The Relationship between Remote Working and Individual Work Performance Mediated by Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

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Abstract
The main purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between remote working and individual work performance and if satisfaction with work-life balance could mediate such a relationship. Using purposive sampling techniques, a group of 110 employees of a utility company in Sarawak, Malaysia, completed a self-report questionnaire encompassing sociodemographic information and the following measures: remote working scale, satisfaction with work-life balance scale, and individual work performance scale. The survey data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS v26.0 and PROCESS. The study's findings confirmed the mediating role of satisfaction with work-life balance in the relationship between remote working and individual work performance. In conclusion, the finding of this study is in line with the Social Exchange Theory in terms of the reciprocity mechanism where remote working meets an employee's higher level of satisfaction with work-life balance, they will, in return, express their commitment through their performance by increasing their task and contextual performance and decreasing counterproductive work behavior.
Keywords: Remote Working, Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance, Task Performance, Contextual Performance, Counterproductive Work Behavior

Introduction
In recent years, flexible working has become more prevalent in most countries, where many organizations have introduced some form of flexible working arrangement for their employees. Flexible working arrangements are not new, but many companies have been obliged to let their employees work from home since the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") outbreak. The danger of COVID-19 triggered global lockdowns that resulted in many people's houses becoming their places of work. The pandemic was a distinct case of an uncertain event that demanded an immediate change in organizations' working arrangements to break the chain of COVID-19 infection. The COVID-19 outbreak has also

proven how fast businesses should respond to rapidly evolving human resources-related issues.

On 5th June 2020, the Malaysian Prime Minister then introduced the National Economic Recovery Plan, also known as Pelan Jana Semula Ekonomi Negara ("PENJANA"), as one of the initiatives to support the Malaysian economy during the outbreak (Flexible Work Arrangements Income Tax Deduction - Initiatives, n.d.). Several measures were designed and implemented by the government to encourage the economy. The Flexible Working Arrangement ("FWA") was introduced to motivate people to work from home while embracing the new normal. In order to encourage FWA as a revolutionary concept of working, Talent Corporation Malaysia ("TalentCorp"), PENJANA's Facilitator, has obtained approval from the Ministry of Finance and the Inland Revenue Board to grant Flexible Work Arrangements Income Tax Deduction to organizations that implement FWA policies for their employees. Effective from 1st July 2020, this scheme offers employers a variety of advantages, including double income tax exemptions, tax cash savings, and SOCSO coverage for their workers.. As of October 2024, a total of 2,826 organisations and 565,210 employees have adopted FWA in Malaysia, (TalentCorp, 2025)

According to Datuk Shamsudin Bardan, executive director of the Malaysian Employers Federation ("MEF"), the MEF Fringe Benefits Survey 2020 indicated that 49.3 percent of the employees interviewed commented that there were many disturbances while working from home (Alisha Nur, 2021). The survey also revealed that 89.9 percent of the 138 respondents could not work from home (Alisha Nur, 2021). Similarly, Palumbo (2020) found that the work-life balance of public employees was negatively affected when they worked from home. It increases work-related fatigue, resulting in a worsening work-life balance. In contrast, the EY 2021 Work Reimagined Employee Survey reveals that only 22 percent of Malaysian workers surveyed want to return to the office once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted locally (Majority of Surveyed Malaysia Employees Prefer Flexible Ways of Working Post-COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021). Besides that, the 2021 Randstad Malaysian Employer Brand survey indicated that 69 percent of 2,523 Malaysian respondents ranked work-life balance as the second most important employee value proposition expected from an ideal employer (Randstad Malaysia, 2021). According to Randstad's H2 2021 Workmonitor survey results, 88 percent of respondents in Malaysia felt that the COVID-19 pandemic had created opportunities to enhance their work-life balance (Randstad Malaysia, 2022). This bi-annual study was carried out worldwide with at least 800 respondents from 34 markets. The survey reveals the workforce's recent attitudes and impressions about the workplace (Randstad Malaysia, 2022).

The EY 2021 Work Reimagined Employee Survey also reveals that seven out of ten Malaysian respondents think flexible work arrangements will enhance productivity and innovation. Furthermore, 63 percent of respondents believe that individual performance can be fairly assessed regardless of where they work (Majority of Malaysian Employees Prefer Flexible Work Environments Post-COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021). Although maximizing individual work performance remotely is difficult, it can be made easier by changing organizational practices and policies (Inamdar, 2022). According to Inamdar (2022), in a setting where employees work remotely, the fundamental principles of performance management are still

applicable, but they must be applied differently. Besides that, a well-defined system for performance review is also important to enhance the employee's performance management.

