

Navigating the digital transition: Work flexibility, organisational trust, and remote work disadvantages

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the article is to identify the relationship between work flexibility and organisational trust, as well as the moderating role of remote work disadvantages in this relationship. Specifically, this study explores how work flexibility influences trust between organisations and remote workers and the role that remote work disadvantages play in this dynamic.

Research Design & Methods: The study employed survey data gathered by a professional research firm that used the Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) method and involved a randomly selected sample of 322 Polish remote employees. The Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis were used.

Findings: The findings indicate that work flexibility positively affects organisational trust, and reveal that remote work disadvantages, such as excessive monitoring and communication challenges, negatively impact organisational trust. Interestingly, our findings suggest that in challenging remote work environments, employees may place greater value on work flexibility as a mechanism for maintaining trust.

Implications & Recommendations: These insights hold practical implications for policies, suggesting that employers aiming to enhance organisational trust should focus on fostering a culture of mutual trust rather than relying excessively on monitoring mechanisms. Additionally, employers should implement flexible work arrangements that support employees in managing remote work-related challenges.

Contribution & Value Added: The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between work flexibility and organisational trust, emphasising the moderating role of remote work disadvantages. Our results confirm that work flexibility positively influences organisational trust, aligning with prior research indicating that remote work environments necessitate a higher level of trust due to the shift in responsibility from employers to employees.

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INTRODUCTION

The social restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic forced many individuals to work from home (European Commission, 2022), producing a rapid increase in remote and hybrid work (Adrian *et al.*, 2025). This growth has fundamentally reshaped how employees organise and experience work. In practice, these arrangements bring greater flexibility and job autonomy, as employees typically gain more freedom to manage their time and allocate energy across tasks (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022). Work flexibility, reflected in the ability to adjust working hours, choose work location, and exercise autonomy in task management, has become one of the most significant advantages of remote work

(Coenen & Kok, 2014). A key feature of remote and hybrid work also lies in the shift in how employees structure and regulate their work, particularly in terms of when and where work is performed. Remote work may also be less physically demanding, as it eliminates commuting time (Bloom *et al.*, 2024). Remote work brings both benefits and challenges. While it offers greater flexibility, remote work also brings limited communication, social isolation, reduced face-to-face interaction, and increased employer monitoring, which may undermine trust between employees and employers (Aloisi & De Stefano, 2022; Chafi *et al.*, 2022). The expansion of remote and hybrid work has also blurred the boundaries between professional and private life (Eddleston & Mulki, 2017), weakening employees' ability to detach from work. This may pressure employees to remain 'always available,' particularly given reduced visibility outside the office (Gerich, 2022), and produces longer working hours, partly driven by difficulty separating work and personal life (Possenriede *et al.*, 2016; Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021). Consequently, despite its flexibility, remote work can contribute to communication inefficiencies, work-home interference, and loneliness (Wang *et al.*, 2021). In addition, physical distance from supervisors may reduce trust (Sewell & Taskin, 2015) and increase monitoring (Abgeller *et al.*, 2024), which itself may further extend working hours in telework settings (Awada *et al.*, 2021).

In this context, organisational trust proves critical, as remote work reduces direct supervision and face-to-face interaction, raising uncertainty in employee-manager relationships. Consequently, remote work and its characteristics may significantly shape organisational trust. Although remote work provides greater flexibility and autonomy, organisations still need to ensure performance and development, creating tension between autonomy and control (Sewell & Taskin, 2015). Flexibility in remote work can strengthen organisational trust by signalling that employers value employee autonomy and respect their professional and personal needs (Bueechl *et al.*, 2023). Greater autonomy and work control may also foster positive emotions and well-being (Hair *et al.*, 2010), encouraging self-regulation processes like goal-setting and self-reward, which enhance job satisfaction (Müller & Niessen, 2019) and work enjoyment (Niebuhr *et al.*, 2022). Organisations may also respond with increased monitoring, as managers often struggle to trust remote employees (Abgeller *et al.*, 2024). At the same time, organisational trust itself constitutes an important determinant of job performance (Bai *et al.*, 2024; Jaiswal *et al.*, 2024). Without face-to-face interaction, conflicts between employees and managers may arise from working hours or unpredictable schedules (Henly & Lambert, 2014), potentially raising control, stress, or opportunistic behaviour (Gilli *et al.*, 2022), although flexible schedules can sometimes reduce psychological strain (Jiang *et al.*, 2023). The complexity of hybrid and remote work arrangements appears in evidence that the effects of flex-time and remote work on productivity depend on employees' ability to balance scheduling flexibility, work-family conflict, and productivity (Zappalà *et al.*, 2024).

