Journal of Management Research, Entrepreneurship and Strategy
Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,
University of Jos, P.M.B. 2084, Nigeria.
ISSN: 0189-1480 | Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026

ORGANISATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND REMOTE WORK ADOPTION AMONG TEACHING STAFF OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Benjamin Bala[1,*], Danjuma Nimfa[1]
[1]University of Jos
***Corresponding author**: bnjmnbala@gmail.com; 08133374514; ORCID: 0000-0003-0921-9669
DOI: https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxx

Keywords:
organisational preparedness; perceived organisational support; remote work adoption; Social Exchange Theory; Organisational Support Theory; Plateau State, Nigeria; conceptual framework

Article History:
Received: 6 August 2026
Revised: 18 October 2026
Accepted: 25 October 2026
Published: 7 November 2026

Article Info:
Homepage:
https://jmres.org.ng
Volume: 1, No. 1, 2026
Pages: 373-382

ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper examines the theoretical relationship between organisational preparedness, perceived organisational support, and remote work adoption among teaching staff in public universities in Plateau State, Nigeria. The global acceleration of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed persistent infrastructural and institutional gaps in developing countries. In Plateau State these challenges are compounded by recurrent insecurity, community conflict, banditry, and displacement that repeatedly disrupts face-to-face teaching and creates an urgent practical need for functional remote and hybrid teaching capacity. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory, with the Technology Acceptance Model retained as background framing, the paper proposes that perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between organisational preparedness and remote work adoption. Organisational preparedness is conceptualised as comprising two dimensions: technological readiness and flexible work structure. The paper advances a set of research propositions and a conceptual model that clarify why institutional investment in preparedness does not automatically translate into staff uptake of remote work. By situating the argument within a conflict-affected higher-education setting, the paper contributes a context-sensitive theoretical framework and an agenda for future empirical research aimed at strengthening remote and hybrid teaching capacity in insecurity-prone regions of Nigeria and comparable environments.

1. Introduction

The adoption of remote work has gained significant momentum in recent years, catalysed by advancements in technology and changing workplace dynamics. The transition was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as institutions worldwide moved to online and remote modalities to ensure continuity of services. By 2021, a substantial body of empirical research had documented the widespread adoption of synchronous and asynchronous digital tools in higher education institutions across continents (Bond, Bedenlier, Marín

& Händel, 2021). Global estimates suggest that remote work adoption continued to expand in subsequent years, supported by rapid growth in internet access across Africa. However, Nigeria's overall remote work penetration among businesses has lagged behind this global trend, constrained by infrastructural hurdles.

In Nigeria's higher education landscape, e-learning surged during the pandemic, yet persistent gaps emerged. Available evidence indicates that the pandemic exposed deficits in digital readiness, with many universities lacking the infrastructure and training necessary for effective remote teaching. Reports indicate that Nigerian public universities, in particular, experienced substantial disruption and in some cases lost significant portions of the academic year due to difficulties in transitioning rapidly to online platforms, while private universities generally adapted more quickly. By September 2022, Nigeria had 111 approved private universities, 37 of which were accredited for postgraduate training (National Universities Commission, 2022). These figures illustrate the private sector's faster institutional adaptation and, by contrast, are consistent with observations of a slower pace of remote-readiness investment among many public universities.

Within the context of public universities in Plateau State, located in the heart of Nigeria's Middle Belt, a significant research gap exists. Most existing studies on remote work adoption in Nigerian higher education have been conducted in southern or northern regions, or have relied on national-level data without isolating the peculiar realities of institutions in the Middle Belt. Public universities on the Plateau operate in a region that combines the general Nigerian challenges erratic power supply, high cost of data and devices, limited digital infrastructure with additional, severe constraints arising from prolonged insecurity, community attacks, farmer–herder conflicts, and banditry that have affected Plateau State and the wider Middle Belt for over a decade.