Respondents in previous studies had mixed feelings about their remote working experiences. As most of the studies were done before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the responses may have been impacted by the fact that workers are forced to work from home rather than choose to do so (Ferreira et al., 2021). Anderson and Kelliher (2020) stated in their study that employees feel increased autonomy and appreciation for being able to choose their flexible work arrangement. However, the same results might not be seen when an individual is obliged to work from home. Thus, it is important to contemplate the possible changes in the post-pandemic landscape to better understand employees' perceptions of remote working.

Investigations on SWLB are relatively less and understudied (Mihelič & Aleksić, 2017; Davis et al., 2013). Many research focuses on the direct effects of remote working. However, little attention has been paid to the mediating effects of SWLB between remote working and work performance. Notably, less research investigates if working from home influences an individual's SWLB and, thereby, work performance. Additionally, Sharabi (2017) observed that work and family domains are frequently investigated. However, there are fewer studies on other life domains, such as leisure, community, and religion. Along with the many studies on family and work, studies on leisure time and religious involvement among employees would help readers learn more about these domains. Hence, there is a need to acknowledge employees' satisfaction with work and life domains.

Koopmans et al. (2012) suggested that the individual work performance domain includes task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviors. As counterproductive behavior differs from the other two types of performance, the researcher categorized individual work performance into two. The first category is the positive aspect of performance, comprising task and contextual performance. The second category is negative.

In order to enhance the generalization of research findings, a thorough investigation of the relationships should be performed with more homogeneous respondents from one job based on different organizations or numerous jobs from one organization (Schneider, 2008, as cited by Spilker, 2014). For purposes of this study, the researcher will narrow down the study to one organisation, the utility company in Sarawak, Malaysia.

It is important for organizations to investigate the impact of remote working for the enhancement of their employee performance, which eventually aids in overall business performance. Therefore, this paper examines the relationship between perceptions towards remote working and individual work performance and if satisfaction with work-life balance could mediate such a relationship.
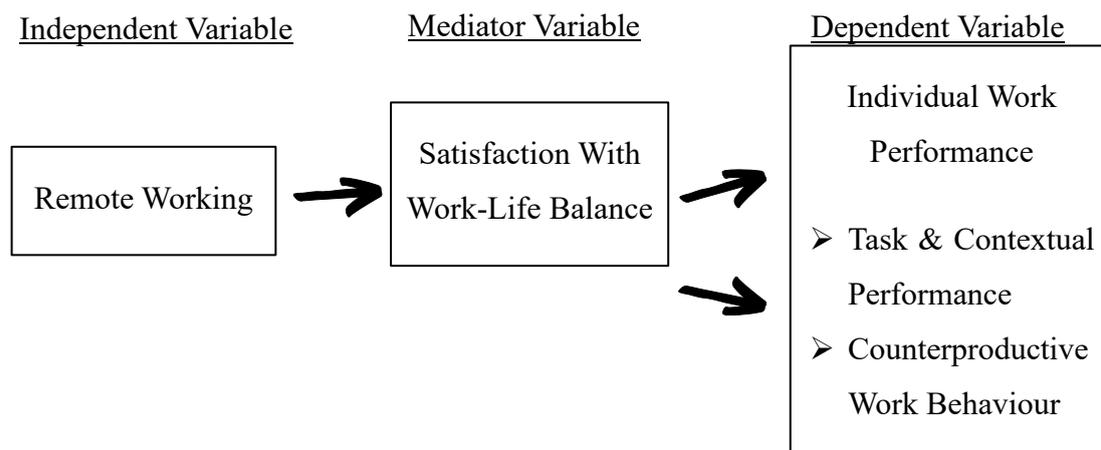
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework of Study

Figure 1.1 above shows the conceptual framework of this study. The independent variable is remote working, and individual work performance is the dependent variable, while SWLB is the mediator variable.

Individual Work Performance

According to Anitha (2014), as cited by Farooq and Sultana (2021), work performance denotes an employee's financial and non-financial outcomes that ultimately influence an organization's performance. It is also referred as a multi-dimensional concept. According to Sonnetag et al. (2008), task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance are three different types of performance. Adaptive performance is a relatively new concept in the individual work performance dimension introduced by past studies (Koopmans et al., 2012). This concept focuses on how the dynamics of individual work performance have changed due to the interconnections and uncertainties of work systems that are becoming more prevalent (Koopmans et al., 2012). However, Koopmans et al. (2012) differ to support this idea and claim that adaptive performance is a part of contextual performance.