Within this framework, remote and hybrid work constitute flexible working arrangements that allow employees to deviate from their regular work location and working hours (Iga & Lipowska, 2021). Remote work refers to any arrangement where employees perform tasks remotely, outside an employer's premises or a fixed location, using digital tools like laptops, mobile phones, networks, and the internet (Eurofound, 2020), whereas hybrid work combines remote and on-site work, with employees dividing their time between the office and remote settings (Vartiainen, 2024). As hybrid arrangements have become the dominant form of flexible work for many employees (Adrian *et al.*, 2025) and may prove particularly relevant for understanding the role of organisational trust, this study focuses primarily on hybrid employees.

Therefore, the purpose of the article is to examine the relationship between work flexibility and organisational trust, as well as the moderating role of disadvantages of remote work in this relationship. Our research contributes to explaining how workplace flexibility affects trust between organisation and remote workers, and the role remote work disadvantages play in this relationship, as previous studies have not provided clear evidence on the impact of work flexibility on organisational trust in remote work. The article addresses the following questions:

RQ1: What role does work flexibility play in shaping organisational trust in remote work?

RQ2: Do remote work disadvantages moderate the relationship between work flexibility and organisational trust?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The Role of Organisational Trust in Remote Work Environments

Despite the rapid advancement of information technologies, the prevalence and adoption of telework remain lower than expected due to organisational factors like managers' lack of trust in remote workers and the perceived need for face-to-face communication. A remote work environment, characterised by leadership at a distance, typically demands greater organisational trust (Jon *et al.*, 2017). Reduced visibility of employees in remote settings has prompted employers to implement various techniques and tools to monitor performance, reflecting a lack of full confidence in their ability to fulfil their responsibilities independently. These practices include documenting working hours and tasks, tracking attendance at meetings (Ruiller *et al.*, 2025), using digital tools for employee supervision, and raising the frequency of online meetings to maintain oversight (Aloisi & De Stefano, 2022; Chafi *et al.*, 2022). The use of these monitoring devices is inherently linked to expanding indirect work control in remote settings, which plays a significant role in shifting the responsibility for productivity and organisational outcomes from supervisors to employees (Gerich, 2022).

In light of these emerging transformations driven by the advancement of remote work and indirect work control, many organisations foster a culture of mutual trust, assuming fair treatment and responsible flexibility, shown to enhance employee satisfaction, even during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bueechl *et al.*, 2023). Empirical research highlights that both employees' trust in their organisations and managers' trust in their employees correlate positively with remote work outcomes (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021). Findings also suggest that employees' trust in their supervisors significantly shapes self-reported productivity, job satisfaction, perceived career opportunities, and perceived benefits of telework (Nakrošienė *et al.*, 2019) while a lack of trust produces dissatisfaction and frustration among workers (Varshney, 2021).

The literature also highlights that fostering social relationships can effectively improve workers' trust both during remote work and on-site, while reducing workplace conflicts (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2021). Building trust between employees and employers in remote work settings has also faced challenges in achieving effective communication (Longmuir, 2023). All in all, remote work often requires a higher level of trust between workers and employers than traditional office settings. Yet employers still need to monitor tasks, activities, and overall progress. From the employers' perspective, such oversight, whether through meetings or check-ins, serves as a necessary means of ensuring productivity. However, from the employees' point of view, these actions may sometimes be interpreted as a lack of trust.

Work Flexibility as an Antecedent of Organisational Trust in Remote Work

Against this backdrop, work flexibility constitutes a critical organisational resource that fosters organisational trust in remote work settings. Flexible work arrangements foster organisational trust by creating reciprocity, perceived support, and reduced strain. By enabling better work-life balance, flexibility strengthens employees' sense of organisational care and support, which strengthens trust and loyalty towards the employer (Çemberci *et al.*, 2022). This mechanism aligns with commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), emphasising that supportive and resourceful work environments foster durable trust relationships, as well as with social cognitive theory (Khuram *et al.*, 2025), which posits that employee attitudes and behaviours reflect the interaction of environmental conditions, individual perceptions, and behavioural responses. Work flexibility may thus function as a key environmental resource shaping employees' perceptions of organisational trust.

