

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**HIGH ROAD & LOW ROAD TO
REMOTE WORK:
THE PERCEPTIONS OF REMOTE
WORK, VISIBILITY AT
WORKPLACE, AND CAREER
PROGRESSION**

**UMMU UBAIDAH BINTI
MUHAMAD FAUZI**

MSc

August 2026

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**HIGH ROAD & LOW ROAD TO
REMOTE WORK:
THE PERCEPTIONS OF REMOTE
WORK, VISIBILITY AT
WORKPLACE, AND CAREER
PROGRESSION**

UMMU UBAIDAH BINTI MUHAMAD FAUZI

Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
(Business Management)

Faculty of Business Management

August 2026

CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS

I certify that a Panel of Examiners has met on 15 June 2026 to conduct the final examination of Ummu Ubaidah Binti Muhamad Fauzi on her Masters of Science thesis entitled “High Road & Low Road to Remote Work: The Perceptions of Remote Work, Visibility at Workplace, and Career Progression” in accordance with Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 1976 (Akta 173). The Panel of Examiners recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree. The Panel of Examiners was as follows:

Norliza Che Yahya, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA
(Chairperson)

Zuhaina Mustapa, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA
(Internal Examiner)

Selvi Kausiliha Vijayan, PhD
Assistant Professor
Graduate School of Business
SEGi University
(External Examiner)

**PROF DR HJH ZURAEDA
BINTI IBRAHIM**
Dean
Institute of Postgraduates Studies
Universiti Teknologi MARA
Date: 15 August 2026

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Postgraduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of Student	:	Ummu Ubaidah Binti Muhamad Fauzi
Student ID. No.	:	2021635472
Programme	:	Master of Science (Business Management) – BA750
Faculty	:	Business Management
Thesis Title	:	High Road & Low Road to Remote Work: The Perceptions of Remote Work, Visibility at Workplace, and Career Progression
Signature of Student	:	
Date	:	August 2026

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic precipitated a global paradigm shift in work arrangements, prompting an abrupt transition to remote work across Malaysia's banking sector and other industries. Despite extensive coverage of work-life balance and productivity in existing literature, a critical gap remains in understanding how remote work impacts employee visibility and the long-term career progression, an important gap given remote work's growing permanence in human resource management.

This study explores the lived experiences of managers and employees in the Klang Valley banking industry, specifically investigating the organizational strategic approaches to remote work (High Road vs. Low Road) and their consequent effects on career advancement.

Adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach within a constructivist worldview, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants from local and international banks. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Findings indicate that organisations adopted mixed strategies, balancing investments in employee welfare with cost-minimisation measures. Consequently, a central tension emerged: the "Visibility-Progression Nexus." Participants perceived a strong causal link between physical visibility and career advancement, substantiated by evidence that a lack of "face time" can lead to stagnation in their career. Crucially, the study identifies that this risk is not uniform; it is heavily moderated by organizational culture and job function, with new employees lacking pre-existing social capital being disproportionately vulnerable.

This study contributes a theoretical framework visualising the interplay between remote work implementation and career outcomes. Practically, it underscores the urgent need for organizations to move beyond technological enablement and intentionally design equitable performance management systems that decouple career progression from physical presence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

First and foremost, all praises and thanks are due to the Almighty Allah S.W.T. for His showers of blessings, strength, and perseverance that allowed me to complete this research successfully. This journey would not have been possible without His will and grace.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation and sincere gratitude to my main supervisor, Associate Professor Dr Idaya Husna Mohd. Her continuous encouragement, motherly guidance, and immense patience were the driving forces behind this thesis. I am truly grateful for her wisdom in steering me through the complexities of academic research and for her unwavering belief in the value of this topic. Her mentorship went beyond mere supervision; it was a constant source of motivation during the most challenging phases of my study.

I would also like to extend my thanks to my co-supervisor, Dr Dilla Syadia Ab Latiff, for her assistance and support in the completion of this thesis.

My sincere appreciation goes to the eight participants from the banking sector in the Klang Valley. I am deeply grateful for your willingness to spare your precious time amidst busy schedules to share your lived experiences. Your candid views on remote work, visibility, and career progression provided the rich data that forms the heart of this study.

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents. Thank you for your unconditional love, endless sacrifices, and prayers. You have been my primary source of strength, always understanding the demands of my studies despite my commitments as a full-time employee. To my siblings and family, thank you for being my cheerleaders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research Background	1
1.2.1 Remote Work	2
1.2.2 History of Remote Work: Connecting Past to Present	3
1.2.3 COVID-19, Remote Work, MCO & Post-Pandemic in Malaysia	5
1.2.4 Remote Work Arrangement in Banking/Finance Sector in Malaysia	6
1.3 Problem Statement and Gap Identification	8
1.4 Research Objectives	9
1.5 Research Question	10
1.6 Scope of the Study	11
1.7 Significance of the Research	12
1.7.1 To The Future Researchers	12
1.7.2 To The Policymakers	13
1.7.3 To The Employers	13
1.7.4 To The Employees	13
1.8 Limitations of the Research	13
1.8.1 Time Constraints	13
1.8.2 Access to Literature	14
1.8.3 Data Collection Process	14

1.9	Definitions of Terms	14
1.9.1	Remote Works	14
1.9.2	Visibility at Workplace	15
1.9.3	Careers Progression	15
1.9.4	High Road	15
1.9.5	Low Road	15
1.10	Summary of The Chapter	15
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW		17
2.1	Introduction	17
2.2	Remote Work	17
2.2.1	Remote Work: The Benefit and Drawback	20
2.2.2	Remote Work as Flexible Work Arrangement and Employment Benefit	28
2.2.3	Theory Associated with Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA)	28
2.2.4	Benefit of Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA)	31
2.2.5	Remote Work in Malaysia	33
2.2.6	SWOT Analysis of Remote Work Arrangements	37
2.3	High Road or Low Road Approach	37
2.3.1	High Road Approach	38
2.3.2	Low Road Approach	39
2.4	Visibility of Employees at Workplace	40
2.4.1	Social Contact at Workplace	43
2.5	Career Progression of Employee's	45
2.5.1	Career Progression Before COVID-19	45
2.5.2	Career Progression During and After COVID-19	46
2.5.3	Career Progression Perceptions of Remote Workers From The Lens of Employees	47
2.6	Work Arrangement After COVID-19	47
2.7	Conceptual Framework	49
2.8	Gaps in the Literature	51
2.9	Literature Highlight	52
2.10	Summary of the Chapter	55

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	56
3.1 Introduction	56
3.2 Research Design	56
3.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach	57
3.2.2 The Constructivist Worldview	58
3.2.3 Phenomenological Research as A Design Inquiry for Qualitative Research	58
3.3 Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique/Method	60
3.3.1 Population	60
3.3.2 Sample Frame	60
3.3.3 Sample Size	61
3.3.4 Sampling Technique/ Method	62
3.4 Data Collection Procedure	64
3.5 Unit of Analysis	65
3.6 Plan for Data Analysis	65
3.7 Reliability and Validity	68
3.7.1 Qualitative Reliability	68
3.7.2 Qualitative Validity	69
3.8 Ethical Issues	71
3.9 Summary of the chapter	72
 CHAPTER 4 INTERVIEW ANALYSIS & FINDINGS	 75
4.1 Introduction	75
4.2 Recall on Research Design	75
4.3 Description of Sample	76
4.4 Analysis and Results on Research Question 1	78
4.4.1 Initial Perceptions of Remote Work	79
4.4.2 Determining the Organizational Approach (High Road vs. Low Road)	80
4.5 Analysis and Results on Research Question 2	88
4.5.1 Perceived Importance and Necessity of Visibility	89
4.5.2 Impact on Relationships, Connection, and Communication	91
4.5.3 Influence of Management Views and Styles	93
4.6 Analysis and Results on Research Question 3	95

4.6.1	The Perceived Link Between Visibility, Remote Work, and Progression	95
4.6.2	Factors Influencing the Impact on Career Progression	97
4.6.3	Overall Perceived Direction of Impact (Positive, Negative, Stagnant)	100
4.7	Themes findings	103
4.7.1	A Perceived “Visibility-Progression Nexus” Emerges as the Core Concern	104
4.7.2	The Impact of this Nexus is Heavily Moderated by Context	104
4.7.3	Newer Employees are Disproportionately at Risk in this New Context	105
4.8	Summary of the Chapter	105
4.9	Summary of Research Finding Comparison	107
	CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	110
5.1	Introduction	110
5.2	Discussion of Findings	110
5.2.1	The Visibility-Progression Nexus in Context	111
5.2.2	The Vulnerability of New Joiners	111
5.2.3	The Moderating Role of Job Function and Culture	112
5.3	The Emergent Theoretical Framework	112
5.4	Implications of the Study	114
5.4.1	Theoretical Implications	114
5.4.2	Practical Implications	114
5.5	Recommendations	115
5.5.1	Organizations	115
5.5.2	Policymakers	116
5.5.3	Future Researcher	117
5.6	Limitations of the Research	118
5.7	Chapter Summary and Conclusion	119

REFERENCES	120
AUTHOR'S PROFILE	141

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Title	Page
Table 1.1	Research Objectives and Research Question Mapping	12
Table 2.1	Highlight on Selected Literature That Directly Related to The Study Undertaken	52
Table 3.1	Summary of The Chapter	73
Table 4.1	Participants Demographic	76
Table 4.2	Generated Codes Compilation	77
Table 4.3	Main Themes, Sub-Themes and Sample Codes Derived for RQ1	79
Table 4.4	Main Themes, Sub-Themes and Sample Codes Derived for RQ2	89
Table 4.5	Main Themes, Sub-Themes and Sample Codes Derived for RQ3	95
Table 4.6	Summary of Key Research Findings	105
Table 4.7	Summary Findings for Research Question 1	107
Table 4.8	Summary Findings for Research Question 2	108
Table 4.9	Summary Findings for Research Question 3	109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Title	Page
Figure 2.1	Combining The Concepts of Remote Work and Work in The Default Place	17
Figure 2.2	Theoretical Framework of WFH	20
Figure 2.3	The Work-Home Resources Model	30
Figure 2.4	Proposition	31
Figure 2.5	Research Model	34
Figure 2.6	Hybrid Work Arrangements Among Firms Are on The Rise	36
Figure 2.7	The SWOT Analysis for Remote Work Arrangement Implementation	37
Figure 2.8	The High Road and Low Road Approach to Remote Work Arrangement	40
Figure 2.9	Model Of Physical Space as Moderator in The Relationship Between Flexible Work and Policies and Temporal Flexibility	44
Figure 2.10	Workspace Workflow	49
Figure 2.11	Coronavirus Pandemic and The Labour Market	50
Figure 2.12	Proposed Conceptual Framework	50
Figure 3.1	Framework for The Research Design	56
Figure 3.2	Combination of Type of Sampling and Their Purpose	62
Figure 3.3	Six General Steps or Phase of Thematic Analysis	67
Figure 5.1	Visibility-Progression Nexus	113

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is composed of the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, scope, significance, limitations, and the definitions of the terms that will be frequently mentioned as we go throughout the research proposal. Introduction part will act as framework for the researcher and act as the early image of the study that will be conducted.

Researcher intended for the introduction section as a warmup reading to the chapter that follows as it will be the backbone of how will the literature review and methodology that constructed to answer and attained the objectives and questions of the study.

1.2 Research Background

The operational architecture of the modern corporate environment has been fundamentally disrupted by the institutionalisation of alternative working models. Remote work, once restricted to a selective fringe of technologically autonomous industries, has rapidly transformed into a core structural variable within contemporary human resource management (HRM) frameworks. Rather than serving merely as a localized location option, remote and hybrid models have emerged as highly contested domains of organizational control, professional exposure, and career equity. Within this landscape, the traditional mechanisms used by employers to evaluate employee capability, dedication, and professional alignment are undergoing severe friction.

Specifically, as remote execution decentralises classical workplace structures, it introduces an analytical tension between objective task output and the subjective influence of physical workplace presence. This research project investigates this explicit friction, exploring how organizational strategic approaches to remote arrangements affects an individual's structural exposure and shaped long-term career progression trajectories.

1.2.1 Remote Work

“The future of work is offering people more optionality” (Dwoskin, 2020)

Remote work is defined as work, duties, and tasks that being perform away from traditional assigned designated office location or any premises for some of the times or almost of all the times (Blount & Gloet, 2017; Clancy, 2020; Jalagat & Jalagat, 2019). From the definition given, work from home, teleworking, telecommuting, and other related phrases that emphasize the work and tasks being perform out of office either in café, hotel, or any other places (Como et al., 2021) fall into remote work designation.

Remote working is categorized as one option for alternative work arrangement (Stirpe & Zárraga-Oberty, 2017) other than job sharing, temporary work, permanent part-time arrangement, and others. How does remote work differ from flexitime? Remote work gives the employees the freedom to choose where to perform the tasks pertaining to the job (Clancy, 2020), while the flexitime gives the employees the freedom to choose what time they will start and finished their work at while adhering to the total number of hours that the employees need to fulfil (Haar, 2007) while some remote working arrangements still require employees to clock in and clock out as predetermined by the company.

The rapid expansion of remote working arrangements in the post-pandemic era has necessitated a critical re-evaluation of how organisational performance is measured and rewarded (Wu & Kao, 2022); (Wang et al., 2023). While remote work provides increased autonomy and reduced stress (Shimura et al., 2021), it simultaneously decouples productivity from the traditional metric of physical presence, which has long been used by managers as a proxy for dedication and professional commitment (Shimura et al., 2021); (Wang et al., 2023). This reliance on “face-time” creates a significant performance evaluation dilemma; employees working remotely risk being perceived as less committed, while those who choose to work despite illness, a phenomenon known as presenteeism, may inadvertently signal high affective commitment and receive more favourable performance ratings, particularly in demanding work environments (Wang et al., 2023). Consequently, as remote and hybrid models become more institutionalised as well as streamlined, organisations must transition from presence-based monitoring to robust, output-oriented appraisal systems to ensure equitable career progression for all employees, regardless of their work

location (Wu & Kao, 2022); (Wang et al., 2023). To understand the trajectory of remote work, it is necessary to examine how its evolution has been consistently defined by the tension between flexible performance execution and established norms of workplace visibility.

1.2.2 History of Remote Work: Connecting Past to Present

The terms of “remote works” first coined by Jack Nilles in 1973 in his book titled *The Telecommunications – Transportation Trade-off*. Nilles, now known as the “Father of Telecommunications”, demonstrated through early experiments with financial firms that work could be done remotely given the advanced means of communication at the time. He reported that over the course of his nine-month study, there was an increase in employees’ productivity, a decrease in healthcare costs, and savings in infrastructure costs (Berthiaume, 2020). Berthiaume (2020) also notes that Niles’s employer is interested by the new work arrangement; however, they are still reluctant to adopt the said work arrangement due to the uncertainties inherent in the method.

From the 1800s through the 1950s, during the onset of the Industrial Revolution, workers left their homes to work in factories and mines, and people did not see any need or significance for remote work. With the advancement of computing technology, World Wide Web (WWW), social medias, and mobile devices in much later years, the telecommuting or remote work or telework has come into the light and garner much attention among the newer generations. The remote work arrangement is growing together with the growing of communication technologies, making collaboration accessible everywhere despite the location and physical barrier.

Remote work has become more common not just in Western countries, but it is also gaining reputation and attention in the Southeast Asian (SEA) region. Many reputable, international firm, and businesses across the region especially the information technology firms are starting to view remote work as a way to reduce operating costs, including the expense of maintaining offices for employees. Robust ICT infrastructure is one of the main factors that made the remote work feasible (Clancy, 2020). Thus, resulting in many of the ICT or IT firms are more inclined to adopt the work arrangement due to the nature of the business that having well-conditioned IT knowledge with advance online collaboration technology that makes it

possible for the employees to work remotely while at that stay collaborated and connected with each other. According to Saludin et al. (2013), Amway International, IBM, American Insurance of Associates (AIA), Grand soft link computers, Motorola and Texas Instruments has been adopting the remote work arrangement in their firm. Di Martino (2001a) reported that:

In 1998 a major study sought to establish the prevalence and patterns of telework in Malaysia, as well as the factors facilitating and constraining its adoption or use. The survey covered 1,254 establishments with a total employment of 259,517 workers. 98 establishments, or 7.8%, were found to be engaged in some form of teleworking with an average of 3.45 teleworkers per 1,000 workers. The incidence of teleworking was highest in the transport, storage and communications sector and the finance, insurance, and real estate sector. (p. 41)

While the structural friction surrounding remote arrangements has gained immense prominence in recent years, the foundational concepts of telecommuting originated over five decades ago. Jack Nilles first demonstrated in 1973 that advanced communication infrastructures could successfully substitute for physical commuting, proving through early experiments that remote operations yielded substantial savings in organizational infrastructure and healthcare costs (Nilles, 1994; Berthiaume, 2020). However, these early initiatives remained largely experimental and unsophisticated; the corporate world remained anchored to traditional management paradigms where physical presence was equated with operational accountability (Vyas, 2022).

In the Malaysian context, the initial adoption of remote work (often characterized by telecommuting) was largely limited to multinational firms like Amway International and IBM (Hamsa et al., 1997). For decades, the financial and banking sectors remained particularly resistant to these shifts, largely due to the sector's high-security requirements and a traditional reliance on physical oversight (Oly Ndubisi & Kahraman, 2005). This historical resistance created a “visibility bias” that persisted well into the 21st century, where evaluation systems were intrinsically tied to office-based metrics (Richardson & Kelliher, 2015). As digital transformation has evolved, the central challenge has shifted from Nilles’s initial focus on “technological enablement” to a new struggle: the difficulty of maintaining professional visibility and career equity in a virtualized environment (Vyas, 2022). Thus, the history of remote work in Malaysia is not merely a record of technological adoption, but an ongoing evolution of

management trust, a narrative of how organizations slowly transition from presence-based monitoring to more robust, output-oriented appraisal frameworks.

1.2.3 COVID-19, Remote Work, MCO & Post-Pandemic in Malaysia

Wyld (2022) describes the onset of the COVID-19 crisis as a '*Black Swan*' event, representing an unexpected phenomenon that goes above and beyond normal situational baselines with severe corporate consequences. Following the global escalation of the pandemic, public health mandates compelled businesses to establish unprecedented operational safeguards. Malaysia's first case was detected on 25 January 2020, and by 18 March 2020, the first phase of the Movement Control Order (MCO) was officially implemented by the Malaysian government to break the chain of transmission. Consequently, employees were immediately compelled to work from home as populations were urged to engage in structural social isolation (Mahmud et al., 2020). A core condition of the MCO included the temporary suspension of all non-essential private and government business activities. Because this emergency policy was executed with little advance notice, it left a vast majority of employers entirely unprepared for a seamless workforce transition, causing immediate disruptions across operational workflows (Mahmud et al., 2020). Over time, these temporary emergency remote practices evolved from makeshift contingency responses into permanent, structural features of modern corporate environments (Maity & Lee, 2025).

Although remote adoption was slow and restricted prior to the crisis, the baseline configuration of professional execution fundamentally shifted over the pandemic lifecycle. Working from home in casual attire became a baseline reality, and virtual meetings rapidly transformed into a mainstream industrial norm (Vyas, 2022). This transition stands in sharp contrast to legacy health crises; for instance, home-based working was not an available option for the global workforce when the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak occurred in 2003, primarily because the majority of personnel lacked access to the digital devices, collaboration toolkits, and remote computing options essential for home execution (Vyas, 2022). Line managers, team leaders, and human resource professionals have become intensely focused on these long-term behavioural modifications, recognizing that physical detachment directly influences the emotional, cognitive, and overall performance outputs of the workforce (Graves & Karabayeva, 2020; Kamis et al., 2023). While emergency remote policies

were initialised out of pure necessity, contemporary organizations have embraced blended models to combine the autonomy of remote work with the collaborative advantages of physical interaction (Kamis et al., 2023; Maity & Lee, 2025).

In the post-pandemic landscape, this transition has generated distinct evaluation friction within the Southeast Asian corporate ecosystem. Contrary to Western markets where distributed models achieved wider structural permanence, macro-scale empirical assessments reveal that 69.19% of employees across Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia have been recalled to physical office spaces under full onsite work mandates (Abdul Aziz & Ong, 2024). This aggressive return-to-office trend is heavily driven by traditional corporate structures and regional leaders who continue to rely on physical presenteeism and direct observation as primary indicators of performance and loyalty (Owl Labs, 2022; Abdul Aziz & Ong, 2024). For organizations attempting to navigate this middle ground, the inability to directly monitor remote employees frequently drives supervisors to overcompensate through micromanagement and hyperconnected accessibility expectations (Fukumura et al., 2021; Abdul Aziz & Ong, 2024). This persistent visibility expectation positions remote work as a highly risky personal career path. When a crisis strikes, emergency policies successfully preserve basic business continuity, but the long-term impact of these distributed frameworks on career progression remains highly problematic within traditional corporate cultures (Mahmud et al., 2020). Redesigning both physical and digital performance systems has therefore become an urgent priority to prevent flexible arrangements from penalizing remote talent (Kamis et al., 2023).

1.2.4 Remote Work Arrangement in Banking/Finance Sector in Malaysia

The institutionalisation of alternative banking work models represents a structural revolution that rapidly accelerated due to unprecedented pandemic disruptions (Shodimu et al., 2021). However, this rapid digitalization wave directly clashed with strict regulatory frameworks, such as mandatory physical or logical network segregation implemented to prevent cyber threats and information leakage (Choi & Kwak, 2021). This fundamental friction highlights that establishing flexible working models in banking requires far more than basic technological enablement, as perimeter controls heavily restrict fluid remote data accessibility (Choi & Kwak, 2021). Consequently, financial institutions have had to navigate an environment where

infrastructure readiness and security protocols directly dictate work design limits (Choi & Kwak, 2021).

Within the Malaysian financial services industry, intense performance targets and heavy workloads historically elevated employee turnover rates to 13.3% due to severe work-life balance conflicts (Dorai et al., 2026). Adopting sustainable practices like remote work and flexible scheduling acts as a crucial resource to mitigate these work-family conflicts and psychological stress (Dorai et al., 2026). Meta-analytic evidence confirms that these flexible work arrangements have a high-level positive correlation ($r = .596$) with overall employee performance, job satisfaction, and productivity (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024). To maximize talent retention, organizations are increasingly forced to blend these flexible options into their permanent human resource frameworks (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024; Dorai et al., 2026).

Despite these productivity benefits, physical displacement introduces severe relational friction, as distributed banking professionals frequently suffer from acute workplace isolation (van Zoonen et al., 2024). This isolation fundamentally erodes interpersonal trust, a decay qualified primarily by reduced communication quality and information-sharing value rather than digital interaction frequency (van Zoonen et al., 2024). Crucially, vertical trust between subordinates and supervisors is significantly more volatile and fragile in remote settings than horizontal trust among coworkers (van Zoonen et al., 2024). Without high-quality communication, isolated banking professionals risk becoming parasocial and less instrumental to shared organizational goals (van Zoonen et al., 2024).