These security challenges have repeatedly forced abrupt campus closures, curfews, displacement of staff and students, and the destruction or inaccessibility of physical infrastructure, rendering traditional face-to-face teaching unreliable and often impossible for weeks or months at a time. Insecurity has therefore created an urgent practical need for functional remote and hybrid teaching capabilities at public universities in Plateau State, yet available observations suggest that adoption remains limited. Power instability and poor connectivity continue to disrupt online sessions, while financial constraints limit many lecturers' ability to acquire personal devices or stable internet access. Cultural preference for face-to-face interaction further fuels resistance, even when physical classes are impossible due to violence or curfews.

Despite clear theoretical and practical arguments linking organisational preparedness to remote work adoption, a critical gap remains: preparedness alone does not guarantee uptake. Investments in infrastructure, training, and flexible policies often fail to translate into adoption when academic staff do not perceive them as genuine care for their well-being and work-life balance. This conceptual paper addresses that missing link by positioning perceived organisational support as the mediating mechanism that transforms organisational effort into actual remote work adoption. It argues that only when lecturers feel genuinely supported will they reciprocate with sustained uptake of remote work practices.

The purpose of this paper is therefore threefold: (1) to integrate Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory into a coherent explanation of remote work adoption in a conflict-affected higher-education setting; (2) to propose a conceptual model in which perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between organisational preparedness and remote work adoption; and (3) to outline a research agenda that can guide future empirical investigation in Plateau State and comparable insecurity-prone contexts.

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper draws primarily on Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory, both of which map directly onto the constructs of organisational preparedness, perceived organisational support, and remote work adoption. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is retained solely as background framing.

2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory posits that workplace relationships are shaped by reciprocal exchanges between employees and the organisation. When organisations provide valued resources such as support, preparedness, and flexibility employees reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviours, including increased commitment, loyalty, and adoption of organisational initiatives (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the context of remote work, the theory suggests that staff who receive tangible and intangible resources enabling remote teaching will feel an obligation to adopt and sustain those practices.

2.2 Organisational Support Theory

Organisational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) posits that employees develop a general perception of the extent to which their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. This perception perceived organisational support (POS) governs whether investments made by the organisation are reciprocated. Favourable treatment by the organisation, including infrastructure investment, flexible policies, and developmental opportunities, is interpreted by employees as evidence of care, thereby generating a felt obligation to help the organisation achieve its goals.

Critically, infrastructure investment and flexible-work policies are not, in themselves, self-evidently expressions of institutional care. Staff may interpret them as cost-cutting measures or as compliance with external directives. It is only where staff interpret such investments as discretionary and genuinely oriented toward their welfare the defining feature of POS that Organisational Support Theory predicts reciprocation in the form of increased remote work adoption. This paper therefore treats perceived organisational support not merely as a variable that co-occurs with preparedness, but as the interpretive mechanism through which preparedness is converted into adoption.

2.3 Technology Acceptance Model as Background Framing

The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) holds that when users perceive a technology as useful and easy to use, they form favourable attitudes and behavioural intentions toward its adoption. Because the core constructs of TAM (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude, and behavioural intention) are not the focal variables of the present framework, TAM is invoked solely to situate remote work adoption within the wider technology-acceptance literature. No claim is made that the proposed model tests or validates TAM.

Together, Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory supply the theoretical logic connecting organisational preparedness to remote work adoption through perceived organisational support: Organisational Support Theory explains why staff form a general perception of being valued on the basis of preparedness investments, while Social Exchange Theory explains why staff who hold that perception reciprocate with increased adoption.

3. Conceptual Development of the Constructs

3.1 Remote Work Adoption

Remote work adoption refers to the extent and effectiveness of implementing flexible work arrangements that allow employees to work outside traditional office or classroom spaces. Remote work also termed telecommuting, telework, or working from home is the practice of performing work at or from one's home or another location rather than from a fixed workplace (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). It is not merely a technological shift but a complex organisational change that requires careful planning, resource allocation, and a supportive organisational culture.