Notably, flexible work practices strengthen trust in management, alleviating job-related anxiety (Yunus *et al.*, 2022), while also reinforcing organisational trust when embedded within a supportive organisational culture and effective leadership (Iddrisu, 2025; Kloepper & Carbon, 2025). Teborg *et al.* (2024) indicate that flexibility in organisation constitutes an important element of organisational structures that shape trust relations and broader trust-building conditions. High-autonomy flexible working arrangements, like trust-based working time systems, signal a positive organisational stance toward employees, thereby fostering development of mutually trusting relationships (Viète & Erdsiek, 2020). More-

over, findings from research in digitally work contexts indicates that flexibility enhances organisational commitment, closely associated with trust and the quality of workplace relationships (Singh *et al.*, 2024).

The evidence indicates that work flexibility directly or indirectly fosters organisational trust. Findings consistently point to a positive relationship between flexibility and trust. Therefore, we formulated the following hypothesis:

- H1:** There is a positive relationship between work flexibility and organisational trust in remote work settings.

The Moderating Role of Remote Work Disadvantages

Although flexibility is often cited as one of the greatest advantages of remote work, this form of work also brings drawbacks. Remote work often produces longer working hours (Possenriede *et al.*, 2016) primarily due to difficulty separating work from personal life (Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021). Monitoring systems designed to improve and control productivity also extend working hours. Furthermore, employer-employee conflict is driven by the unpredictability of work schedules (Henly & Lambert, 2014). Unpredictable work schedules set by employers may result in greater control over employees, leading to increased stress (Kniffin *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the erosion of trust is considered one of the more significant drawbacks of remote work. Workplace isolation undermines trust by weakening the quality of organisational communication and information exchange (Zoonen *et al.*, 2024). Limited face-to-face interaction weakens trust development within supervisor-employee relationships (Hanz & Mckinnon, 2026). Similarly, workplace isolation diminishes the quality of interactions needed to maintain trust among colleagues (Urrila *et al.*, 2025).

Under challenging remote work conditions, the importance of work flexibility increases. Kesenheimer *et al.* (2025) indicate that employees 'generally value flexibility more than potential declines in workplace relationships' (Kesenheimer *et al.*, 2025). Flexibility plays a crucial role in enhancing work-life balance, fostering autonomy, and strengthening perceptions of organisational support, factors that grow particularly important when remote work conditions generate strain. Flexibility can also buffer stress and sustain employee well-being when remote work disadvantages are more pronounced (Çemberci *et al.*, 2022).

Together, remote work disadvantages may erode trust, whereas work flexibility can act as a compensatory resource, fostering autonomy, support, and commitment. From a conservation-of-resources perspective, flexibility may serve as a critical resource enabling employees to cope with strain and maintain positive work-related outcomes under demanding conditions (Omar *et al.*, 2024). This reasoning is consistent with prior research (Fateh *et al.*, 2024) showing that the effects of individual and contextual resources depend on situational conditions, with stronger effects observed when employees face greater remote work disadvantages. Flexibility should accordingly exert a stronger positive effect on organisational trust when employees face greater remote disadvantages. On this basis, we formulated the following hypothesis:

- H2:** The positive impact of work flexibility on organisational trust is higher when employees experience higher disadvantages in remote work.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Sampling

The survey data were collected by a professional research firm using the CAWI method. The study involved a randomly selected sample of 322 Polish employees working in remote settings (77.33% hybrid, 22.67% fully remote). The gender distribution was nearly balanced, with men slightly outnumbering women (51.86% men, 49.14% women). Most respondents held at least a bachelor's degree (69.25%), and the most common role was specialist/independent (59.63%). Managers accounted for 23.91% of the sample. Most participants worked in the services sector (83.85%), indicating a predominantly service-based sample.