Individual contribution to organizational performance based on job description can be defined as task performance. Thus, it involves achieving the conditions stipulated in the employment contract, according to Sonnetag et al. (2008). It is an important technical and job-related action or behavior which includes the completion time as well as accuracy. In contrast, contextual performance does not directly impact organizational performance but assists the organization by supporting it in terms of social and psychological circumstances (Sonnetag et al., 2008). Similarly, Borman and Motowidlo (1993), as cited by Koopmans et al. (2012), concurred that contextual performance is the behavior patterns that support organizational, social, and psychological environments. The behavior, for example, includes collaborating and encouraging co-workers as well as team performance.

In addition, Koopmans et al. (2012) argued that the individual work performance domain also includes counterproductive work behaviors. Counterproductive work behaviors are described as an action harmful to an organization's success (Rotundo and Sackett, 2002, p. 69, as cited by Koopmans et al., 2012). Counterproductive behaviors are often combined with contextual performance measures and reverse scored. However, it was clarified that

counterproductive behaviors and contextual performance are totally different because the complete absence of counterproductive actions is not equivalent to effective contextual performance.

Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance ("Swlb")

There are numerous studies on the common subtopics of work-life concepts, such as "work-life balance," "work-life enrichment," "work-life facilitation," and "work-life conflict." The cross-domain concepts are mechanisms of which an individual's performance in one role is influenced by their performance in another role concepts (Valcour, 2007). However, SWLB is not focusing on these cross-domains. SWLB is distinctive in the nomological model of work-life conceptions (Valcour, 2007). It is a relatively new and understudied concept in the academic literature. Valcour (2007) pointed out that satisfaction with work-family balance comprises two main components, namely, cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component includes an evaluation of an individual's accomplishment level in managing various work demands and non-work responsibilities. The positive experience or emotion that results from that evaluation constitutes the affective component of SWLB. Hence, Valcour (2007) stated that individuals are satisfied when they perceive they have enough resources to handle the demands of their job and family responsibilities successfully.

The term of work-family balance or "work-life balance", refers to how well people perceive their ability to juggle the responsibilities of their work life, family life and other non-work lives. The definition of "balance" here is having nearly equivalent inputs and outputs of work and non-work duties. Personnel resources that are committed to each of the duty are known as inputs. While outcomes are analysed based on the individual's levels of contentment or satisfaction with their roles. SWLB's comprehensive degree of contentment is based on an individual's evaluation of how they successfully handle all the pressures from work and personal or non-work life duties (Valcour, 2007). Similarly, Davis and Tuttle (2017) elaborated that a person's degree of SWLB is highly related to their perceptions of the demands of their personal and professional lives. SWLB emphasizes individual's perception of the degree of balance instead of the actual degree of balance itself (Greenhaus et al. 2003).

Based on past studies, several aspects contribute to the variation of one's degree of SWLB. According to Valcour (2007), time is the most tangible resource that connects an individual's work and personal life. The time demands of an organization also affect an individual's ability to balance various roles and properly manage work and family obligations (Beham & Drobnič, 2010). For example, longer working time reduces an individual's capacity to achieve the demands of numerous roles, which contributes to a diminished feeling of being able to integrate work and family life successfully (Valcour, 2007). Valcour's (2007) study also found a negative relationship between work-family balance satisfaction and time spent commuting, increases a time-based work demand on top of regular work hours and drain resources.

Along these, Beham and Drobnič (2010) explained that autonomy over one's working hours, location, and work completion method helps employees better manage their various roles, which will eventually lead to a good SWLB. As for working hours, for instance, when individuals have control over their work hours, they are able to meet demands coming from other domains without facing any consequences. Similarly, Valcour (2007) discovered that

working hours were negatively associated with employees' satisfaction with their work-family balance. Valcour's findings showed that "control" or autonomy reduced the negative effect of work hours on individuals' satisfaction with their professional and personal lives.

One of the primary reasons for occupational stress and frustration is a heavy workload, which can then affect employees' ability to manage work and personal obligations. Beham and Drobnič (2010) stressed that frequent work overload, deadline pressure, and conflicting expectations at work stress out employees, diminish their ability to handle non-work activities, and cause dissatisfaction with work-family balance.

Besides that, Beham and Drobnič (2010) found that social support from co-workers and superiors was significantly linked to an individual's level of SWLB. The supportive behavior of co-workers and supervisors, such as empathetic listening, plays a crucial role in individuals. Other than that, it is also crucial to understand the changes in cultural beliefs on the opportunity, particularly those based on gender, which may influence what constitutes satisfaction. Davis and Tuttle (2017), in their study on SWLB in 26 countries, provide evidence that gender inequality at the country level has a negative impact on family life, which highlights the need for cross-country policies promoting gender equality. Hence, economic and social inequalities across countries could also affect an individual's SWLB (Davis & Tuttle, 2017).

