

A Conceptual Transition of the OCTAPACE Framework into Hybrid Work Model

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Abstract

The operations of the contemporary corporate world have been significantly altered by the growing popularity of hybrid work models. Virtual designs offer real practical advantages, but they also create subtle psychological barriers that affects the foundation of company culture. This paper fulfils crucial need to assess changing employment environments by methodically applying Udai Pareek's OCTAPACE profile into the digital work infrastructure. Through a deductive analysis of literature, this study establishes that while hybrid system introduces systemic negative issues in terms of Openness, Confrontation, and Trust, it can also serve as a powerful driver for positive Autonomy. Furthermore, the analysis highlights that Authenticity remains an academically underexplored domain within remote environments. However, the study finds that the successful optimization of Proactivity, Collaboration, and Experimentation is conditional upon sound leadership and targeted collaborative technological investments. Finally, in order to enable HR professionals to assess and actively maintain organizational strength across modern workforces, this paper summarises these elements into an OCTAPACE-Hybrid matrix.

Keywords: Hybrid Work, Organisational Culture, OCTAPACE Framework, Organisational Ethos.

Introduction

The global corporate landscape has undergone a profound transformation over the past few years, shifting from co-located offices to hybrid, and remote work models. What initially began as an emergency response to global crises has become a permanent operational avenue. Studies on the hybrid model frequently highlight its benefits, including enhanced geographic flexibility, reduced commuting friction, and reduced operational expenditures for firms. However, as organizations transition from temporary remote management to long-term remote or hybrid work, a critical secondary crisis has emerged in form of turbulence in deep-seated organizational culture.

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Organizational culture is not merely a byproduct of corporate existence. It is a vital infrastructure that governs employee engagement, internal communication, ethical behaviour, and enterprise innovation. In traditional set up, this culture is sustained organically through physical proximity, shared visual cues, interpersonal rituals, and spontaneous collaboration. When this is replaced by digital space, the nature of human connection changes. Communication frequently becomes transactional, team structures are restricted, and the boundaries between professional responsibilities and domestic life dissolve. Consequently, modern HR practitioners are increasingly finding that traditional cultural paradigms are inadequate for managing the psychological distances inherent in hybrid teams. To address the same, researchers and practitioners require a robust and multidimensional framework to study and evaluate the cultural health of an organization. This study utilizes the OCTAPACE profile, an organizational development tool originally pioneered by Udai Pareek. The OCTAPACE framework maps corporate ethos across eight distinct and interdependent behavioural dimensions including Openness, Confrontation, Trust, Autonomy, Proactivity, Authenticity, Collaboration, and Experimentation. While historically used to audit physical workplace dynamics, the completeness of the OCTAPACE profile makes it an exceptional diagnostic instrument for the digital era as well. By examining how the pressures of remote work affect each of these eight pillars, HRs can move past from generic initiatives to targeted and systemic interventions.

This study aims to examine the OCTAPACE model in context of the digital era of remote and hybrid work, providing a practical, strategic blueprint that empowers human resource professionals to build, and sustain a resilient corporate culture.

Literature Review

The literature on the OCTAPACE framework and hybrid work culture is still mainly divided, with OCTAPACE study concentrating on traditional, co-located settings and hybrid work research only implicitly addressing cultural values (Malviya 2022) (Gohil 2025). Although OCTAPACE is a useful tool for measuring organizational ethos across eight dimensions, it has not yet been specifically applied to the hybrid work dynamics (Gohil 2025) (Krishna 2024).

