



---

# FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A REMOTE WORK SETTING

---



Dhwani Modi

Industrial and Organizational Psychology

New York University

PSYCH-GA 2067: Applied Research Methods

Dr. Paul Squires

May 16, 2024

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PROBLEM STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RESEARCH OBJECTIVE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>HYPOTHESES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THEORETICAL REVIEW .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VARIABLES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SAMPLE .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>METHOD .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>LIMITATIONS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>25</b>

## ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant rise in remote work, which changed the traditional work environments and impacted employees' professional development. This study investigates the factors influencing perceptions of professional development among remote workers. The independent variables measured are networking opportunities, training and mentoring, employee engagement, motivation, gender, work experience, and education level. A sample of 35 remote employees was used to conduct this study and their responses were measured using descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, correlation, and multiple regression analyses to explore these relationships. The research findings indicated significant positive relationships between the perceptions of professional development and networking opportunities, training and mentoring, employee engagement, and motivation. Gender differences reported males having higher perceptions of professional development compared to females. Education level showed a significant positive impact on the perceptions of professional development. However, work experience had no impact. The study contributes to existing literature on factors that create positive and negative impacts on remote settings. Thus, it is important to address these factors influencing the professional development of remote employees.

## INTRODUCTION

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, up to 5% of Americans worked from home three or more days a week (Bloom, 2020), but by April 2020, up to 37% of Americans might be working from home (WFH) full-time. As a result, the pandemic forced almost one-third of US workers to switch to working from home in a couple of weeks (Dingel & Neiman 2020). Remote work refers to employees who perform their job responsibilities outside of traditional office environments (Hill and Schmutz, 2020, Olson, 1983). The COVID-19 pandemic has renewed the focus on remote working (Orsini & Rodrigues, 2020). Telecommunicating technologies have made it easier for many jobs to transition into a remote environment. Recent estimates state that 23 percent of jobs are being conducted remotely in the US (Jose Maria Barrero, Bloom, and Davis 2023).

Remote work has brought significant changes in the work culture of organizations, and it can have impacts on career development, professional growth, and organizational dynamics. It can lead to missed opportunities for promotion and career growth due to proximity bias since managers are more likely to prefer on-site employees who are physically visible to them. Due to this, remote employees may be overlooked for in-person networking, mentorship, and visibility opportunities. A survey revealed that 67% of supervisors believed that remote workers are more replaceable than onsite workers, and 42% said they sometimes forget about remote workers when assigning tasks (Society for Human Resource Management, 2021). However, a worker survey conducted showed that career advancement prospects and job stability are the top priorities for employees (Adkins and Rigoni 2016).

Employees may have positive notions about remote work since it provides them flexibility and reduces commuting stress, but it can also create challenges in professional networking and communication with supervisors and colleagues and lead to missed learning opportunities in the traditional work setting. The benefits of telecommuting on work-family balance and job satisfaction have long been recognized. However, telecommuting is sometimes seen as indicating a lack of dedication to one's profession. Very little research has investigated the actual, objective effects of telecommuting on career success.

This study is conducted to analyze the factors that impact the Perceptions of Professional Development among individuals in a remote work setting. These effects were measured based on

these individual's Networking Opportunities, Training and Mentoring, Employee Engagement, Motivation, Gender, Work Experience, and Highest Education Level.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Remote work is evolving with the help of technological advancements and its increasing popularity due to worker flexibility and work-life balance. Hence it is critical to understand its positive and negative implications on the professional development of employees. Remote workers may experience differences in opportunities such as networking, training, and mentoring, which are more accessible in a traditional workplace setting. Even though research studies have found that on-site workers are preferred for promotions or career development opportunities than their remote counterparts, limited research has been collected on how remote work influences employees' perceptions of their professional development opportunities.

This study aims to investigate the factors that affect these perceptions, including networking opportunities, access to training and mentoring, employee engagement, and motivation. This research will also explore demographic variables such as gender, work experience, and education level to determine their impact on employee perceptions of professional development in a remote setting. Analyzing these impacts can provide organizations with a deeper understanding of factors that affect employees' professional development opportunities.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This study aims to examine the factors that impact employee perceptions of career development in a remote work environment.

### **HYPOTHESES**

An overall hypothesis for this study is that higher Networking Opportunities, Access to Training and Mentoring, Engagement, and Motivation would result in a positive relationship with Professional Development Perceptions.

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between networking opportunities and professional development perceptions in remote work.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between training and mentorship opportunities and professional development perceptions in remote work.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement levels and professional development perceptions in remote work.

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between motivation levels and professional development perceptions in remote work.

H5: There is a significant gender difference in Professional Development Perceptions.

H6: There is a statistically significant relationship between Education Levels on Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) for Lower, Middle, and Higher-class conditions.

H7: There is a statistically significant relationship between Work Experience and Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) for Less, Medium, and Higher-class conditions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Leonardi, P. M., Parker, S. H., & Shen, R. (2024) examined the impacts of remote work on organizational practices and employee experiences. The study categorizes remote work into psychological, temporal, technological, and structural distance. It also identifies the material, social, and symbolic resources that are impacted by these distances. Results found that remote work can create psychological distance which leads to a feeling of isolation from coworkers and the company and lowers motivation and engagement. Temporal distance is identified as differences in work schedules and time zones that can make coordination and communication difficult. Technological distance can be dependent on the users' accessibility and skill level which can help or hinder communication. Structural distance is the absence of a physical office which can create changes in the dynamics of supervision, collaboration, and organizational culture. These distances can impact material resources such as access to physical tools and office supplies and employees need to adapt to home office setups. Social resources are limited since building and maintaining professional relationships can be challenging without face-to-face interactions which impacts networking and mentorship opportunities. Symbolic resources are impacted since the symbolic meaning of work and professional identity can shift and the traditional markers of success and productivity are redefined in a remote context.