Last but not least, based on their findings, an individual's attributes contribute to nearly 95 percent of the variation in SWLB (Davis & Tuttle, 2017). It is important to note that SWLB differs from one person to another and is reliant on an individual's interests or beliefs (Ortiz-Bonnin et al., 2022). Individual characteristics and individual experiences of work and life responsibilities are critical components in determining work-family satisfaction.

According to Kirchmeyer (2000), as cited by Mihelič and Aleksić (2017), an effective allocation of individual resources, such as time, effort, and dedication across domains is necessary to attain satisfaction in all domains of individual's life. Non-work activities are not family concerns or responsibilities but still matter for preserving work-life balance. Non-work activities refer to a person's involvement in "community, social, religious, and leisure duties" (Prakash, 2018). Due to the collectivist nature of Malaysian society, Brough et al. (2014) considered community domain and religious principles as predictors of work-life enrichment to fit the Malaysian setting. Besides that, Riddick (1986), as cited by Kong et al. (2020), highlighted that leisure satisfaction is vital in the life domain of an individual. Leisure satisfaction refers to an individual's favorable feelings after engaging in leisure activities such as jogging, reading, dancing, and playing games. Russell (1987), as cited by Kong et al. (2020), pointed out that one of the best ways to help someone be satisfied with their work-life balance is by enjoying their leisure time.

Remote Working
According to Nakrošienė et al. (2019), telework is regarded as performing tasks from different locations that allow employees to access their labor activities through technologies. Even though the term lacks a commonly accepted definition, in a simple word, "remote working" refers to an employee working away from their workplace or office. Madsen (2003), as cited by Nakrošienė et al. (2019), mentioned that it had been viewed as a win-win scenario

for both workers and employers, allowing them to select from various talents, and reduce real estate costs, motivate employees, and maintain work-family balance.

There are three types of telework, according to Nakrošienė et al. (2019), namely full-time telework, part-time, and ad hoc telework. When a teleworker uses telecommunications regularly and works from home or another location other than the office, that is considered full-time telework. Meanwhile, part-time telework is when they sometimes work from their homes, offices, or other locations. Ad hoc telework is when they work from home occasionally. Besides that, a teleworker that has agreements with multiple employers is called a freelance telework (Nakrošienė et al., 2019).

Past research showed that there are a number of implications and benefits of remote working for individuals, organizations, and society as a whole. Remote working can have favorable and unfavorable implications, depending on the home environment, organizational support, and social connections. Previous studies claimed that the favorable outcomes of remote working are cost savings, flexibility to fulfill family commitments, increased autonomy, improved performance, and having enough time to complete duties remotely.

However, studies also revealed that employees are still struggling to adapt to remote working as it is challenging due to worsening work-life balance, technology reliance, communication problems, ergonomics and work schedule issues, increased work-related fatigue, low productivity, increased stress levels, and a reduced sense of connectedness to others. Accessibility via the internet and mobile devices gave remote workers the impression that they were always committed and connected to their work life. Remote workers also reported feeling lonely, which led to stress and lower performance (Toscano & Zappalà, 2020 as cited by Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). Waight et al. (2022), in their study, listed six effects of remote working on connecting, namely, lack of informality, connection, nonverbal communication, tacit information sharing, unequal access to workspaces, and getting additional family time.

Social Exchange Theory

According to Organ (1988, 1990), as cited by Cropanzano et al. (2017), social exchanges are more ambiguous, include higher trust, and are more flexible than economic exchanges, which tend to be quid pro quo, with lower trust and more rigid monitoring. Social Exchange Theory claims that resources are exchanged through a reciprocity mechanism, in which an individual wants to pay back another party for their favorable or unfavorable actions (Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960, as cited by Cropanzano et al., 2017).

Cropanzano et al. (2017) claimed that there are several types of social interaction and the current version of organizational behavior consists of three common characteristics as follows:

(i)   Initial treatment of an actor
      When an organizational actor engages a target individual in either a favorable or unfavorable manner, the process of social exchange consider begins (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004).

(ii) Reciprocal reactions of a target individual

Social exchange theory indicates that when an organizational actor does a favorable initiating action, the target individual will typically respond in a more positive reciprocating manner.

(iii) Development of a relationship

The response above can be divided into two categories, relationship reactions and behavioral reactions, which often contribute to one another. Thus, positive reciprocal exchanges can develop an economic exchange connection into a strong social exchange relationship. However, the development of such a relationship will be absent if the target individual is treated poorly.