The lack of research that specifically apply the OCTAPACE profile to hybrid work situations remains the most obvious gap. This persists because OCTAPACE research remains focussed in traditional sector studies such as manufacturing, healthcare, and IT, without adapting to distributed work arrangements (Ainapur 2023) (Bhardwaj 2026) (Shah 2025). The literature on hybrid work, on the other hand, recognizes empathy, autonomy, and trust as important cultural elements but does not systematically map them to the entire OCTAPACE framework (Malviya 2022). According to research on hybrid work, trust is a sensitive and dynamic cultural aspect that needs to be maintained (Rave 2025). Although trust is a powerful predictor of employee engagement and organizational behaviour in classic OCTAPACE studies, little is known about how it develops in remote teams (Mazinga 2025) (Shah 2025). Additionally, as there are lesser direct social connection and diverse subcultures between remote and in-office workers, openness comes across as an obstacle in hybrid workplaces (Sundari 2024) (Krishna 2024). Classic OCTAPACE studies reveal that authenticity is frequently the least valued characteristic in corporate settings, consequently authenticity is rarely discussed in hybrid literature (Krishna

2024). The most frequently cited benefit of hybrid work is autonomy, which is in line with OCTAPACE's focus on employee empowerment (Malviya 2022) (Tannu 2025). Proaction and confrontation, however, encounter considerable difficulties in scattered settings. Confrontation is hampered by communication barriers and diminished team cohesiveness, making it challenging to confront issues directly in hybrid settings (Tanni 2025) (Naik 2025). Proactive problem-solving in hybrid teams requires deliberate leadership to address coordination issues and communication gaps (Padma 2025) (Bhardwaj 2026). Experimentation requires heavy digital infrastructure and inclusive leadership to sustain in a hybrid scenario (Tanni 2025) (Naik 2025). Similarly, collaboration suffers in hybrid work culture as there is lesser in-person interaction (Sundari 2024) (Bula 2024).

In conclusion, while literature associated with hybrid work model only addresses the dimensions of OCTAPACE in an implicit and unorganised manner. The framework's structured eight-dimensional approach offers a systematic way to measure cultural strengths and gaps in distributed work environments however, it remains underexplored.

Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to evaluate the shifts in organizational ethos brought about by remote and hybrid work models. To achieve this, the paper addresses following specific research objectives:

- To identify critical workplace challenges introduced by the hybrid work paradigm.
- To evaluate the impact of these hybrid workplace challenges on the eight dimensions of the OCTAPACE framework.
- To formulate a conceptual matrix of strategic human resource interventions to mitigate cultural friction and sustain a resilient organizational climate.

Research Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative research design based on theoretical deduction. This study uses an analytical approach to synthesize existing organizational behaviour literature with modern workplace realities. A conceptual methodology is applied for this study as it allows for the systematic application of the OCTAPACE profile to a rapidly evolving the hybrid work era.

The data for this study comprises of secondary literature obtained from credible academic sources, like Google Scholar. The literature search strategy was bound to peer-reviewed articles, theoretical discourse, and corporate case studies published primarily between 2021 and 2026. Search matrices utilized combinations of keywords like OCTAPACE profile, organizational culture, hybrid work paradigms, distributed team engagement, and digital workplace isolation.

The analysis follows a two-stage qualitative synthesis process. First, the documented challenges of hybrid work, derived from secondary literature, are mapped directly against the behavioural requirements of the eight OCTAPACE dimensions as defined by Udai Pareek. A deductive reasoning model is applied where hybrid work patterns are studied in parallel to the

conflict with a cultural dimension. Second, utilizing contemporary strategic human resource management theories, the study finds out actionable, output-oriented HR solutions tailored to alleviate each diagnosed issue.

The final output of this methodology is compiled into a comprehensive OCTAPACE-Hybrid Matrix, which provides a blueprint for HR practitioners.

Discussion

The transition from physical office to a hybrid work model alters the psychological climate of an organization. This section evaluates how the structural challenges of hybrid work compromise the foundational pillars of the OCTAPACE framework, while offering strategic remedies to counter this cultural disruption.

