

IMPACT OF REMOTE WORKING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES AND BUSINESS POST COVID-19. THE MODERATING ROLE OF JOB CRAFTING

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 outbreak brought in widespread remote employment which play a key role in transforming the workplace. The study examined the impact of remote working performance of employees and business performance post COVID-19 with a focus of job crafting as a moderating variable. 385 employees from an IT sector Karachi, Pakistan were recruited and surveyed by the researcher through convenience sampling method. The collected using Smart PLS as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structure Equation Modelling were utilised (SEM). The study found that remote working significantly enhances employee performance and business performance ($\beta = 0.42, p < 0.01$). Through the role of job crafting, it was discovered that the variables significantly affects the relationship between remote working and employee business performance ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01, \beta - 0.25, p < 0.05$). The findings resulted in an increase in both productivity and employee satisfaction. As per the findings of the study, efforts to create new jobs have the potential to improve the outcomes of remote work for both employee and businesses. It is recommended that organizations must understand how remote work, job crafting, and performance outcomes interact in today's changing workplace. They should encourage WFH as job crafting, which can greatly increase employee and corporate performance.

Keywords: Remote working, Employee Performance, Business Performance, COVID-19, Job Crafting

Abbreviations: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Work From Home (WFH)

INTRODUCTION

The work environment has changed due to the outbreak of COVID-19, affecting workplace dynamics and the need for a better work-life balance. As per Mbonu and Bello (2024), one of the most significant shifts has been the rise of remote work, which has allowed employees to work from home. Companies in various industries are now providing their workers the possibility to work remotely from their homes or any other location due to the advancement of technological devices for communicating (Hill, Schmutz, 2020). The term remote working can be referred to as flexible working arrangement that enable an employee to Work From Home (WFH), or remotely. Scholars and practitioners debates have shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed

the workplace, resulting in a post-COVID workplace that is marked significantly different from the kind before the outbreak (Cooke et al. 2021). The pandemic's most prominent impact on work arrangements in the first half of 2020 was the widespread move to working from home. The rise of remote employment has changed workplace practices and procedures (Donnelly and Johns, 2021). Businesses and employers are attempting to create an intelligent working system using digital technologies, particularly those that allow communication, collaboration, and social networking, as well as mobile devices that are both powerful and easy to use. New methods have led to changes in corporate policies and working culture.

Several people believed the COVID-19 pandemic would be temporary, yet it closed several offices for more than a year. The outbreak had an influence on employee performance and productivity, prompting many businesses and employees to seek flexible and remote work arrangements (DiabBahman and Al-Enzi, 2020). This experience has raised concerns among individuals and corporations about how to implement and manage remote employment. Remote working is not new, but the pandemic has highlighted its benefits and drawbacks, even before COVID-19 (Williamson et al., 2020). Working remotely has various advantages; yet some firms have been sluggish to adopt this approach raising worries about its effectiveness and productivity. In this case, the study by Bessa and Tomlinson (2017) argued that working remotely promotes laziness and demotivation among employees, it is probable that these and other opposing challenges and attitude among employees are the basis for certain companies' restricted adoption of remote working jobs. On the other hand Sahut, and Lissillour (2023) stated that COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the "World's largest experiment in remote work and has shown a huge rise in remote working arrangements.

According to Ward, and King, (2017), Job crafting involves shaping physical or cognitive task boundaries, relationship-based boundaries, or both to improve satisfaction with work. It is an effective way to match the desire for meaningful employment opportunities provided by the job. Job crafting, a technique for adjusting to organisational transformation, assists employees in dealing with new and challenging situations by modifying their work environment (Petrou et al., 2018). As the practice of remote working began, employees were able to personalise their working environment and their tasks, which led to an increase in job satisfaction (Mbonu, and Bello Ade 2024). Due to this flexibility, employees were able to personalise their employment by altering the parameters of their tasks, relationship concerns, and cognitive perspectives. As per Nagarajan et al. (2022), job crafting is a crucial skill for remote workers as employees have more freedom to change their work methods and settings in order to boost their performance, productivity and personal well-being as they are traditionally removed from their offices. Employees may refocus on their responsibilities

along with their skills and personal interests to boost their level of engagement and drive. Additionally, Ingusci et al. (2021) stated that remote workers used job crafting to improve communication and engagement with their coworkers.