Effective remote work practices can enhance employee satisfaction, productivity, and well-being (Bloom, Liang, Roberts & Ying, 2015). Remote arrangements enable flexible work hours, reduce commuting time, and permit personalisation of the workspace, often contributing to higher autonomy and reduced stress when management demonstrates trust and support (Bellmann & Hübler, 2020). From an organisational perspective, successful remote work can yield gains in productivity, retention, and cost savings. At the same time, the transition presents challenges that necessitate a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing successful implementation.

Scholars have identified three main types of resources organisations need to pursue teleworking successfully: human resources (roles, skills, and autonomy), technological resources (tools, software, and equipment), and organisational resources (HR flexibility, management by results, and activity outsourcing). The number of resources organisations are willing to invest depends largely on their culture, which shapes decisions regarding work-life balance, flexibility, transparency, and recognition of employee contributions. Teleworking arrangements have a higher chance of success when they fit the organisation's existing value system.

3.2 Organisational Preparedness

Organisational preparedness refers to the readiness of an institution to support remote and hybrid work through infrastructure, policies, and structures. Wang et al. (2021) conceptualise preparedness through a work-design lens, emphasising that pre-pandemic organisations were often ill-equipped for sudden shifts, which amplified psychological strains such as blurred boundaries and isolation. Kniffin et al. (2021) frame the pandemic as a "global experiment" in remote work and argue that preparedness hinges on evidence-based adaptation rather than ad-hoc response; organisations with prior telework pilots fared better in maintaining performance.

In this paper, organisational preparedness is conceptualised as comprising two interrelated dimensions: technological readiness and flexible work structure.

3.2.1 Technological Readiness

Technological readiness encompasses robust ICT infrastructure, cybersecurity, user-friendly tools, and platforms that bridge physical distance. Inadequate technology—unreliable connectivity, incompatible software, or insufficient devices—undermines productivity. Bick et al. (2023) apply the Technology–Organisation–Environment framework and identify technology as a primary enabler of remote adoption. Firms with pre-existing digital ecosystems adapted faster, while those without such alignment experienced greater technostress. Robust IT infrastructure and ongoing support systems are associated with higher

employee satisfaction and engagement because they enable seamless communication and collaboration (Bentley et al., 2016; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

3.2.2 Flexible Work Structure

Flexible work structure refers to organisational policies and arrangements that permit employees to choose when, where, and how they perform their work. Work flexibility strongly influences attitudes toward work, job satisfaction, and performance (Hill et al., 2003). Empirical studies have found that optimising workplace flexibility increases job satisfaction and employee performance (Troup & Rose, 2012). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the flexibility created by remote arrangements enhanced work-life balance and reduced barriers between work and private life (Del Boca et al., 2020). Ideally, remote work arrangements should be offered as an option rather than a mandate; allowing employees to set their own work hours and locations improves work-life balance and supports sustained adoption (Putri & Amran, 2021; Rudnicka et al., 2020).

Leadership capability and change-management competence are widely discussed as determinants of remote work success (Choudhury et al., 2021). Although leadership is an important contextual factor, the present framework operationalises organisational preparedness through its technological and flexible-work-structure dimensions only. Leadership development is noted as a direction for future conceptual and empirical elaboration.