Henke, J. B., Jones, S. K., & O'Neill, T. A. (2022) provided valuable insights into their study of skills and abilities required for success in remote work environments. The COVID-19

epidemic, which caused a sharp rise in distant work, gave rise to this study. The authors aimed to understand the organizational changes and skill sets required for success in remote work environments, as well as how people who had not previously worked remotely adjusted to this new work environment. For remote professionals, effective communication has been regarded as a vital ability. To ensure the exchange of information is clear and succinct, it is important to be competent in both written and verbal communication. To stay productive, remote workers need to possess strong time management and self-discipline abilities. The capacity to prioritize work and create a disciplined schedule was highlighted. Technology proficiency such as with digital tools and platforms is also important and workers must be comfortable using the software programs that support remote work. Success in remote work requires the flexibility to adjust to new technologies and situations. Effectively handling emotions, empathizing with peers, and managing social difficulties are critical for building professional connections in a remote setting.

Anand, A., & Acharya, S. (2021) addressed the importance of employee engagement in remote work settings. Their study found that remote workers experience isolation and communication barriers that impact their engagement and productivity. Their study also emphasizes challenges in work-life balance since working from home can increase stress and burnout which can affect engagement and productivity levels. Thus, they suggested that through regular communication, technological support, and recognition and feedback, employees can become engaged while working.

Barhate, B., & Hirudayaraj, M. (2021) analyzed the impact of remote work on women's career development during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results found that women frequently experience systemic barriers and a lack of support from their families and employers. These obstacles may prevent them from advancing in their careers and make it challenging for them to manage their personal and professional duties. Gender norms and stigma can prevent women from making full use of remote work rules, despite the freedom that remote work offers. Their capacity to work flexibly and successfully balance their dual roles may be limited by this stigma. However, the study's findings are based on the experiences of women during the COVID-19 pandemic, which might not be universally applicable to all remote work contexts. The unique circumstances of the pandemic, such as widespread lockdowns and remote work mandates, may influence the generalizability of the results.

Golden, T. D., & Eddleston, K. A. (2020) examined the impact of telecommuting on career advancement and focused on objective career success metrics such as promotions and salary growth. Researchers examined survey data from 405 employees and matched it with corporate-provided data on promotions and salary growth. Key findings on the impact on career advancement showed that telecommuting can enhance job satisfaction and work-life balance, which can lead to better job performance. However, it was also found that telecommuting may signal a lack of career dedication to employers, which can potentially limit career advancement opportunities. Results indicated telecommuters and non-telecommuters did not differ in the number of promotions, telecommuters might face career penalties such as slower promotion rates and smaller salary increases compared to their in-office counterparts.

Richardson, J., & Kelliher, C. (2015) studied how remote workers manage their visibility to sustain their careers. This study is especially important given how technological improvements have made it possible for workers to work remotely, leading to changes in work habits. The report emphasizes how important it is for remote workers to stay visible if they want to advance professionally and have job stability. In contrast to their colleagues who work in offices, remote workers are not able to take advantage of spontaneous, in-person meetings that inherently increase visibility inside the company. The study suggests that businesses must acknowledge the difficulties experienced by remote employees and create policies that encourage visibility. This includes giving remote workers a place to showcase their work, fostering virtual networking opportunities, and motivating managers to communicate with their staff on a frequent basis. The study also discovered that many remote workers accept the challenges associated with reduced visibility rather than actively challenging the difficulties brought on by decreased visibility. This acceptance emphasizes how much organizational change is required to provide greater support for remote workers.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura proposed the Social Learning Theory which states that learning occurs through observation. Employees learn in the workplace by collaborating with others to find solutions, sharing their ideas, and expanding their skills to excel in their duties. However, in a remote work setting, employees lack face-to-face interactions with supervisors and colleagues



which can decrease the opportunities for observational learning. This presents a challenge in applying Social Learning Theory for professional development and organizational learning. Other barriers include feelings of isolation, lack of immediate feedback, and challenges in forming informal learning experiences. These barriers require strategies to improve social interaction and opportunities for informal learning in remote work environments (Kreijns, Kirschner, & Jochems, 2003). Social Learning Theory also emphasizes the importance of mentoring and coaching, such as through regular virtual check-ins and mentoring sessions to help employees receive the guidance and support necessary for professional development. It provides employees with opportunities for observational learning and reinforces positive behaviors for professional growth (Staples, 2001).