The effects of remote working on employee performance and business following COVID-19 have been extensively studied in recent studies (Enaifoghe, and Zenzile, 2023; McPhail et al. 2024), but the moderating role of job crafting has not been properly discussed. Previous studies such as Shirmohammadi, Au, and Beigi, (2022) have focused on work-life balance, technology consumption, and organisational support frequently overlooking how proactive role of job crafting influences the performance of employees. Feng, Z. and Savani, (2020) examined the effects of remote working productivity and job satisfaction, but did not consider job crafting. Niessen, Weseler, and Kostova, (2016) investigated how job characteristics and motivators influence remote work success but they overlooked job crafting's dynamics ability to boost performance. The current study closes this gap by using job crafting as a moderator and exposes how employees navigate and improve their remote work experiments, potentially increasing both individual and organisational performance. Additionally, managers can use this dimension to advocate proactive role changes that complement personal and professional objectives in order to support remote workers. The study further enhances the understanding of the mechanisms through which remote work impacts performance and also provide strategies that can both helps employees and businesses thrive in the evolving working environment. The study seeks to contribute by extensively discussing role of job crafting in moderating the effects of remote work on employee and business performance. The knowledge gain be used to develop post COVID-19 policies and practices that can improve work-life balance, employee satisfaction and business outcomes. It further demonstrates that how proactive role modifications can reduce stress, manage workloads, and improve job satisfaction, as this role may be critical towards business transition to remote workforce following COVID-19.

Literature Review

Working from home was one of the most common approaches for lowering unemployment rates, preserving societal functions, and safeguarding the general public from COVID-19 (YORGUN, 2020). According to Gibbs, Mengel, and Siemroth, (2021) working from home has a lot of disadvantages, one of which is the lack of supervision, which may lead to disputes. As per McPhail et al. (2024) Working from home may result in a repetitious work environment and make distinguishing between work and pleasure difficult. These challenges may cause increased workplace anxiety and a decline in firm performance indicators. According to the data in reference virtual work increases the cost of communication, coordination, and cooperation. This could be a barrier to work-from-home prospects in occupations that require certain abilities, especially for those with less experience. Work-from-home (WFH) can improve or decrease productivity depending on abilities, education, activities, and industry. According to Kitagawa et al. (2021) the influence of WFH on productivity is mitigated by the individual's physical health, with muscle difficulties usually highlighted as a source of concern. WFH limits could damage worker performance. For example, Deole, Deter, and Huang, (2023) WFH time savings may encourage shirking and breaks, but decreased supervisor help and teamwork may lower accountability and efficiency may result in decreased hourly productivity and working hours. Thus, WFH may have no overall effect on productivity or working hours.

Moreover, Mason (2020) discovered that working from home enhanced the well-being of employees as this benefited their employment and leisure. More than one-third found working from home motivating. The top three advantages of working from home include shorter commutes, increased autonomy, and a more productive environment. 44% of respondents had no trouble balancing work and home, and 49% are satisfied with their work-life balance. 62% valued the independence that comes with working from home. Moreover, various government policies and industry reactions have spurred a debate over how remote working affects business performance. According to studies, the adoption of remote work varies by industry due to lack to standardization. This regulatory gap has delayed the industry's

promotion of WFH arrangements. Despite the constraints of flexible work systems such as sustaining productivity and effective monitoring Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have been demonstrated to save operational costs which are frequently used to evaluate business success (Viete and Erdsiek 2020). The concept of remote working assisted businesses and organizations in managing performance and increasing output after the COVID-19 pandemic (Kumar and Zbib 2022). Similarly, studies such as Xie et al. (2020) and Patanjali and Bhatta (2020) argued that environment of working remotely emphasizes the need of researching how job crafting and remote working effect employee performance and corporate outcomes.