This lack of physical vicinity triggers a powerful proximity bias, where authority figures subconsciously show favouritism or given preferential treatment to office-present staff (Hirsch, 2022). Managers routinely utilize visual familiarity as a mental shortcut to make subjective judgments pertaining performance reviews, promotions, and premium assignments (Hirsch, 2022). Even when remote employees demonstrate identical objective outputs, they face steep career penalties because managers assume full-time teleworkers are less committed to work (Matysiak et al., 2025). Therefore, financial institutions must intentionally design performance management systems that completely decouple long-term career progression from physical presence (Hirsch, 2022; Matysiak et al., 2025)

1.3 Problem Statement and Gap Identification

“Good scientific research involves not only an important topic but research problem.” (Wertz et al., 2011)

A massive increase in the number of people working from home has been one of the pandemic's responses. While this shift was initially reactive, recent data suggests that remote and hybrid arrangements are gaining structural permanence in Southeast Asia, even as many regional employers call for a return to physical offices (Abdul Aziz & Ong, 2024; Chow & Choo, 2023). This shift could have long-term implications for a variety of factors, including the ways employees organize their work and where it is done. While the sudden enforcement of remote work worldwide (widely known as WFH in Malaysia) during the MCO enforcement due to the COVID-19 pandemic saw a surge of research exploring its effects on psychological health and productivity, there remains a critical knowledge gap regarding the long-term impact on professional growth and career development (Chow & Choo, 2023).

Working from home is not a new concept, but its relevance has grown exponentially (ILO, 2020). Past research has often focused on frameworks highlighting the multiple challenges and benefits of remote work (Mohd Rahim et al., 2018). However, recent findings suggest that workplace isolation, a key byproduct of remote work, serves as a significant barrier to interpersonal trust, which in turn hinders professional integration and team cohesion (Van Zoonen et al., 2024). Richardson and Kelliher (2015) highlighted that the traditional model of standard working arrangements may no longer be applicable to distributed teams. They further added that emphasis on physical presence at the workplace often disadvantages remote workers. This disadvantage is exacerbated by ‘proximity bias’, where authority figures subconsciously favour office-present staff, creating a dual-track career path where remote workers face persistent career penalties (Hirsch, 2022). Recent empirical evidence demonstrates that these penalties, such as reduced promotion and salary growth, are often driven by managerial perceptions that teleworkers perform worse or are less committed, regardless of their objective output (Matysiak et al., 2025).

In the Malaysian banking sector, these challenges are compounded by industry-specific infrastructure constraints. Financial institutions must navigate strict regulatory frameworks, such as mandatory network segregation policies designed to prevent cyber threats, which paradoxically limit the technical fluidity required for effective remote

operations (Choi & Kwak, 2021). Furthermore, heavy workloads and high turnover rates, historically cited at 13.3% in the sector, underscore the urgent need for sustainable practices that mitigate work-life balance (WLB) conflicts and stress, rather than exacerbate them (Dorai et al., 2026).

This research stemming from research conducted by Hamsa et al. (2016) that resulted in the discovery of key perceptual constraints of telecommuting, namely the “fear of isolation” and “losing the chance for promotion”, were found to be negatively correlated with the inclination to telecommute. Research conducted during the pandemic that highlighted the challenges of WFH listed face-to-face contact, visibility, and communication as key challenges (Ambikapathy & Ali, 2020a). Both studies highlight the need for larger respondent pools and in-depth interviews to further understand the Visibility-Progression Nexus (Ambikapathy & Ali, 2020b; Hamsa et al., 2016).

Thus, this study is designed to fill a knowledge gap by examining remote working from a different perspective, contributing to the body of knowledge in the Malaysian context. It goes beyond prior studies on work–life balance and the general benefits and downsides of remote work to focus on both employee and employer perspectives.

1.4 Research Objectives

Research objectives are statements of the research questions that the researcher wishes to investigate which also known as the list of the aim of the study that stem from the research questions or the problems (Sundram et al., 2016).

The objective of this phenomenological qualitative study is to explore the organizations approach towards the remote work arrangements (High Road or Low Road), the perceptions of the managers and employees on the visibility at workplace of the employees that work remotely and how will the chosen approach of the remote work arrangements will affect their career progression in long run if they choose to work remotely. Listed below is the set of the research objectives that the researcher wished to accomplish at the end of the study:

RO1: To explore the perceptions of the managers and the employees on working remotely with the approach (high road or low road) taken by the organisations in implementing the remote work arrangement.

The first research objective intends to find out how the organizations approach the remote work arrangements and what triggers them to implement the remote work arrangement. This then, will shape their perceptions towards the career progression of them that work remotely. It is expected this approach that the organizations pursue when implementing the remote work arrangements will somehow impact the career progression of the employees that affected by the arrangements.

RO2: To understand how the perceptions of the managers and employees on visibility at workplace of the employee that work remotely.

From the second objectives, which is at the end of the study, the researcher will be able to describe the level of understanding among the managers and employees about remote work and visibility at workplace in Malaysia which is in this study would be circulating in financial industry (banking sector). Thru these objectives (RO1 and RO2), the researcher is expected to discover the views and the perceptions of working remotely, which later shape the perceptions on the objectives of research that follows.

RO3: To explore the views of managers and employees on career progression of the employee that work remotely.

The third and last objectives of this research are to explore the perceptions of managers and employees on career progressions and how those aspects will affect those employees that choose to work remotely. How will the organisations tackle the career progression of remote worker and how will it differ from employees that works in traditional work arrangement settings in office? At the end of the study, the researcher is expecting to learn more about career progression of remote workers in the organisations.

1.5 Research Question

Tracy (2012) describes research questions as the axis to kick start qualitative research. Since the qualitative research intended to explore further the topic of interest, the research questions develop by the researcher are kept open and expected to be added

further going along with the research. Creswell (2013) in his book mentioned that the research questions for the qualitative study are differ from the quantitative.

Below listed the three (3) research questions that is expected to help the researcher to achieve the objectives of the research:

RQ1: What is the approach that the employers choose when they decide to pursue for remote work arrangement (high road or low road) and their initial perceptions about it?

RQ2: How does working remotely affecting their visibility at work?

RQ3: How will working remotely affects the career progression of the employees (positive, negative, stagnant)?

The answers to these questions will be processed and assigned into themes and codes which later lead to the development of the theoretical framework. The managers perceptions will be on behalf of the firms and the employees is the perceptions from the employees' side.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study refers to the parameters that serve as a guide to the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2017). These parameters set by the researcher will set as a guideline that will set boundaries for the researcher to conduct the study. The scope of the study includes the geographical area where the study will be conducted, the target participant groups, and the industry of focus.

For the intended study, the area of research covered the Klang Valley region. Klang Valley, also known as Greater Kuala Lumpur, is one of the densest urban regions in Malaysia with a population density of 7,188 persons per square kilometre (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). In 2013 it was home to 7.2 million people (The Star, 2013). According to The Star (2013), Klang Valley is Malaysia's business and economic hub. Many international and local firms are located in Klang Valley, making it an ideal area to conduct research without geographic limitations.

The group that will be interviewed later is the managers and the employees as this is the group that have experience and knowledges about the topic of interest.

Due to time constraints, this study will focus on the financial services sector, specifically the banking industry, in the Klang Valley area.

Table 1.1
Research Objectives and Research Questions Mapping

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. To explore the perceptions of the managers and the employees on working remotely with the approach (high road or low road) taken by the organisations in implementing the remote work arrangement	● What is the approach that the employers choose when they decide to pursue for remote work arrangement (high road or low road) and their initial perceptions about it?
2. To understand how will the perceptions of the managers and employees on visibility at workplace of the employee that work remotely.	● How does working remotely affecting their visibility at work?
3. To explore the views of managers and employees on career progression of the employee that work remotely.	● How will working remotely affects the career progression of the employees (positive, negative, stagnant)?

1.7 Significance of the Research

1.7.1 To The Future Researchers

To future researchers, this study will serve as a reference for future research on remote work arrangements. It will contribute to the body of knowledge on remote work in Malaysia, which has not been widely explored in all aspects of human resource management. This study will also provide a foundation for researchers investigating other aspects of remote work beyond its commonly studied benefits and challenges. Given that remote work arrangements are likely to persist and gain further acceptance, this research will be valuable for understanding their implications.

1.7.2 To The Policymakers

To the government policies maker, this study will help the government to devise policies regarding the said work arrangement as the implementation of the new norm post COVID-19. Additionally, there is growing interest in the remote work arrangement and interference and properly laid out policies from the government will help to protect the rights of the remote workers from being exploit by the employers in devising proper chances for career progression and not just another work arrangement that will benefit the employer side only.

1.7.3 To The Employers

To employers, the study will provide insight on how to implement remote work as an alternative arrangement that benefits both the organisation and its employees. With this research, employers will gain ideas for creating robust career progression and development plans for remote workers, ensuring these employees are actively involved in the organisation and receive proper career advancement, rather than being viewed merely as external labour completing tasks.

1.7.4 To The Employees

To the employees, this research will help them in mapping their career progression and them making decisions in choosing the right career road for them. Knowing the reasons behind the implementation behind the remote work arrangement will assist them in making decisions for career choice. What will they need to sacrifice and what will they gained from choosing to work with the company of their choice. This is an important decision to make, and this will help them see the possibilities and perceptions from both the employer's side and the employee side included.

1.8 Limitations of the Research

1.8.1 Time Constraints

The most obvious limitation of the research is time constraints. Time constraints may arise for both the researcher and the participants, as the participants (who are

employers, managers, and supervisors) are expected to be busy with hectic schedules. This will affect data collection and the timeline for completing the research.

1.8.2 Access to Literature

The second limitation is the lack of literature in the Malaysian context, since this work arrangement is relatively new in Malaysia. It is not yet widely adopted in local organisations and has often been studied only in certain types of jobs (e.g. sales).

1.8.3 Data Collection Process

The data collection process may include but not limited to just face to face interview but also phone interview which makes it difficult for the researcher to access the non-verbal cues such as the body language. The increasing case of COVID-19 in Malaysia is alarming that the participants may refuse to be interviewed face to face.

1.9 Definitions of Terms

1.9.1 Remote Works

There are many terms that can be used interchangeably with remote work. In early studies, Nilles et al. (1976) used the term telecommunicating. Nilles's definition was "the substitution of telecommunications and/or computers for commuting work" (Nilles, 1994). According to Sayers & Monin (2005), working from home (WFH) is defined as spending days in a home environment to perform tasks and duties related to work. Other terms for this arrangement include telework and homeworking. Clancy (2020) states that remote work specifically refers to individuals who work physically away from colleagues with whom they collaborate. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the term WFH has been frequently used, as most people have stayed home to work.

Regardless of these terms, this study will use "remote work". Remote work is defined as work performed away from the office – for example at a hotel, café, home, or even on the other side of the globe – either part of the time or fully remote (Bjärntoft et al., 2020; Clancy, 2020; Richardson & Kelliher, 2015; Yarberry & Sims, 2021)

1.9.2 Visibility at Workplace

Dictionary definitions describe visibility as the “degree to which someone or something can be seen” (“Visibility”, n.d.). In the workplace, visibility refers to how much a person’s presence, skills, and abilities are noticed by others. The definition of visibility at the workplace used in this study is: the degree to which an employee is visible and noticed by their superiors, supervisors, and colleagues, allowing them to showcase their abilities

1.9.3 Careers Progression

Hoekstra (2011) defined career progression as the interaction between external career development and internal career identity. It can also be viewed as the process of obtaining different career roles (Hoekstra, 2011; White, 1995) to gain better benefits, such as higher pay. Thus, career progression is defined in this study as the process of acquiring different career roles to broaden experience and gain greater benefits.

1.9.4 High Road

The High Road refers to an organisational approach where remote work is implemented as an employment benefit aimed at achieving higher productivity by prioritising employee welfare and job satisfaction. In other words, organisations on the High Road aim for Employee Quality Maximization (Osterman, 2018; OECD, 2017).

1.9.5 Low Road

The Low Road approach is when an organisation that employs remote work arrangements as means of maximizing the profit by reducing the cost of labour or simply for Employee’s Cost Minimization (Delany, 2021).

1.10 Summary of The Chapter

In summary, this research centres on remote working and how it affects employees’ career progression, especially considering their visibility in the workplace. The study is intended to explore the perceptions of both employees and managers and

how these perceptions will affect them in the long term. Due to limitations, the study will be conducted in the financial industry, specifically the banking sector.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature review is one of importance components in research, as it links the planned study to previous work, connects the specific topic to the broader subject area, and relates the study's findings to those of earlier researchers (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007).

As for the intended research, the earlier part of this chapter will be discussing and reviewing the general concept of remote work and then build up the review of literature that revolves around the core of the study or research undertaken which is the remote work arrangements, visibility at workplace, and the career progression.

2.2 Remote Work

Remote work defined as the employees that where work is perform away from the office environment, such as at the hotel, café, home, or even at the other side of the globe either half of the time or fully remote (Bjärntoft et al., 2020; Clancy, 2020; Richardson & Kelliher, 2015a; Yarberry & Sims, 2021).The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) has come out with detailed definition of many distance works arrangements alternatives that arose out of COVID-19 lockdown relevancy even thou the concept of work from a distance is not a new phenomenon. Figure 2.1 give the overview of the works arrangements alternatives:

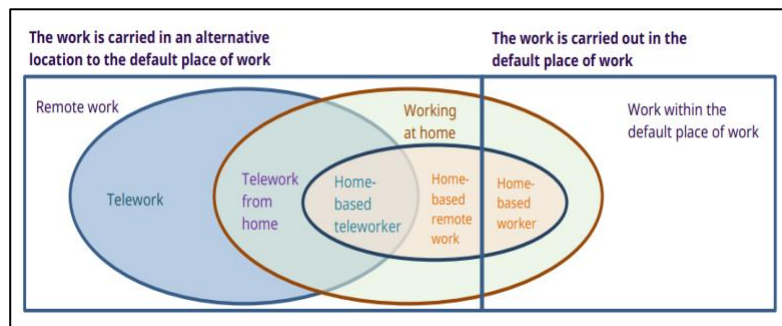


Figure 2.1. Combining The Concepts of Remote Work and Work in The Default Place
(Source: ILO, 2020)

Remote work has undergone significant developments and has altered conventional work settings. This trend intensified following the COVID-19 pandemic and has attracted substantial interest from human resource practitioners worldwide, with expectations that it will continue to expand even in the post-pandemic period (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). It is well known that, in accordance with “modern rational trends,” the physical space of workplaces has been steadily reduced in recent decades, transforming the actual office into a grid where employees carry out their tasks in spaces smaller than three square metres (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021). A growing number of organisations have embraced the idea of remote working, with some employees working from home, as a component of more flexible working, to the point where remote working is increasingly described as the post-pandemic new normal for employment, stating to offer benefits to both employees and employers (Delany, 2021). It is expected that 23 to 25 per cent of workers in developed economies possibly will work remotely around 3 days or more in 5 days workweek (Lund et al., 2021).

The ICT and cloud file sharing and remote access technology is the main factor that allowing the employees to work away from their office while at the same time accessing the resources as when they’re present and work in the office (Richardson & Kelliher, 2015a), also included was the ease of communication technology that make it easier for the teammates to communicate with each other boundaryless (Castells et al., 2009; Di Martino, 2001b). Digitization indeed explained the dramatic increasing trend in the implementation of the flexible work arrangement as well as remote work (Bjärntoft et al., 2020). Zoom (a video conferencing software and tools) that made popular since the COVID-19 hit the globe has seen a tremendous increase in sales and in the three months of 2020, the firms earn sales up to 370% when compared to the year before which the total sales hits \$882.5 million with over 300 million users daily (BBC News, 2021; Tillman, 2021). Home working was not an option for most workers worldwide when the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) swept the globe in 2003, because the majority of them did not have access to essential devices and equipment to carry out their work at home meanwhile working in the current coronavirus disease pandemic era is quite different, with technology now providing more options for work practises (Vyas, 2022).

Not all of group of employees adopt the remote work arrangement, as per being orchestrated from a report whereby the group that would most likely to adopt or taking on the work from home arrangement or telecommunicating would be older employees,

parents, and professional with higher educational and qualifications that earn higher income, not to be missed those in executive, managerial, and higher positions (Di Martino, 2001b; Tipping et al., 2012). Delany (2021) highlighted that from a qualitative study done by the researcher which senior managers and HR directors emphasised the significance of developing and maintaining a performance culture that can accommodate remote work which it is seen to be advantageous for both the organisation and the individual and that not all roles are suitable for remote working which is this is gain from the experiences in conducting the remote working while in COVID-19 lockdown.

Saludin et al. (2013), has come out with a theoretical framework that highlighting the factors that trigger WFH and the basic requirements to initiate WFH as per adopted based on the previous literature that they had review prior to the study conducted. Some of the factors that trigger WFH, or remote work and the basic requirements will be discussed further in the next section of the literature review. In another report published by ILO in 2001 which is written by Di Martino (2001) highlighting few factors that triggers the forces of telework which is:

- i) Organisational structure and the pursue for knowledge economy
- ii) Technology advancement
- iii) Public policies
- iv) Attitudes of individual and employers

In an extensive study done by reviewing articles published by several world-renowned consultancy firm, the researchers underscored the importance of change management to adopt culture of promoting responsiveness and collaboration that aiming for flexible working, family conciliation, and employee care (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021) as the driver of adopting remote work arrangement.

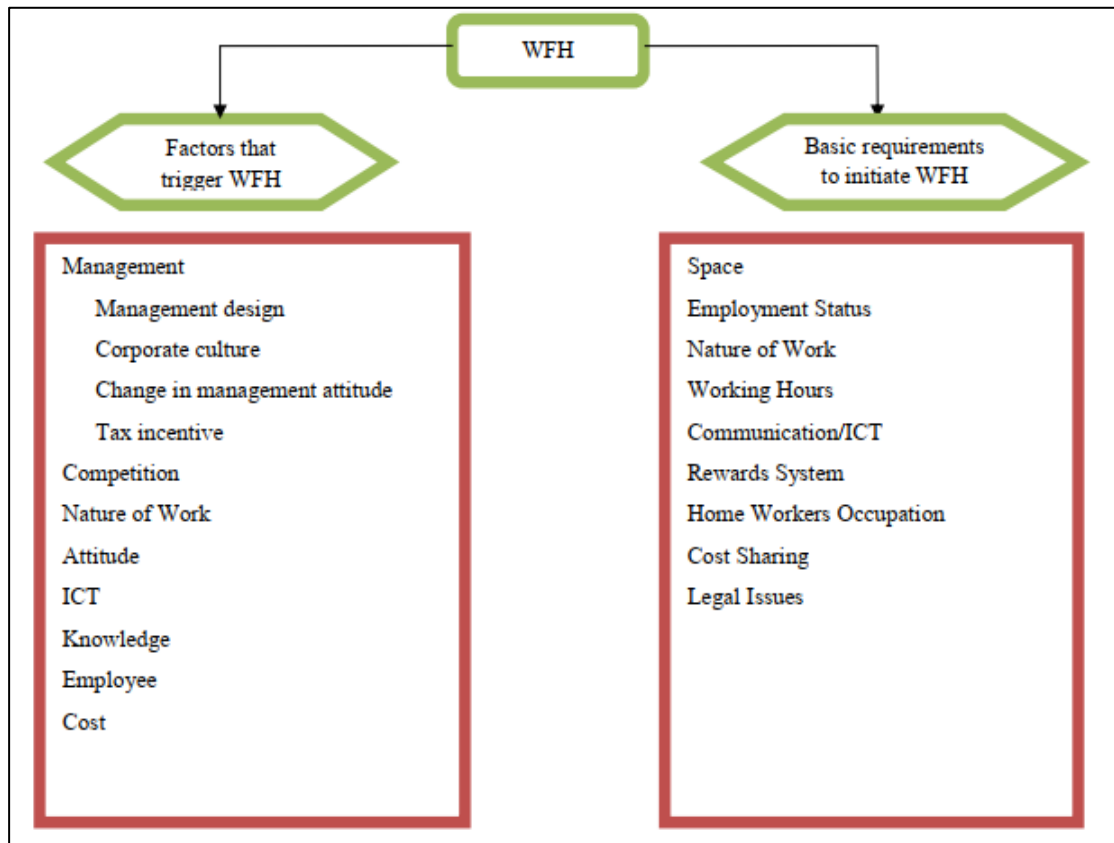


Figure 2.2. Theoretical Framework of WFH
(Source: Saludin, Karia, & Hassan, 2020)

2.2.1 Remote Work: The Benefit and Drawback

Remote work as being mentioned earlier, allows employees to perform their tasks outside traditional office settings (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020) and is recognised as a form of flexible work arrangement (FWA) enabled by advancements in information and communication technology (Choudhury et al., 2019).. As being describe by Soroui (2021a) and Matthew (2020), technology such as the rapid growth of portable hand-held communication devices and the furtherance of the infrastructures if the IT such as the cloud computing, remote access, video conferences platform and more which acts as enabler have that made team collaboration and knowledge sharing possible anywhere and anytime.

Whilst remote work has orchestrated immerse benefits, De Klerk et al. (2021) findings show that with perplexing data demonstrated that intensive working from home eventually resulted in a slew of negative outcomes which include the feelings of

isolation and a reduction in emotional well-being which later will be discussed further in the section that follows.

2.2.1.1 Gain In Employee and Firm Productivity

It is well documented by previous researcher that working remotely has demonstrated to benefit the employees in many ways (Matthew, 2020; Soroui, 2021). Gain in employee productivity is one of the main driver and reason that drive the employer to implement remote work and it has been proved by many past researchers (Daniels et al., 2001; Zhu & Mason, 2014). From an experiment conducted in China, the productivity of the employees that placed in the group of WFH has skyrocketed over the period of nine months the experiment being conducted (Bloom et al., 2015a). However, the productivity at the firm level vary depends on the type of the firm with the remote work negatively affecting the productivity of the firms on the lower-performing organisation while the mid-size and large-size firm which include exporters and firms with high skilled employees, did not show any fall in firm productivity when they decided to adopt the remote work (Clancy, 2020).

According to a findings in a research conducted in Malaysia, the respondents agreed that working from home offers flexibility, mainly because they have more time to complete their daily tasks because they don't have to travel to work (Daud et al., 2021).

2.2.1.2 Employees Job Satisfaction

One of the most notable benefits is that remote working helps to increase the job satisfaction of the employees (Hashim et al., 2020). Nakrošienė et al. (2019) found that teleworking positively affects multiple dimensions of satisfaction, including career opportunities, perceived benefits, and self-assessed productivity.

Due to feeling satisfied and contented with their job consequently lead to feeling less stress and thus contribute to better mental and physical well-being (Faragher et al., 2013). Indeed, that one of the sources for fatigue and stress experience by employees is

that the long and difficult means to commute to the office of work (Richardson & Kelliher, 2015b). This phenomenon can be coined as the domino effect where define as a cumulative impact caused by a single incident that sets off a chain of comparable occurrences (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Bloom et al. (2015b) in his paper documented on an experiment that was conducted in a Chinese Travel Agency, the group of employees that in the WFH group shows statistically higher job satisfaction when being compared to the control group of employees that work in the collocated office given that the survey was taken at the same time the experiment began.

2.2.1.3 Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Kotey (2017) in his work conducted among the Small & Medium Enterprises (SME's) in Australia highlighted that supposed flexibility that awarded together with working remotely provide the employees the freedom of time and work location should be able to improve the work-life balance (WLB) and promptly elevated the motivation of the employees to work and perform better. Remote work offering the chances of pursuing job opportunities that located geographically far away and at the same time giving them the opportunities to be physically close to those that have emotionally close relationship such as our families and friends (Clancy, 2020). In a meta-analysis of advantages and disadvantages of e-working, flexibility and WLB mentioned in 55% and 50 % of the cases respectively which further support that remote work, WLB, and flexibility are directly related to each other (Beño, 2021) .