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Deci and Ryan (1985) developed the Self-Determination Theory of human motivation that addresses the factors influencing intrinsic motivation, well-being, and personal growth. It is important to discuss this theory for remote workers since remote working affects traditional motivational factors and work environments. Self-determination theory states that human motivation is driven by the need to fulfill three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is the need to feel in control of one's own behaviors and goals. Competence is the need to gain mastery and efficacy in one's activities. Relatedness is the need to feel connected to others and experience a sense of belonging. These needs are important in developing intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being. Employees who work remotely have a high degree of autonomy over their tasks since they can control their environment and schedules. Increased autonomy has been linked to higher job satisfaction and motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Remote work also allows employees to gain new competencies and adapt to new technologies. Their motivation and job performance are impacted positively since it gives them a sense of competence when they get the opportunity to learn and apply new skills (Spreitzer, Cameron, & Garrett, 2017). However, employees can also experience a lack of competency in remote environments if they do not get immediate feedback and support, creating a need for organizations to provide adequate training and resources (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). Relatedness can be a challenge in remote work environments since employees can experience feelings of isolation. This can impact their psychological well-being and motivation (Golden, Veiga, & Dino,

2008). Hence, self-determination theory is important in understanding employee motivation in remote work settings.

## **VARIABLES**

The independent variables of the study were Networking Opportunities, Training and Mentoring, Employee Engagement, and Motivation. The dependent variable included Perceptions of Professional Development. Demographic variables included were Gender, Work Experience, and Highest Education Level.

Professional development refers to gaining new skills in one's career for professional advancement and growth opportunities. Perceptions of Professional Development measure the degree to which individuals feel their remote work environment supports and contributes to their professional growth and career advancement. For example, "I am confident in my ability to advance my career while working remotely."

Networking is the process through which one makes connections and builds relationships to gain opportunities in their career. Networking Opportunities measure the frequency and quality of interactions with colleagues, industry peers, and professionals that can contribute to an individual's career development while working remotely. For example, "The networking opportunities available to me in a remote work setting are diverse."

Training opportunities offer a set of curriculums to employees to gain new skills and knowledge. Mentoring is a more customized activity, in which a more experienced employee provides expertise, support, and guidance to a less experienced employee focusing on the employee's needs and desires. Training and Mentoring measure the availability and accessibility of formal training programs and mentorship opportunities aimed at skill development and career guidance for remote workers. For example, "I feel that remote work affects my ability to participate in mentorship opportunities with my supervisors."

Employee engagement describes the level of enthusiasm and dedication a worker feels toward their job. Employee Engagement measures the level of an employee's emotional investment, commitment, and enthusiasm towards their work and organization in a remote setting. For example, "I feel connected to my organization's culture and values while working remotely."

Employee motivation is the level of commitment, drive, and creativity that employees bring with them to work every day. Motivation measures the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive an individual to engage in their work tasks while working remotely. For example, “Virtual recognition and rewards positively impact my motivation to perform well.”

The variables are measured on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Agree".

### **SAMPLE**

The research population constituted employees working remotely. The non-probability sampling method called convenience sampling was used. A self-administered survey method was prepared, and the online questionnaire form was shared with the participants. The final sample size was 35, with 22 females and 13 males. The sample representation of the Highest Education Level included 1 participant as High School Graduate, 18 participants with a bachelor's degree, and 16 participants with a master's degree. Representation for Work Experience included 24 participants with 0-5 years of experience, 7 participants with 6-10 years of experience, and 4 participants with 11-15 years of experience.

### **METHOD**

The non-probability sampling technique called convenience sampling design was used to collect the data. A survey was created. The questionnaire was sent out to the employees who fit the demographic of the study. After the data collection, the data analysis method was chosen based on the variables of the study after the data was collected. The online questionnaire followed the basic outline. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants. Then, they were asked to give their consent to the study. Participants were free to leave the study any time they wanted. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The data was downloaded from Qualtrics and cleaned and coded in R to conduct data analysis.

Analysis on Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) among individuals (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, and Q5) was conducted through many statistical practices utilizing six independent variables (IVs). These six independent variables are Networking Opportunities (categorical variable, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, and Q11), Training and Mentoring (categorical variable, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, and Q17), Employee Engagement (categorical variable, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21,

Q22, and Q23), Motivation (categorical variable, Q24, Q25, Q26, and Q27), Gender (Binary Variable, Q28), Highest Education Level (categorical variable, Q29), and Work Experience (categorical variable, Q30). During data cleaning, Q4, Q9, Q17, Q22, and Q23 were reverse scaled.

An overall hypothesis for this study is that higher Networking Opportunities, Access to Training and Mentoring, Engagement, and Motivation would result in a positive relationship with Professional Development Perceptions. H1 states that there is a significant positive relationship between networking opportunities and professional development perceptions in remote work. H2 states that there is a significant positive relationship between training and mentorship opportunities and professional development perceptions in remote work. H3 states that there is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement levels and professional development perceptions in remote work. H4 states that there is a significant positive relationship between motivation levels and professional development perceptions in remote work. H5 states that there is a significant gender difference in Professional Development Perceptions. H6 states that there is a statistically significant relationship between Education Levels on Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) for Lower, Middle, and Higher-class conditions. H7 states that there is a statistically significant relationship between Work Experience and Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) for Less, Medium, and Higher-class conditions. To test this hypothesis, the following analyses were performed: Descriptive Statistics, Individual T-test, One-Way ANOVA, Correlation, and Multiple Regression.