Job crafting activities can improve employee outcomes by increasing person-job fit, meaning of work, job satisfaction, and work engagement while decreasing job demands and occupational health impairment processes such as burnout (Bakker and Demerouti, 2014). Making one's own job can motivate people to enhance their skills and align workplace expectations with their requirements. Working remotely makes job crafting an important part and the way it affects employee performance. As per the findings of Ingusci et al. (2021) job crafting and perceived autonomy reduce stress while increasing effort of employees thus enhancing their performance. employees who actuality design and share their work environments to match their preferences often suffer less psychological anguish and have higher levels of well-being that those who do not. It is critical to do so in order to avoid overload and long hours when working remotely, as the distinctions between work and remote work may become undetermined (Leroy, Schmidt, and Madjar, 2021). By providing flexibility, job crafting allows employees to better balance their professional and personal life, which promotes mental health and having significant influence on their work performance. as per studies Saragih et al. (2021) and Kumar et al. (2021) a lack of effective job crafting can result in higher stress and poor work life balance, negatively affecting employee and overall business performance. Therefore, job crafting is critical for the health and performance of remote workers. According to the findings by Garg, Murphy, and Singh (2021), there is a positive correlation between work crafting and the emotional

engagement of employees, showing that higher levels of job crafting behaviours, such as making self-initiated modifications in job resources, are shown to be associated with higher levels of emotional engagement and performance.

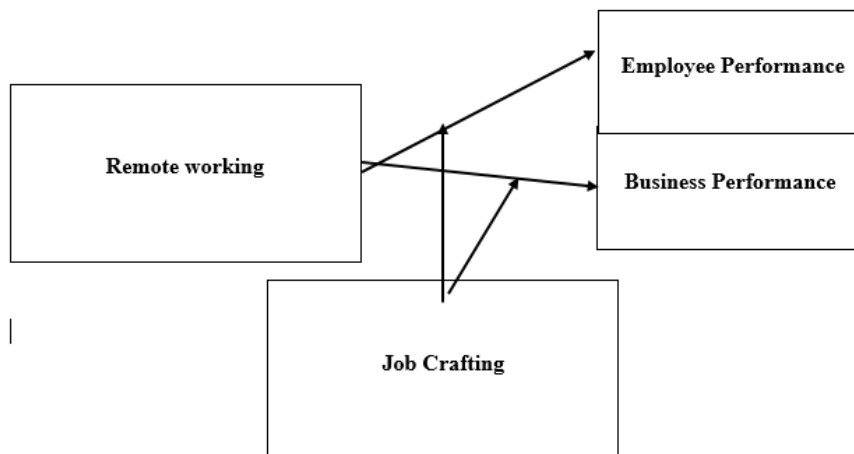
The current study is grounded by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) from Ryan and Deci (2008) as well as MacIntyre, Schnare and Ross (2018). The theory emphasizes both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in human behavior and performance. According to Fésüs, (2022) SDT believes that people naturally grow and self-organize, and based on this idea, they desire to learn more, find job that meets their needs, wants and interests; thus, connecting with others and the world. SDT believes that more autonomy and control over remote work can significantly improve intrinsic motivation and employee performance (Mbonu, and Bello Ade, 2024). Additionally, the theory SDT asserts that intrinsic motivation necessitates autonomy and remote work generally provides more flexibility and independency. Employees feel more empowered and engaged when they can tailor their roles and schedules when working from home. SDT cautions that unmet psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness can impede appropriate evolution. Becker, et al. (2022) stated that, remote workers may feel alone or detached if they do not receive adequate supervision. Thus, SDT demonstrates that remote work can enhance performance by increasing autonomy, but also necessitates careful consideration of employees' connectivity and competency requirements.