As the Social Exchange Theory supports reciprocity concepts in the workplace; hence, it can be used to explore the impact of remote working on employees (Tsen et al., 2021). From the lens of social exchange theory, all social relationships are placed within an exchange framework (Tsen et al., 2021). When a member obtains benefits from another, they feel obligated to pay back favors in order to maintain the pleasant exchange relationship. Similarly, Tsen et al. (2021) pointed out that social exchange theory posits that FWA reflects an organization's commitment and investment in its employees' well-being, which may encourage employees to reciprocate and provide some advantages to the organization.

Therefore, when remote work is viewed as advantageous by the staff, they are more likely to feel obligated to the company and put in extra effort to produce excellent performance. For example, if working from home arrangements meet an employee's SWLB, they will, in return, express their commitment to achieving the organization's goal. Here, individual job performance represents the outcome of the theory. The employee could even reciprocate by tolerating the possible drawbacks of remote work. An employer who provides remote work options shows a signal that they are concerned about their workers' physical and mental well-being; therefore, remote workers would feel that they owe the employee for giving them the chance to work from home (Palumbo et al., 2022).

Remote Working and Individual Work Performance

One of the most compelling arguments Nakrošienė et al. (2019) for companies considering telework is that it increases staff performance. It was mentioned that remote work enables employees to be more productive by letting them work at their convenience and most productive time. However, it is also important to understand that not all companies allow employees to work at their preferred time. Remote workers are believed to be less productive than workers working on office premises. For example, in China, Wang et al. (2021), as cited by Waight et al. (2022), found that the communication gap had negatively influenced the productivity of remote workers. Campo et al. (2021), in their study, also found that remote working had no impact on individual work performance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Jackson and Fransman (2018) also claimed that remote working does not always increase productivity. Some companies still expect their employees to work remotely during normal office hours. Thus, trust is the biggest concern between employees and employers when considering remote work. Cultivating trust between employee and employer is crucial as it will increase productivity, employee engagement, and retention.

Improving an employee's performance level is always beneficial for an organization. Stieg (2020) as cited by Farooq and Sultana (2021) opined that working remotely could make

employees perform better in certain tasks while deteriorating in others. On the same note, Pickard-Whitehead (2020) as cited by Farooq and Sultana (2021) mentioned that 30 percent of the workers claimed that they were productive while working remotely, compared to 45 percent working from a workplace. Based on their research findings, Farooq and Sultana (2021) concluded that working from home significantly influences female employees' productivity more than male employees because it enables female employees to simplify domestic duties and family demands.

Remote Working and Satisfaction of Work-Life Balance
Waight et al. (2022) pointed out that the greatest achievement of remote working, though not perfect is work-life balance. Traditionally, remote working was considered to enhance employees' work-life balance by allowing them to work from home while caring for their families (Nakrošienė et al., 2019). However, in the current situation, balancing work and personal life duties is one of the most challenging tasks for remote workers. For instance, there could be frequent interruptions from work or family while carrying out their duties at home. As a result, it could negatively impact the worker's satisfaction with telework and overall performance.

Ferreira et al. (2021) argue that remote working practice is a valuable approach for employees to arrange their day better to achieve their professional and personal responsibilities. It helps employees achieve a healthy work-life balance, improving job satisfaction (Ferreira et al., 2021). Beham and Drobnič (2010) explained that employees could handle multiple roles better when they can control their working environment, time, and job completion styles.

On the same note, Waight et al. (2022) found that respondents had more time with their family and pets while working from home. While losing connectedness at work, remote workers could experience a greater connectedness with family members, especially for those employees staying with their parents and children. Supportive organizational environments, for instance, an organization with flexibilities, are necessary to boost employees' SWLB. These factors eventually will contribute to a favorable perception of their work-life balance.

Remote Working, Satisfaction of Work-Life Balance and Individual Work Performance
Flexible scheduling and working arrangements are expected to enhance workers' productivity and work-life balance. The relationship between remote work and individual work performance is indirect, and the outcome, such as SWLB, mediates the relationship (Kelliher and De Menezes, 2019, as cited by Metselaar et al., 2022). According to Gajendran and Harrison (2007), as cited by Metselaar et al. (2022), working from home is favorable for performance only when remote workers have access to extra resources, such as autonomy and improved work-life balance. In line with this assumption, Metselaar et al. (2022) went beyond by looking at the possible mediators that could signify the relationship. According to their findings, it was proven that there is a significant relationship between remote workers' SWLB and work performance Metselaar et al. (2022). Employees with a satisfying balance between work and personal life can concentrate better at work, which eventually improves their work performance (Kim, 2004, as cited by Metselaar et al., 2022).