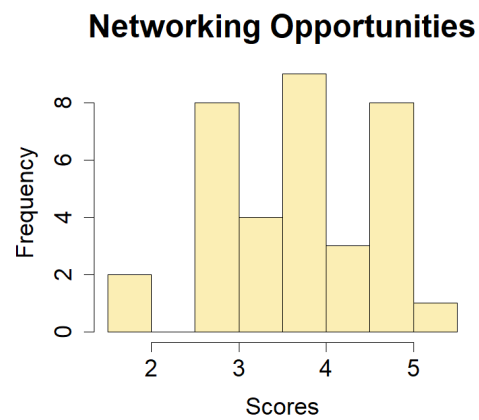
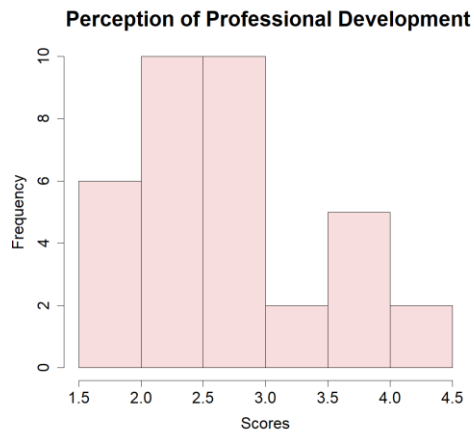
## **DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS**

### **Descriptive Statistics**

A descriptive statistic for each variable was computed which includes mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation scores (when applicable). Table 1 below shows the results of the statistics mentioned above. Figures 1 through 8 show graphical representations of the frequencies of each variable are represented.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Each Variable

	Perceptions of Professional Development	Networking Opportunities	Training and Mentoring	Employee Engagement	Motivation	Work Experience	Highest Education Level	Gender
<b>Mean</b>	2.766	3.674	3.057	3.091	2.069	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Median</b>	2.800	3.600	3.000	3.000	2.000	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mode</b>	2.200	3.400	1.000	2.600	1.400	1.000	3.000	2.000
<b>Range</b>	2.600	3.600	2.600	3.400	2.200	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	0.707	0.917	0.765	0.832	0.639	N/A	N/A	N/A



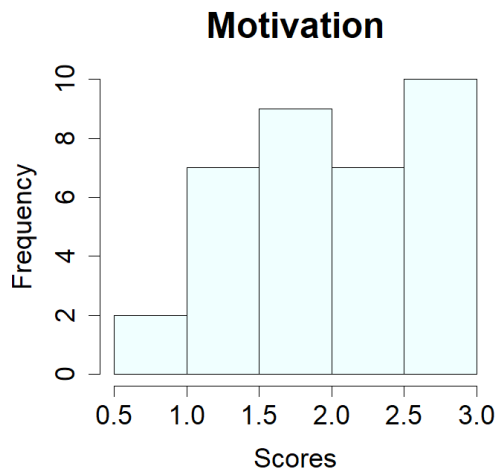
**Figure 1** Histogram of Perceptions of Professional Development **Figure 2** Histogram of Networking Opportunities



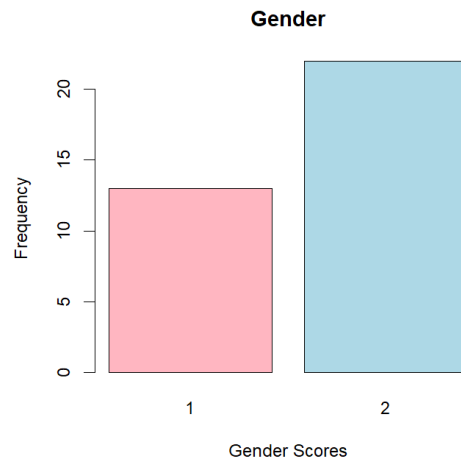
**Figure 3** Histogram of Training and Mentoring



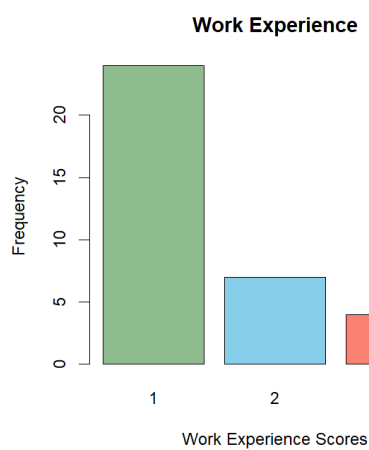
**Figure 4** Histogram of Employee Engagement