The data were collected in March 2024 and verified by two independent experts before coding and analysis. We conducted the analysis using Jupyter Notebook (version 6.4.5) and Python (version

3.9.7) with the following packages: NumPy (1.22.4), pandas (2.1.4), SciPy (1.13.1), statsmodels (0.14.1), and semopy (2.3.9).

Measures

To define and quantify the variables, we employed measurement scales derived from previously validated research (Grant *et al.*, 2019; Ingusci *et al.*, 2023). All scales, originally in English, were translated into Polish via the back-translation method.

For organisational trust (*ewor_trust*) and work flexibility (*ewor_flex*), we adopted the framework proposed by Grant *et al.* (2019). Each construct corresponds to one of the four scales of the E-Work Life Scale tool. The remaining two constructs (work-life interference and productivity) were not the subject of this study. Both scales representing *ewor_trust* and *ewor_flex* comprise three items. In terms of remote work disadvantages (*disadv*) we adopted the proposal by Ingusci *et al.* (2023). The Remote Working Benefits and Disadvantages Scale examines two constructs: the benefits and disadvantages of remote work. For this study, we used only one of the two scales of this tool, the one on disadvantages. The questionnaire is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

We conducted CFA to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model, which included four key constructs assessed from different perspectives, including factor loadings ($FL > 0.6$) (Awang, 2012; Hair *et al.*, 2010), Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability ($C\alpha$ and $CR > 0.70$) (Hair *et al.*, 2010), and Average Variance Extracted ($AVE > 0.50$; Table A3 in Appendix 1) (Chau, 1997). All constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency, evidenced by the Cronbach's alpha ($C\alpha$) and composite reliability (CR) values, both of which meet or exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, except for *ewor_trust*, with a lower $C\alpha$ value (0.633) and a CR value of 0.705. Two constructs, *disadv* and *ewor_flex*, exhibited adequate convergent validity with AVE values above 0.5. Although the AVE for *ewor_trust* (0.469) falls slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.50, we retained the construct for several reasons. Firstly, the composite reliability ($CR = 0.705$) exceeds the recommended minimum of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency despite the lower AVE . Previous research suggests that when CR exceeds 0.60, convergent validity may still be considered adequate even if AVE falls below 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Secondly, the construct is theoretically central to the model and derived directly from a previously validated scale (Grant *et al.*, 2019), supporting its content validity. Thirdly, the scale contains only three indicators, and removing the lowest-loading item would substantially narrow the conceptual domain of organisational trust in e-working contexts. Given these considerations, we retained the construct, although the results involving *ewor_trust* warrant cautious interpretation. Future research should refine the measurement by revising or expanding the item pool.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework for the analysis is presented in Figure 1¹.

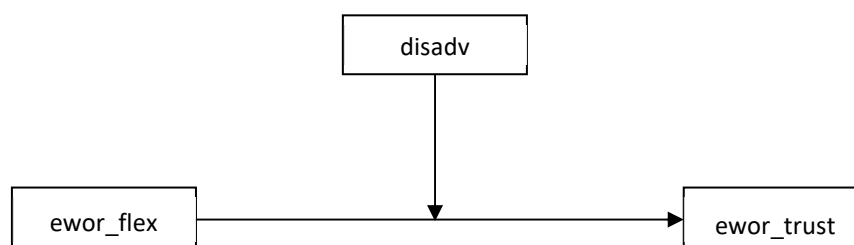


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for basic moderation analysis

Source: own elaboration.

¹ The descriptive statistics, normality assessment metrics, and correlation matrix are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

The analysis treats *ewor_trust* as the dependent variable, *ewor_flex* as a predictor, and *disadv* as a moderator. Table 1 summarises the moderation analysis results, highlighting the relationships between *ewor_trust*, *ewor_flex*, and *disadv*, and their interactions across different model specifications.