Methods

Participants
The target group of samples is comprised of employees from a utility company that has adopted a flexible work arrangement that allows for remote working. Thus, the population of this study is 5400 staff from a utility company located in Sarawak, Malaysia. Purposive or judgemental sampling was used to reach out to the respondents. The purposive sampling technique for this study works by asking the employees working from home in the current condition. Based on Israel's (1992) published table, the minimum sample for the population is 98 respondents, and the researcher managed to gather 110 samples.

Measures
The data was collected from a questionnaire survey completed by the respondents. The perception of remote working was measured by seven items in total, three items were adapted from Albion (2004), and another four items were adapted from Charron and Lowe (2005) scored on a 6-Point Likert Scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*) with the coefficient alpha of 0.752. Satisfaction with work-life balance scale was adapted from Valcour (2007), consisting of seven items scored on a 5-Point Likert Scale (1 = *very dissatisfied* to 5 = *very satisfied*) with the coefficient alpha of 0.945. In addition to the family domain, the researcher added religious and leisure activities under the life domains of this scale. As for individual work performance, the researcher adapted ten items developed by Koopmans et al. (2012) scored on a 5-Point Likert Scale) with the coefficient alpha of 0.786. This section contains measurements for three parts namely task and contextual performance (1 = *seldom* to 5 = *always*) and counterproductive work behavior (1 = *never* to 5 = *often*).

Findings and Discussion
Of the 110 respondents, 62.7% are female. The majority part of the respondents is from the age group of 25 to 35 years old (42.7%), trailed by the age group of 36 to 46 years old (38.2%) and the age group 47 to 57 years old (19.1%). While for marital status, a larger part of the respondents is married (70.0%), followed by singles (28.2%), divorced (1.8%), and none widowed. Larger part of the respondents is with higher level of education which made up 91.8% of the entire population. As for respondents' job positions, the majority of them are executive and senior executive (62.7%), followed by managers and senior managers (20.0%), non-executive (16.4%), and general manager (0.9%). In a typical working week, 33.6% of the respondents are working from home for five days, followed by three days (21.8%), two days (18.2%), four days (14.5%), and one day (11.8%). Overall, 83% of the respondents preferred to work from home.

Table 1 shows the findings of Spearman Correlation nonparametric test between remote working, satisfaction with work-life balance, and individual work performance, which includes task and contextual performance and counterproductive work behavior.

Table 1

Summary of Correlation, Means, and Standard Deviation for Scores Remote Working, Satisfaction With Work Life Balance and Individual Work Performance (N=110).

Scale	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Remote working	4.75	.90			
2. Satisfaction with work-life balance	3.55	.77	.229**		
3. Task and contextual performance	3.67	.71	.057	.345**	
4. Counterproductive work behavior	2.20	.72	-.036	-.321**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

H_1: Remote working is positively related with task and contextual performance.

H_2: Remote working is negatively related with counterproductive work behavior.

The first and second assumptions were not supported as there are no correlation between remote working and task and contextual performance $r(110)$ = .057, p = 0.553 as well as counterproductive work behaviour $r(110)$ = -.036, p = 0.707. The finding was similar to past literature, where Campo et al. (2021), in their study, found that remote working had no impact on individual work performance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondent's sociodemographic characteristics showed that most of them have been working in their current job for one to ten years (64.5%) and 62.7% are executives and senior executives. Perception towards remote working does not directly affect the task and contextual performance, probably due to their position's criticality and work demand, which remain status quo while working from home. For example, for those executives responsible as a secretariat for management and board of directors' meetings may not encounter any change in their task, and contextual performance after working from home as the number of physical meetings is equally replaced with virtual meetings. In short, their positive or even negative perceptions of remote working will not affect their work performance. Besides that, the total days of working from home in a typical week also vary among respondents. Only 33.6% of them work from home five days in a typical working week. Hence, it might not significantly affect their work performance. On the same note, Jackson and Fransman (2018) also claimed that remote working does not always increase productivity. One of the reasons could be remote workers trying to adapt to the post-pandemic new norm and hybrid work environment while their employer develops, improves, and alters its flexible work arrangements policies.

Similarly, the perception of remote work does not affect counterproductive work behavior. It means that when the perceptions towards remote work are high or low, it will not affect the counterproductive work behavior of an employee. It could be because the trust the organization gain from its employees is very high. For example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were many retrenchments and pay cut by various organizations within Malaysia. However, the mean total score for counterproductive work behavior ($\bar{x}$ = 2.20; SD = 0.72) proved that the employees seldomly portray counterproductive work behavior. It showed how well the utility company maintained its people well-being in recent years. Thus, H_1 and H_2 of this study were rejected.