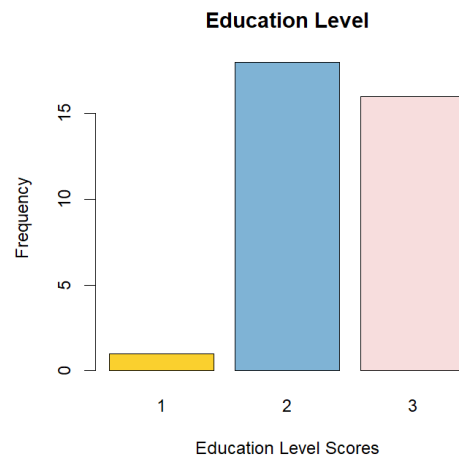
**Figure 5** Histogram of Motivation



**Figure 6** Histogram of Gender



**Figure 7** Histogram of Work Experience



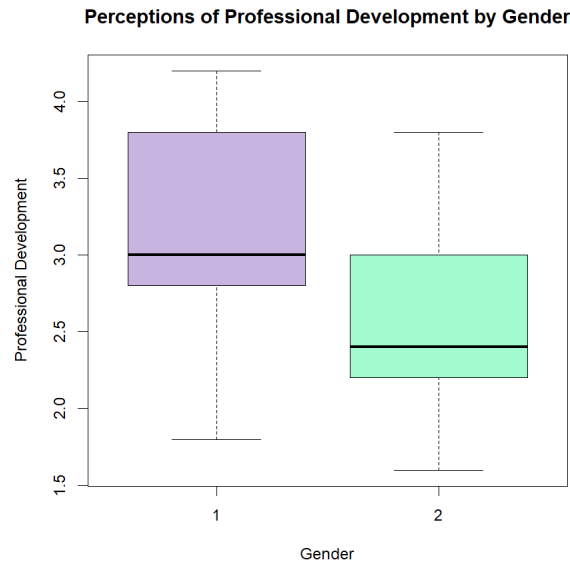
**Figure 8** Histogram of Education Level

## Independent T-Test

An independent T-test was used to analyse the relationship between the dependent variable Perceptions of Professional Development and the two levels of the binary variable, Gender. The research hypothesis for this analysis is if there are significant differences in the perceptions of professional development between males and females. The results of the independent t-test revealed that the mean perception score for Males ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 0.746$ ) was significantly lower than that of Females ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = 0.565$ ) (visualized in Figure 8 below). Furthermore, the p-value was calculated as " $p < 0.05$ ," which means the observed differences are statistically

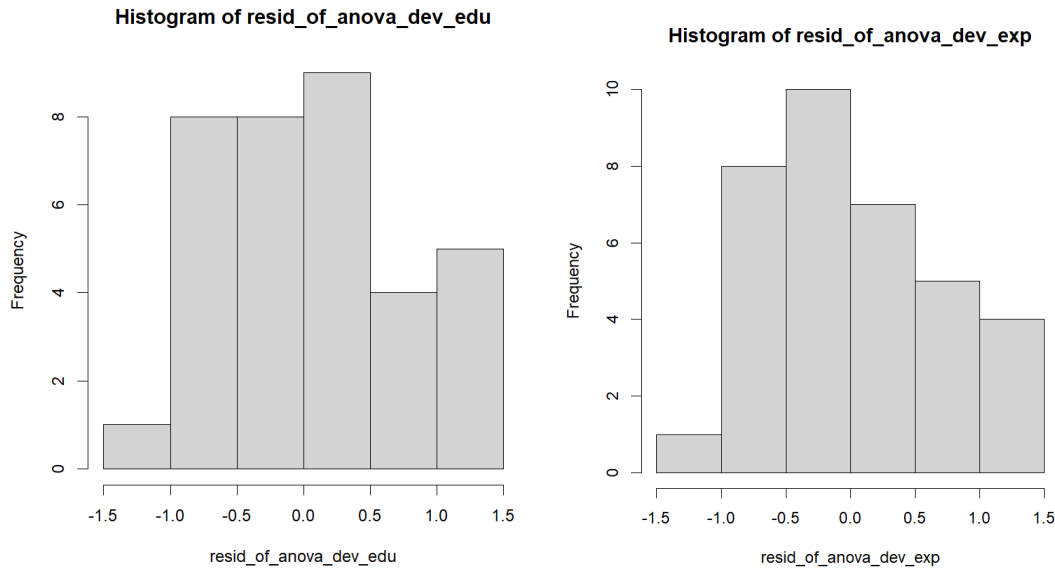
significant ( $t(20.177) = 2.7844$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, these results prove our stated hypothesis that there is a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of professional development between males and females.

**Figure 9** Box Plot (Perception of Professional Development by Gender)



## ANOVA

A one-way ANOVA test was performed using both categorical variables, Work Experience and Highest Education Level to explore the relationship with the dependent variable, Perceptions of Professional Development. The hypothesis for this test was that there would be a statistically significant relationship between Education Levels on Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) for Lower, Middle, and Higher-class conditions. Results of the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant interaction between Education Level and Perceptions of Professional Development [ $F(1, 33) = 0.971$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ], which supports the hypothesis. The second hypothesis for this test was that there would be a statistically significant relationship between Work Experience and Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) for Less, Medium, and Higher-class conditions. Results of the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically insignificant interaction between Work Experience and Perceptions of Professional Development [ $F(1, 33) = 0.705$ ,  $p = 0.146$ ], which rejects the hypothesis.



**Figure 10** Histogram of Residuals for Perception of Professional Development by Education Level and Work Experience respectively.

### Correlation

Perceptions of Professional Development (DV) was used to conduct a correlation analysis with each of the four independent variables - Networking Opportunities, Training and Mentoring, Employee Engagement, and Motivation to assess significant relationships. A Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between perceptions of professional development and employee engagement, with a correlation coefficient of  $r(35) = 0.596$ ,  $p < .001$ . Another Pearson correlation coefficient showed a significant moderate positive relationship between perceptions of professional development and training and mentoring, with a correlation coefficient of  $r(35) = 0.535$ ,  $p < .001$ . A Pearson correlation coefficient indicated a weak-to-moderate positive relationship between perceptions of professional development and employee engagement, with a correlation coefficient of  $r(35) = 0.487$ ,  $p < .01$ . Lastly, a Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between perceptions of professional development and motivation, with a correlation coefficient of  $r(35) = 0.502$ ,  $p < .01$ . Based on the significant correlations observed, we reject the general null hypothesis since the evidence suggests that there is a statistically significant correlation, and the true correlation is not equal to 0.