Methodology and Framework

A quantitative study was carried out to investigate the impact of remote working on employee and business performance of job crafting as a moderator. Data was collected through structured questionnaires as 385 employees were recruited from an IT firm in Karachi, Pakistan. The sample had a confidence level of 95% and an error rate of 5%. Three hundred and thirty-seven people were chosen for the study due to the large number of workers and the method's potential to provide a good representative sample. The poll had a total sample size of 385 out of an original 400

respondents. Convenience sampling method was used for the study as it allowed the collection of data from participants who were readily available and willing to participate. Employees were approached directly from the researcher ensuring that participants could choose to be part of study obligation. Moreover, Rañeses, Bacason, and Martir (2022) developed a 4-item scale to assess the effectiveness of remote work, and the measure properly assessed how work remote work affects employee and business performance. Employee productivity was measured using 4-item scale created by Lee and Brand (2010), as the scaled showed how remote working affects employee productivity which is significant to an organizations' overall effectiveness. Firms' performance was measured using a 4-item scale developed by ÖZKAN (2017). Using this scale, the study was able to assess profitability, market share and operational efficiency to identify overall business performance. Tims et al. (2012) designed a 4-item to measure job crafting as the scale measures job crafting behavior performed by remote workers, encoding task modification, and relationship development. Job crafting was utilized as a moderating variable, allowing the researcher to evaluate how proactive employee adjustments affect remote working outcomes and performance. In this study, an effective exploratory confirmatory technique called as SmartPLS, as the data was examined using SMRT PLS, which is capable of supporting both exploratory and confirmatory research, as well as complicated techniques. Validation of the measurement model was conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), which ensured that all theoretical components were included. In addition, the same kind of metrics were acquired, including component loadings, composite dependability, and average variance extraction. A multicollinearity test was used to confirm the predictor variables' independence. On the other hand, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was calculated for the independent variables. The study was carried out to determine the impact of remote working on employee performance and business performance by considering the moderating role of job crafting.

Conceptual Model



Results

Measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Table 1: Measurement model using CFA

Constructs	Indicators	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Remote Working	RW1	0.841	0.830	0.830	0.666
	RW2	0.863			
	RW3	0.845			
	RW4	0.706			
Employee Performance	EP1	0.767	0.810	0.811	0.637
	EP2	0.797			
	EP3	0.815			
	EP4	0.813			
Business Performance	BP1	0.833	0.905	0.905	0.780
	BP2	0.873			
	BP3	0.920			
	BP4	0.903			
Job Crafting	JC1	0.804	0.843	0.934	0.825
	JC2	0.835			
	JC3	0.831			
	JC4	0.828			

Brown (2015) discovered that, using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), component structure can be evaluated in terms of discriminant convergence and reliability. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are two approaches used to assess construct dependability. Table 1 shows the degree of internal consistency's dependability. Cronbach's alpha and composite dependability must both be more than 0.7 to be regarded dependable (Kline,

2023). As per the above table, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for variables Remote Working (0.830), Employee Performance (0.810), Business Performance (0.905), and Job Crafting (0.843); as a result of these values demonstrating that the things are reliable. A composite reliability analysis of the variables is presented in the table shows the values for Remote Working (0.830), Employee Performance (0.811), Business Performance

(0.905), and Job Crafting (0.934), given that these values guarantee the instruments' reliability. In addition, factor loadings were utilized in order to validate the indications that were used. It was mentioned by Latan, Noonan, and Matthews (2017) that in order to guarantee validity, factor loadings had to be higher than 0.6. As shown in Table 1, there is no requirement to exclude any of the indicators and verify their validity. This is because all of the indicators have factor loadings that are more than 0.6. Furthermore, Cheung et al. (2024) investigated and published on convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with a 0.5 threshold to assess relationship. Table 1's AVE values are considerably higher than 0.5, indicating convergent validity.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity

Variables	Business Performance	Employee Performance	Job Crafting	Remote Working
Business Performance	0.471			
Job Crafting Remote Working	0.765	0.491		
Job Crafting x Remote Working	0.334	0.898	0.315	
Remote Working	0.349	0.2052	0.387	0.266

The heterotrait-monotrait ratio, commonly known as the HTMT ratio, was used to assess the discriminant validity of the study's components as the ratio clearly shows that the constructs are significantly different. Wong (2013) claimed that in order to demonstrate discriminant validity and avoid multicollinearity, HTMT ratios must be less than 0.85. Table 3 shows correlation levels that demonstrate the model's discriminating validity. These levels demonstrate that the construct has a stronger relationship with its indicators than with other constructs. The discriminant validity analysis demonstrates that the variables are distinct from one another due to the fact that the correlation values are lower than 0.85. The table shows moderate associations among each other Remote Working (0.471), Employee Performance (0.765), Business Performance (0.334), and Job Crafting (0.349).