H_3: Remote working is positively related with SWLB.

Based on the findings, remote working and SWLB were found to be weakly positively correlated, r(110) = 0.229, p = 0.008. This result indicates that when the perceptions towards remote working increases, the SWLB will also increase, The result is supported by Metselaar et al. (2022), which found that remote work benefits attaining work-life balance satisfaction. The working from home option allows employees to adjust their work time in order to accommodate needs from other life domains such as family, leisure time, and religious activities. For example, by eliminating the commuting time, remote workers can fulfill their caring responsibilities, hobbies, and prayers, especially those who struggle to pray at the workplace.

Similarly, Waight et al. (2022) found that respondents had more time with their family and pets while working from home. Despite the lack of human connection at work, remote workers could experience a greater connection with family members, especially for those employees staying with their parents and children. It is relevant in this study because 70.0% of the respondents are married, and 62.7% of their spouses are working. Furthermore, 29.1% and 32.7% of them are with the eldest child and youngest child aged under 12 years old. In addition, 49% of them have indicated that they are providing elderly care to parents, siblings, or relatives. In short, flexibility, such as working from home, is necessary to boost SWLB. Therefore, the H_3 is accepted.

H_4:   SWLB is positively related with task and contextual performance.
H_5:   SWLB is negatively related with counterproductive work behavior.

The fourth and fifth assumptions were supported, whereby satisfaction with work-life balance and task and contextual performance was found to be moderately positively correlated, r(110) = .345, p=.000. While. In contrast, SWLB and counterproductive work behavior was found to be moderately negatively correlated, r(110) = -.321, p=.001. Hence, the H_4 and H_5 of this study were supported. The finding is in line with past research by Ortiz-Bonnin et al. (2022), which confirmed that satisfaction with work-life balance positively impacts individual work performance in the long term. A satisfying balance between work and personal life can help people concentrate on their jobs, eventually improving performance (Kim, 2004, as cited by Metselaar et al., 2022). For example, an employee with a higher level of satisfaction in work and personal life will feel happier and focused, thus contributing positively to their task and contextual work performance. On the other hand, a higher level of satisfaction in these domains contributes negatively to the counterproductive work behavior of an employee. Thus, a satisfied employee will not undermine the organization's image and interest by focusing on the negative aspect of their organization.

Mediation Analysis
The mediating role of SWLB on the relationship between remote working and individual work performance was assessed following Hayes's (2013) approach via bootstrapping method by utilizing SPSS Version 26; PROCESS Version 4.1 Model 4 in a simple mediation model. The summary of the mediation analysis result is tabulated in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Mediation Analysis

Relationship	Total Effect (c)	Direct Effect (c')	Indirect Effect (a*b)	Confidence Interval		Conclusion
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
RM → SWLB → Task and Contextual Performance	.031 $p=.68$	-.026 $p=.72$	.058	.003	.135	Full Mediation
RM → SWLB → Counterproductive Work Behaviour	-.036 $p=.64$	.022 $p=.77$	-.058	-.134	-.006	Full Mediation

Similar to the Spearman Correlation test, the mediation bootstrapping method confirms that H_1 and H_2 are rejected while H_3, H_4, and H_5 are supported. There was no statistically significant direct effect of remote working on task and contextual performance in presence of SWLB ($b = -.026$, $t(107) = -.357$, $p > 0.05$) and remote working on counterproductive work behaviour ($b = .022$, $t(107) = .299$, $p = .766$. However, the result reveals that there are significant indirect effects of remote working on the task and contextual performance as well as counterproductive work behavior via SWLB, supporting **H_6** and **H_7**. According to Hayes (2012), a mediator is considered to have a mediational effect when the indirect effect is statistically significant with its bias corrected 95% confidence interval excluded from zero. As shown in Table 4.7, the bias-corrected confidence interval for both the indirect path excluded zero. Hence, SWLB is considered a mediator in this study.

This indicates that the higher level of remote working perception will indirectly contribute to a higher level of SWLB, which eventually able to increases individual task and contextual performance and decreases individual counterproductive work behavior. In line with this, that there is a slight improvement in the respondents' objective performance rating after remote working. It indicates that none of them scored "poor" and "marginal". Most of the respondents scored "good" (30.0%), "very good" (60.0%) and "high" (5.5%).