### Multiple Regression

Multiple regression test was used to test the predictive strength of the independent variables on the dependent variable. For the overall multiple regression analysis, continuous variables of Networking Opportunities, Training and Mentoring, Employee Engagement, and Motivation were utilized, along with the dependent variable of Perceptions of Professional Development. The hypothesis for this study was that higher Networking Opportunities, Access to Training and Mentoring, Engagement, and Motivation would result in a positive relationship with Professional Development Perceptions. The results from the multiple regression model revealed that Perceptions of Professional Development have a weak positive relationship with Networking Opportunities (slope = 0.207), Training and Mentoring (slope = 0.1634), Employee Engagement (slope = 0.1363), and Motivation (slope = 0.1575). The multiple regression model's overall p-value is statistically significant  $p < 0.05$  and the hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 2.** Overall Multiple Regression Results

	Estimate	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value
Networking Opportunities	0.2071	0.1957	1.058	0.298
Training and Mentoring	0.1634	0.1969	0.830	0.413
Employee Engagement	0.1363	0.1564	0.871	0.390
Motivation	0.1575	0,2129	0.740	0.465

*\*Note: the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> was 0.4041 which means that 40.41% of the variance is explained by the model*

### Scale Validity

Cronbach's Alpha for the scale of Perceptions of Professional Development is 0.59. This value indicates moderate reliability, but it's generally considered on the lower end for internal consistency. Networking Opportunities showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.76 which indicates good

reliability, suggesting that the items measure the same underlying construct well. However, dropping Q11 increases the alpha to 0.79, since it may not align as well with the other items. For the scales Training and Development, Employee Engagement, and Motivation, Cronbach's Alpha score shows acceptable reliability but is still on the lower end ( $\alpha = 0.66, 0.67$ , and  $0.67$  respectively). The results of the Cronbach Alpha test are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Cronbach's Alpha Score

Scale	Cronbach Alpha	Lower CI	Upper CI	Mean	SD
Professional Development	0.59	0.32	0.77	2.8	0.71
Networking Opportunities	0.76	0.61	0.86	3.1	0.76
Training and Development	0.66	0.46	0.81	2.5	0.64
Employee Engagement	0.67	0.46	0.81	2.6	0.69
Motivation	0.67	0.44	0.82	2.6	0.8

## DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis showed that there is a significant positive relationship between networking opportunities and perceptions of professional development. It suggests that employees perceived better professional development when they received higher networking opportunities. This aligns with the findings by Richardson and Kelliher (2015) who discussed the importance of visibility for remote workers to sustain their careers. Their study emphasized that virtual networking opportunities enhance visibility in organizations in remote work settings. Results also found a significant positive relationship between training and mentoring opportunities and perceptions of professional development, which means that higher perceptions of professional development are achieved through access to effective training programs and mentorship. Organizations can enhance remote workers' careers by providing accessible and effective training and mentorship programs. Kreijns, Kirschner, and Jochems (2003) and Staples (2001) discussed

the application of Social Learning Theory for training and mentoring in remote settings and indicated the challenges in observational learning due to the lack of face-to-face interactions. This supports the idea that training and mentoring opportunities are crucial for professional development in remote environments. For the variable employee engagement, a significant positive relationship between engagement and perceptions of professional development suggests that higher engagement levels create better perceptions of professional development opportunities. A research study conducted by Anand and Acharya (2021) discussed the challenges remote workers face in maintaining engagement due to isolation and communication barriers. This study aligns with their findings that regular communication and technological support can enhance engagement which is crucial for remote workers' professional growth. Next, motivation levels showed a significant positive relationship with perceptions of professional development. The motivation of employees influences their perception of opportunities for professional growth. The results align with the Self-Determination Theory, as proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985), and further discussed by Gagné and Deci (2005) and Spreitzer, Cameron, and Garrett (2017), which emphasizes the key factors of motivation such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Fulfilling these psychological needs can enhance the motivation and well-being of employees in remote work settings. A statistically significant difference in perceptions of professional development was found between males and females. Findings showed that males perceived higher levels of professional development opportunities compared to females. Barhate and Hirudayaraj (2021) research discussed the challenges of remote work on women's career development due to systematic barriers and a lack of support. These findings align with Barhate and Hirudayaraj (2021) study, indicating that women might face unique challenges in remote work environments, impacting their professional development perceptions. Work experience of employees showed no significant relationship between work experience and perceptions of professional development, suggesting that work experience did not affect professional development perceptions in this study. However, Education level showed a statistically significant relationship with perceptions of professional development. Higher education influences perceptions of professional development opportunities more positively than work experience. To summarize, the findings of this study show consistency with those of the previous research conducted. However, little research has been conducted in this sector and it is important to measure how remote work can influence employees' professional growth.