Flexibility provided by remote work which enhancing the balance between personal life and work led to better time management and lower stress level (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020b; Zhu & Mason, 2014). Workers are interested in teleworking because it allows them to have more control over their time and better balance their work and personal lives (Bjärntoft et al., 2020; Di Martino, 2001b). A study conducted in Malaysia where working from home is flexible, and people seem to like it because they don't have to travel to the office and can work whenever they want in the comfort of their own homes consequently their productivity goes up because they are less stressed out and can live a healthier lifestyle while also working from home (Daud et al., 2021).

According to Kossek & Van Dyne (2008), work-life-flexibility is a policy by an organisation, allowing the employees to enjoy and invent for when, how long, and where the employees work which gives them the autonomy to determine their time, timing, and place to perform their tasks and job and comparing the policy to the child and elder care benefits. This work-life flexibility offers wider flexibility, and the employees will gain more across all life spans and mitigates the negative effects of poor working conditions on WLB (Bjärntoft et al., 2020).

Contrarily, this remote work especially employees that WFH, there is possibility of blurred line between home related affairs to the work which can lead to stress, burnout and other related career obstructions that hinder the employees to perform at their optimum (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Expectations of availability outside of regular working hours make it difficult to disconnect from work after the workday, resulting in longer working hours and lower WLB (Bjärntoft et al., 2020). The line between work and leisure is increasingly blurred because of today's hyperconnected world, where many remote workers are expected to respond to urgent tasks as well as after-work emails (Vyas, 2022). Di Martino (2001) included WLB as one of dimension in teleworking and he presented in two scenario which is the pessimistic and optimistic scenario of work to family/home affairs.

2.2.1.4 Recruiting Potential and High-Skilled Candidate

With remote working arrangement, the organisation gained huge advantage in recruiting and finding potential hires due to the access to larger pools of potential candidate with better skills and match to the organisations (Ahmed & Khalil Md, 2021; Clancy, 2020). Expanding geography search for recruitment has been one of the boosts for the organisation in implementing teleworking or the remote work arrangement and proved to be one of the benefits of the intended work arrangement and to alleviate the shortage of native labour shortage and incompatible skills, where acquiring the right talents are seen as another motivation factor for the organisation that was utilized as a makeshift strategy in finding talents with skills set that is not readily available local labour market (Soroui, 2021). Additional benefits to the organisations in employing a remote worker in another country or geographical area with significantly lower cost of

labour will helps the firm to save on the cost of labour (Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, & Tomaney, 2016) and consequently diminishing the dependency to the local labour market (Soroui, 2021).

2.2.1.5 Lower Cost on Human Capital Spending

Remote working employees usually cost the organisations less in human capital related spending (Clancy, 2020; Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). Accepted by many, human capital related spending takes up almost two out of third of an organisation related spending particularly for the organisations where nature of business is in service industry which involving the human interaction such as the call centre. This spending includes the cost to train, cost of recruitment, and cost of renting or buying offices/buildings includes the utilities (Delany, 2021; Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020b). Some employers pursuing the strategy of the employees working away from the collocate office for full time or half of their time to reduce the cost of renting property (Ahmed & Khalil Md, 2021; Richardson & Kelliher, 2015a). Telework was implemented in a public organisation in Great Britain since 1970s in response to both employee demand and cost-cutting goals, the latter of which has resulted in the closure of a number of smaller, regional offices over the years (Beauregard et al., 2019).

Bloom et al. (2015) reported that, through the experiment of WFH implemented, they have witnessed a rather sensational drop in employee's attrition which led to a saving of about \$1900 per year for an employee which includes the lower office and IT costs, and importantly the saving in reducing of turnover rate which is the number in saving is not small. Multiple organisations, firms, and establishments adopting remote work arrangement and other type FWA as an employee's retainment strategy to make sure the highly valued employees and talents stay in the organisation (Helling & Mokhtarian, 2001; Soroui, 2021; Zhu & Mason, 2014).

2.2.1.6 Sub-Urban Development and Environmental Effects

There is a growing body of literature discussing the development of suburban economic perspectives in relation to remote work arrangements (Bloom et al., 2015a).

Remote work is also associated with improved economic productivity due to reduced travel time and increased access to employment opportunities (Cox, 2010). As a result, employees and job seekers who choose remote work are more likely to reside in suburban areas, contributing to a reduction in population concentration in major cities where large corporate offices are typically located (Soroui, 2021). Soroui (2021) later proved in his study that one of the main drivers for an organisation in making decision in hiring remote employees is they're highly mobile or the organisations in need for territorial coverage.

Supported further by Lund et al. (2021) from a report published by McKinsey Global Institute, when they examined LinkedIn data and discovered that in 2020, more members moved to smaller cities from major cities in the United States than in 2019. According to the findings, major metropolitan areas such as New York City, the San Francisco Bay Area, Washington, DC, and Boston experienced the greatest decline in member inflow-outflow ratio, while smaller cities such as Madison, WI, Jacksonville, FL, and Salt Lake City experienced the greatest growth. Such a change will strengthen the local and regional economies of the affected cities (Vyas, 2022).

Moreover, there is expectation where the lesser travelling demand due to teleworking will help in reducing the traffic congestion that eventually lead to lower greenhouse effect (Cerqueira, Motte-Baumvol, Chevallier, & Bonin, 2020). Conforming to that, Models of Industrial Relations in Telework Innovation (MIRTI) consortium highlight four broad reasons that why the publics support telework which is 1) reducing traffic congestion in cities, 2) reducing energy consumption and achieving other environmental goals, 3) ensure the economic and social well-being of rural and outlying areas, and 4) creating and maintaining job opportunities in specific areas. However, Cerqueira et al. (2020) also stated that due to the employees stays indoor at their own home which resulting in the increasing emission of carbon dioxide and energy consumptions due to the usage of electrical equipment that needed to perform their tasks. Supporting the previous argument, additional non-work-related travel undertaken while working remotely, such as running errands, may offset the reduction in commuting distance (Zhu & Mason, 2014). This additional travel can lead to increased CO₂ emissions and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

2.2.1.7 Feeling Of Isolation and Lonely

Research conducted by Bloom et al. (2015) from the interview that the participants went through revealed, due to the feelings of being isolated and lonely (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020b; Gigauri, 2020; Hamsa et al., 2016) because of working at home, around 50 % of them decided to return to work at their designated work or office and only 35 % of those in control group that at first voluntary to work from home agreed to the work arrangement post experiment. Yarberry and Sims (2021) recorded the interview in their study as per below:

Yeah, I think that it has impacted greatly. Some days are very depressing because there are sometimes where there's no one; there is no interaction for me to live here in [the city], so I live alone. I moved here solely for the job, and then the pandemic happened about 5 months or 4 months while I was here....so I think that it has caused a great deal of, sometimes loneliness.
-Beverly (p. 7)

The participants of the interview expressed that they feel lonely and socially disconnected when work from home during the enforcement of lockdown due to COVID-19 global pandemic which led to them feeling stress and demotivated to do their tasks (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Clancy (2020), viewed in his paper that one of the potentials that will impede the formation of relationship is the physical vicinity which is lacking when employees choose to work remotely.

Savić (2020) highlighted that the emotional well-being of remote workers, limited career development opportunities, working outside of regular local work hours due to different time zones, professional or even geographical bias, and emotional resentment of co-workers and local colleagues are all disadvantages unique to remote workers.

2.2.1.8 Supervising and Managing Employees Remotely

Organizations must develop management skills capable of dealing with the challenges posed by diverse working patterns (Murabula, 2022). The reality of not being able to observe individuals at work limits managers' and colleagues' ability to provide

timely and informal guidance rather than committing to emails or more formal video contacts (Delany, 2021; Vyas, 2022). Delany (2021) underscored the importance of the managers to be exceptional in managing peoples when dealing with the employees that work remotely where they will need to adopt the role as coaches and mentors, establishing clear expectations for their workforce, creating, and maintaining the necessary culture that in line with the organisation. According to a study by Kumar and Mokashi (2020) on WLB in higher education employees in the UK, support from supervisors during coronavirus disease improved employees' quality of life.

In a remote workplace, observing behaviours is no longer a practical means of coordination and control; trust must be used in its place due to the high potential of isolation between the managers and the remote workers (Staples, 2001). Many managers feel more at ease when they can observe their employees' work first-hand whereby employees who work remotely and take advantage of the policy are assumed by business leaders to be not working because of a loss of control (Church, 2015). Church (2015) added further that this is a form of distrust among the managers where there is less trust on the employees that were not within their walls. However, some employees who work from home may require additional supervision to ensure that they are working productively (Murabula, 2022).

2.2.1.9 Loyalty and Commitment

Omar (2013) in his research paper that is conducted in Klang Valley, Malaysia highlighted that there is relationship of perceived commitment of the employees to the organizations that work in non-standard working arrangements. The flexible work practice has been documented that it will increase the organizational attachment and commitment, decrease turnover intention and consequently making the organizations more attractive to work in (Onken-Menke et al., 2017). Meta-analytic research conducted by the same authors has revealed that flexible work practices (referred to as flexible work schedule) enhance organisational attachment and reduce the turnover intention of the employees. Zhu and Mason (2014) stated that the actual benefit of telecommuting is flexibility and increasing presenteeism rate as in lesser leave took by the employees.

2.2.2 Remote Work as Flexible Work Arrangement and Employment Benefit

As defined by Houseman (2011) and (Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008), flexible work arrangement (FWA) is the employees' autonomy to opt for when and where to work outside of their conventional working arrangement. Primarily, FWA is a term that acting as the umbrella term representing all the work arrangement that are deem as flexible such as work from home, flexitime, telecommuting, and many more (Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008; Tsen et al., 2021). A flexible work arrangement, among other possibilities, enables employees to WFH as a form of work continuity in emergency situations (Mahmud et al., 2020).

Each of the FWA serve different perks as well as different draw backs (Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008). Suggesting that each FWA suitability is differ from one to another either the policy, arrangements, or even mode and because of this, it is crucial and much needed for a call to made thorough research on this different type of FWA individually (Tsen et al., 2021).

In general, the flexible work arrangement offer flexibility to the employees in work design and will meliorate both the work-life balance and organisational performance (Haar, 2007; Klindžić & Marić, 2019) which giving a win-win situation to both employees and employers. Greater organisational or job tenure tends to lead to greater flexibility, which leads to less work-to-family conflict (Kossek & Lee, 2017). FWA first officially implemented in Malaysia in 2007 for private sector which is by Shell Malaysia and in 2009 for the public sector (Mumin, Sigamul, & Ooi, 2014).

2.2.3 Theory Associated with Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA)

There are a few theories that frequently associated with FWA that previous researcher used and adopt in their study. The five top theories that are frequently being adopted by the researchers in their study is 1) social exchange theory, 2) border theory, 3) conservation of resource theory, and 4) the spill-over theory.

2.2.3.1 The Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory have been widely used to explain how work-family policies like flexitime can result in favourable and positive job outcomes (Haar, 2007). The social exchange theory posits that when an employee receive and enjoys perks and benefits from the employers, they will feel responsible to respond at the same length if not more as to benefit the organisations (Haar, 2007; Stock et al., 2016) which resulting in higher commitment and motivation for the organisation in trade for the benefit given to them (Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008). This which then resulting to feelings of attachments to the organisations which in human resources management layman term known as the organisational commitment. Such exchanges subsequently lead to stronger emotional attachment to the organisation, which in human resource management is commonly referred to as organisational commitment. Chen and Fulmer (2018) further emphasised that the implementation of flexible work arrangements strengthens employees' organisational commitment, which consequently contributes to lower turnover intentions.

2.2.3.2 The Border Theory

The border theory according to Clark (2000) is the fine line between the work-family border that when this border is crossed, conflict will occur. Tsen et al. (2021) noted in his study that this border that separate between the work-family is not fixed and permeable which later increase the blurring of role as an employee and member of a family member. As for the case during the lockdown due to the COVID-19, the parents which is also the employees of an organisational need to attend to their kids needs while at the same time performing their task. Another close example is the act of bringing the work home.

Clark (2000) further noted that individuals may choose to manage these boundaries either through role integration or role segmentation. Supporting this view, Golden (2021) highlighted that because remote work activities frequently take place at home, the traditional physical and psychological boundaries between work and family become less distinct and more permeable, making work–family conflict more difficult to manage effectively.

2.2.3.3 The Conservation of Resource Theory

The conservation of resource (COR) theory states that a person will have high motivated of protecting and creating resources that said when they have sufficient resources then they are will not likely to undergo stress and vice versa (Zhang et al., 2019). Hobfoll (1989) stressed that to achieve the goals, people are more motivated in acquiring and conserving the resources. The protection or conservation of resources includes the free time, self-discipline, good marriage, and more while the gaining of resources includes the good job done at work which resulting in promotion and higher pay (Kossek & Lee, 2017). Kossek and Lee (2017) relates the COR theory to the work-family concept that at some point, to conserve and protect the resources (salary, position, performance, etc.) the work-related domain will crossover the family domain like sacrificing more time with family to work longer or extra time. This is other issues that arise with the flexible work arrangement.

Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) provide a theoretical framework which illustrate the COR theory associated with the remote work (or in their article refer to as work from home). They called the model as *The Work-Home Resources Model*. The model is as per adopted in Figure 2.3.

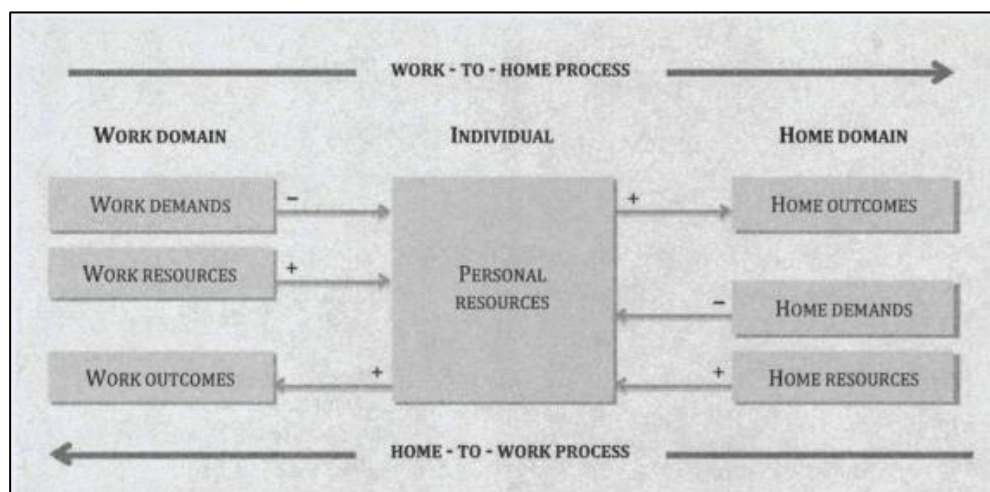


Figure 2.3. The Work-Home Resources Model
(Source: Ten Brummelhuis, & Bakker, 2012)

To explain the model, the first four (4) preposition by the authors was referred to as per below:

Proposition 1. Contextual work demands diminish home outcomes through a loss in personal resources (work-to-home conflict).
Proposition 2. Contextual work resources improve home outcomes through a gain in personal resources (work-to-home enrichment).
Proposition 3. Contextual home demands diminish work outcomes through a loss in personal resources (home-to-work conflict).
Proposition 4. Contextual home resources improve work outcomes through a gain in personal resources (home-to-work enrichment).

Figure 2.4. Proposition
(Source: Ten Brummelhuis, & Bakker, 2012)

2.2.3.4 *The Spill-Over Theory*

The fourth theory is one of the common theories relates to the FWA which is the spill-over theory. The foundation of spill-over theory is that work and non-work domains are linked and can influence each other in either a positive or negative way (Naithani, 2010). As a result, personal experiences in one area might be transferred over into the other (Akanji, Mordi, & Ajonbadi, 2020). For an example, during the COVID-19 pandemic era, most of the employees are required to work from home which the working hour could become longer compared to normal working hour and the hours that previously used for personal time became shorter (Bjärntoft et al., 2020). This scenario could be producing more productive employees but may also at the same time giving more pressure to the employees.

2.2.4 **Benefit of Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA)**

Flexible working arrangement (FWA) which includes remote work arrangement as another benefit attached to the employment offered and it is one of the most discussed topics as a non-monetary incentive which include the work from home (WFH) and work from anywhere (WFA) which both provide different flexibility to the employees (Choudhury, Foroughi, & Larson, 2019). From their study where further revealed that, the output of employees that choose to WFA exceed the employees that choose to WFH (Choudhury et al., 2019). In 2007, Shell implemented telecommunicating (a form of

FWA) with the aims to retain high performer especially female employees that tend to leave the organisation once they are having child of their own (Mumin et al., 2014). The Australian Government included in their Australian Industrial Relations Legislation of Fair Work Act 2009 which stated that the employees with age of 55 years old and older, disabled, have the responsibilities of the need to care for others, is suffering a family violence, or taking care for family members which experiencing violence (Kotey, 2017).

Other prominent reasons for an organisation to adopt the FWA tie with the strategic focus of the organisation. An organisation that focuses on human capital empowerment as the strategic focus will be most likely to adopt the said work arrangement (Kotey, 2017) to increase the employee's satisfaction which then lead to higher employee's productivity. Klindžić and Marić (2019) in their study mentioned that, for an organisation to achieved competitive advantage in human capital, it is necessary to implement staffing systems that includes mix of FWA so that the employees can perform at their best. The FWA has become another normal and organisations that intended to keep being competitive in the industry will feel the need to implement the work arrangement to keep abreast with their competitors (Soroui, 2021).

Kossek and Van Dyne (2018) categorized the work-life flexibility in three group which is the 1) time flexibility, 2) timing flexibility, and 3) place flexibility. The definition of each type or group of flexibility according to the authors is 1) Time Flexibility - the flexibility that the employees able to alter the labour duration in relative to non-labour, 2) Timing Flexibility - the flexibility that granted to the employees to decide when their work will begin, and 3) Place Flexibility - the flexibility that giving the freedom to the employees to perform work at their place of preference. Another study also classified FWA in three categories which is flexibility in time refers to work-hour autonomy; flexibility in space refers to the ability to choose more than one working location (e.g., work from home); and flexibility in performance refers to how the work can be performed (Bjärntoft et al., 2020). As for the intended study, the researcher will focus on the place flexibility where granted the employees to perform their work and tasks at the place that they favour.

2.2.5 Remote Work in Malaysia

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, just like in any other industry, the work environment in private and public offices required employees to be in constant contact with co-workers and clients. They must share the same area, resources, and tools for a set period of time (Mahmud et al., 2020).

2.2.5.1 Early Implementation

The main factors cited for the potential growth of telecommuting in many developed nations include flexibility, decreased office overheads, energy consumption, increased worker productivity, improved recruitment opportunities, especially for female employees, decreased travel fatigue, travel time, travel cost, parking fees, savings on gasoline, promotion of opportunities for dual income households, effective management of child care arrangements, increased family size, and increased family size (Hamsa et al., 1997). In Malaysia (pre COVID-19), due to the cultural, structural, and/or infrastructural uniqueness of the Malaysian context, the forms of telecommuting or remote work are rather basic and relatively unsophisticated in comparison to the West (Ma et al., 2019). The earliest company that implementing the telecommuting (either full time or part-time) in Malaysia is dominated by multinational companies such as Amway international, IBM, American Insurance of Associates (ALA), Grand soft link computers, Motorola and Texas instrument (Hamsa et al., 1997).

Despite the extensive and widespread research around the issue of interest, remote working or teleworking remains uncommon in Malaysia and very dainty information is available about it (Oly Ndubisi & Kahraman, 2005) prior to COVID-19. Thus, Oly Ndubisi and Kahraman (2005) has come out with detailed model of the adoption of teleworking in Malaysia as follows.

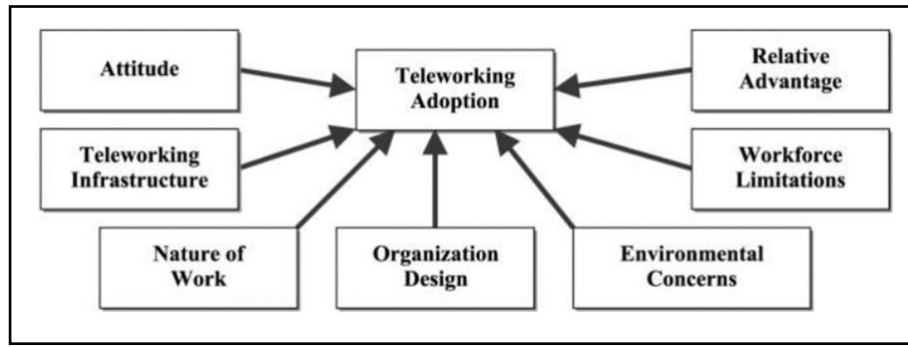


Figure 2.5. Research Model
(Source: Oly Ndubisi and Kahraman, 2005)

2.2.5.2 *The Employment (Amendment) Act 2022 and Tax Deduction*

It is crucial to revise work-related policies that will safeguard and assist businesses and workers, including in improving employees' work-life balance (WLB) in the wake of the pandemic as everyone will face challenges in the labour market going forward, and to succeed in the post-coronavirus disease world, labour policies must be strengthened and improved (Vyas, 2022). A study by Daud et al. (2021) underscored the importance to ensure that employees have a seamless transition from working in an office to working from home, it is also advised by their study that employers should implement clear WFH policies, and this is based on the findings of the research that are conducted in Malaysia.

Employees in Malaysia who want to work on a flexible basis can apply for Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) with their respective employers under the Employment Act 1955 amendment, which takes effect on 1 September (BERNAMA, 2022). Deputy Minister of Human Resources Datuk Awang Hashim said the FWA applications for adjustments to working hours, working days, and workplace location must be submitted in writing. Quoting his words from a speech deliver by him on June 23, 2022, to the press as follows.

“When the application is made, the employer must give an answer to the employee in writing whether to agree or reject the application within 60 days and must give reasons why the application was rejected,”

Employees can now submit written requests to employers for flexible work arrangements under Sections 60P and 60Q. Employers must then respond with a

decision within 60 days, and if they reject an application, they must provide employees with a reason (Nicholas, 2022). However, on August 26, The Employment (Amendment) Act 2022, which makes significant changes to the First Schedule that identifies the employees who will be covered by EA 1955, will go into effect on January 1, 2023, according to a recent announcement by the Minister of Human Resources, Datuk Seri Saravanan Murugan whereby the changes will include the includes Part XIIC, an essential section that addresses flexible work schedules (Nicholas, 2022).

Prior to the amendment of Employment Act 1955, the Malaysian government is providing eligible employers with additional tax deductions for implementing FWA or undertaking enhancement of their existing FWA in an effort to accept the new normal. Starting on July 1, 2020, this initiative also known as the Flexible Work Arrangements Income Tax Deduction will be in place (TalentCorp, n.d.). The agency added further that companies that qualify for the Income Tax Deduction Cost of Implementation of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) are allowed to deduct the cost of FWA implementation twice, up to a maximum of RM500,000 for each year, for a maximum of three (3) consecutive years of assessment beginning on the date the company received TalentCorp's approval for implementation. Applications are for expenses incurred between July 1, 2020, and December 31, 2022.