It shows that the overall relationship between remote working and individual work performance is indirectly mediated by SWLB. The finding supports the past study suggestion where the author pointed out that the relationship between remote working and individual work performance is indirect, and the outcome such as SWLB mediates the relationship (Kelliher and De Menezes, 2019, as cited by Metselaar et al., 2022). According to Gajendran and Harrison (2007), as cited by Metselaar et al. (2022), working from home is favorable for performance only when remote workers have access to extra resources, such as autonomy and improved work-life balance. For example, remote workers would have the time to cook meals, washcloths, and care for their family members. It will make them feel satisfied and obliged to pay back the time used for personal duties with excellent performance. Likewise, the organization shows employees that they care for their well-being by providing flexibility. It builds the trust and loyalty of the employees. Hence, they will not be the reason to damage the organizational image.

In a nutshell, the findings of this study are in line with the Social Exchange Theory in terms of the reciprocity mechanism where if remote working meets an employee's SWLB, they will, in return, express their commitment to achieving the organization's goal. Here, individual work performance represents the outcome or commitment referred to in theory.

Implication

With the rise of remote work following the COVID-19 pandemic, this research offers a relevant contribution to the knowledge of remote work practises. This study will contribute to human resource professionals' substantial understanding of the importance of acknowledging employees' satisfaction levels towards their work-life balance while practicing remote working. As a strategic business partner in an organization, human resource professionals will be able to articulate and illustrate the findings to the management and propose long-term solutions on remote working and work-life balance policies in order to accelerate employees' work performance.

It will assist utility organization in establishing policies related to remote working and improvising those initiatives in the future. The empirical evidence of this study will also shed light on all other Malaysian organizations in reviewing, re-evaluating, revising, and developing effective remote work practices to attain an organization's ultimate goal. Besides that, the present study is able to provide information to the relevant agencies, such as TalentCorp, that are involved in promoting FWAs and work-life balance policies on behalf of the government. Other than that, this study contributes to the growing literature on remote working knowledge by focusing on the utility industry, particularly from the South East Asian context, which implemented remote working after COVID-19. Hence, it enables the generalization of the research findings to the population of utility industries. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on satisfaction with work-life balance by building on existing research. It highlights the unique mediating role of satisfaction with work-life balance. Lastly, in terms of the theory, the findings have provided additional support for Social Exchange Theory literature.

Limitations and Future Study

The unit of analysis in this research is only based on individual-level analysis. When it comes to remote working and individual work performance, the results can vary significantly between individuals and organizations. Working from home can have favorable and unfavorable implications, depending on the home environment, organizational support, and social connections. Combining these two levels could lead to a richer understanding and a more comprehensive grasp of an organization's intricacies. Therefore, future researc should go beyond the individual level and look into multiple levels of analysis by including insight into the organizational culture and performance.

Next, the time horizon in this study is cross-sectional, meaning that data is only collected once. Thus, the cross-sectional nature of the data obtained limits the analysis of causal relationships. It was also observed that there was a lot of quantitative cross-sectional research. Cross-sectional work helps to collect data from larger groups and understand the different outcomes of remote work. However, longitudinal data can give a complete picture of the implications of remote working on employees, organizations, and society before and after a crisis. Thus, we encourage future research to employ a longitudinal and mixed-

methodological approach to obtain richer data and minimize the current gaps in remote working research.

Lastly, little research has focused on satisfaction with work-life balance. Future research should consider the concept of satisfaction with work-life balance as a variable and create awareness of this unique concept.

Recommendation and Conclusion
Remote working has exploded massively around the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic, and most organizations still prefer this flexibility. Human resource professionals must assist organizations in making decisions about the nature and dynamics of the remote work policies that they offer and ensure it boost performance, employee engagement, satisfaction, and well-being (Bierema, 2020 as cited by Shirmohammadi et al., 2022).

Human resource professionals should always remember to voice out for employees who are single parent, those who are with caring responsibilities, and disable employees, on their interests and concerns accordingly. On the same note, organisations should not lose sight on unmarried employees with elderly parents when developing policies on remote work. Along this, the employee union also plays a crucial role in moderating the outcomes of remote working arrangements.

As suggested by Ortiz-Bonnin et al. (2022), it may not be sufficient to merely rely on private organizations to carry out work and non-work life initiatives, and there should be an intervention by the government. Government intervention is one of the sustainable ways to resolve work-life-related issues. For example, legislation such as the latest amendment to the Malaysian Employment Act that reduced weekly work hours from 48 hours to 45 hours (Zulkifli, 2022) is helpful for most employees. Hence, the Malaysian government should continue to enact more legislation to regulate and control work-life balance initiatives throughout the country.

Remote working goes along with mutual trust among employees, unions, human resource practitioners, management, and government. They play a vital role in supporting remote working arrangements and satisfaction with work-life balance while sustaining employees' high work performance. Without trust, remote working is impossible. Trust decides the future of remote work arrangements.

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