shaping the combination of work environment along with team dynamics, role clarity, reliance patterns and technological infrastructure. The descriptive statistics indicated that the average evaluation of these stressed domains was modest. This suggested that conditions are not wholly unfavorable but remain far from optimal the correlation analysis revealed that particular strong positive association between employee performance and work environment along with team dynamics and technology while raw clarity and individual reliance had weaker but significant positive relationships. The regression analysis further refines such findings with team dynamics and work environments exerting the strongest unique influence followed with the models yet significant contributions from the individual reliance as well as job role clarity and technological factors. Overall, the model demonstrated very high explanatory power with $R=0.927$. This indicated that these five stress domains account for nearly 86% of the variance in employee performance.

These results made several critical contributions such as establishing that team processes and work environments are the most consequential levers of performance in hybrid work arrangements. Along with trust, communication, conflict management and clarity of norms significantly strengthen the performance as do supporting physical and psychological conditions across home and office setting. While the technological stability strongly relates to the performance the overall its unique predictive power is reduced by the social and environmental factors which are considered simultaneously which suggested and intervened relationship where effective teams and supportive environments mitigate the technological strain. Although the role clarity and reliance structures exert weaker with direct effects, their statistical significance highlighted the importance in reducing ambiguity and distributing pressure different teams.

The study also provided advanced understanding about stress In hybrid project based context for Azerbaijan's project management organisations the findings help in addressing hybrid stress holistically which improve team dynamics through player norms and trust building periods Enhancing the work environment through ergonomic and psychological safety measures was technology along with clarity rules and reducing reliance on single individuals collectively form a comprehensive stress management framework.

Furthermore, the study acknowledged the limitations including reliance on self-reported data potential refer based sampling bias and the contextual restriction to project management organisations in Azerbaijan which may limit the general aspect. These constraints point to further research opportunities in adopting longitudinal as well as multi method approaches across industries and regions to validate and extend the findings.

The research confirms that stress and performance are intrinsically linked with hybrid work models with social, technological and environmental factors jointly shaping the outcomes. Through the identification of the most influential stress domains and their relative contributions the study provides actionable insights for organisations seeking to safeguard the employee well-being an optimized performance in an era where hybrid work is increasingly becoming a norm.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

An empirical study to evaluate the effect of stress on employee performance in hybrid work settings within project management organisations in Azerbaijan.

Dear Sir/Madam,

As part completing my degree the final submission is the research where I am required to undertake an academic research study. Due to such I am conducting this research in relation to stress on employee performance and I kindly invite you to participate in the study which is on a voluntary basis. I also ensure that your personal information will remain confidential and anonymous. You will be referred through a reference no. I kindly request you to answer all the questions. Please select only one answer under each question and indicate your answer with “√”.

QUESTIONS

1 Your Annual earnings	Less than 30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
	29,999-49,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	50,000-74,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More than 75,00	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Gender	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Your Age	Less than 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
	36-44	<input type="checkbox"/>
	45-54	<input type="checkbox"/>
	55 and Above	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 How long you have been in hybrid working	Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More than 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 How long have you been in project management company	Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More than 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Please tick one option only.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Independent variables for work stress						
6.0	Work Environment					
6.1	Does working in a hybrid setting help you to manage the workload more effectively?					
6.2	Does your home office setup allow you to work productively with minimum distraction?					
6.3	Does your organisation provide adequate resources and support for an efficient workspace?					
6.4	Do you feel you can maintain a healthy work life balance while working hybrid?					
6.5	Do you find your home environment less stressful than the office environment?					
7.0	Team dynamics					
7.1	Are you able to participate in team discussions and decision making while working Hybrid?					
7.2	Does working hybrid improve communication within team members?					
7.3	Can you easily reach out to team members for support when required?					
7.4	Has team collaboration strengthened in hybrid work setting?					

7.5	Does your team maintain trust and cohesion in hybrid work setting?					
8.0	Job role					
8.1	Do you have all the necessary tools and resources to perform your role effectively?					
8.2	Is your job role clearly defined and even flexible?					
8.3	Do you feel your role is valued regardless of the working hybrid?					
8.4	Are you given sufficient autonomy to complete your activities efficiently?					
8.5	Is our workload manageable while working hybrid?					
9.0	Individual reliance					
9.1	Does your productivity remain high in hybrid work setting?					
9.2	Do you require minimal supervision to manage your work in Hybrid setting?					
9.3	Are your supervisor's confidence in your decision making while working hybrid?					
9.4	Can you stay focused and disciplined when working hybrid?					
9.5	Are you able to complete your task without relying upon others in hybrid work environment?					
10.0	Technological factors					
10.1	Are you satisfied with the technological infrastructure supporting hybrid work?					
10.2	Can you reliably access the technology needed to perform the job?					

10.3	Do technical issues really disrupt the workflow?					
10.4	Does the company provide software facilities for efficient work?					
10.5	Does the company provide effective information technology support to resolve issues quickly?					
Dependent variables						
11.0	Employee performance					
11.1	Do you feel motivated and engaged while working hybrid?					
11.2	Does your performance remain consistent as working hybrid?					
11.3	Are you able to meet deadlines and project goals in hybrid work environment?					
11.4	Do you receive regular and constructive feedback from the manager to improve performance?					
11.5	Does stress from hybrid work negatively affect your ability to perform?					

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



INFORMED CONSENT FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

**AN EMPIRICAL STUDY TO EVALUATE THE EFFECT OF STRESS
ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN HYBRID WORK SETTINGS
WITHIN PROJECT MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS IN
AZERBAIJAN.**

I, agree to be questioned for the research which will be conducted by Rauf Ahmadov doctorate students at the Swiss School of Business and Management, Geneva, Switzerland.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this research and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning research procedures and other matters; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the research or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in providing answers for a questionnaire for this research. I understand that such survey and related materials will be kept completely anonymous and that the results of this study may be published in any form that may serve its best.

I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

.....

.....

Signature of Interviewee

Date