2.2.5.3 Remote Work Arrangements Implementation in Financial and Banking Sector in Malaysia

From latest small-scale research conducted by Daud et al. (2021) the majority of the respondents which about 48.4 per cent of it was from Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate sectors while about 3.2 per cent of it are from Financial Services, Retail and Essential Services. From a report published by World Bank, the percentage of employees working remotely has decreased as the economy recovers, but hybrid work arrangements are increasing. According to the rate of reopening, the average percentage of employees who worked remotely fell from 40 per cent in July 2021 to 27 per cent in February 2022. 77 per cent of the businesses surveyed indicated that they would adopt hybrid work arrangements in February 2022, while only 46 per cent of businesses would choose fully physical work arrangements when mobility restrictions ended (Figure 2.6).

HSBC Malaysia has implemented a hybrid work model as part of its commitment to its Future of Work (FOW) model in 2022 and with the new work arrangement, HSBC employees will have more freedom to choose the work schedules best suited to their roles and the needs of their clients, including whether they would prefer to work from home or in an office (Tan, 2022; The Star Online, 2022). Sugunah Verumandy, Country Head of Human Resources at HSBC Malaysia, commented to Tan (2022) on this by saying:

“How we work today is different to the past. Many of our people felt just as, if not more, productive at home as in the office throughout the pandemic. But some also told us they have often worked longer hours and have missed human interaction. Learning from this, we are continuously and proactively shaping the way we work. Hybrid working is not only about where we work, but also about how and when we work.”

Banks and financial institutions in the area are now venturing into unknown terrain by clearing out office space, moving some tasks and divisions abroad, and giving employees more flexibility to work from home.

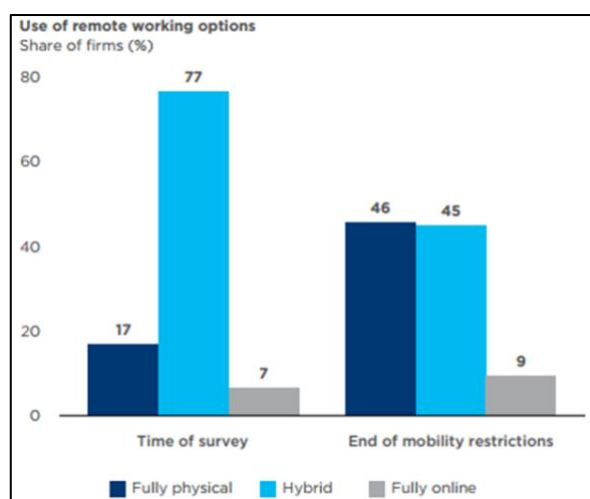


Figure 2.6. Hybrid work arrangements among firms are on the rise
(Source: Kuriakose et al., 2022)

2.2.6 SWOT Analysis of Remote Work Arrangements

The Figure 2.7 that follows is the SWOT analysis done for the remote work arrangement to give the readers better understanding of the said arrangements. SWOT analysis that's stands as Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and it is a method for assessing a company's competitive situation and creating a strategic plan and the SWOT analysis evaluates internal and external variables as well as present and anticipated future situations (Kenton, 2022). The SWOT analysis was done after careful analysis on past literature review.

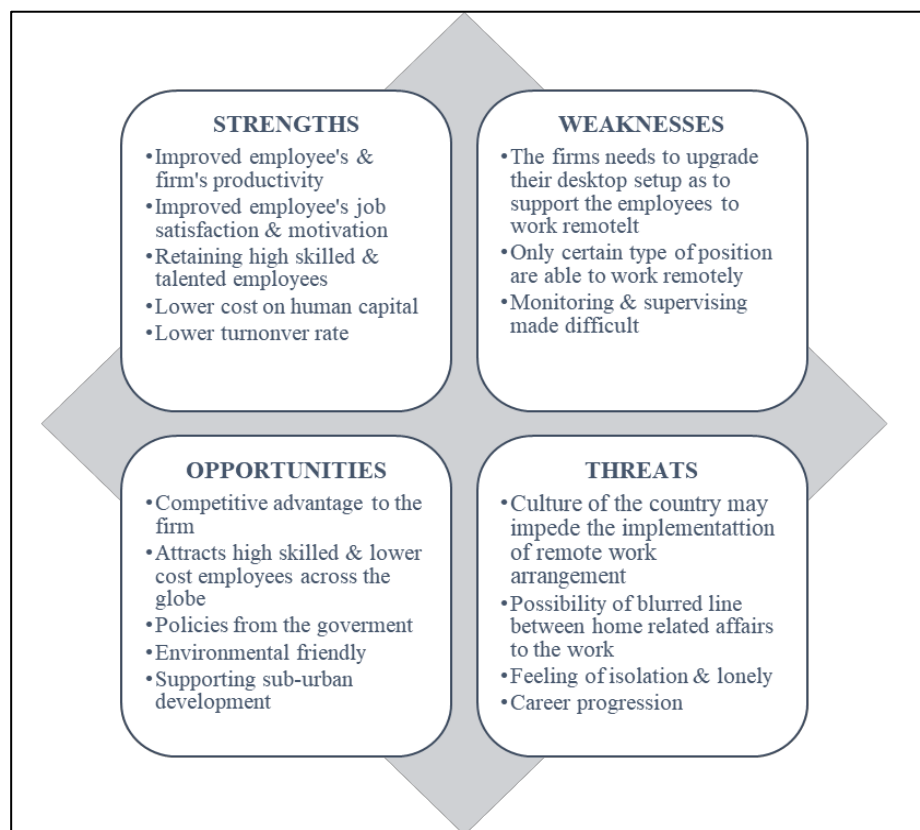


Figure 2.7. The SWOT Analysis for remote work arrangement implementation
(Source: Developed for the research)

2.3 High Road or Low Road Approach

Low road or high road model closely associated in Human Resources practice especially when the talks about the wage policy in low-wage industries (e.g., fast food, cashiers and hotels) came into discussion (Osterman, 2018). However, high road and low road concept also can be the driver of other Human Resources practice in an

organisation. OECD (2017) stated that employers who pursue “high road” strategies, in which employees and the skills they possess are viewed as an integral part of a company's competitive advantage, are distinguished from those who pursue “low road” strategies, in which labour is treated as a commodity and workers are viewed as a cost to be minimised.

2.3.1 High Road Approach

According to Osterman (2018), employers that pursue ‘High Road’ model commonly being associated and common with High-Performance Work Organisation (HPWO) or High-Performance Work Practices (HPWP). High Road organisations, deploy 'Functional Flexibility,' which builds employee capacities so that they can undertake a broader range of more highly skilled work duties (Orlitzky & Frenkel, 2005 as cited in Gill & Meyer, 2008). High Road organisations are more likely to have permanent personnel, a long-term outlook, a theory Y management mindset (thinking that employees are valuable asset who are primarily self-motivated and self-controlled), and to implement High Commitment Work Practice (HCWP) (Gill & Meyer, 2008). Gill and Meyer (2008) added further High Road organisations are more likely to succeed in delivering positive human resource results if they implement HCWP. Supported by (Di Martino, 2001b) that the current approach, based on massive technological input, reduced labour costs, short-term determinism, and downsizing, is gradually giving way to a new approach - what we call the high road approach - in which human capital, new technology, and work organisation become fully interlocked in creating growth, competitiveness, jobs, and better working conditions.

Osterman (2018) highlighted that, the two focus practices that has been a hot debate pertaining to the High Road approach is the improved scheduling practises and increased investment in training and career ladders to gain access to higher-paying jobs which is actually in like with the concern of this study that actually to discover the link between the High Road approach to remote working arrangement and the career progression/development opportunities of this type of workers.

The high road approach to the implementation of the remote work somehow will mirror of how the organizations views their human asset as a competitive advantage or just another cost to be minimize (OECD, 2017). Organisations that have a long and positive history of remote working will have embraced remote working as a key driver of long-term organisational performance rather than viewing remote working as a goal

in itself which leading to the designing of human resource policies and practises that recognise and support remote working, and systems and processes will be in place to manage performance and identify and develop potential in the remote worker community (Delany, 2021).

2.3.2 Low Road Approach

In contrast to High Road, according to the same authors mentioned above, that organisations adopting Low Road use 'Numerical Flexibility' (non-standard employment) to keep costs in line with demand by altering the amount of labour employed. Because this strategy regards that labour is a net expense, raising wages and conditions fundamentally contradicts to management's profit maximisation goal which leading to low investment in human capital as they trying to curb the cost as much as they can. OECD (2017) in their working paper listed reasons for employees to pursue low road approach which is 1) firms can continue to profit due to the low road, 2) low-road strategies can be self-reinforcing at the firm and economic levels, 3) managers may be unaware of the potential benefits of better utilising skills, or may lack the knowledge to put these ideas into action, 4) short-term concerns may overshadow long-term gains, and 5) economic downturns can inflame these concerns.

However, Gittell and Bamber (2010) in their paper that investigating the scenario of low-cost airline this is not the case as they're still need to invest in human capital and at the same time going for low road approach. They added that even when labour costs are at the forefront of an organization's competitive strategy, those costs can be cut not only by lowering wages and benefits, but also by increasing labour productivity which is by investing in human capital. This is a very interesting view where some industry like healthcare and other service sector which pursue for the low road approach but still need to maintain top notch service (Gittell & Bamber, 2010).

Low Road approach taking the High Control practice that are designed to produce reliable but not outstanding performance that cannot compete with the standards of excellence laid by world-class competitors (Gill & Meyer, 2008). Figure 2.8 that follows illustrates the two approaches to implementation to remote work arrangements and the stance that stand within the two approaches in implementing the remote work arrangements.

High Road Approach	Low Road Approach
The organisation that employed remote work arrangements as employment benefits in view of better productivity achievement through delivering best employees' welfare and job satisfaction or for Quality Maximization (Osterman, 2018; OECD, 2017).	The organisation that employed remote work arrangements as means maximizing the profit by reducing the cost of labour or simply for Cost Minimization (Delany, 2021).
Employee Quality Maximization	Employee Cost Minimization
- Employed high skilled employees from different geographical area (Clancy, 2020) - Preparing maximum infrastructure to the employee to work remotely (Oly Ndubisi & Kahraman, 2005)	- Employed high skilled employees from different geographical area with lower labour cost (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020) - Cut the cost on space, training, and hiring (Church, 2015)

Figure 2.8. The High Road and Low Road Approach to Remote Work Arrangement
(Source: Developed for the research)

2.4 Visibility of Employees at Workplace

Visibility as per define by Timonen and Vuori (2018) is the attribute of being apprehensible by the sense of sight where the visibility is within our field of our current vision and space thus means that those are that visible to us is those that within the same field and space as us. Munck (2001) as cited in Kossek, and Van Dyne (2008) refer to the visible time that employees working at the office and use as indicator to the commitment level to work. Whilst in an experiment conducted by Elsbach, Cable, & Sherman (2010) used the term 'face-time' which define as the "1) the amount of face-to-face interaction that occurs between employees and relevant others, or 2) the amount of time an employee is merely seen at work or around the office" (p. 736). Another challenge to the ostensibly enjoyed by employees is 'invisibility,' or the fact that senior managers may be unaware of an individual's performance and potential (Beauregard et al., 2019; Delany, 2021).

The advancement in communication technology has made visibility not only to those that are in the current space and field as us but also extend to those that are located geographically apart from us (Timonen & Vuori, 2018). Supported further by (Castells

et al., 2009) that more robust tasks scheduling thru information communication technology (ICT) developments have elevated the management and employees to communicate and resources sharing and access from remote locations. Conventional management practices that underscore the presenteeism have been consistently a barricade that implicate the implementation of remote working consistently (Ansong & Boateng, 2018; Michielsens et al., 2013; Soroui, 2021a). Substantiated by Delany (2021) from the research that although the interviewees generally agreed that video was a better medium for remote-working communication than email or phone calls, there is still a strong fondness for face-to-face meetings.

It is suggested that remote work implying decentralization of work as well as the monitoring of the work process, which also assume that the employees have greater responsibility for their own performance as well as their career performance (Richardson & Kelliher, 2015a). Richardson and Kelliher (2015) highlighted that the remote working has changed the dynamic of career progression of an individuals or employees as they are working in a way that is different from the traditional way of work as in located in an organisational environment (i.e., office, unit, factory) which is close to their colleague and sometimes away from their clients as well. Supported by Yarberry and Sims (2021) in their latest study that due to the pandemic of COVID-19 that hit the globe, the employees are being forced to work remotely and virtually which resulting in lack of physical contact therefrom potentially affecting the employee's effort to stay and remain engaged which will hamper the career progression and development of the employees.

Organisations with large distributions of remote employees, oftentimes emphasize the significance of "flying-in" employees for periodical face to face meet up and team-morale building conditioning (Soroui, 2021a). Moreover, the work process usually is interdependent with their colleague and the employees ought to communicate and work together with them which then require for the employees to have face time and visible to their colleague and even supervisor (Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008). Adding to that, some of the work that requiring and emphasizing on the group performance instead of individuals are the stressor that face-time and visibility is important for the group to achieve their target performance (Hackman, 1990, as cited in Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008). The work-life flexibility that were enabled by working remotely giving the employees to control their location to work, timing, and time which led to important group performance and social performance that relate to facetime or visibility,

coordination, and motivation of the employees (Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008) which when in used, these benefits will reduce their facetime at work and chances to coordinate with their fellow teammates.

Previous researchers debate that, while flexibility in working remotely provide a great flexibility to the employees, but some employees feels that it will lead to endamage of their career (Perlow, 1997 as cited in Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008). Richardson and Kelliher (2015) in their study thru interviews, revealed that there are expansive of concern among the employees that they would somehow becoming invisible and potentially affecting the relationship with the higher managements and their colleagues which later affecting the progression of their career even though they gain credit for the improvement in the productivity and performance. As being noted by the participants of the interview conducted by Richardson and Kelliher (2015) as per below:

You're at home ... you become more invisible, so you don't have that group support, that cohesion. It would perhaps be a foolish person who would focus too much on the fact that they're working from home. So, you've got to face the issue about needing to show up to work... you gotta have some face time! (Michael, manager) (p. 122)

I think it impresses a lot of managers if you can run with things on your own and handle things remotely by yourself. But my boss always tells me I should go to the office sometimes, that I should make myself more visible because of [the need to maintain] internal visibility. (Pilar, non-management) (p. 122)

Supported further by Daniels et al. (2001) in their research that hypothesized one of the costs of telecommuting that there are fewer opportunities for advancement and the perception that teleworkers are undervalued by their managers. In 2008, a data from research done by McDonald et al. (2008) revealed that near-constant visibility in the workplace is still a key component of professional success despite the increasing demand for work-life balance and the availability of flexible work options in many organisations. In such “facetime”-focused organisations, the end result is the establishment of a dual-track career path in which individuals focused on career advancement work a standard schedule and are primarily based in the workplace, and

individuals who work remotely for reasons such as care responsibilities or health issues are not considered eligible for leadership positions (Beauregard et al., 2019).

2.4.1 Social Contact at Workplace

“Desire for social relationships can also be influenced by a belief in the benefits from social relationships.” (Wright & Silard, 2020)

The findings of the study that is reflecting an understanding that social contacts frequently influence career prospects, and it indicates that having a reduced physical presence in the workplace may damage professional progression, chances for growth, and, as a result, career sustainability (Richardson & Kelliher, 2015). Few prominent management presses declared that central problem for remote employees (i.e., telecommuters, work-from-home, freelancer etc.) is the insufficient of facetime which perceived as a negative side compared to those that work on-site (Elsbach et al., 2010) as per reported below by the author:

Although access to technology is often viewed as the key ingredient of an increasingly dispersed ‘any time, any place’ work environment, our research shows that workplace attitudes and management practices – such as measuring employee performance by long on-site hours or ‘facetime’ – can be greater obstacles to remote work. (The Boston Globe, 11 November 2001) (p. 738)

In the long run, these would pose a threat to the career progression and development of the employees. Bloom et al. (2015) illustrated in their experiment conducted that, when an employees work from home or away from the traditional assigned work location, there’s these phrases that “*out of sight, out of mind*” means that when an employee not present, they will be invisible as in their performance is unnoticed and due to this, it will hinder with their chances to be promoted which could endanger their career progression.

Gonsalves (2020) in his research paper has come out with a model that illustrate how changes in physical space in workplace has changed the social contact at workplace. The managers' meetings could be more casual in the future, but employees noticed that there may be less room for personal interests and concerns to be discussed and the danger of ‘losing touch’ as in the concern of them cannot keep up with the changes occurred while they work away from their office (Delany, 2021). The model in

Figure 2.9 that follows illustrates that the physical space can structure social practices in the workplace by the changing in greetings practice, noticing practice, and evaluative practice.

There are many ways to increase the visibility for the employees that work remotely. Among them as per highlight by Richardson and Kelliher (2015) is to schedule regular meet-up with the team-mates and going to the office intentionally. Regular in-office get-togethers, in-house development programmes, and opportunities to work on internal project teams are all possible initiatives (Delany, 2021). Huang and Liu (2017) suggested that the usage of social networking service (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) will increase the performance and satisfaction of the job while at the same time keeping the employees and managers stay connected with each other even in different location.

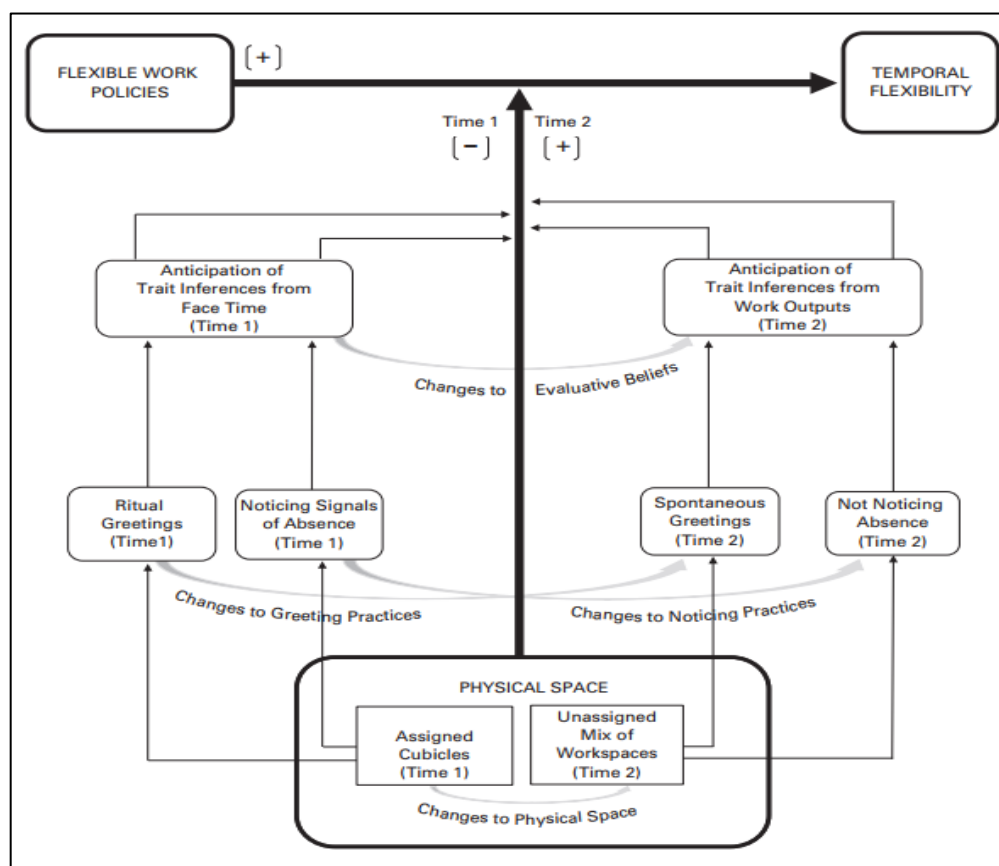


Figure 2.9. Model of Physical Space As a Moderator in The Relationship Between Flexible Work and Policies and Temporal Flexibility
(Source: Gonsalves, 2020)

2.5 Career Progression of Employee's

One of the most active areas of research in the social sciences is the study of careers and how they evolve. Educators, sociologists, economists, and human resource professionals are all trying to figure out how a person chooses, works within, and decides to shift the focus of his or her work life (Dwyer, 2003). Career progression taken from Chapter One, by definition, is a process in obtaining or acquiring different career roles to expand the experience and gaining more benefits along the way. Traditionally, pay increase and job promotion were the objective criteria typically used by researchers in their study on career success (Poon et al., 2015) which also means that career progression is equal to career success of an individual. Herr (2001) in his paper about the historical perspective of career development which is career progression is part of that, career development serves as a mechanism to provide people with hope, affirmation of their individual dignity and worth, and assistance in establishing new career paths.

Career progression also closely tied to job motivation and satisfaction. Career progression that comes with better salary, promotion and recognition which can be grouped together under the rewards umbrella that will uplifting the motivation of the employees to better work performance (Abu Hassan Asaari et al., 2019). It is argued that the COVID-19 pandemic is a career shock that will have a significant influence on people's jobs and careers (Akkermans et al., 2020).

2.5.1 Career Progression Before COVID-19

In research conducted by Horak and Yang (2019), they listed that seniority as one of the factors that determine the career progression in Korea and seniority-based promotion is still prevalent, and individual performance evaluation systems, as found in Western countries, do not fit the cultural setting, and are deemed as ineffective. However, employee motivation is hampered when promotion is based on seniority because employees merely need to achieve the minimum job requirement and continue with their duties until they reach a particular year of the criteria to be promoted (Abu Hassan Asaari et al., 2019). Seniority also acts as a protection from dismissals in country like Sweden and Finland as they use the last-in-first-out policy and there is also evidence that senior employees in Sweden are benefitted in terms of compensation as there is steeper seniority-wage in order of seniority of the employees (Böckerman et al.,

2018). Poon et al. (2015) shows evidence that some situational determinants taken from a few past studies that contribute to career success (or career progression) which is 1) the supervisor-subordinate relationship predicts salary advancement, promotability, and job satisfaction (Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999 as cited in (Poon et al., 2015), 2) career mentorship predicts the rate of promotion and total compensation (Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991 as cited in (Poon et al., 2015), and 3) employer aid for development contributed to career accomplishment (Maurer & Chapman, 2013) as cited in (Poon et al., 2015). Compensation and career development (e.g., promotion) are both important factors and contribute directly to the career progression.

However, different sector or industries have different determinants for career progression. Take academicians for an instance, in Arokiasamy et al. (2011), listed that the determinants for career advancement can be broken into individual factors (conscientiousness, neuroticism, and extraversion) and organisational factors (organisational support). However, these determinants are exclusive to the academicians in private institution of higher learning (in Malaysia) only.

2.5.2 Career Progression During and After COVID-19

For some, the negative career shock brought on by COVID-19 may also open doors to new work arrangements, professional advancement, and skill upgrades (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020). Rudolf and Zacher in his paper noted that period effects can be studied thanks to the COVID-19 epidemic (as cited in Spurk & Straub, 2020). Spurk and Straub (2020) support further with giving examples such as economic cycles, national conflicts, one-time occurrences, or the emergence and progression of the COVID-19 pandemic are examples of period effects. Period effects, which include the role of key events, are commonly used as evidence for the effect of time. The COVID-19 epidemic might be thought of as an event in its own right. More specifically, it refers to a long-term event that is divided into sub-events or phases.

In response to the COVID-19 lockdown that been implemented with preparation that's been done in very little time, many of the reputable organisations able to provided their employees with the technology and gadgets that they needed to perform their tasks efficiently at home, ensuring support for safety, health, and wellbeing but performance management and overall development may have taken a

back seat, and employees anticipate renewed opportunities for personal and professional progress (Delany, 2021).