Structural Model

Table 3: Structural Model

Variables	Coefficients	T statistics	P values
Job Crafting -> Business Performance	0.615	13.325	0.000
Job Crafting -> Employee Performance	0.254	5.490	0.000
Remote Working -> Business Performance	0.105	2.1016	0.036
Remote Working -> Employee Performance	0.687	22.316	0.000
Job Crafting x Remote Working -> Business Performance	-0.069	1.811	0.074
Job Crafting x Remote Working -> Employee Performance	0.057	1.787	0.074

The Table 3 shows that job crafting increase business performance ($\beta = 0.615, p < 0.001$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.254, p < 0.001$), implying that actively role structuring from employees lead to better employees and business performance. It was also revealed that, remote working improves business and employee performance ($\beta = 0.105, p 0.036$), ($\beta = 0.687, p < 0.001$), emphasizing the importance in product especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. The interaction between job crafting and remote shows mixes results. Although not statistically significant, there is a minor negative influence on a business performance ($\beta = -0.069, p = 0.074$). Therefore, the findings show that job crafting and remote working are the key drivers of success having a significant and bigger impact on employee outcomes as compared to organizational performance.

Predictive Relevance and Quality Assessment

Table 4: Predictive Relevance and Quality Assessment

Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted
Business Performance	0.475	0.470
Employee Performance	0.598	0.595

The predictive relevance and quality assessment findings demonstrate that the model adequacy explains both business and employee performance. The R-square value of business performance is 0.475 implying that model predictors explain 47.5% of the variable in business success. An adjusted R-square score of 0.470 indicates a well-fitted and predictive accurate model. The R-square value for employee performance is higher than

normal at 0.598, implying that the model explains 59.8% of the variation. Despite the modest reduction, the adjusted R-square for employee performance is 0.595, demonstrating that shows a strong productive quality. The model shows substantial predictive relevance in explaining employee performance which aligns with the significant impact of job crafting and remote working on employee outcomes.

Table 5: Multicollinearity

Constructs	Indicators	VIF
Business Performance	BP1	2.178
	BP2	2.715
	BP3	15.002
	BP4	13.633
Employee Performance	EP1	2.001
	EP2	2.135
	EP3	2.583
	EP4	2.562
Job Crafting	JC1	1.623
	JC2	1.988
	JC3	1.998
	JC4	1.963
Remote Working	RW1	2.129
	RW2	2.486
	RW3	2.125
	RW4	1.328

The results presented in Table 5 demonstrate that all of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are lower than the threshold of 5.0 that was established by Hair et al. (2019). This demonstrates that there is no such thing as multicollinearity. As per the above table the value of VIF ranges from 1.328 to 15.002 for Remote Working, Employee Performance, Business Performance, and Job Crafting. Based on these observations, it can be concluded that the model does not exhibit multicollinear behavior because none of its components are higher than the threshold. Therefore, the stability of the model as well as the reliability of the regression coefficient are both ensured simultaneously.

Table 6: Table of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Decision	Evidence from Previous Literature
Remote working has a positive impact on employee performance.	Accept	Mason (2020), Mbonu, and Bello Ade (2024)
Remote working has a positive impact on business performance.	Accept	Previous studies on remote work and business performance
Job crafting moderates the relationship between remote working and employee performance.	Reject	Ingusci et al (2021)
Job crafting moderates the relationship between remote working and business performance.	Reject	Saragih et al. (2021), Kumar et al (2021)