## LIMITATIONS

The limited sample size of 35 individuals is one of the study's main drawbacks. The sample lacks a wide range of participants, with only 22 girls and 13 males, which restricts how broadly the results may be applied. The results may not accurately reflect the findings of experiences and perceptions of a wider range of remote workers. Another limitation is the use of convenience sampling which further limits the study's generalizability. Participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to take part in the study, rather than selecting through a random process. Therefore, the results may be biased since the sample may not be representative of the broader population of remote workers. The measurement tool used in this study can also lead to a bias since it is self-reported through an online questionnaire. Self-reported data can lead to biases such as recall bias and response bias. Participants may overstate positive experiences or underreport negative ones, which can affect the accuracy and reliability of the data. The validity of the measurement tool can also present certain limitations that affect the findings. The Networking Opportunities scale shows good reliability (0.76), while the other scales such as Perceptions of Professional Development, Training and Development, Engagement, and Motivation have moderate reliability, with alpha values ranging from 0.59 to 0.67. Dropping certain questions such as Q11, Q17, Q23, and Q27 increases the alpha score of the scale which suggests that these items might not align well with the scales. Statistical limitations can also occur in the multiple regression analysis. Even though the overall model was significant, it did not find individual contributions of the independent variables to be statistically significant. This could occur due to multicollinearity among the variables.

## Implications for Future Studies

Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample size. Larger sample size can provide a more in-depth understanding of how employees perceive professional development in remote work settings. Future research with a large sample size can also study the effects of statistical limitations such as multicollinearity. Sample size can include a wide range of demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, and industry, to improve the generalizability of the findings. Next, using a mixed-methods approach such as developing a study with both quantitative and qualitative methods can provide insights into the factors influencing professional development. The measurement tool used in this study should be refined for validity and reliability.

Certain items can be adjusted or removed to improve the validity of the instrument and used again to measure the findings. Lastly, conducting a comparative study between different remote work models such as fully remote, hybrid, and traditional office-based can provide insights into the differences in perceptions of professional growth between different groups. This comparison can help determine if remote work influences professional development more than employees working hybrid or in-office.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study focuses on how different variables influence an individual's perceptions of professional development. By analyzing the relationships between networking opportunities, training and mentoring, employee engagement, motivation, gender, work experience, and education level, the research provides valuable insights into employee perceptions of professional growth in a remote work setting. The study utilized a comprehensive analytical approach, with the use of independent t-tests, ANOVA, Correlation, and Multiple Regression. The multiple regression analysis aimed to assess the influence of Networking Opportunities, Access to Training and Mentoring, Engagement, and Motivation on Professional Development Perceptions. While the overall model demonstrated a significant relationship, the individual contributions of these factors were not separately identified as statistically significant. Independent t-test analysis provided evidence to support the research hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of professional development between males and females. The study also reveals gender disparities in professional development perceptions, with males reporting higher levels than females. The ANOVA test results indicated no statistically significant differences among the three educational levels concerning Professional Development Perceptions. Finally, the correlation analysis explored the relationships between Professional Development Perceptions and the four independent variables. Key findings indicate that networking opportunities, training and mentoring, employee engagement, and motivation are positively correlated with perceptions of professional development. The statistically significant correlations confirm the alternative hypothesis and suggest that as these factors improve, perceptions of professional development tend to be more positive. This highlights the importance of creating a supportive remote work environment where employees can engage in meaningful networking, receive adequate training and mentorship, and stay motivated and engaged. Thus, it is crucial for organizations to create an

inclusive and supportive remote work environment by enhancing networking opportunities, providing effective training and mentorship, and maintaining engagement and high motivation levels. These aspects can help remote employees achieve their professional development goals.

## REFERENCES

- Anand, A. A., & Acharya, S. N. (2021). Employee Engagement in a Remote Working Scenario. *International Research Journal of Business Studies*, 14(2), 119-127.  
<https://doi.org/10.21632/irjbs.14.2.119-127>
- Baard, P. P., Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2004). Intrinsic Need Satisfaction: A Motivational Basis of Performance and Well-Being in Two Work Settings. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34(10), 2045-2068. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb02690.x>
- Barhate, B., & Hirudayaraj, M. (2021). Emerging Career Realities during the Pandemic: What Does it Mean for Women's Career Development? *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 23(3), 253-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15234223211017851>
- Bloom, N. A. Working From Home and the Future of U.S. Economic Growth Under COVID (2020);  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtdFIZx3hyk>
- Brunelle, E., & Fortin, J.-A. (2021). Distance Makes the Heart Grow Fonder: An Examination of Teleworkers' and Office Workers' Job Satisfaction Through the Lens of Self-Determination Theory. *SAGE Open*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020985516>
- Career Development Strategies for the Digital Workplace. (n.d.). Reworked.co.  
<https://www.reworked.co/employee-experience/career-development-in-the-remote-or-hybrid-workplace/>
- Dingel, J. I. & Neiman, B. How many jobs can be done at home? *J. Public Econ.* 189, 104235 (2020).
- Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(4), 331-362. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.322>
- Golden, T. D., & Eddleston, K. A. (2020). Is There a Price Telecommuters Pay? Examining the Relationship Between Telecommuting and Objective Career Success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 116, 103348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.103348>
- Golden, T. D., Veiga, J. F., & Dino, R. N. (2008). The impact of professional isolation on teleworker job performance and turnover intentions: Does time spent teleworking, interacting face-to-face, or having access to communication-enhancing technology matter? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(6), 1412-1421. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012722>