Consequently, in Malaysia context where majority of the employer still unfamiliar with the concept of remote work now has given the chances to implement the remote working arrangement and observe the effects of the said work arrangement on many variables and uncertainties such as career development which seen as long-term and sustainability effects of the employees (Spurk & Straub, 2020).

2.5.3 Career Progression Perceptions of Remote Workers From The Lens of Employees

The previous researchers collectively agreed that one of the major concerns of the employees that affecting their willingness to adopt the remote working is the effects of career development and progression options (Baruch, 2000; Bloom et al., 2015a; Gonsalves, 2020; Hamsa et al., 2016; Mumin et al., 2014). In a case study in a financial firm in London that there are mentions about the fewer career development opportunities for the teleworkers compare to the workers that work in office (Collins, 2005).

In a study conducted by Beauregard et al. (2019) in a public organisation in Great Britain that many of the employees that WFH in fulltime basis would forgo the desire to move up the ladder as they address the concerns of adjusting to commuting to office as their perceptions that higher role required their frequent presenteeism in the office. The results from the study of the same authors revealed that while the use of telework arrangements appears to have a positive effect on employee retention, it has a negative impact on career progression at the individual level and succession planning at the organisational level (Beauregard et al., 2019).

Gonsalves (2020) suggested for the future researchers to determine whether non-territorial workspaces affect career penalties associated with flexibility, such as remuneration trajectories and career progression. Which highlighting the needed for more knowledge and empirical evidence as this area is still in the grey.

2.6 Work Arrangement After COVID-19

Many scholars expecting that post COVID-19, there would be conspicuous changes in work culture in many establishments which include the working

arrangement. Jenkin and McDonald (2020) wrote in an article published in The CGO website that the spiking in adoption of remote work in the past 2 years was mainly driven by the government policies to curb the COVID-19 spread, but it will most likely continue in the long run and there might be changes in some of the conditions to work remotely such as the duration of days the employees allowed to work remotely. De Klerk et al. (2021) in their findings that somehow due to the perceived advantages of working from home led to expectations that this practise, along with some office employment, would continue in the future.

In the last 2 years of the COVID-19 hit the globe, there is changing in the labour force as many employees, especially the younger ones that began to enter the labour force at early pandemic stage are more prone to see working remotely as more desirable compared to sit-in-office and 9 to 5 job (Wyld, 2022) as they are the group that actually experienced working remotely full time and experienced the benefit the work arrangement had offered them first hand.

However, the likeliness of an organisation to continually adopt the remote work arrangement and for the positive outcomes of the said work arrangements is heavily depending on the supporting and trusting culture of the organisations themselves. Without this supporting organisational culture, there will be creations of unrealistic anticipations and demands where this might lead to tension and poor work habits of the employees (de Klerk et al., 2021). Instead, striking a healthy balance between physical office presence and working from home, with proper organisational and managerial support, is the answer to future work arrangements.

Previously, organisations would simply theorise about new forms of work; however, the COVID-19 crisis has forced them to take action, such as transitioning to completely new ways of working and even re-imagining new forms of work as needed by the new pandemic circumstances (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021). Primarily, the pandemic environment presents opportunities to learn new ways of working in the long run in addition to challenges (Mahmud et al., 2020). de Lucas Ancillo et al. (2021) from his extensive analysis on using the Grounded Theory has come out with a workspace workflow design during and after COVID-19 as per below;

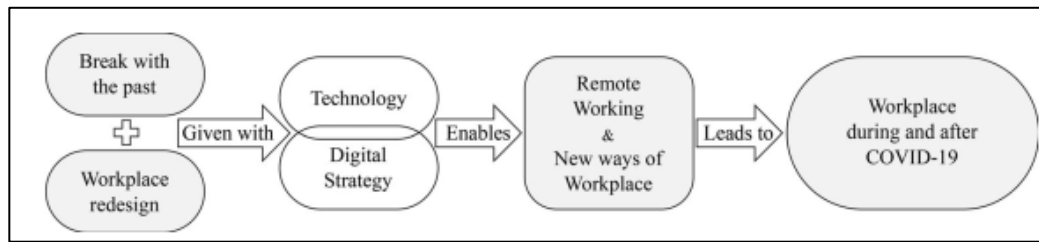


Figure 2.10. Workspace Workflow
(Source: de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021)

Figure 2.10 demonstrates the flow of the core category that according to the author will ‘re-imagined, re-improved and re-invented, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic’ given that the technology and digital strategy as the driver of the remote working and new ways of workplace arrangement which could be the implementation of hybrid or the emergence new form of work arrangement (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021). Later, Vyas (2022) has come out with a map that illustrates the scenario of the labour market post COVID-19. The author highlights the importance point in the map that it will illustrates the “new normal” of post-coronavirus disease, the likely composition of the future labour market, and what WLB might look like, highlighting potential trends and directions. The map is shows in Figure 2.11.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework developed in Figure 2.12 is intended to give early pictures of the study and to guide the researcher. The conceptual framework illustrated based on the review from the pass literature and the research question and objective.

To explain the conceptual framework is first, need to be noted that there will be two (2) approaches that will be undertaken by the firms which is the low road and high road approach when they considering in implementing the remote work arrangements. High road approach is when the employer is considering implementing the remote work arrangements for Employees Quality Maximization and low road approach for Employee Cost Maximization.

These approaches will determine how the employer perceived the visibility (at workplace) of the employees that work remotely and link this to their prospective career progression in the future.

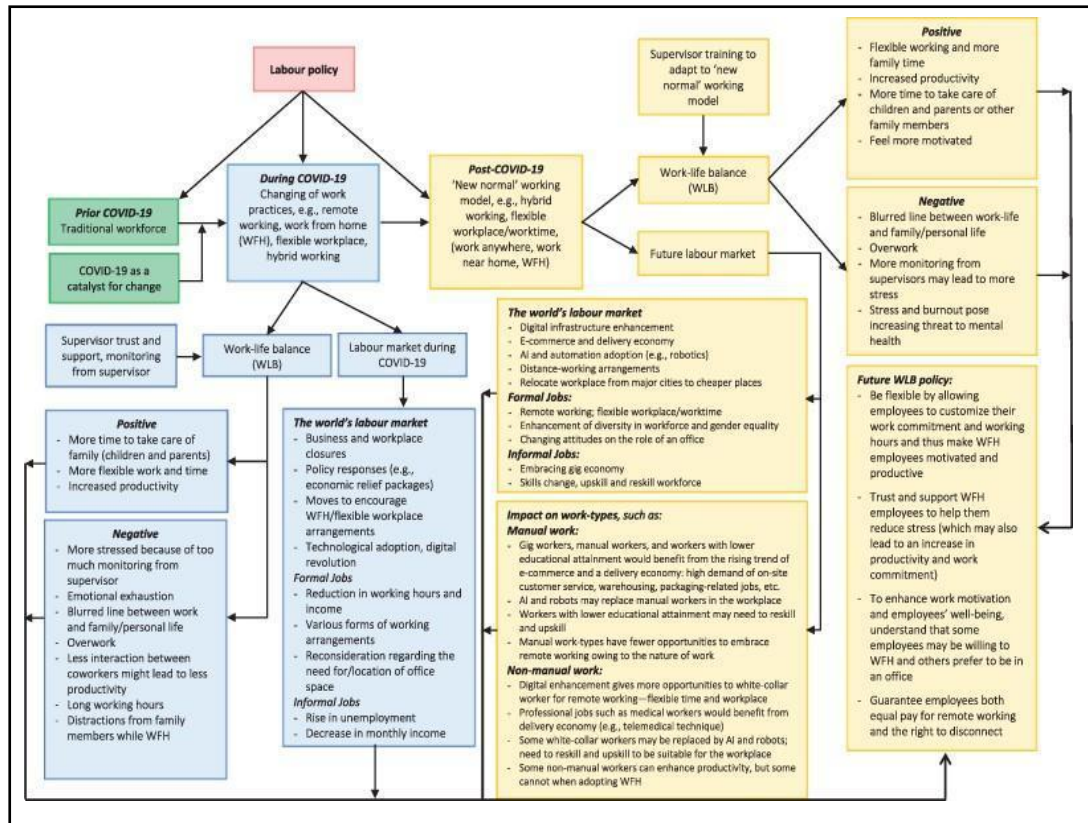


Figure 2.11. Coronavirus Pandemic and The Labour Market.
(Source: Vyas, 2022)

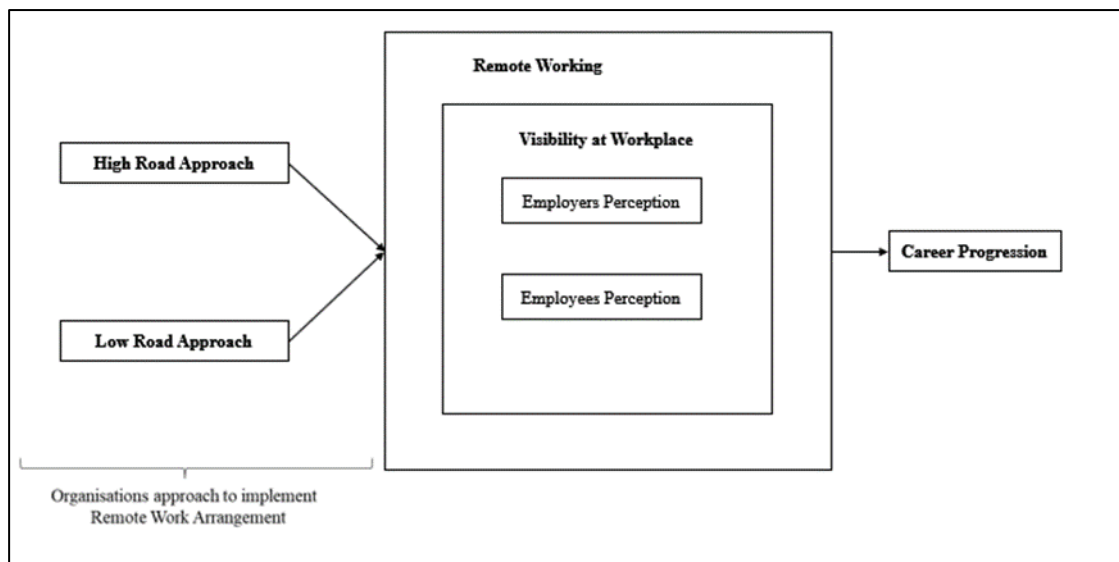


Figure 2.12. Proposed Conceptual Framework
(Source: Developed for this research)

2.8 Gaps in the Literature

As the literature reviewed in this chapter has demonstrated, the shift to remote work has been studied extensively. The primary gap identified is the limited and narrow scope of existing research on remote work, especially within the Malaysian context.

Most literature focuses heavily on work-life balance (WLB), general benefits, challenges, and the downsides of the arrangement. A crucial shortfall is the lack of research exploring critical Human Resource Management (HRM) aspects such as the impact on performance management, training and development, and the prospects of career development and progression.

Additionally, previous studies highlighted that remote workers were disadvantaged due to lower physical visibility at the workplace, which was detrimental to their performance and commitment (Richardson & Kelliher, 2015). Finally, key studies on telecommuting (a remote work alternative) in Malaysia suffer from limitations in methodology, including a lack of large-scale, empirical data, and a noted difference between the willingness to telecommute and the actual adoption rates, suggesting a need for paired in-depth interviews to fully understand the issues (Ambikapathy & Ali, 2020b; Hamsa et al., 2016).

2.9 Literature Highlight

Table 2.1

Highlights on selected literature that directly related to the study undertaken

AUTHOR/YEAR	RESEARCH/STUDY OBJECTIVES	FINDINGS
Elsbach, Cable, & Sherman, (2010)	To investigate how passive 'face time' (the amount of time one is passively observed without interaction) affects how one is perceived at work.	Findings 1 The traits of committed/dedicated are more likely to be inferred following the observation of extracurricular face time than following the observation of expected face time. Findings 2 The traits dependable/reliable are more likely to be inferred following the observation of expected face time than following the observation of extracurricular face time.
Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying (2015)	A report on an experiment conducted in a China leading travel agency with the aim to study the impacts of WFH to both the firm and the employees.	Impact on the firm There is 13% increase in the overall performance of the employee. Impact on the employees Career progression as in promotion wise, during the period of the experiment they discover that WFH impact on the promotion is trivial, but it has a negative partial impact when performance is taken into account.
Richardson & Kelliher, (2015)	To investigate how the firm managed their relationships with colleagues and clients in order to improve their career longevity with	Visibility, fears of becoming 'invisible' and the impact on relationships with colleagues and the employer When it came to career opportunities and experiences,

focus on the theme of visibility while working remotely.

interviewees were especially concerned that their lack of visibility would cause them to be overlooked, or that their accomplishments would be overlooked precisely because they did not have strong connections with others. Both managers and non-managers also emphasised that, while objective performance was important, the larger organisational culture was that being visible was critical for securing career development opportunities, particularly hierarchical promotion.

Maintaining connections with colleagues and clients

All interviewees expressed concern about becoming invisible and described specific actions they took to improve their visibility.

Being seen

Data analysis revealed a strong link between 'being seen' and maintaining interaction/relationships with key stakeholders in the home organisation, and interviewees felt that in order to facilitate that interaction, they needed to be 'known' and/or 'seen' on a fairly regular basis.

Management support to create and maintain visibility

Many of the managers interviewed stated that, while they were aware of the benefits of ICTs in supporting remote working, they also believed that over-reliance on technology would eventually impair both individual and group performance, and thus the individual's career opportunities.

General findings

Finding suggests an understanding that social relationships frequently influence career opportunities, and it indicates that

Yarberry & Sims (2021)	To investigate the effects of working in a virtual/remote environment as a result of COVID-19.	having a reduced physical presence in the workplace may impact career advancement, opportunities for development, and, as a result, career sustainability.
		Emotional impact Most admitted that their morale and motivation to complete their tasks had suffered as a result.
		Enhanced self-efficacy & self-empowerment All The participants stated that they have broadened their skill set while working virtually in the pandemic, felt more confident in their abilities to complete tasks and rely on their own knowledge and knowledge-seeking behaviours,
		Lack of human connection & belongingness Several participants discussed how a lack of physical contact with co-workers or subordinates affected their performance. Their sense of teamwork and belonging was harmed by working individually and distantly.
		Role of supervisor support Participants highlighted the effect of leadership assistance during the pandemic such as how care and treatment is enacted by the supervisor in supporting the employees during the remote working due to COVID-19 is important.
		Work-life balance (WLB) Some of the participants prefer to work in office as it gave them the sense of separation between the work and private life.

2.10 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter highlighting the past researcher works that's focusing on visibility at workplace, remote works, and career progression. The literatures cover different view on the remote works which covering from both employers and employee's view. Researchers agreed collectively that the main enabler for remote work is the rapid development and innovation in ICT, cloud file sharing technology and the availability of remote access functions where everyone can communicate face to face, sharing knowledge, and accessing files and documents even when they're not physically present in their physical office. Majority of the researchers also agreed that remote work will increase the performance, profit, and productivity of the firm and employees by cutting the cost on human capital related spending, utilities, rent and gaining skilled workforce in across different continent where the salary could be offer at lower cost.

Remote working is not a new alternative form of work arrangement as it has been long introduced in developed, western country and even in some part of Asian, but in Malaysia, it was a relatively a new concept especially among the local owned firm. The enforcement of MCO during the COVID-19 requiring many firms and businesses to shift their work arrangement to home and the whole nations firms and businesses, all of entities, sizes and industries are included (exceptions are given to the business and firms that are part of the essential services).

The main issues that's being highlighted in the study are expected to be emerging trends in the future of workplace as the accelerating of digitalisation, the increase trends of hybrid work arrangement which later will seeing in the performance management's challenges and atomistic behaviours at work. Seeing this as a chance to study and explore in depth about the effects and the perceptions of the employers and employees about the enforcement of mass remote working from every aspect of human resources, the researcher is looking to explore the approach that the organisation will take on implementing the remote work arrangement.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The contents of this section of the research proposal included the design of the research, population and sampling frame, data collection procedure, unit of analysis, plan for data analysis, reliability and validity, and the ethical issues surrounding a qualitative study or research.

All the main components in the research methodology were carefully drawn upon the research question and the research objectives.

3.2 Research Design

A research design refers to a blueprint or strategy for gathering, measuring, and analysing data to fulfil the research objectives and answer the research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007). Research design helps the researcher to ensure that the information and data collected is appropriate and adequate to solve the problem stated (Adams et al., 2007). Below is the framework for research design that shows the interconnection of worldviews, design, and the method of research used by Creswell (2013).

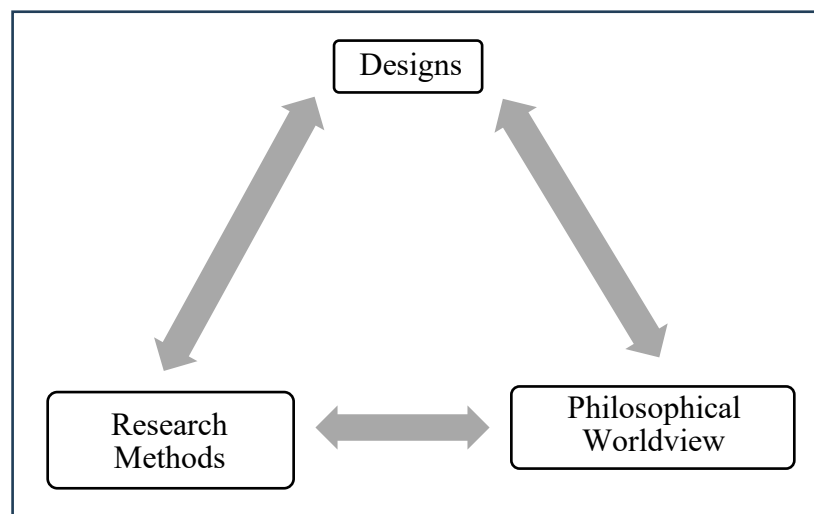


Figure 3.1. Framework for research design
(Source: Creswell, 2013)

Following this framework, the present study adopted a qualitative research approach grounded in a constructivist worldview and employed a phenomenological research design. Details regarding data collection methods and data analysis planning were discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach

As for the intended study, researcher decided to adopt qualitative research approach. Qualitative research approach involved non-quantitative data gathering and analysis methodologies, strives to explore social interactions, and describes reality as seen by respondents (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007). Flick (2008) described qualitative research as a study that aimed at approaching the world 'out there' (rather than in specialised study settings such as labs) and understanding, describing, and occasionally explaining social phenomena 'from the inside' in a variety of methods. The methods that suggested by Flick (2008) is, 1) analysing individual or collective experiences; 2) by studying in-progress exchanges and conversations; 3) documents (texts, photographs, movies, or music) or comparable remnants of events or interactions can be analysed.

Qualitative research points out the “what?” questions which then followed by “how?” which discovering the conceptualization of the topics of interest which also include a grasp of the background context, the consequences/outcomes, and even the relevance of the research in the greater world (Wertz et al., 2011). Wertz et al., (2011) pointed out few aims in conducting qualitative research which is:

- i. A qualitative study may be used by a researcher to obtain information about a subject matter to integrate, or at least relate, fragmented or conflicting ideas and theories, or to highlight and call attention to taken-for-granted understandings and dispositions.
- ii. The goal of some qualitative research is to establish the fundamental categories of a subject matter in order to build a measuring instrument for basic or applied research.

Since the study was to explore the perceptions of the managers and employees about the visibility at workplace and their career progression while working remotely which is rooted from their own experience for the past two years of extensively working

remotely since the pandemic hits the globe, qualitative research approach was the most suitable and appropriate ways to conduct the intended research.

3.2.2 The Constructivist Worldview

Constructivist or interpretive as referred to by Tracy (2012) which according to Cresswell (2013) stated that the social constructivists believed that people wanted to comprehend the world in which they live and work. Added further that the study's purpose was to depend as much as possible on the participants' perspectives on the topic under investigation which is the reason that the questions become wide and comprehensive to enable the participants to create the meaning of a scenario, which is often developed in talks or interactions with other peoples or party (Cresswell, 2013; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The constructivist or interpretative paradigm emphasises that analysing social activity from the perspective of the actors is essential necessary-a concept typically referred to by the German word *verstehen* (“to comprehend”) (Tracy, 2012). The knowledge of a given instance is sometimes more important to constructionists than the generalisation of their conclusions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

It is noteworthy that the constructivist worldview theory creation is through inductive, expansionistic, and iterative (Tracy, 2012). Inductive reasoning main objectives is directing at theory creation where the reasoning progresses from particular facts to larger generalisations (Streefkerk, 2019).

Transferring the interpretation and the understanding of the constructivist worldview to the study undertaken, the researcher conducted the research as to see and seek from the current experience and their perceptions first-hand from the participants of the study themselves since the remote work in Malaysia was considered uncommon as there it is still not intensively applied pre-COVID-19 and with the mass enforcement of work from home (one of remote working arrangement alternative), this was a golden change to seek and to enrich the knowledge about the interest of the said topics in Malaysia also the regional context.

3.2.3 Phenomenological Research as A Design Inquiry for Qualitative Research

Research designs provide structured guidance for conducting studies across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches (Creswell, 2013). Within

qualitative research, different strategies of inquiry serve as frameworks that guide methodological decisions (Lincoln, 2011, as cited in Creswell, 2013). It is safe to assume that types of qualitative inquiry are part of the research design that require close attention as it will act as the compass for constructing the methods that needed to conduct the research.

Phenomenological research design inquiry as described by Creswell (2013) that the inquiry is a philosophical and psychological research strategy in which the researcher described the lived experiences of persons as recounted by participants concerning a topic which culminates in the core of the experiences of several people who have all experienced the event. The research inquiry thus suited to answer the research question whereby the query must be about experiencing a phenomenon, such as, what is the experience of the event or phenomenon under investigation (Elkatawneh, 2016). Due to that, oftentimes, the study that employ phenomenological ways of research inquiry will be conducting interviews with the participants to enquire the data needed (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

While the said research inquiry helps the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge and information about the research undertaken, there is also downside to the phenomenology method which is the difficulty in recruiting the participants, require longer time to gather, analysis and interpreting the data (Elkatawneh, 2016). Additionally, phenomenology is effective when studying a small number of subjects, thus in this study there were 8 participants in order to produce patterns and identify relationships of meaning that contribute to the creation of new knowledge (Moustakes, 1994) and to identify the core of their experiences with the phenomenon. The data collection was done once but if issues arose, then the researcher revisited the participants to confirm the issues.

Albeit the downside of the phenomenological research inquiry, the researcher intended to use the approach as it is the one qualitative inquiry that is delineated with the aim of the study which is to explore the topic understudy in-depth. The phenomenon under study was the remote work arrangements that came into enforcement during the MCO for the past two years and the continuity of the remote work arrangements post MCO.

3.3 Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique/Method

3.3.1 Population

Population, referring to the entire group of masses of people as refer to Sundram et al. (2016) or events, things of interest to the researcher investigation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Based on the definition given, the intended study investigated and explored the perceptions of the managers and employees in financial service industry specifically the banking sector in Malaysia about the remote work arrangement and the effects of visibility at workplace to their career progression which means that the population where the sample was drawn from was:

Managers and employees (executive level) of the financial services industry (banking sector) in Malaysia numbered approximately 372.1 thousand individuals (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021).

Need to be noted here that the managers acted on behalf of the firm/company. Participants were selected based solely on their experience with remote work (either full-time or hybrid). Departmental specialization was not a criterion, ensuring broad representation of functional roles and perspectives across the banking hierarchy.