3.3 Perceived Organisational Support

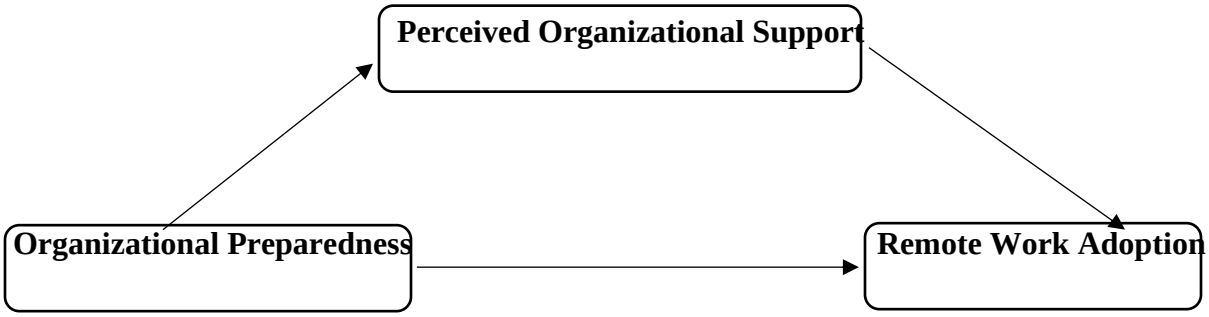
Perceived organisational support (POS) is the degree to which employees believe that their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). POS stimulates a norm of reciprocity: employees treated favourably care about the organisation's well-being and feel an obligation to help it reach its objectives, alongside an expectation that increased performance will be recognised and rewarded (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). As a result, both parties benefit employees experience heightened positive mood and job satisfaction, while organisations gain increased commitment, work effort, and performance (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Human resource practices that recognise employees' contributions, together with work-role characteristics and job conditions such as rewards, benefits, job security, autonomy, flexible work practices, and training opportunities, have long been linked to POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Job security and autonomy show particularly strong relationships with POS, while training and organisational size show more moderate relationships (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In the present framework, POS is positioned as the interpretive lens through which staff evaluate organisational preparedness investments. Only when those investments are perceived as genuine expressions of institutional care does the reciprocity logic of Social Exchange Theory predict increased remote work adoption.

4. Conceptual Framework and Research Propositions

Figure 1 (conceptual) illustrates the hypothesised relationships. Organisational preparedness comprising technological readiness and flexible work structure is proposed to influence remote work adoption both directly and indirectly through perceived organisational support. Given the distinctive security context of Plateau State, exposure to insecurity-related disruption (for example, the frequency of campus closures a respondent has experienced) is included as a contextual control variable. This allows future empirical work to examine whether the relationships among preparedness, support, and adoption hold, or vary in strength, under conditions of recurrent disruption.

[Figure 1: Conceptual Framework]



Source: Survey of Literature 2026

4.1 Research Objectives

Building on the theoretical framework and conceptual model, this paper pursues the following conceptual objectives:

1. To clarify the theoretical relationship between organisational preparedness and remote work adoption among teaching staff of public universities in a conflict-affected setting.
2. To articulate how organisational preparedness is expected to shape perceived organisational support.
3. To explain the expected relationship between perceived organisational support and remote work adoption.
4. To propose perceived organisational support as the mediating mechanism linking organisational preparedness to remote work adoption, and to outline how insecurity-related disruption may condition these relationships.

4.2 Research Propositions

Corresponding to the objectives, the following research propositions are advanced:

1. Organisational preparedness is positively associated with remote work adoption among teaching staff of public universities in Plateau State.
2. Organisational preparedness is positively associated with perceived organisational support.
3. Perceived organisational support is positively associated with remote work adoption.
4. Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between organisational preparedness and remote work adoption.

Where the two dimensions of organisational preparedness (technological readiness and flexible work structure) are examined separately, Propositions 1 and 2 may each be tested as two sub-propositions, one

per dimension. Exposure to insecurity-related disruption is proposed as a contextual control (and potential moderator) whose influence should be examined in future empirical work.

5. Research Gap and Contribution of the Conceptual Model

While existing literature establishes a link between organisational preparedness and remote work adoption, a notable gap remains in understanding how organisations can ensure that preparedness actually translates into adoption among their staff. This paper addresses that gap by introducing perceived organisational support as the mediating mechanism connecting organisational preparedness to remote work adoption, drawing on Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory.

A second, contextual gap is equally important. Existing Nigerian studies on remote work adoption in higher education have not isolated the distinctive realities of a conflict-affected setting such as Plateau State, where insecurity itself creates the practical case for remote and hybrid teaching capacity. By embedding the mediation model within this context, the paper offers a framework that is both theoretically grounded and practically relevant to institutions operating under conditions of recurrent disruption.