- Henke, J. B., Jones, S. K., & O'Neill, T. A. (2022). Skills and abilities to thrive in remote work: What have we learned. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.893895>
- Leonardi, P. M., Parker, S. H., & Shen, R. (2024). How Remote Work Changes the World of Work. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 11, 193-219. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-091922-015852>
- Oleniuch, Iwona. (2021). Employees' Perception of the Difficulties of Work at Home from the Perspective of their Experience on Remote Working. *EUROPEAN RESEARCH STUDIES JOURNAL*. XXIV. 781-796. 10.35808/ersj/2627.
- Raïneses, M. S., Nisa, N. un, Bacason, E. S., & Martir, S. (2022). Investigating the Impact of Remote Working on Employee Productivity and Work-life Balance: A Study on the Business Consultancy Industry in Dubai, UAE. *International Journal of Business and Administrative Studies*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.20469/ijbas.8.10002-2>
- Remote Work Might Damage Your Career Advancement, new study. | Alliance Virtual Offices. (2022, April 25). <https://www.alliancevirtualoffices.com/virtual-office-blog/remote-work-study-career-advancement/>
- Richardson, J., & Kelliher, C. (2015). Managing visibility for career sustainability: A study of remote workers. In A. De Vos & B. I. J. M. van der Heijden (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Careers* (pp. 116-130). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782547037.00013>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- SHRM Research Reveals Negative Perceptions of Remote Work. (n.d.). [Www.shrm.org. https://www.shrm.org/about/press-room/shrm-research-reveals-negative-perceptions-remote-work](https://www.shrm.org/about/press-room/shrm-research-reveals-negative-perceptions-remote-work)
- Spreitzer, G. M., Cameron, L., & Garrett, L. (2017). Alternative Work Arrangements: Two Images of the New World of Work. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4(1), 473-499. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113332>
- Stunted Growth: Remote Work's Effect on Career Development | WorldatWork. (n.d.). [Worldatwork.org. https://worldatwork.org/resources/publications/workspan-daily/stunted-growth-remote-work-s-effect-on-career-development](https://worldatwork.org/resources/publications/workspan-daily/stunted-growth-remote-work-s-effect-on-career-development)



- Vijaya Lakshmi, M. (2023). The Impact of Remote Work on Employee Engagement and Productivity. International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews Journal Homepage: Wwww.ijrpr.com, 4, 1711–1717. <https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V4ISSUE8/IJRPR16266.pdf>
- Zhang, Letian and Wang, Simeng and Wilmers, Nathan and Hong, Zhuoqiao, Remote Work and Careers (February 16, 2024). SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4729282>

## APPENDIX

### Print version of the questionnaire used.

**Instructions:** You are invited to take part in a research project titled 'Factors Affecting Employee Perceptions of Professional Development in a Remote Work Setting.' This study aims to examine the factors that impact employee perceptions of career development in a remote work environment. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Your personal information will be kept strictly confidential, and the research findings will not be associated with your name or identity, it will be used for academic purposes only. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time.

I have read and understood the above information and agree to participate in the study.

The following are questions on the Remote-Work Survey. You have to choose on a scale of 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree. Choose the option that best represents your current situation the best. There is no right or wrong answer.

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Professional Development Perceptions

- Q1. My achievements are recognized and rewarded in a remote work setting.
- Q2. I receive constructive feedback on my work that contributes to my career growth.
- Q3. I am confident in my ability to advance my career while working remotely.
- Q4. I feel that working remotely affects my chances of being considered for promotions.
- Q5. My organization is effective in providing leadership development opportunities for remote employees.

#### Networking Opportunities

- Q6. My organization hosts virtual networking events to enhance team bonding and social interactions.
- Q7. I find virtual networking events effective in helping me build professional connections.

Q8. Virtual networking can be as effective as in-person networking for career development.

Q9. My work relations suffer due to working remotely.

Q10. The networking opportunities available to me in a remote work setting are diverse.

Q11. I feel comfortable reaching out to colleagues for professional networking in a remote work environment.

### **Training and Mentoring**

Q12. I regularly participate in training and development programs offered by my organization.

Q13. My organization provides flexible access to personal training and mentoring opportunities based on my individual needs.

Q14. My professional skills have improved due to the training and mentoring received while working remotely.

Q15. My organization offers continuous learning opportunities to teach new skills to remote workers.

Q16. I receive constructive feedback from my supervisors on my training progress.

Q17. I feel that remote work affects my ability to participate in mentorship opportunities with my supervisors.

### **Employee Engagement**

Q18. I feel connected to my organization's culture and values while working remotely.

Q19. I am satisfied with the level of autonomy I have in working from anywhere to manage my tasks and schedule.

Q20. Virtual team meetings keep me engaged with my team's goals and activities.

Q21. I am satisfied with the frequency of communication from my managers in a remote work environment.

Q22. I feel left out in decision-making processes affecting my work or team.

Q23. Technology challenges and communication barriers decrease my level of engagement in work and team activities.

**Motivation**

Q24. The flexibility of remote work significantly motivates me to engage in my work.

Q25. Virtual recognition and rewards positively impact my motivation to perform well.

Q26. I am motivated to participate in virtual team-building activities.

Q27. I am motivated to go above and beyond in my job duties while working remotely.

**Demographic details**

Gender – Male/ Female/ Other/ Would not like to mention

Highest Education Level – High School/ Bachelors/ Masters

Work Experience – 0 to 5 years/ 6 to 10 years/ 11 to 15 years/ 15+ years