Openness

An open workplace is one where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and talking honestly. Spontaneous, casual interactions chats maintain openness in physical workplaces because they inherently reduce communication barriers. Interpersonal communication changes from organic to highly structured and transactional under a hybrid system. Without a clear task-oriented agenda, employees hardly ever start digital interactions. To mitigate this friction, HR must focus on engineering deliberate and non-transactional digital channels like a virtual “Open door hour” where executives remain accessible on video links for unstructured drop-in discussions.

Confrontation

Confrontation represents the organizational capability to face problems, addressing challenges before they escalate into systemic dysfunction. In physical workspaces, interpersonal friction is easier to mitigate due to fewer misunderstandings because of interpersonal relationships and non-verbal communication. In contrast, in the hybrid paradigm, the absence of physical proximity allows individuals to withdraw behind closed laptops or employ calculated text responses. Due to the fact that texts lacks tone, minor disagreements frequently escalate into relational conflicts. To reconstruct a culture of healthy confrontation, human resource systems must establish clear conflict resolution protocols, such as a "Three-Turn Rule," mandating that if an operational disagreement continues for more than three successive emails or chat messages, team members must transition the conversation to a real-time audio or video medium to resolve the conflict.

Trust

Trust serves as the glue of the OCTAPACE framework, defined as the mutual assurance that team members will support one another. In traditional environments, trust is heavily reinforced by visible presence. The shift to hybrid work frequently triggers phenomenon such productivity paranoia and flexibility stigma. Deprived of physical oversight, remote managers indulge in micromanagement through logging software and unpredictable status check-ins. This continuous monitoring structurally conveys a lack of institutional trust, resulting in digital burnout among the employees. Alleviating this strain requires human resource departments to

lead a structural transition toward Result-Oriented Management Systems (ROMS), shifting key performance indicators (KPIs) strictly from activity metrics to definitive and tangible outcomes.

Autonomy

In contrast to other dimensions experiencing friction, existing literature indicates that Autonomy is the singular dimension that can potentially be positively affected by hybrid work. Autonomy refers to the willingness to delegate authority among managers and empowers individual employees or teams to take ownership of their roles, plan their workloads, and exercise independent judgment. The hybrid model naturally removes the physical constraints like rigid nine-to-five office structure and strict scheduling. If not micro-managed, remote operations allow employees to plan their tasks around personal peak productivity cycles, manage domestic responsibilities asynchronously, and execute deep work without the constant visual and acoustic interruptions of an open-plan office.

To capitalize on this positive cultural effect, HR departments must formalize organizational boundaries to prevent autonomy from devolving. Implementing a formal "Right to Disconnect" policy, which legally or contractually protects an employee's right to ignore internal communications outside of core hours. This will safeguard this autonomy, ensuring it serves as a long-term driver of professional empowerment and retention.

Proaction

Being proactive is acting in advance to either take advantage of possibilities or avoid problems before they arise. Ambient office awareness is severed in hybrid workspaces, which makes workers exhibit reactive tendencies and concentrate just on the current lines of works. It will need transformational leadership and focused investment in collaborative technology to reverse this pattern. Leaders need to switch from assigning tasks in a top-down manner to coaching methods that promote independent problem-solving. In order to systematically drive proactive, organizations must simultaneously invest in decentralized digital dashboarding platforms (such as automated notification arrays) and predictive project management interfaces that notify neighbouring teams of pipeline delays before they happen.

Authenticity

The degree of congruence between a person's words, feelings, and actions combined with the psychological freedom to portray one's actual self at work is known as authenticity. The authenticity factor of contemporary hybrid work literature is still largely unexplored and academically scattered. People naturally offer polished versions of themselves since remote interactions are mostly limited to brief, carefully planned video chats, which might lead to performative productivity. HR strategies must purposefully create workplaces that encourage vulnerability in order to overcome this ambiguity. During company-wide digital town halls, senior leadership must actively engage in visible vulnerability, specifically addressing operational shortcomings or work-life conflict. In order to establish a baseline for future empirical tracking, HR should concurrently replace coerced corporate socialization

with interest-driven digital micro-communities where genuine human connections can develop naturally without professional posturing.