Table 1. Regression models underlying moderation analysis

Identified category	Estimate	SE	z	p	Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
ewor_trust ~						
Intercept	1.8823	0.154	12.189	<0.001	1.579	2.186
ewor_flex	0.4774	0.040	11.872	<0.001	0.398	0.556
ewor_trust ~						
Intercept	2.3609	0.201	11.760	<0.001	1.966	2.756
ewor_flex	0.4712	0.040	11.929	<0.001	0.393	0.549
disadv	-0.1951	0.054	-3.635	<0.001	-0.301	-0.089
ewor_trust ~ (centered variables)						
Intercept	3.6639	0.037	99.393	<0.001	3.591	3.736
ewor_flex_c	0.4866	0.039	12.504	<0.001	0.410	0.563
disadv_c	-0.2352	0.054	-4.384	<0.001	-0.341	-0.13
ewor_flex_c:disadv_c	0.1914	0.051	3.778	<0.001	0.092	0.291
ewor_trust ~						
Intercept	4.0657	0.492	8.259	<0.001	3.097	5.034
ewor_flex	0.0396	0.121	0.329	0.743	-0.198	0.277
disadv	-0.9471	0.206	-4.600	<0.001	-1.352	-0.542
ewor_flex:disadv	0.1914	0.051	3.778	<0.001	0.092	0.291

Source: own study.

In the base model, *ewor_flex* positively predicts *ewor_trust*, indicating a strong, significant direct effect. The model explains 30.6% of the dependent variable's variability. Adding *disadv* to the model introduces a significant negative effect on *ewor_trust*, suggesting that *disadv* correlates with lower *ewor_trust*. The positive association between *ewor_flex* and *ewor_trust* remains robust in the full model.

In the model assessing moderation effects between *ewor_flex* and *disadv*, the interaction term (*ewor_flex_c:disadv_c*) emerges significant, indicating a moderating effect. This suggests the relationship between *ewor_flex* and *ewor_trust* strengthens at higher levels of *disadv*. The main effects of *ewor_flex* and *disadv* remain significant, with confidence intervals supporting the stability of these estimates. The estimates of the coefficients in the model with centred variables show their effects relative to deviations from their mean values. The alternative specification shows that the main effect of *ewor_flex* becomes non-significant owing to multicollinearity and the dominance of the interaction term, while *disadv*'s negative impact remains substantial. Despite its limitations, we retained the alternative specification to enable Johnson–Neyman intervals and pick-a-point analyses shown below. The moderated model explains 36.2% of the variance in the dependent variable, with the interaction term raising explanatory power by 5.6 percentage points.

The results reveal a complex interplay among flexibility, disadvantages, and trust. *Ewor_flex* consistently predicts *ewor_trust* positively, while *disadv* negatively affects it. The significant interaction between *ewor_flex* and *disadv* highlights that the positive effect of *ewor_flex* on *ewor_trust* amplifies under higher *disadv*, underscoring the contextual dynamics of workplace trust. The results of the Johnson–Neyman probing, conducted at 0.5 intervals appears in Table 2. The conditional effect of *ewor_flex* on *ewor_trust*, given the value of *disadv*, follows the formula: $0.0396 + 0.1914 \times \text{disadv}$. The conditional effect of *ewor_flex* on *ewor_trust* intensifies as the level of *disadv* increases, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The findings show a strong positive correlation between organisational trust and work flexibility. Second, our results highlight that work flexibility positively shapes workplace trust. These findings align with previous studies indicating that remote work due to its specificity usually requires a higher level of organisational trust (Jon *et al.*, 2017). As indicated, this increased trust is largely influenced by the

development of indirect work control, which shifts responsibility for organisational outcomes from employer to employee in remote work (e.g. Gerich, 2022).

Table 2. Johnson-Neyman interval analysis for conditional moderation effects

Value of disadv	Effect	SE	z	p	Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
1.0	0.231	0.0744	3.10	0.002	0.085	0.377
1.5	0.327	0.0544	6.00	<0.001	0.220	0.434
2.0	0.422	0.0408	10.35	<0.001	0.342	0.503
2.5	0.518	0.0406	12.75	<0.001	0.438	0.598
3.0	0.614	0.0541	11.35	<0.001	0.507	0.720
3.5	0.709	0.0740	9.59	<0.001	0.564	0.855
4.0	0.805	0.0965	8.34	<0.001	0.615	0.995

Source: own study.