3.3.2 Sample Frame

The sampling frame is a representation of the target population's elements, and it is vital to note that using the most recent sampling frame will ensure that no under-coverage occurs (Ahmad & Halim, 2017). In simpler terms, a sampling frame is a list of elements that can be sampled (Adams et al., 2007).

Thus, for the intended study or research, the sample frame where the sample was drawn upon was as per below:

- i. the list of managers and employees of the financial services industry (banking sector) in Malaysia are which amounting to 372.1 thousand (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021).

3.3.3 Sample Size

The sample is a subset of the population that consist of several members selected from it (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Sundram et al., 2016). For generalizability, it's crucial to establish the sample's representativeness as a voluminous sample size will not, by itself, allow the findings to be extrapolated to the population if the right sampling design is not applied.

However, it is a different case for qualitative study whereby the sample size was difficult to determine but one way to figure out the adequate sample size is by relying on the fundamental guideline in qualitative research is to keep sampling until you run out of new information or new ideas (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) from the data acquired thru the data collection method chosen. This method also known as “saturation” as per being claimed by Gershgoren et al. (2016) as cited in (Braun et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2012) that the most widely use criterion for deciding the appropriate size for the Thematic Analysis (TA).

To kickstart the study, the researcher came to a decision to choose four (4) banks, whereby two (2) of them were from the local bank and another two (2) from international bank. From each back, the participants were two (2) employees, one (1) from executive/associate level and another one (1) from managerial level. The total initial sampling was eight (8) interviewees or participants all together. On another note, if the multiple interviews conducted yielded same data and answer which had reached its ‘saturation’ then the data collected was deemed as sufficient for the study and the researcher proceeded to the next stage which was data analysis.

The sample deliberately includes an even split between two (2) local commercial banks and two (2) international banks to account for distinct variations in organizational culture within the Malaysian financial sector. Local banks typically maintain traditional, presence-oriented management hierarchies, whereas international banks mirror global frameworks that heavily prioritize digitalized, output-based evaluation models. This comparative structure ensures that data collection captures how these differing cultural environments shape employee visibility and career outcomes across both institutional settings.

3.3.4 Sampling Technique/ Method

Sampling method or plan or titled as techniques is the road map for how you will select sources for your data (Tracy, 2013). In quantitative research, sampling standardize as the process of drawing random sample from a given population or by having allotment of sample size with the aim to represent and making appropriate inferences about the larger population and to achieve the generalization of the target population which includes appropriate attributes distributions of the population (Flick, 2008; Ahmad & Halim, 2017). In other words, sampling is the process or technique of selecting an appropriate sample for the purpose of determining the parameters or characteristics of an entire population (Adams et al., 2007).

According to Sutton and Austin (2015) that an important aspect of qualitative research is that no attempt is made to generalise the findings to a larger population. Flick (2008) add further that in qualitative research or study, the sampling technique and method following a more structured sampling which is more purposive and having more flexibility in technique. Back up further by Tracy (2013), a credible qualitative researcher, at the very least, engage in purposive sampling, which meaning they deliberately select samples to gather appropriate data that fit the research parameters of the research questions, goals, and objectives. Purposive sampling falls under non-probability sampling method (Adams et al., 2007). Below is the illustration of few types of samples and their purpose as in Tracy (2013, p. 135):

Type of Sample	Purpose
Random	Creates an equal opportunity for all the members of a certain population to be chosen
Convenience/ Opportunistic	Appropriate when time and money are scarce, but may indicate laziness
Maximum Variation	Includes the entire rainbow of possible data. Helps to ensure the inclusion of usually marginalized data
Snowball	Expands in size as the researcher asks study participants to recommend other participants
Theoretical Construct	Helpful for testing and finding gaps in existing theory
Typical Instance	Focuses on the routine, the average, and the typical
Extreme Instance	The most/least/best/worst of a certain category. Can be valuable and interesting, but also time-consuming
Critical Instance	Focuses on data that are rare, under-studied, or strategically bounded to the argument at hand

Figure 3.2. Combination of Type of Sampling and Their Purpose
(Source: Tracy, 2013)

How does the researcher select the most appropriate sample for the study? This is answered by the research questions that determine the type of population and the most appropriate person or individuals that can provide data on the phenomenon of interest (Tracy, 2013). Adhering to that, this research or study used the purposive sampling method to select the most suitable individuals that has the knowledge and has been through the stated events to answer the research questions according to criteria pre-determined below:

- i. Managers and employees that worked in banking sector in Klang Valley
- ii. Managers and employees that worked under the remote working arrangement either pre, during, or post COVID-19 (the variations will provide more in-depth information and data for comparison)

Therefore, any managers and employees that conformed to the above criteria had the chance of being picked as the participants of the study or research undertaken. The study intentionally sampled participants with a minimum of three years of continuous banking experience, ensuring that each respondent possessed sufficient longitudinal perspective to compare their pre-pandemic, mid-pandemic, and post-pandemic career trajectories. The purposive sample was deliberately stratified to include a hierarchical distribution of managers and non-managers across the selected local and international institutions. This structural division allowed the study to compare the operational realities from the side of the management team responsible for making career-defining decisions against the subjective career development experiences of the non-managerial workforce. Capturing these dyadic perspectives ensured that the emergent “Visibility-Progression Nexus” was evaluated comprehensively from both the evaluative standpoint of the employers and the lived experiences of the employees.

Since there was expected difficulty in identifying and to access the participants paired with the time constraints, snowball sampling (Tracy, 2013), was chosen in tandem with purposive sampling. Notwithstanding, employing the snowball sampling method serves its own downside whereby a person who knows someone has a higher chance of being similar to the first person, bias was likely to enter the research (Adams et al., 2007). Tracy (2013) addresses the solution for the problem is to recruit a limited number of individuals who reflect the widest range of possibilities and then create multiple smaller snowballs from that diversified starting sample.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

From Creswell (2013), stated that “the data collection steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information” (p. 189). Flick (2017) define further that the selection and development of linguistic (or visual) information for studying and interpreting events, social domains, subjective and collective experiences, and the accompanying meaning-making processes is referred to as qualitative data collecting with the aim to identify and characterise challenges in the field, as well as structures and processes in routines and procedures. It uses non-quantitative methods of data collection and analysis, aims toward the exploration of social relationships, and describes the realities as experienced by the respondents (Adams et al., 2007).

The two aspects that needed to be taken into consideration when designing for data collection procedure for qualitative research with phenomenology approach is 1) purposefully select whereby according to Creswell (2013) that the idea behind a qualitative research is to deliberately selecting participants or sites (or documents or visual materials) that will best help the researcher to understand the problems and questions of the study undertaken, and the 2) saturation where stated by Charmaz (2006) as cited in Creswell (2013, p. 189) that the researcher will stop collecting data when the category (or theme) is saturated; when collecting new data is no longer triggers new observations or reveals new property or information.

Basically, there are four types of data collection method that is being widely employed by qualitative researcher (Creswell, 2013) which is 1) qualitative observations, 2) qualitative interviews, 3) qualitative documents, and 4) qualitative audio and visual materials. As for the study undertaken, the researcher took on the qualitative interview using self-developed semi-structured interview question as an instrument. To elicit the essence of these lived experiences, the semi-structured interviews were guided by the phenomenological requirement to allow participants to lead the narrative, with prompting focus shifted from ‘what you do’ to ‘what you experienced’ and ‘what meaning you attributed to that experience’ throughout the career progression timeline.

Due to geographical dispersion across the Klang Valley and the demanding operational schedules within the financial sector, all eight (8) in-depth interviews were

conducted virtually via the Google Meet platform. The interactive dialogue specifically required participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their personal career progression trajectories across a dual-phase timeline, explicitly contrasting the emergency of work-from-home parameters of the Movement Control Order (MCO) against post-pandemic hybrid banking policies. Formal verbal and written informed consent was secured via the Subject Information Sheet prior to each recording session, ensuring strict compliance with institutional ethical standards. Verbatim, line-by-line transcription was immediately initiated post-interview to guarantee structural and narrative accuracy, providing a solid qualitative foundation before executing the reflexive thematic analysis.

3.5 Unit of Analysis

Unit of analysis refers to the level of data aggregation achieved during the subsequent data analysis stage (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The unit of analysis is determined by the objectives of the research (Sundram et al., 2016).

Recalling the objectives of the research in Chapter One that is to explore and discover in depth what are the perceptions of the managers and employees on the visibility of the employees that choose to remotely work and how will this affect their career progression or growth. Wherein, the data collection was completed by interviewing the managers and employees individually which is safe to conclude that the unit of analysis of the research or study was individuals.

3.6 Plan for Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of assessing data in multiple formats and critical in research because it simplifies and improves data processing by making it significantly simpler and more precise (Amadebai, 2021).

Data analysis usually take place after the data is collected. However, it would be immensely helpful if the researcher pre-plan the data analysis as it will give the researcher the first picture of how they will interpret and turns the raw data into meaningful information that will answer the research questions. For the study undertaken, the researcher used the Thematic Analysis (TA) approach to analyse the data. TA defined as an approach for capturing patterns (“themes”) across qualitative datasets (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2019) or in simpler words it is “the study

of patterns of meaning” (Crosley, 2021). Braun et al. (2019) further added that since TA known as an analytic method instead of methodology, it offers the qualitative researcher a vast amount of flexibility to be utilised to accomplish the many goals listed and indeed, it is compatible with a wide range of interpretive frameworks, from phenomenological to critical constructionist approaches to meaning which signalling the ability of TA to solve a variety of research problems.

Referring to Crosley (2021), there are four (4) main approaches to TA which is (1) inductive, (2) deductive, (3) semantic, and (4) latent approaches. Meanwhile, there are three (3) types of TA namely (1) reflexive thematic analysis, (2) coding reliability thematic analysis, and (4) codebook thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Crosley, 2021). The choice of the most suitable type of thematic analysis depended on two factors: (1) the approach taken by the researcher, and (2) whether the researcher worked individually or within a team framework (Crosley, 2021).

Therefore, based on that, the researcher decided to adopt the deductive approach and inductive approach as the researcher expected to have some set of themes (prior to the study) that will be discover (deductive approach) also did not deny or overlook the potential of discovering new themes (inductive) throughout the process of analysing the raw data. As for the type of the of thematic analysis employed was the reflexive thematic analysis as it provided the researcher the flexibility to add, remove, change the codes when working with the raw data and it is suitable to be use when working individually as Crosley (2021).

To analyse the data using thematic analysis, there are six (6) general steps or phase (Braun et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012) which is the relevant steps will be different depending on the approach and the thematic type of analysis that is being pursued by the researcher (Crosley, 2021). The summary of the six steps or phases that were employed by the researcher in accordance and guide from Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) is as per illustrated below:

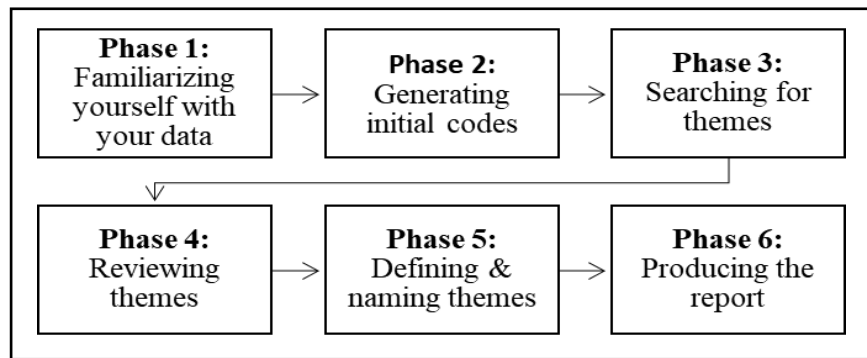


Figure 3.3. Six General Steps or Phase of Thematic Analysis
(Source: Braun & Clarke, 2012)

The first phase required the researcher to get familiar with the data by getting immerse by reread and reviewing the data collected analytically and critically. It is also suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) that the researcher to actively doing note taking but as not to take it seriously. The second phase involved generating initial codes. Codes that were generated represented the interesting or relevant feature to the research conducted (Braun et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). In the third phase, the researcher determined the themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82), “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.” This phase required the researcher to review the coded data and identified the similarity between the codes and grouped them into one theme.

Phase four involved reviewing the themes and compare them to the entire dataset. There are two steps of reviewing the themes. The first step was for the researcher to compare your themes to the data extracts and determined whether the theme worked in relation to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). This phase as coined by Braun and Clarke (2012) as a stage for quality checking where key questions as follows were asked:

- i. Is this a theme (make sure that it is not interchange with code)?
- ii. If it's a theme, how good is it (does it tell me anything useful about the data set and my research question)?
- iii. What are the theme's boundaries (what does it include and exclude)?
- iv. Is there enough (meaningful) data to back up this theme (is it thin or thick)?
- v. Is the data too diverse and broad in scope (does the theme lack

coherence)?

The second step involved examining the themes in relation to the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The fifth phase was to define and naming the themes. It was an ongoing analysis to fine-tune the specifics of each theme as well as the overall story the analysis told, resulting in clear definitions and names for each theme. The last phase, which is sixth phase, whereas to produce the report. It involved the selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the research question and literature, and production of a scholarly report on the analysis.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

As much as reliability and validity is importance in quantitative research, it is also importance in qualitative research to ensure the reliability and validity to control the quality of qualitative research (Flick, 2007). The procedures that the writer of the study took in their research to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of their findings were explained (Creswell, 2013). Simultaneously, qualitative inquiry had a crisis of trust from both inside and outside the profession due to the lack of hard data and p values (Morse et al., 2002).

In general, following the quantitative research, reliability stands for either the results of the research undertaken in replicable, meanwhile validity stands for whether the means of measurement are accurate, and whether they are measuring what they are supposed to measure (Golafshani, 2003). Golafshani (2003) added further that, the concept of reliability and validity in qualitative is perceived differently compared to their quantitative counterpart. Which means that in qualitative research, the validity and reliability are view in different perspective.

3.7.1 Qualitative Reliability

Qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's methodology is consistent across different projects and researchers (Gibbs, 2007). Gibbs (2007) further added that for a loner qualitative researcher, there is few practices that can be done to ensure the analysis as self-contained and dependable as possible that is:

- i. *Transcription checking* to make sure that any transcriptions researcher

make are free of obvious errors by making repeat checking. Even though it is a very time-consuming activities, but it will help the researcher to familiarize with their data (Gibbs, 2007).

- ii. Ensure there is *no definitional drift in coding* especially in large dataset by comparing data to the codes on a regular basis and keeping track of the codes and their definitions in memos (Creswell, 2013). Definitional drift in coding is a type of inconsistencies where the material coded later in a project with previously defined codes may be coded slightly differently than material coded at the start (Gibbs, 2007).
- iii. *Team coordination* by using 1) division of labour, and 2) more than one person engaged in the process of analysis at once (Gibbs, 2007). This is usually applied to qualitative researcher that being conducted in team. This can be achieved by holding regular, documented meetings and sharing the results of the analysis (Creswell, 2017).
- iv. *Code cross-checking* enabled by having collaboration on analysis allows researchers to compare the work of one researcher to that of another, reducing researcher bias and providing a measure of coding reliability (Gibbs, 2007).

To maintain reliability, the researcher chose to execute line-by-line transcription checks, prevent any definitional drift during coding, and perform systematic code cross-checking.

3.7.2 Qualitative Validity

Qualitative validity indicates that the researcher uses particular process to ensure that the findings are accurate (Creswell, 2013). Validity is discussed in the qualitative literature using terms like trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Creswell (2013) listed eight (8) main strategies that frequently used by researchers to determine the validity of a qualitative research. The strategies are as per listed below:

- i. *Triangulation method* which referring to the researcher using multiple sources of data, methods, researchers, theories, or approaches to analyse the single phenomenon undertaken in research (Gibbs, 2007; Sundram et al., 2016).

- ii. The usage of *member checking* to determine the preciseness of the qualitative findings by returning the final report, or specific descriptions or themes, to participants and asking if they believe the analysis to the data is accurate (Creswell, 2013; Morse et al., 2002; Sundram et al., 2016).
- iii. The usage of *rich and thick descriptions* to communicate findings which lead to a more realistic and deeper when qualitative researchers provide extensive descriptions of the surroundings, for example, or offer multiple perspectives on an issue (Creswell, 2013).
- iv. *Explain the bias* brought by the researcher to the study. A good qualitative researcher would be aware that there is potential that their interpretations might be shaped by their own background and surroundings. Reflectivity is one of core characteristics that a qualitative researcher needed (Creswell, 2013; Gibbs, 2007).
- v. Parading *negative or conflicting information* that goes against the theme because in real life, there's always set of different perspective and by discussing on this will articulate the credibility of the research conducted (Creswell, 2013).
- vi. Spend a *significant amount of time* in the field. It is believed that the longer the time spent by the researcher to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, the settings and such will increase the credibility and validity of the findings (Creswell, 2013).
- vii. Usage of *peer debriefing*. Peer debriefing conducted when a researcher and an unbiased peer organise and hold detailed discussions regarding the investigation's findings and progress (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Spall, 1998). This strategy helps to ensure that the findings and interpretations are valid, truthful, and convincing (Spall, 1998).
- viii. By hiring an *external auditor* with the goals to review both the method and the outcome of the investigation, as well as to assess the reliability and trustworthiness of the results (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This type of strategy however, requiring extra fund since employing external auditor is not as cheap.

Since there were limitations in time and funding, the researcher verified the validity and trustworthiness of the findings by using rich and thick descriptions, explaining the bias brought by the researcher to the study, and presenting negative or conflicting information.

3.8 Ethical Issues

Every research conducted (quantitative or qualitative) dealt with ethical issues and it was one of the main concerns for researchers that needed to be addressed. Because of the in-depth nature of the research process, ethical considerations have a special resonance in qualitative studies (Mohd Arifin, 2018). Among the issues that being raised and explored by Mohd Ariffin (2018) in her paper is listed below:

- i. Informed consent and voluntary. The participants of the research study need to be well-informed about the research, and they should be allowing the freedom of choice to participate and decline from participating.
- ii. Anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher was responsible to make sure that the personal details are not being revealed at all stages of data collection, analysis, and reporting of the findings of the study.
- iii. Interview session. The interview conducted needed to be done in a room that is private and quiet or in a location were agreed by both parties.
- iv. Data analysis and dissemination of the findings. The researcher needed to make sure that during the data transcribing and handling of the personal data is at best. Especially during the data analysis, the researcher needed to make sure that she/he is the only one that has the access to the data collected.
- v. Ethical approval and access to participants. As for this part, the researcher was required by the faculty to obtain ethical approval from the UiTM Research Ethics Committee and the related organisations where the participants are chosen from.
- vi. Data protection. The researcher needed to make sure that all the data and information collected were kept in an encrypted device and password protected.

3.9 Summary of the chapter

The earlier section of this chapter discussed the research design employed in the study, namely the qualitative research design, which was closely interconnected with the subsequent sections. The primary data was collected through interviewing total of eight (8) employees and managers who worked in banking sector in Klang Valley. To answer the research questions, self-developed semi-structured interview question method was utilised. The researcher selected reflexive thematic analysis as the analytical method, as it offered greater flexibility in interpreting qualitative data. This chapter also highlighted the ethical issues that could be encountered during the research process. More details of the summary are provided in the table that follows.

Table 3.1.
Summary of The Chapter

OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARCH DESIGN	DATA COLLECTION	DATA ANALYSIS PLAN	RESPONDENTS
To explore the perceptions of the managers and the employees on working remotely with the approach (high road or low road) taken by the organisations in implementing the remote work arrangement	What is the approach that the employers choose when they decide to pursue for remote work arrangement (high road or low road) and their initial perceptions about it?				
To understand how will the perceptions of the managers and employees on visibility at workplace of the employee that work remotely.	How does working remotely affecting their visibility at work?	● Qualitative research design ● Constructivist Worldview ● Phenomenological research	● Qualitative interview ● Self-developed semi-structured interview question as an instrument.	● Deductive and inductive approach ● Reflexive thematic analysis	● 8 participants from local and international bank in Klang Valley, Malaysia

To explore the views of managers and employees on career progression of the employee that work remotely.

How will working remotely affects the career progression of the employees (positive, negative, stagnant)?

CHAPTER 4

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the overviews of the key themes derived from the qualitative interview session with eight (8) employees from different bank. The findings are presented according to the three (3) research questions introduced in Chapter One. These research questions were formulated to address the three (3) research objectives outlined in the same chapter.

To recall the research objectives of this thesis is that to explore the organizations approach towards the remote work arrangements (High Road or Low Road), the perceptions of the managers and employees on the visibility at workplace of the employees that work remotely and how will the chosen approach of the remote work arrangements will affect their career progression in long run if they choose to work remotely.

The interviews were conducted online via Google Meet platform and were recorded for subsequent analysis, with all participants having provided their informed consent by signing the Subject Information Sheet. All the participants consented by signed the Subject Information Sheet. To maintain the anonymity of those who participated, their personal backgrounds were not disclosed, and each individual was assigned a special identification call name, such as Interviewee 1, for the duration of the study; furthermore, every interview was held in a confidential and secluded environment.

4.2 Recall on Research Design

To provide context for the data analysis, it's crucial to revisit the research design outlined in Chapter Three. This study adopts a qualitative research approach, consistent with the goal of exploring and understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals regarding remote work. It is underpinned by a constructivist worldview, which acknowledges that individuals actively construct their own meaning from their experiences and interactions within their environments. Specifically, this research employed a phenomenological research design inquiry to delve deeply into the lived

experiences of managers and employees in the banking sector concerning remote work arrangements, workplace visibility, and career progression. This approach is particularly suitable as it focuses on the essence of individual experiences with a phenomenon. The data analysis was guided by reflexive thematic analysis (Crosley, 2021), allowing for both deductive exploration of pre-existing themes and inductive identification of themes that emerged directly from the interview data.

4.3 Description of Sample

For this qualitative study, a total of eight (8) individuals were interviewed. These participants were carefully selected to include both managers and employees, all of whom were affiliated with diverse banking institutions situated within the Klang Valley region of Malaysia. The composition of the sample was intentionally designed to provide perspectives from varying levels within the organizational hierarchy, with an estimated ratio of two (2) managers to six (6) non-managers. A significant majority, specifically seven, of the participants were engaged in a hybrid work arrangement, blending remote and on-site work. The remaining participant operated under a conditional work-from-home policy, primarily working remotely only as required. Importantly, all eight (8) participants possessed direct experience working through the Movement Control Order (MCO) period in Malaysia, and as a result, they had substantial experience with various forms of remote work. The participants demographics are being tabulated inside the table below:

Table 4.1.

Participants Demographic

Participant	Gender	Level
IV 1	Female	Manager
IV 2	Female	Non Manager
IV 3	Male	Non Manager
IV 4	Male	Non Manager
IV 5	Male	Non Manager
IV 7	Female	Non Manager
IV 8	Female	Manager

Following each interview session, which ranged from 20 to 30 minutes in duration, the recordings were transcribed and reviewed against both video and audio to guarantee accuracy (Bailey, 2008). All interviews were conducted online via Google Meet. Participants were informed beforehand that the sessions would be recorded, and

their verbal consent was obtained prior to starting. To ensure the selection of participants who meet the study's criteria, participants were asked at the end of the session to recommend other potential interviewees. For this study, participants were selected using purposive sampling. The selection criteria included: (a) employment as a manager or employee within the banking sector, and (b) professional experience with remote work arrangements (pre-, during-, or post-COVID-19). All participants were based in the Klang Valley region of Malaysia.