Discussion

The study investigated the impact of remote working on employee and business performance considering the moderating role of job crafting. As per the study’s findings, job crafting serves in reducing the impact of remote working on employee and business performance. Previous research demonstrated that working remotely can have both negative effects as Mason (2020), and Mengel and Siemroth (2021) discovered that working remotely enhances employee performance by providing greater job autonomy, and better work-life balance. As per Mbonu, and Bello Ade (2024) these components significantly improve job satisfaction, employee well-being and profundity. The existence such benefits suggests that working remotely can improve company’s performance by creating a flexible and enjoyable work environment. Moreover, the moderating role of job crafting emerged as a key factor in affecting both employee and business performance. As per the

study's findings, allowing employees to personalise their work surroundings and takes helps to increase their level of autonomy, relatedness which helps them to mitigate any of the negative consequences when doing WFH. The study by Bakker and Demerouti (2014) validated the current finds by stating that, job crafting can encourage and engage employees and significantly affect their overall performance. Moreover, Ingusci et al (2021) discovered that job crafting has the potential to improve performance, implying that businesses must encourage job crafting to optimise the advantages of remote working. The result also indicates that plays a significant part in mediating the relationships between the employee and business performance on working from home. The findings from the literature as Saragih et al. (2021), argued that job crafting has the potential to diminish the negative effects of remote work by allowing employees to have a better control over the tasks that they perform and the working environment. On the other hand, the authors Kumar et al (2021) posit that through job crafting, individuals are able to design a better and more satisfying work experience for themselves implying improved job satisfaction, engagement and performance. Garg, Murphy, and Singh's (2021) research found a positive association between work creation and employees' emotional engagement experiences. As a result, this suggests that job-related activities, such as self-initiated resource changes, are associated with higher levels of emotional involvement and performance for the individual.

Conclusion and Implications

The study concluded that remote working increases employee and business performance, while job crafting helps in reducing remote challenges, and plays a key role in enhancing business and employee performance. As per the study, organisations must prioritize employee well-being and productivity in remote work environments. In additionally, businesses that support remote workers can increase job satisfaction, reduce burnout and improve overall performance. The study further demonstrated how businesses may foster trust and collaboration and employee empowerment and facilitate remote work. Socialising, training on remote work technologies along best practices and providing feasible work arrangements can all help employees thrive when

they are working from home. Future studies can look into how remote work and job crafting influence and employee and business accomplishments over time. Additionally, investigating how company culture and leadership influences remote work dynamics may provide insight on these issues can be an effective area to shed light. These findings should also be studied for generalizability across sectors and settings, as the consequences of remote work may differ depending on the business and organization. In the end, it is recommended that organization must grasp how remote work, job crafting and performance outcomes interact in today's evolving workplace they must promote WFH as job crafting in this case, an significantly help improve employee and business performance. Through this study organizations can optimize the benefits of remote work by focusing on employee well-being and productivity. Businesses must adapt and be proactive in creating remote-friendly workplaces to ensure long-term economic success.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

1. Please specify your age:

- i) 18-25
- ii) 25-35
- iii) 35-45
- iv) 45-55
- v) More than 55 years

2. Please specify your Gender:

- i) Male
- ii) Female
- iii) Other
- iv) Not feeling comfortable to specify

Based on your knowledge and experience, select any one of the options given below each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Remote working (Rañeses, Bacason, and Martir, 2022)					
I feel that the quality of the work I do during working from home is better					
Working from home is personally beneficial for me at work.					
Working from home motivates me to work better.					

I have clear work targets when working from home					
I have sufficient technical knowledge in completing work during working from home					
Performance of employees ((Measured through productivity) Lee, and Brand, 2010					
I complete a significant amount of work each day while working remotely.					
I efficiently accomplish tasks and meet deadlines in my remote work environment.					
I maintain high standards of task completion and performance in my remote role.					
The quality of my work remains consistently high, even when working from home.					
I consistently meet or exceed team performance targets while working remotely.					
Performance of Business ÖZKAN, (2017).					
I have effectively adapted to remote working, which has positively influenced overall business performance.					
Remote working has contributed to the overall success of my company's business performance.					
I believe that remote working has positively impacted our company's profitability.					
Remote working has enhanced our company's operational efficiency and capacity utilization.					
Job Crafting (Tims et al. 2012)					
I actively seek opportunities to enhance my skills and capabilities while working remotely.					
I make an effort to pursue professional development and learning opportunities even while working from home.					
I actively look for new learning opportunities and ways to expand my knowledge while working remotely.					
I organize my remote work to ensure that it remains mentally manageable and not overly stressful.					