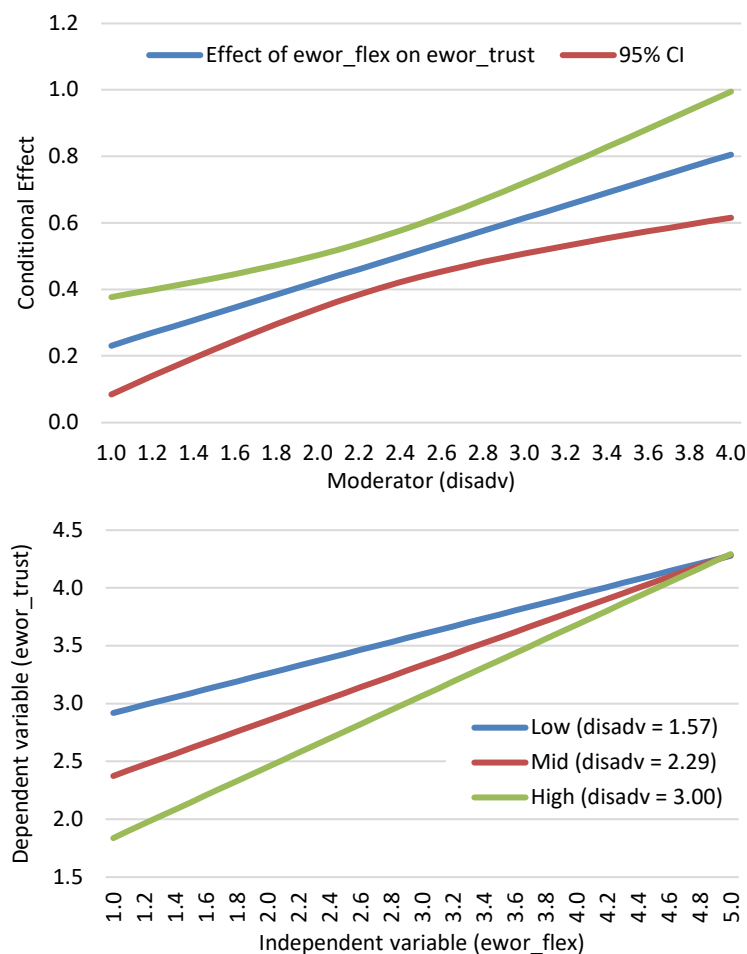


Figure 2. Conditional Effect and its Visualization at Selected Percentiles of the Moderator

Source: own elaboration.

These findings provide direct support for H1 and offer a clear answer to RQ1. This result aligns with prior theoretical arguments that flexibility operates as a key organisational resource fostering reciprocity, perceived support, and reduced strain (Çemberci *et al.*, 2022). From the perspective of commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), flexible arrangements signal organisational goodwill and strengthen relational bonds, while social cognitive theory suggests that such environmental conditions shape positive employee perceptions and trust-related attitudes (Khuram *et al.*, 2025). Our findings are also consistent with research showing that high-autonomy flexibility, like trust-

based working time systems, acts as a signal of organisational trust toward employees, thereby reinforcing mutual trust relationships (Viète & Erdsiek, 2020).

Our results indicate that the disadvantages of remote work significantly harm workplace trust. Previous studies suggest that managers often overuse monitoring tools during remote work (e.g., documenting working hours and tasks, tracking attendance at meetings) to maintain oversight (Aloisi & De Stefano, 2022; Chafi *et al.*, 2022). This excessive surveillance may signal a lack of trust, ultimately producing dissatisfaction and frustration among employees (Varshney, 2021). Organisational trust can also serve as a substitute for direct control reducing the need for monitoring tools and lowering employee stress (e.g. Chafi *et al.*, 2022).

This negative association aligns with prior literature emphasising that remote work disadvantages, like isolation, communication barriers, and blurred work-life boundaries, erode trust by weakening relational quality and increasing strain (Hanz & Mckinnon, 2026; Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021; Zoonen *et al.*, 2024). Our findings thus further substantiate the view that trust in remote contexts is particularly vulnerable to structural and interactional limitations inherent in digitally mediated work.