All eight (8) interviews reached data saturation and resulting in total of 30 pages of transcription. Employing an open coding approach, each transcript was analysed without reference to codes from other transcripts. Total of 31 codes generated, and it is listed in the Table 4.2. The pattern of code frequency suggests that theoretical saturation was attained after eight (8) interviews, implying that the core themes of the phenomenon under investigation had been sufficiently captured (Braun et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012).

Table 4.2.
Generated Codes Compilation

Main Theme	Code	Frequency
Implementation & Perception	EXP-InitialReactions	7
	EXP-Challenges	7
	IMP-HybridModel	6
	EXP-Preferences	6
	IMP-PreCOVID	5
	COVID-Adaptation	5
	ORG-CultureShift	5
	EXP-Benefits	5
	IMP-Infrastructure	5
	ORG-Support	4
	EXP-Productivity	4
	IMP-COVIDResponse	4
	EXP-Adaptability	4
	EXP-TeamConnection	3
	IMP-Guidelines	2
	EXP-Isolation	2
	ORG-Digitalization	2
	IMP-CostCutting	2
	IMP-FullRemoteConsideration	1
	IMP-	1

	ProcessImprovement	
	COVID-Impact	1
Workplace Visibility	VIS-Importance	6
	VIS-	6
	RelationshipImpact	
	VIS-	4
	ManagementView	
	VIS-NewJoinerImpact	1
Career Progression	VIS-CareerImpact	6
	CP-Impact	5
	CP-	3
	RelationshipBuilding	
	CP-	2
	EstablishedEmployees	
	CP-Opportunities	2
	CP-NewJoiners	1

4.4 Analysis and Results on Research Question 1

RQ1: What is the approach that the employers choose when they decide to pursue for remote work arrangement (high road or low road) and their initial perceptions about it?

Research Question 1 (Section 1.4) investigates two key areas: the exploration of initial perceptions of remote work and the identification of the organizational approach (High Road vs. Low Road). Research Question 1 corresponds to Research Objective 1, defined as exploring the perceptions of managers and employees concerning remote work in relation to the organizational approach (high road or low road) implemented by organizations. To understand the initial perceptions and organizational approaches, the researcher will draw upon the identified themes and sub-themes from the interview conducted. The themes and sub-themes extracted from the interview analysis are presented in Table 4.3, serving as a foundation for the subsequent analysis in this section.

Table 4.3
Main Themes, Sub-Themes and Sample Codes Derived for RQ1

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample Codes
Implementation and Perception of Remote/Hybrid Work	Pre-COVID Context & Initial Reactions COVID-19 Response, Adaptation & Support Transition to Hybrid/Flexible Models Employee Experiences & Preferences	EXP-InitialReactions, IMP-PreCOVID IMP-COVIDResponse, IMP-ProcessImprovement MP-HybridModel, ORG-PolicyFlexibility IMP-CostCutting, EXP-Productivity

4.4.1 Initial Perceptions of Remote Work

Early perceptions of remote work in Malaysia were significantly influenced by the limited implementation of this arrangement within the Malaysian banking sector pre-pandemic. This finding was consistent across almost all interviews and aligns with Omar and Henry (2024), who noted that remote work was uncommon in Malaysia's banking sector before the pandemic. Following are some interview transcripts that explicitly address participants' familiarity and initial perception regarding remote work

“Before 2019, it was like...actually, there wasn't anyone working from home. Before 2020, no one really did that.” (Interviewee-2, Line 4)

“Before COVID, it was 100% office work.” (Interviewee-4, Line 18)

“Before Covid hit, have you work remotely/work from home before?” (Implied answer: No) (Interviewee 8, Line 1)

Given the unfamiliarity with sudden remote work, observing employees' and employers' initial reactions upon implementation was crucial. This aspect was specifically explored in the interview, providing insight into the foundational perceptions of this new work arrangement.

Employee responses were notably varied, ranging from enthusiasm for working from home to feelings of stress and overwhelm, and concerns about their ability to manage work effectively in a remote setting as shown below:

“Initially, I felt stressed...needed to work from home, staying in one place all day...it felt stressful because I couldn't go out. However, as time passed, I gradually got used to it.” (Interviewee 7, Line 18)

“There is mix feeling, there is soo much things going on in my mind like ‘I cannot do this, I cannot do that, etc’” (Interviewee 3, Line 8)

“Of course, when we work from home, we are happy...I think everyone was happy...” (Interviewee 8, Line 16)

“My initial thought was, “How am I going to manage my project?”“...I had this project to handle while adjusting to working from home. It felt overwhelming...” (Interviewee 4, Line 26)

Initially, the abrupt imposition of working from home precipitated considerable psychological stress, primarily stemming from the enforced spatial immobility and the curtailment of external movement. This initial period of constraint and the associated feelings of being confined gradually yielded to a process of adaptation and habituation as the individual adjusted to the altered environmental and behavioural parameters.

Employers were initially unprepared for the sudden shift to remote work during COVID-19, leading to widespread cluelessness and chaotic responses across all levels. Significant infrastructure challenges emerged, highlighting a lack of readiness for widespread remote operations, with even management appearing lost before adaptation and support structures were established. This was highlighted during the interview session as below:

“Everyone did not know what to do. Started from the bosses as well as the executives and the officers. Everyone was clueless.” (Interviewee 1, Line 12)

“Yes, when the regulation was issued, everyone started working from home. They quickly introduced guidelines...At first, it was a bit chaotic...The main issue was infrastructure...” (Interviewee 2, Line 6)

4.4.2 Determining the Organizational Approach (High Road vs. Low Road)

The previous analysis section recognizes the Movement Control Order (MCO) as the initial catalyst that compelled organizations to adopt remote work. However, the crucial questions explored here shift significantly to examine *why* organizations chose to continue remote work after the initial mandate and *how* they effectively managed its prolonged implementation. This moves the analytical lens beyond the emergency impetus, concentrating instead on identifying the sustained motivations and practical strategies that underpinned this enduring practice within these organizations.

To analyse this, the study specifically aims to determine if these post-mandate decisions reflected a “High Road” approach one focused on supporting employee well-being, maintaining quality, and encouraging new ideas in remote work or a “Low Road” approach, mainly aimed at cost saving while having access to good and top talent. Knowing this distinction is vital for understanding the lasting views and practical methods organizations adopted for remote work, separate from the initial emergency phase and its reactive measures.

Our primary focus at the beginning of this analysis is to thoroughly explore the reasons why organizations chose to continue or further develop their remote and hybrid work setups. To do this effectively, we have categorized these reasons into two main areas. The first area, which we term the “High Road,” includes all the motivations and strategies that prioritize employee well-being, aim for high-quality work, and encourage innovation. The second area, the “Low Road,” encompasses all the reasons and approaches that are mainly about saving money and having access to top talent. By examining these two perspectives, we aim to gain a clearer understanding of the long-term direction of remote and hybrid work.

4.4.2.1 Rationale for Continuing/Shaping Remote/Hybrid Work

This research, as outlined in the initial sections of this thesis, seeks to determine if the implementation of remote or hybrid work arrangements by an employer/organization is perceived through either a High Road Approach or a Low Road Approach. The interview data provides strong evidence that employers or managers often framed the remote or hybrid work arrangement as a notable employee benefit, indicating a shift away from viewing it solely as a temporary response.

High Road Evidence

For instance, one interviewee expressed and highlighted the perceived value in work-life balance when implementing the remote work arrangement which improved their quality of life and satisfaction towards the job.

“I think for parents, especially moms, the hybrid model is really appreciated” (Interviewee 1, Line 49)

This sentiment of flexibility as a benefit is supported further by the exchange where the bank's approach was characterized as giving employees the choice, leading to a “hybrid” model.

“So meaning to say that the bank gave their employees the flexibility to choose?”

“Yes. We can consider as hybrid. Like 2 days work in office and another days work at home” (Interviewee 4, Line 19 & 20)

Moreover, the perceived advantages of this balance were echoed by another participant who found their “hybrid arrangement three days a week in the office and two days working from home” to be “a good balance” reinforcing the idea of these arrangements being presented as a positive offering.

Significantly, the interview data strongly suggests that employers or managers frequently presented this work arrangement as an employee benefit, moving beyond the notion of it being merely a temporary solution.

“Like in our current situation, we have a hybrid arrangement three days a week in the office and two days working from home. I think that’s a good balance.” (Interviewee 1, Line 10)

The organization further implemented process improvements to support the remote work arrangement. These improvements encompassed the enhancement of key processes and the streamlining of redundant steps. The preceding two years of remote work necessitated by the MCO were instrumental in driving this process improvement.

“During the starting of MCO, slowly the office, what is that cannot, what we called as, they cut the process, they implement, they enhance the system.” (Interviewee 2 Line 30)

Aligning with the concept of Employee Quality Maximization, the evidence presented in this section supports the earlier assertion that the organization views remote working as a crucial driver of sustained organizational performance, rather than a standalone objective. As Delany (2021) noted, this understanding results in the development of human resource policies and practices that support remote work, along with systems to manage performance and foster potential within the remote workforce.

Low Road Evidence

In analysing the rationale behind the continuation or adjustments to remote/hybrid work, clear indications of a 'Low Road' approach emerged. This was primarily demonstrated in situations where organizations explicitly cited cost-cutting measures as the main driver for maintaining or adapting their remote work policies. Instances such as aiming to reduce operational costs through methods like 'going paperless' or explicitly targeting reductions in utility bills, like water and electricity, were provided as key motivations. These examples align with the 'Employee Cost Minimization' concept, where the focus is on reducing expenses rather than maximizing employee well-being or productivity through strategic investments in remote work infrastructure and support.

“For long term it’s for cutting cost...going paperless, and staff no longer do over time.” (Interviewee 3, Line 28)

“For long term it’s for cutting cost, it helps the bank a lot. When they see it in long term, they saw the good effect of cost cutting for them. For example, going paperless, and staff no longer do over time.” (Interviewee 2, Line 28)

“They wanted to decrease or reduce the utilities like the water bills and electricity and things similar” (Interviewee 3, Line 32)

Furthermore, evidence of the 'Low Road' also apparent where decisions to reduce or restrict remote work were based primarily on concerns about maintaining control over employees and perceived declines in productivity, without accompanying supportive measures. A case in point is, instances were noted where changes in leadership, such as a new CEO, led to a tightening of remote work policies due to beliefs that productivity was negatively impacted. This resulted in changes like reducing remote workdays significantly. Such actions, when taken without providing adequate resources, training, or addressing underlying issues, reinforce a 'Low Road' approach, suggesting a lack of trust and a primary focus on control rather than fostering a productive and supportive remote work environment.

“...new CEO and he believed that the productivity was not that good so now we are at 4 to 1 days. Previously, it was full day’s work at home.” (Interviewee 1, Line 32)

The tendency of banking institutions to adopt a pragmatic mix of High Road and Low Road approaches reflects the specific operational tensions within the sector, where high-security mandates often clash with the need for agile, flexible work designs. While the ‘High Road’ investments in secure mobile technology were necessary for business continuity during the pandemic, the simultaneous ‘Low Road’ cost-cutting measures suggest that banking leadership still views remote staff through a traditional, commodity-based lens. This hybrid strategy demonstrates that the sector has not yet fully transitioned to a results-oriented performance culture, as the drive for operational efficiency and stringent security remains a primary, often overriding, organisational goal. Consequently, employees experience a contradictory environment where they are simultaneously treated as high-value human capital and operational costs to be minimised.

4.4.2.2 Level of Investment and Support

The willingness of employers or the organization to invest in and support the implementation of remote work will be considered as an indicator of their potential adoption of either a High Road or a Low Road strategy. Building upon the definitions provided in Section 2.2, the interview transcripts will be analysed to further discern the nature of this support.

High Road Evidence

The support from the top management team is identified as a key factor in facilitating remote work flexibility (Chatterjee et al., 2022). This support could be in the shape of provision of resources like company laptops, allowances, loans for equipment, dedicated IT support (like mobile clinics), and system enhancements. Here are some of the interview lines that highlighted on support by the organisations.

“... the bank gave us laptop, and the laptop was equipped with good security system to safeguard the data and to be access other than office.” (Interviewee 4, Line 12)

“The organization also provided allowances to help employees purchase devices and set up internet connections if needed. Everything moved online quite seamlessly.” (Interviewee 1, Line 61)

“Because, starting from the MCO and until now, they have mobile clinic. So, any issue on the laptop, you can just walk into the clinic, or you work from home and there’s issue, you can just call their helpdesk.” (Interviewee 2, Line 104)

Illustrating a substantial level of investment in their remote workforce, certain organizations even extended financial support to their employees in the form of loans. This initiative was designed to empower employees to create proper and conducive remote work setups, ultimately facilitating their ability to perform their work to the best of their capabilities.

“But now they even provided loan for the employees that wanted to set up work from home station, you can work from home so.” (Interviewee 2, Line 100)

Low Road Evidence

When examining the level of investment and support provided by organizations, there are clear signs of a “Low Road” approach particularly evident through ongoing infrastructure issues. One key example is the expectation for employees to use their own personal laptops for work, often over extended periods, to access sensitive company data. This reliance on personal devices highlights a lack of adequate upfront investment in secure, company-provided tools, raising concerns about both data security and employee support in remote work environments. Presented below are key excerpts from the interviews:

“...challenge was that I had to use my personal laptop for 6 months and using that to access confidential information was challenging...Using Zoom to replace...face time was hard...” (Interviewee 1, Line 10)

4.4.2.3 Policies and Culture

As organizations moved from the reactive, fully remote phase of the MCO to more permanent arrangements, their hybrid policies and the workplace culture surrounding them became key indicators of their underlying “High Road” or “Low Road” approach. The analysis of these policies and cultural shifts, as described by the participants, reveals a clear divergence in organizational philosophies.

High Road Evidence

A key indicator of a “High Road” approach is the development of policies and a workplace culture rooted in trust and genuine flexibility, which empowers employees rather than controlling them through rigid oversight. This philosophy goes beyond simply allowing remote work; it actively fosters a sense of employee ownership and autonomy by valuing outcomes over micromanagement. The interview data reveals several compelling instances where organizations embodied this philosophy by institutionalizing choice and actively adapting their policies to support a greater degree of employee autonomy. This was evidenced by organizations giving employees the agency to determine their own schedules and work locations, thereby embedding a culture of self-direction and mutual trust into their long-term operational framework.

Instead of a rigid, top-down mandate, some organizations fostered a High Road culture by giving employees the agency to decide their work arrangements. This was clearly articulated by an employee from Interview 8:

“So meaning to say that the bank gave their employees the flexibility to choose...” (Interviewee 8, Line 19)

“Yes. When we onboard the new employee, we will let them know, but the arrangement came with condition.” (Interviewee 8, Line 22)

A trusting, “High Road” culture is evidenced when flexible work arrangements are established as a standard operational benefit, accessible to all employees without preconditions. This approach reflects a fundamental belief in employee autonomy and competence, embedding trust as a foundational element of the workplace culture. This was confirmed by a manager from Interview 2, who provided compelling evidence of this philosophy in practice by noting that the hybrid option is made available to new joiners immediately upon their entry. This policy demonstrates that trust is extended proactively to all members of the organization, regardless of their tenure, reinforcing a culture where flexibility is an inherent right rather than a conditional reward.

“No, it’s immediate...they are allowed to work from home or the office. There’s no requirement to work for a certain period first.” (Interviewee 2, Line 24)

Low Road Evidence

A “Low Road” approach to remote work becomes evident when organizational policies grow increasingly restrictive, and the prevailing culture actively pushes for a return to the office. This philosophy is typically rooted in top-down assumptions about the necessity of physical presence for productivity and a fundamental lack of trust in employees to work effectively without direct supervision. As such, it prioritizes control over genuine flexibility, often manifesting in strict attendance mandates, rigid check-in protocols, or other measures designed to monitor and manage employee visibility rather than focusing on performance outcomes.

A primary indicator of a “Low Road” strategy is the curtailment of flexibility based on unilateral management decisions rather than collaborative assessment. This is powerfully illustrated by one participant's experience, where their hybrid arrangement was drastically reduced for a reason based not on team-level data, but on a high-level assumption:

“...new CEO and he believed that the productivity was not that good so now we are at 4 to 1 days. Previously, it was full days work at home.” (Interviewee 1, Line 22)

Such a move demonstrates a management philosophy rooted in a lack of trust, suggesting that the organization equates physical presence with productivity and doubts the ability of employees to perform effectively without direct oversight. This restrictive policy is often supported by a broader organizational culture that actively discourages remote work. This cultural push creates uncertainty and reinforces the idea that remote work is a temporary privilege rather than a permanent strategy. An employee from one such company noted that significant investments were being made in physical infrastructure, which they interpreted as a clear signal:

“...The overall culture in my office doesn't seem to reflect this. It seems that others might be more particular and still prefer employees to work in the office.” (Interviewee 7, Line 34)

Another piece of evidence of a “Low Road” culture is found in the implementation of stricter rules for ad-hoc remote work requests. One participant explained that in other departments, employees can no longer work from home unless

they applied for it. This bureaucratic process undermines genuine flexibility and treats remote work not as a trusted option but as an exception that requires high-level justification.

*“...other departments no longer have the option to work from home unless they apply for it...you have to provide a valid reason...it's the GM who has to approve it...quite difficult to request WFH now.”
(Interviewee 4, Line 38)*

The tendency of banking institutions to adopt a pragmatic mix of High Road and Low Road approaches reflects the specific operational tensions within the sector, where high-security mandates often clash with the need for agile, flexible work designs. While the ‘High Road’ investments in secure mobile technology were necessary for business continuity during the pandemic, the simultaneous ‘Low Road’ cost-cutting measures suggest that banking leadership still views remote staff through a traditional, commodity-based lens. This hybrid strategy demonstrates that the sector has not yet fully transitioned to a results-oriented performance culture, as the drive for operational efficiency and stringent security remains a primary, often overriding, organizational goal.

4.5 Analysis and Results on Research Question 2

RQ2: How does working remotely affecting their visibility at work?

This section transitions the analysis to the second research question, which aligns directly with Research Objective 2: “To understand the perceptions of managers and employees on the workplace visibility of remote workers.” This research question delves into the multifaceted impact of remote and hybrid work arrangements on an employee's visibility within the workplace. By focusing on the lived experiences of employees and managers, this section will unpack how visibility is understood, valued, and ultimately affected in a non-traditional work setting, and how these perceptions may influence recognition, career progression, and a sense of belonging.

The themes and sub-themes extracted from the interview analysis that are pertinent to this research question are presented in Table 4.4. This table served as the guiding framework for the subsequent analysis in this section.

Table 4.4.
Main Themes, Sub-Themes and Sample Codes Derived for RQ2

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample Codes
Workplace Visibility	Importance of Visibility	VIS-Importance
	Impact on Relationships & Connection	VIS-Relationshipimpact,
	Management Views & Styles	VIS-Managementview
	Visibility Challenges For New Joiners	VIS-Newjoinerimpact

4.5.1 Perceived Importance and Necessity of Visibility

The analysis of the interview data reveals a significant divergence in how participants perceive the importance of workplace visibility. This finding was consistent across the interview sessions, where the necessity of being physically “seen” was sharply contested. The participants’ views were often shaped by their specific job functions, their perception of their manager’s style, and the overarching culture of their organization.

The erosion of these interpersonal bonds, as reported by participants, serves as a primary driver of the “Visibility-Progression Nexus” within these banks. In a sector where trust and information-sharing quality are fundamental to operational success, the shift from nuanced face-to-face interaction to transactional digital communication directly hinders the development of the social capital necessary for career sustainability. This finding supports the argument that in the banking sector, the lack of physical presence is not merely a logistical challenge, but a fundamental disruption to the relational lubricant that sustains trust and career visibility. The following sections will present these conflicting perspectives.

4.5.1.1 *The Argument for the Importance of Visibility*

Several participants strongly argued that visibility is an essential, non-negotiable component of professional life. For some, visibility is fundamental to building the social capital required for effective collaboration and networking. This perspective was clearly articulated by one participant:

*“Yes. Important. Because you need to make people aware of you...Especially for building wider and deeper connection.”
(Interviewee 1, Line 39)*

This view was often reinforced by the perception that management values physical presence. An employee acknowledged that while it may not be a personal priority, it matters to those in decision-making positions:

*“From my boss’s perspective, it’s definitely considered important.”
(Interviewee 4, Line 46)*

Furthermore, within the banking sector, visibility was sometimes described as a practical necessity tied to the nature of the work. One manager explained that handling sensitive information requires a physical presence, making visibility a matter of security and operational integrity:

“...we deal with a lot of sensitive information. If you’re required to be at the office, you must be physically present...visibility is important.” (Interviewee 2, Line 33)

4.5.1.2 The Argument Against the Importance of Visibility

In direct contrast, several other participants, particularly those in roles with clearly defined and measurable outputs, dismissed the need for physical visibility. For this group, performance and accountability are the only metrics that matter, rendering “face time” irrelevant. An employee from an operations team was unequivocal in this belief:

“Not needed [visibility]. Because our job was our own responsibility...As long as there is no issues then we will settled it on our own.” (Interviewee 3, Line 64)

This perspective decouples successful performance from physical presence, suggesting that in a results-oriented environment, autonomy and effective task completion make direct supervision unnecessary. This sentiment was strongly echoed by another participant who stated that results transcend location:

“It is based on performance. Doesn’t matter if your manager sees you or the interaction or not, if you completed the tasks, you perform well then it didn’t matter.” (Interviewee 8, Line 60)

Ultimately, this viewpoint posits that the ability to deliver quality work is the true measure of an employee's value. As another participant concluded, the focus should be on output, not observation:

*“As long as you can deliver your work...visibility isn't that crucial.”
(Interviewee 4, Line 46)*

4.5.2 Impact on Relationships, Connection, and Communication

Beyond the debate over its necessity, the reduction in physical visibility due to remote work was found to have a tangible and consistently negative impact on interpersonal dynamics, the quality of communication, and the integration of new employees. This section explores these consequences, drawing from Sub-themes 2.2, 1.4, and 2.4.