Collaboration

The organizational capacity of individuals and groups to voluntarily cooperate and share intellectual resources is known as collaboration. Hybrid work has seemed to hamper this by moving from spontaneous to intentional and calculated collaboration. Deliberate leadership frameworks and cohesive technology systems are necessary to overcome this rigidity. In order to duplicate impromptu, cross-departmental encounters, the company must also invest in digital workspace suites that incorporate asynchronous brainstorming, real-time whiteboarding, and enterprise social networks. In order to inculcate cooperative behaviours among peers, performance scorecards must also have shared cross-functional KPIs.

Experimentation

Experimentation encourages innovation, risk-taking, and the continuous testing of new ideas. When isolated at home, employees become highly risk-averse, fearing that an unpredicted negative outcome from an innovative test will be judged harshly through cold digital data logs. Overcoming this stagnation requires a dual commitment to supportive leadership behaviour and technological infrastructure. Leaders must explicitly cultivate psychological safety by normalizing failure. Concurrently, the organization must invest in dedicated digital innovation tools like isolated, low-stakes development environments where teams are allocated resources to run experimental models without risking core enterprise stability.

Table 1: OCTAPACE-Hybrid Work Matrix

Dimension	Hybrid Cultural Impact Type	Proposed Strategic HR Intervention
O	Negative (Transactional communication)	Institutionalize asynchronous transparency tools and virtual open-door drop-in slots.
C	Negative (Avoidant behaviours/text friction)	Enforce the "Three-Turn Rule" to mandate immediate transitions to live video/audio channels.
T	Negative (Micro-managing/paranoia)	Transition to Result-Oriented Management Systems (ROMS) to track outputs over hours.
A	Mixed (Schedule flexibility and flexibility stigma)	Formalize "Right to Disconnect" regulations and divide tasks into micro-task to be finished in certain deadlines.
P	Conditional (Reactive operational tendencies)	Invest in predictive team alert systems and incorporate digital risk assessments tools.

A	Underexplored (Performative/masked behaviours)	Foster executive vulnerability in town halls and establish opt-in interest-driven micro-groups.
C	Conditional (Calculated and rigid cooperation)	Introduce shared cross-functional KPIs and invest in integrated collaborative workspace suites.
E	Conditional (Isolation-driven risk aversion)	Fund structural digital innovation tool and normalise failures.

Conclusion

By adapting Udai Pareek's seminal OCTAPACE framework to the current hybrid work age, this conceptual study fills a significant gap in modern organizational theory. The study uses a qualitative and deductive analysis to show that workplace culture is fractured along several dimensions lines rather than being affected uniformly. The resultant OCTAPACE-Hybrid Matrix offers strategic HR interventions to combat systemic cultural degradation, maximize the inherent advantages of greater autonomy, and use technology and leadership to maintain experimentation and collaboration.

Despite these contributions, this study is subject to certain limitations that must be acknowledged. As the framework is entirely conceptual and built upon a synthesis of existing literature, it lacks primary validation across diverse industries. The cultural impacts identified represent broad theoretical tendencies rather than universal rules, failing to account for how variations in organizational size, sector, or regional culture might alter employee experiences. Furthermore, the rapid, ongoing evolution of collaborative software imply that some technological dependencies highlighted may shift as digital workspaces become more immersive over time. These limitations open up valuable avenues for future researchers. First, there is an urgent need for studies to design and validate quantitative measurement scales based on this hybrid framework, testing the matrix across distinct sectors like technology, banking, and education. Second, as these dimensions emerge as a significantly underexplored in remote settings, future studies should focus on mixed-method research to track how performative digital presentation impacts long-term employee well-being and psychological safety. Finally, longitudinal research could track organizations over several years to observe how it influences employee retention, innovation rates, and overall corporate performance in a stabilized hybrid environment in long term.

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