Interestingly, our findings suggest that the relationship between workplace flexibility and organisational trust strengthens when the disadvantages of remote work intensify, highlighting the contextual nature of workplace trust. In such conditions, employees may value flexibility more as a mechanism for sustaining trust. When remote work involves challenges like occasional overtime (Bloom *et al.*, 2015; Possenriede *et al.*, 2016) or work-family conflict, access to flexible arrangements such as breaks, days off, greater autonomy, or flexible scheduling can sustain trust between employees and organisations. Similarly, when remote work produces communication difficulties from reduced face-to-face interaction, organisational trust may depend on how effectively flexibility is managed. Prior research shows that physical distance between supervisors and employees can reduce trust through infrequent face-to-face contact (Sewell & Taskin, 2015) and ineffective communication (Longmuir, 2023), reinforcing the importance of managing flexibility in remote work environments.

This result provides crucial empirical support for H2 and directly addresses RQ2, demonstrating that remote work disadvantages act as a significant moderator of the flexibility-trust relationship. In line with conservation-of-resources theory, flexibility can be interpreted as a compensatory resource that becomes particularly valuable under conditions of increased strain (Omar *et al.*, 2024). When employees experience higher remote work disadvantages, the value of flexibility intensifies, strengthening its positive effect on organisational trust. This aligns with prior evidence suggesting that the impact of organisational and contextual resources depends on situational demands, with stronger effects under more adverse conditions (Fateh *et al.*, 2024). Our findings also echo arguments that employees tend to prioritise flexibility even at the expense of relational drawbacks in remote work (Kesenheimer *et al.*, 2025), indicating that flexibility not only mitigates strain but also sustains trust by reinforcing perceptions of autonomy, organisational support, and work-life balance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study's findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between work flexibility and organisational trust, emphasising the moderating role of remote work disadvantages. Our results confirm that work flexibility positively shapes organisational trust, aligning with prior research indicating that remote work environments necessitate a higher level of trust due to the shift in responsibility from employers to employees. Importantly, the study highlights that disadvantages associated with remote work, like excessive monitoring, work-family conflicts, and communication challenges, negatively affect organisational trust. This underscores the delicate balance between managerial oversight and employee autonomy in fostering trust-based work environments.

Furthermore, our findings reveal an intriguing dynamic: the positive link between work flexibility and organisational trust becomes even stronger when the disadvantages of remote work are more pronounced. This suggests that in challenging remote work conditions, employees may value workplace flexibility more as a mechanism for maintaining trust. The ability to adjust work schedules,

take breaks as needed, and exercise autonomy in task management proves crucial in sustaining trust between employees and their organisations.

Our results provide important insights into managing employees in remote and hybrid work settings, particularly the role of organisational trust. A key implication for managers is to foster trust in hybrid environments, as work flexibility positively shapes organisational trust. This proves especially relevant given that responsibility for performance is partially shifted from managers to employees due to reduced direct supervision. Another implication is the need to balance employee autonomy with appropriate control, shifting the focus from monitoring working hours toward managing performance outcomes. Given the identified challenges of remote work for trust–flexibility relationships, managers should also support employees in managing blurred work–life boundaries and encourage the use of technology in a way that avoids an ‘always-on’ culture. Strengthening trust also requires improving communication quality in hybrid settings. Finally, ensuring adequate equipment and IT support for remote work proves essential, as technical issues may affect both employee well-being and productivity.

Our study also has limitations that suggest directions for future research. Firstly, the study’s generalisability remains limited by its sample size and focus on the Polish service sector. To enhance representativeness and enable cross-sector comparisons, future research should expand the sample to include remote workers from various industries and countries. Secondly, our survey provides only a snapshot of remote workers’ experiences at a specific point in time. A longitudinal study could offer deeper insights into how perceptions of remote work benefits and drawbacks, alongside well-being, evolve over time. Thirdly, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce common method bias and social desirability effects. Future research could benefit from incorporating multi-source data (e.g., supervisor ratings or objective indicators). Fourthly, the use of OLS regression, although appropriate for the tested relationships, cannot fully capture more complex interdependencies between variables. Future research could employ more advanced analytical approaches, like structural equation modelling, to simultaneously assess direct and indirect effects. Finally, the study focuses on selected aspects of remote work disadvantages, organisational trust, and work flexibility. Future research could expand the model by adding individual (e.g., digital competencies) and organisational factors (e.g., leadership styles) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee functioning in digitally mediated work environments. Despite these limitations, our findings contribute to a growing body of knowledge in studies on remote work, organisational trust and work flexibility.

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Use of Artificial Intelligence

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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