The conceptual contribution therefore lies in: (a) integrating two complementary theoretical perspectives to explain the preparedness–adoption link; (b) specifying POS as the interpretive mechanism that converts institutional investment into staff uptake; and (c) highlighting the conditioning role of insecurity-related disruption in a Middle-Belt higher-education setting.

6. Agenda for Future Empirical Research

The conceptual model advanced in this paper generates a clear agenda for subsequent empirical investigation. Future studies should:

1. Operationalise organisational preparedness as a higher-order construct comprising technological readiness and flexible work structure, and test the proposed direct and mediated paths using structural equation modelling (for example, PLS-SEM or covariance-based SEM) on a representative sample of teaching staff from public universities in Plateau State.
2. Measure perceived organisational support with validated scales (e.g., adapted items from Eisenberger et al., 1986) and examine its mediating role through bootstrapped indirect-effect analysis, following contemporary mediation typology (Zhao et al., 2010).
3. Incorporate exposure to insecurity-related disruption (frequency and severity of campus closures, displacement, or restricted access) as a control variable and, where theoretically justified, as a potential moderator of the preparedness–support and support–adoption paths.
4. Address common method bias through procedural remedies (temporal or psychological separation of predictor and outcome measures, anonymity guarantees) and statistical controls (marker-variable or latent common-method factor approaches).
5. Consider multi-wave or longitudinal designs that separate the measurement of preparedness and support from subsequent adoption behaviours, thereby strengthening causal inference beyond the limitations of cross-sectional data.

Such empirical work would test the propositions advanced here and generate evidence-based guidance for institutional leaders and policymakers seeking to strengthen remote and hybrid teaching capacity in insecurity-prone regions of Nigeria and comparable settings.

7. Theoretical and Practical Implications

7.1 Theoretical Implications

The framework contributes to the remote-work and higher-education literatures by specifying perceived organisational support as the mechanism that converts organisational preparedness into staff adoption. It thereby moves beyond a direct "preparedness-leads-to-adoption" assumption and incorporates the reciprocity logic of Social Exchange Theory and the interpretive process emphasised by Organisational Support Theory. By locating the model in a conflict-affected context, the paper also extends organisational support and remote-work theory into settings where the practical need for remote capacity is driven not only by technological change or pandemic disruption but by recurrent insecurity.

7.2 Practical Implications

For university leaders and policymakers, the conceptual argument underscores that investment in technological infrastructure and flexible policies is necessary but not sufficient. Such investments must be communicated and experienced by teaching staff as genuine expressions of institutional care for their well-being and professional effectiveness. Training programmes, device and data support, and flexible workload arrangements are more likely to generate sustained remote-work uptake when staff perceive them as discretionary and supportive rather than as administrative compliance or cost-saving measures. In insecurity-prone regions, building remote and hybrid capacity is not merely a technological or pedagogical project; it is also a relational and organisational-support project.

8. Conclusion

This conceptual paper has proposed that perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between organisational preparedness and remote work adoption among teaching staff of public universities in Plateau State, Nigeria. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory, the framework explains why institutional investment in technological readiness and flexible work structures does not automatically produce staff uptake of remote practices. Only when those investments are interpreted as genuine organisational care do staff reciprocate with sustained adoption. By situating the model within the distinctive insecurity context of Plateau State, the paper highlights both a theoretical gap and a practical imperative: functional remote and hybrid teaching capacity is essential for educational continuity in conflict-affected settings, yet its realisation depends as much on perceived support as on physical infrastructure.

The propositions and research agenda outlined above provide a foundation for future empirical testing. Once tested, the model has the potential to inform evidence-based strategies for strengthening remote and hybrid teaching capacity in insecurity-prone regions of Nigeria and in comparable higher-education environments worldwide.

References

Bellmann, L., & Hübler, O. (2020). Working from home, job satisfaction and work–life balance – robust or heterogeneous links? *International Journal of Manpower, 42*(3), 424–441. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-10-2019-0458

Bentley, T. A., Teo, S. T. T., McLeod, L., Tan, F., Bosua, R., & Gloet, M. (2016). The role of organisational support in teleworker wellbeing: A socio-technical systems approach. *Applied Ergonomics, 52*, 207–215. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apergo.2015.07.019

Bick, A., Blandin, A., & Mertens, K. (2023). Work from home before and after the COVID-19 outbreak. *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, 15*(4), 1–39. https://doi.org/10.1257/mac.20210061

Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.

Bloom, N., Liang, J., Roberts, J., & Ying, Z. J. (2015). Does working from home work? Evidence from a Chinese experiment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 130*(1), 165–218. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju032

Bond, M., Bedenlier, S., Marín, V. I., & Händel, M. (2021). Emergency remote teaching in higher education: Mapping the first global online semester. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 18*(1), Article 50. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00282-x

Choudhury, P., Foroughi, C., & Larson, B. (2021). Work-from-anywhere: The productivity effects of geographic flexibility. *Strategic Management Journal, 42*(4), 655–683. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3251

Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management, 31*(6), 874–900. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly, 13*(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Del Boca, D., Oggero, N., Profeta, P., & Rossi, M. (2020). Women's and men's work, housework and childcare, before and during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household, 18*(4), 1001–1017. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11150-020-09502-1

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 71*(3), 500–507. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.71.3.500

Gajendran, R. S., & Harrison, D. A. (2007). The good, the bad, and the unknown about telecommuting: Meta-analysis of psychological mediators and individual consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(6), 1524–1541. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.6.1524

Hill, E. J., Ferris, M., & Märtinson, V. (2003). Does it matter where you work? A comparison of how three work venues influence aspects of work and personal/family life. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 63*(2), 220–241. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(03)00042-3

Kniffin, K. M., Narayanan, J., Anseel, F., Antonakis, J., Ashford, S. P., Bakker, A. B., Bamberger, P., Bapuji, H., Bhave, D. P., Choi, V. K., Creary, S. J., Demerouti, E., Flynn, F. J., Gelfand, M. J., Greer, L. L., Johns, G., Kesebir, S., Klein, P. G., Lee, S. Y., Ozcelik, H., Petriglieri, J. L., Rothbard,

N. P., Rudolph, C. W., Shaw, J. D., Sirola, N., Wanberg, C. R., Whillans, A., Wilmot, M. P., & van Vugt, M. (2021). COVID-19 and the workplace: Implications, issues, and insights for future research and action. *American Psychologist, 76*(1), 63–77. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000716

Kurtessis, J. N., Eisenberger, R., Ford, M. T., Buffardi, L. C., Stewart, K. A., & Adis, C. S. (2017). Perceived organizational support: A meta-analytic evaluation of organizational support theory. *Journal of Management, 43*(6), 1854–1884. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315575554

National Universities Commission. (2022). *List of approved universities in Nigeria*. https://www.nuc.edu.ng

Putri, A., & Amran, A. (2021). Employees' work-life balance reviewed from work from home aspect during COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Management Science and Information Technology, 1*(1), 30–34.

Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(4), 698–714. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.4.698

Rudnicka, A., Newbold, J. W., Cook, D., Cecchinato, M. E., Gould, S., & Cox, A. L. (2020). *Eworklife: Developing effective strategies for remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic*. In The New Future of Work Online Symposium.

Troup, C., & Rose, J. (2012). Working from home: Do formal or informal telework arrangements provide better work–family outcomes? *Community, Work & Family, 15*(4), 471–486. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2012.725289

Wang, B., Liu, Y., Qian, J., & Parker, S. K. (2021). Achieving effective remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic: A work design perspective. *Applied Psychology, 70*(1), 16–59. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12290

Zhao, X., Lynch, J. G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research, 37*(2), 197–206. https://doi.org/10.1086/651257