4.5.2.1 The Erosion of Interpersonal Bonds

A recurring finding in the interviews was that the lack of physical co-presence significantly hinders the development and maintenance of strong interpersonal relationships among colleagues and with superiors. Participants described a shift from personal, nuanced interactions to more transactional, formal communication, which often led to a sense of detachment. One employee noted this can result in feeling disconnected from the team:

“Yes. Might be different [treatment by supervisor]. ...when you work from home, it feels a little bit left out...” (Interviewee 5, Line 52)

This feeling of being “left out” stems from the difficulty of establishing genuine trust and emotional connection through virtual means. A manager emphasized that the richness of in-person interaction is lost, making it harder to build the foundational trust that underpins effective teamwork:

“Of course, will have better connection with the employees that work in office...talking about connection, we need to have physical presence and emotion connection...Its quite difficult to established connection and trust...” (Interviewee 6, Line 24)

Another participant explained how the nature of conversations changes, becoming less personal and more functional, which ultimately weakens the social fabric of a team:

“When you meet face-to-face...you'll also talk about more personal things. But when working from home...all communication happens via WhatsApp...reduces the bond...” (Interviewee 7, Line 51)

The divergence in perceived visibility highlights a fundamental clash between presence-based norms and performance-based output in the banking sector. Participants in operational roles with objective KPIs correctly identified that their measurable output acts as an insulating resource against proximity bias, supporting the theory that clear outcomes can buffer against presence-based discrimination. However, the erosion of interpersonal bonds due to reduced physical interaction directly diminishes the communication quality required to maintain trust, particularly in vertical supervisory relationships. Within the Malaysian banking context, visibility is therefore less about technical task performance and more about sustaining the social lubricant required for career sustainability and organisational cohesion

4.5.2.2 The Link to Communication Deficiencies

This erosion of personal connection is directly linked to the inherent communication challenges of remote work, as identified in Sub-theme 1.4. Participants found that virtual tools were often a poor substitute for the clarity and immediacy of face-to-face dialogue. The difficulty of replacing “face time” with virtual meetings was a common sentiment from the initial transition period:

“Using Zoom to replace...face time was hard...” (Interviewee 1, Line 10)

These challenges persisted beyond the initial adaptation phase, with employees noting practical issues that hinder effective collaboration. The lack of non-verbal cues and the asynchronous nature of text-based communication often lead to delays and misinterpretations:

“...difficulty is from the communication. Their respond is not instant which is crucial...communication using texting, some of it cannot be understand.” (Interviewee 1, Line 18)

4.5.2.3 The Amplified Challenge for New Joiners

These negative effects on relationships and communication are particularly amplified for new employees. The data strongly suggests that new joiners face significant hurdles in integrating into the team and absorbing the organizational culture when their visibility is limited. A manager highlighted that essential elements of the workplace are difficult to convey remotely, leading to isolation:

“...understanding the culture like teamwork, responsibility, and trust is crucial. It was challenging for them to learn these aspects remotely. We realized they were feeling isolated...” (Interviewee 2, Line 57)

In response, organizations recognized the need for physical presence to facilitate this crucial integration process. The same manager explained that their organization mandated more office time for new hires specifically to counteract the effects of remote isolation, underscoring the perceived value of visibility for building foundational relationships:

“This allowed them [new joiners] to meet different people, build relationships...” (Interviewee 2, Line 57)

4.5.3 Influence of Management Views and Styles

The interview data strongly indicates that the supervisor's attitude and management style are critical factors that moderate the impact of remote work on employee visibility. The experiences of the participants show a clear distinction between managers who operate on a basis of trust and autonomy versus those who struggle with the lack of direct oversight, thereby heightening the importance of visibility for their subordinates. This section explores these contrasting approaches, drawing upon Sub-theme 2.3.

4.5.3.1 The Trust-Based, Results-Oriented Approach

In environments where managers prioritize outcomes over physical presence, the issue of visibility becomes significantly less important for employees. This approach is characterized by a high degree of trust and a focus on task completion rather than micromanagement. One participant described their manager's style as hands-off and supportive:

*"The manager did not do such things as micromanaging."
(Interviewee 1, Line 33)*

This results-oriented approach was echoed by another participant, who, when asked if they would allow their subordinate to work from home, stated that physical presence was not a concern as long as the work was delivered:

"No problem...as long as he can completed his tasks, I don't think that would be a problem." (Interviewee 8, Line 42)

4.5.3.2 The Control-Based, Presence-Oriented Approach

Conversely, when managers find it difficult to adapt to remote oversight, the lack of physical visibility becomes a source of tension. One manager candidly expressed the difficulty of leading a remote team, explicitly linking the challenge of monitoring to the need for trust:

"...monitoring, it is rather difficult for us to monitor our team is they are doing their job. So, the main one is to build trust..." (Interviewee 6, Line 4)

This perspective highlights how a manager's struggle with remote oversight can directly translate into a heightened sense of scrutiny for the employee. Participants were acutely aware of this dynamic, with one employee correctly identifying that a manager's need for constant check-ins is often a symptom of a deeper issue:

"...What you mentioned just now is more to micromanaging...maybe the level of trust is not there." (Interviewee 8, Line 101)

4.6 Analysis and Results on Research Question 3

RQ3: How will working remotely affects the career progression of the employees (positive, negative, stagnant)?

This final analytical section addresses the third and culminating research question, which investigates the perceived impact of remote and hybrid work on employee career progression. This question corresponds directly to Research Objective 3, which is “*To explore the views of managers and employees on career progression of the employee that work remotely*”. The analysis will delve into whether participants believe their career advancement opportunities are enhanced, hindered, or unaffected by their work arrangements.

To answer this question, the analysis will be structured around Theme 3: Career Progression and its sub-themes. Crucially, this section will demonstrate the deep interplay between career progression and the findings on workplace visibility from the preceding analysis (Section 4.4), illustrating how perceptions of visibility often form the basis for concerns about career advancement. The themes, sub-themes, and sample codes that form the foundation for this analysis are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5.
Main Themes, Sub-Themes and Sample Codes Derived for RQ3

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample Codes
Career Progression	Link between Visibility & Career Progression	VIS-CareerImpact CP-Impact
	Role of Relationships	CP-RelationshipBuilding
	Differential Impact on Employees	CP-NewJoiners CP-EstablishedEmployees
	Assessment & Opportunities	CP-Opportunities

4.6.1 The Perceived Link Between Visibility, Remote Work, and Progression

The analysis begins by establishing the foundational belief held by many participants: that a direct and significant link exists between an employee’s visibility and their opportunities for career progression. This narrative evidence substantiates the “Visibility-Progression Nexus”, where physical presence is utilized by decision-makers as a mental shortcut for evaluating employee worth and performance. As noted by Matysiak et al. (2025), even when performance metrics are objectively identical, remote

workers face significant career penalties because managers may subconsciously equate physical absence with a lack of job commitment and presenteeism. In the context of the Malaysian banking sector, this ‘presence-based evaluation’ creates a systemic bias that effectively limits advancement opportunities in their career trajectories for any employee that is not physically visible to senior leadership and decision maker.

4.6.1.1 The General Connection Between Visibility and Career Advancement

A prevalent perception among many participants is that the reduced visibility associated with remote work can negatively impact career progression. This belief is often tied to the persistence of traditional organizational cultures where physical presence is equated with commitment and contribution. This suggests a cultural lag where traditional metrics of evaluation still hold significant weight in career-defining decisions. One participant articulated this by pointing to generational differences in management:

“...I feel it would affect career progression...my boss’s boss...comes from a generation that still looks at who they see in person. So...it would still affect career progress if they don’t see you.” (Interviewee 7, Line 48)

This sentiment was reinforced by another manager who, when asked if it was easier to progress if visible in a traditional culture, simply stated, “Yes”. These statements collectively underscore a strong belief that in many organizational contexts, “out of sight” can indeed mean “out of mind” when it comes to promotions.

4.6.1.2 Concrete Examples of the Visibility-Progression Impact

This perceived link was not merely an abstract concern; for some, it manifested in tangible, career-altering outcomes. The most powerful evidence of this connection came from a participant who shared a direct personal experience where differing levels of visibility led to divergent career paths for two otherwise similar employees. This narrative provides a stark, real-world illustration of how perceived differences in visibility can translate into significant professional consequences. The employee recounted:

“Yes, actually...my boss preferred me and saw my work more often, he would submit my name for promotion every year...my teammate's name wasn't submitted, which ultimately led to him deciding to resign.” (Interviewee 4, Line 60)

This narrative evidence substantiates the ‘Visibility-Progression Nexus,’ where physical presence is utilised by decision-makers as a mental shortcut for evaluating employee worth for career advancement. Even when performance metrics are objectively identical, remote workers face significant career penalties because managers may subconsciously equate physical absence with a lack of job commitment. In the Malaysian banking sector, this bias is reinforced by traditional organisational cultures that prioritise ‘facetime’ as a measure of institutional loyalty. Consequently, remote employees are systematically overlooked for advancement, creating a dual-track career path that disadvantages distributed talent in favour of those physically present in the office environment. This testimony serves as a critical anchor for the study, demonstrating a clear case where a lack of face-time was perceived to have directly resulted in a missed promotion opportunity and the subsequent loss of a team member.

4.6.2 Factors Influencing the Impact on Career Progression

The data reveals that the impact of remote work on career progression is not uniform. It is moderated by several key factors, including the emphasis on performance versus presence, the quality of professional relationships, the organizational context, and an employee's tenure within the organization.

4.6.2.1 The Performance vs. Presence Debate

The core tension within the data lies in the debate between presence-based and performance-based evaluation. A strong counterargument emerged from participants who believe that performance is the sole determinant of career progression, regardless of work location. This perspective, common among participants in operational roles, posits an ideal meritocracy where objective output fully supersedes the subjective influence of physical presence. One operations employee stated firmly:

“No [visibility affect career progression]. As for us in operation. It won't affect us...The thing that will affect us is when there is error, and it will affect the performance.”

(Interviewee 3, Line 74)

This view was echoed by another who emphasized that good performance is what truly matters, stating, “if your performance was good then the career progression was fast...it did not matter much”. These statements highlight a belief that robust performance management systems can effectively insulate employees from the potential biases associated with physical visibility.

4.6.2.2 The Role of Relationships

The data reveals a strong perception among participants that career progression is not solely a function of task completion but is also significantly influenced by interpersonal relationships and social integration. Participants highlighted that factors beyond technical performance, such as personality and teamwork, are critical for advancement, and that building the necessary relationships to demonstrate these qualities is hindered by remote work. One participant explicitly stated that progression depends on more than just work output:

“Personality yes. How you communicate with the colleague. What kind of role as a team player...” (Interviewee 1, Line 51)

This underscores the belief that career advancement involves integrating into the social fabric of the organization. However, participants noted that developing these essential connections is a primary challenge in a remote setting. The difficulty in building this social capital was identified as a key barrier, particularly for those who have not had the chance to build a strong network from the outset. As one manager explained, the core issue for new remote workers is that they:

“...haven’t had the chance to establish strong relationships with their supervisors, management, or even within their teams.” (Interviewee 2, Line 51)

This inability to form deep professional relationships while remote is therefore a significant underlying factor in the perceived risk to an employee's career progression, as opportunities can be influenced by the strength of these connections.

4.6.2.3 The Influence of Organizational Context

The data reveals that the impact of remote work on career progression is not determined by the arrangement itself, but rather by the organizational context in which it is practiced. Participants consistently indicated that the prevailing culture and management style act as a critical filter, shaping whether remote employees are at a disadvantage. One manager directly articulated this, stating that the effect on career progression is not universal:

*“Yes. Again. It depends on the superior and depends on the management style and culture...our culture was very traditional.”
(Interviewee 6, Line 26)*

This participant confirmed that in such a “traditional” culture, being physically visible does indeed make it easier to advance in one's career. This highlights that in workplaces where “face time” is an ingrained cultural value, remote workers face an inherent disadvantage. The influence of this traditional mindset is often driven by senior leadership, whose generational views can dictate promotion practices, as another employee explained:

“...I feel it would affect career progression...my boss's boss...comes from a generation that still looks at who they see in person. So...it would still affect career progress if they don't see you.” (Interviewee 7, Line 48)

This evidence strongly suggests that the negative impacts on career progression are most pronounced in organizations with a presence-oriented culture, which aligns with the characteristics of a Low Road approach that prioritizes control and traditional oversight. Therefore, an employee's career trajectory in a hybrid or remote role is heavily dependent on the specific cultural and managerial context of their organization.

4.6.2.4 Differential Impact on Employees

The data consistently indicates that the career risks associated with remote work are not distributed evenly; newer employees are perceived to be at a significant disadvantage compared to their more established colleagues. Experienced employees

who had years to build their internal networks before the pandemic are seen as better insulated from the negative effects of reduced visibility. As one manager explained:

“I don’t think it has significantly affected career progression [for me]...However, for newer employees...they might face some delays...because they haven’t had the chance to establish strong relationships...” (Interviewee 2, Line 51)

This highlights a potential long-term equity issue, where a “tenure-based visibility advantage” may inadvertently penalize new talent in a hybrid environment, making it harder for them to get noticed and advance.

4.6.2.5 Alternative Assessment Methods

To counteract presence bias, participants identified several performance assessment methods that are independent of physical location. These alternatives represent a potential pathway to ensuring equitable career progression by grounding decisions in objective contributions. For employees in client-facing roles, formal feedback provides a clear measure of performance:

“...we are servicing client, so every year we have client review...they will assign marks...this is where the performance review coming from.” (Interviewee 3, Line 76)

For others, active involvement in key projects serves as a way to demonstrate capabilities. As one participant suggested, this is a good way for managers “to engage staff and evaluate their performance”

4.6.3 Overall Perceived Direction of Impact (Positive, Negative, Stagnant)

This final part of the analysis synthesizes the interview data to directly address the overall perceived direction of remote work's impact on career progression, as framed by the third research question. The findings do not converge on a single, uniform conclusion; rather, they reveal a clear spectrum of lived experiences, with perceptions ranging from a tangible negative or stagnant effect to a belief that the impact is entirely neutral.

This divergence in perception is not random but appears to be a direct consequence of the various influencing factors explored in the preceding section, such as an employee's specific job function, their manager's leadership style, and the overarching organizational culture. To fully explore this spectrum, the following analysis will first examine the evidence supporting a negative or stagnant impact, followed by the counterargument for a neutral impact, and will conclude with the participants' forward-looking views on how this dynamic might change.

4.6.3.1 Synthesize Participant Views

Synthesizing the diverse perspectives on career progression reveals a clear spectrum of lived experiences rather than a single, uniform conclusion. The participants' views fall into three distinct categories, shaped by their roles, management styles, and organizational cultures. The most prominent view was that remote work poses a negative or stagnant risk to career advancement, driven by concerns over visibility and relationships. One participant confirmed this anxiety was a primary consideration:

"...one of the concerns you have is how it might affect your career progression, right?" (Interviewee 7, Line 55)

This was countered by a strong belief from another group that the impact is entirely neutral, as objective performance overrides all other factors. This perspective was common in roles with clear metrics:

"Not affected. This is all based on performance." (Interviewee 5, Line 68)

Finally, a more nuanced, forward-looking perspective suggests that while the current situation may be challenging, there is potential for future change as leadership and cultures evolve. This view acknowledges the current barriers but maintains optimism for the long term:

"I don't think it's feasible right now [100% remote + career progression], but perhaps in the future...it could become a reality." (Interviewee 7, Line 58)

These divergent viewpoints highlight the complexity of the issue, and the following sections will explore the evidence for each of these perspectives in greater detail.

4.6.3.2 Evidence of Negative or Stagnant Impact

The most common perception among participants who acknowledged an impact was that remote work poses a significant risk of a negative or stagnant effect on their career progression. This view was often expressed as a direct concern about being overlooked in a hybrid environment. One participant confirmed this anxiety, acknowledging that a primary worry is how remote work might hinder their advancement:

“...one of the concerns you have is how it might affect your career progression, right?” (Interviewee 7, Line 55)

This concern was substantiated by the most definitive evidence of a negative outcome, where a participant recounted the tangible career consequences for a less-visible colleague:

“Yes, actually...my boss preferred me and saw my work more often, he would submit my name for promotion every year...my teammate’s name wasn’t submitted, which ultimately led to him deciding to resign.” (Interviewee 4, Line 60)

This direct link between lower visibility and a tangible negative outcome (a missed promotion and subsequent resignation) powerfully illustrates the career risks perceived by employees. The widespread nature of this concern indicates that for many, the potential for career disadvantage is a significant psychological drawback of remote work.

4.6.3.3 Evidence of Neutral or No Impact

In direct contrast, a significant portion of participants perceived the impact of remote work on their career progression to be neutral or non-existent. This view was almost exclusively held by individuals in roles governed by clear, quantitative KPIs and objective metrics, which they believed insulated them from the subjective assessments

that affect others. They were confident that their performance spoke for itself, making their physical location irrelevant to their advancement opportunities. This was stated unequivocally by multiple participants:

“Not affected. This is all based on performance.” (Interviewee 5, Line 68)

“No. [Career progression affected by remote work]” (Interviewee 3, Line 68)

“No. It is not affecting that [career progression].” (Interviewee 8, Line 64)

This neutral stance was predominantly held by individuals whose roles were governed by clear, quantitative key performance indicators, insulating them from the subjective assessments that affect others.

4.6.3.4 Evidence of Potential Future Change

Finally, a forward-looking perspective emerged from the data, suggesting that while the current impact of remote work on career progression may be negative in many traditional contexts, this is not a permanent state. This view attributes the current challenges to prevailing cultural norms and the mindset of the current generation of senior leaders, implying that these biases are not inherent to remote work itself but are products of an older paradigm. There is an underlying optimism that as workplace cultures evolve and new, more digitally native generations of leaders take charge, the biases against remote workers will erode. One participant captured this sentiment perfectly, expressing hope for a future where location is no longer a barrier to advancement:

“I don’t think it’s feasible right now [100% remote + career progression], but perhaps in the future...it could become a reality.” (Interviewee 7, Line 58)

4.7 Themes findings

The comprehensive analysis of the interview data presented in this chapter culminates in several key findings that illustrate the complex lived experiences of employees in the Malaysian banking sector. These findings synthesize the connections

between the organizational approach to remote work, the subsequent impact on workplace visibility, and the ultimate effect on career progression. The core findings are summarized in Table 4.6 presented at pages that follows.

4.7.1 A Perceived “Visibility-Progression Nexus” Emerges as the Core Concern

The most significant finding of this study is the powerful, perceived link between an employee's lack of physical visibility and the risk of negative career outcomes. This “Visibility-Progression Nexus” was the central anxiety for many participants, who feared that being “out of sight” would lead to being “out of mind” during promotion considerations. This concern was not merely abstract but was substantiated by tangible, career-altering experiences, most notably the direct testimony of a participant whose higher visibility led to consistent promotion nominations while their less-visible colleague was overlooked, ultimately leading to that colleague's resignation. This demonstrates that for many employees, the shift to remote work is not just a change in location but a fundamental change in the perceived rules of career advancement.

4.7.2 The Impact of this Nexus is Heavily Moderated by Context

While the fear of the Visibility-Progression Nexus was strong, its actual impact was found to be highly context-dependent. The findings reveal that its importance is heavily moderated by two key factors: organizational context and job function. First, the organization's overarching approach, as explored in Theme 1 has sets the stage.

A Low Road culture focused on control and traditional oversight tends to amplify the importance of visibility as a proxy for productivity. Conversely, a High Road culture built on trust, investment in technology, and robust performance metrics can mitigate this bias. Second, the nexus is significantly weaker for employees in operational roles with clear, objective KPIs, who feel their measurable results insulate them from presence bias. The concern is strongest for those in roles requiring more subjective evaluation, collaboration, and strong interpersonal relationships to demonstrate value.

4.7.3 Newer Employees are Disproportionately at Risk in this New Context

The findings consistently indicate that the career risks associated with reduced visibility are not distributed evenly across the workforce; newer employees are perceived to be the most vulnerable group. Lacking the pre-existing social capital and established internal networks of their more tenured colleagues, new joiners face a double bind. Their reduced visibility not only hinders their immediate social and cultural integration into the team (Theme 2) but also curtails their ability to build the very relationships and informal knowledge that are often crucial for long-term career progression (Theme 3). This creates a potential long-term equity issue where, without targeted intervention from management, hybrid and remote work models may inadvertently create a two-tiered system that disadvantages new talent.

Table 4.6.
Summary of Key Research Findings

Key Finding	Description	Supporting Themes
The “Visibility-Progression Nexus”	A powerful, perceived link exists where a lack of physical visibility is believed to directly hinder or stagnate an employee's career progression. This is the central anxiety for many remote and hybrid workers.	Theme 2 (Workplace Visibility) & Theme 3 (Career Progression)
The Moderating Role of Context	The impact of the “Visibility-Progression Nexus” is not universal. It is heavily moderated by the organization’s approach (High Road vs. Low Road) and the employee's specific job function (e.g., performance-based vs. subjective evaluation).	Theme 1 (Implementation & Perception), Theme 2 (Workplace Visibility), & Theme 3 (Career Progression)
The Disproportionate Risk for New Employees	The challenges associated with reduced visibility and hindered relationship-building disproportionately affect new joiners, placing them at a greater risk for slower integration and career advancement compared to established colleagues.	Theme 2 (Workplace Visibility) & Theme 3 (Career Progression)

4.8 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the analysis and findings derived from the qualitative data collected through eight in-depth interviews with managers and employees in the Malaysian banking sector. The chapter began by providing context on the research

design and a description of the participant sample before proceeding to a systematic analysis structured around the three core research questions of this study.

The analysis revealed a complex and multifaceted picture of the lived experiences with remote and hybrid work. The findings for the first research question indicated that organizations adopted a mixed “High Road” and “Low Road” approach, balancing investments in employee capability with a clear focus on cost-cutting and control. The analysis for the second research question demonstrated that this context created a contested view on workplace visibility, where its importance was heavily dependent on job function, management style, and traditional organizational cultures. The culmination of this analysis, addressing the third research question, was the identification of a perceived “Visibility-Progression Nexus”, a significant concern among participants that a lack of physical presence could directly hinder their career advancement. This impact was found to be most acute for newer employees who lacked pre-existing social capital.

Having presented and thoroughly analysed these findings, the research will now proceed to the final chapter. Chapter Five will discuss the broader implications of these findings, connect them back to the existing literature, and provide recommendations for employers, employees, and policymakers navigating the future of work.

4.9 Summary of Research Finding Comparison

Table 4.7.

Summary Findings for Research Question 1

<i>What was the initial perceptual framing of the remote work arrangement by employers, and which strategic approach (High Road or Low Road) did they subsequently adopt?</i>	
Previous Research	Current Findings
• Osterman (2018) and OECD (2017) define the “High Road” as a strategic choice focusing on “Employee Quality Maximization,” treating employees as assets, and investing in their skills and welfare to drive long-term performance. • Delany (2021) and OECD (2017) define the “Low Road” as a strategy focused on “Employee Cost Minimization,” treating labour as a cost to be controlled, and prioritizing profit maximization through reduced investment in human capital. • Oly Ndubisi & Kahraman (2005) noted that prior to the pandemic, remote work adoption in Malaysia was unpopular, limited, and relatively unsophisticated compared to Western counterparts.	• The initial adoption of remote work was not a strategic choice. It was a mandatory, “chaotic” response to the MCO. Both employers and employees were described as “clueless” and unprepared for the sudden shift. • Current findings show organizations did not adopt a pure strategy. Instead, they adopted a pragmatic Mixed “High Road” and “Low Road” Approach. • “High Road” evidence was found Organizations made significant investments in employee capability (e.g., providing laptops, allowances, loans for home equipment) and framed the hybrid model as a key benefit for work-life balance. • “Low Road” evidence was found concurrently: Strategic motivations were also driven by cost-cutting (e.g., “going paperless,” reducing utility bills) and a desire for managerial control, such as leadership reducing remote workdays due to a lack of trust.

Table 4.8.
Summary Findings for Research Question 2

<i>How does working remotely affecting their visibility at work?</i>	
Previous Research	Current Findings
• McDonald et al. (2008) argued that “facetime” and near-constant physical visibility in the workplace remain a key component of professional/career success. • Richardson & Kelliher (2015) found that remote workers expressed widespread concern about becoming “invisible,” which they feared would negatively affect relationships with management, managers, and their colleagues. • Beauregard et al. (2019) and Delany (2021) identified “invisibility” as a primary challenge for remote workers, noting that senior managers may be unaware of an individual's performance and potential in acquiring promotion and salary increment. • Yarberry & Sims (2021) and Hamsa et al. (2016) highlighted that remote work can lead to feelings of isolation and a “reduced face-to-face interactions with others,” which impedes social connection.	• The findings show a significant divergence in how participants perceive the importance of visibility. It is not universally essential but is highly contested and context dependent. • Argument against visibility: Participants in operational roles with measurable outputs argued that visibility is “not needed”. They claim that if tasks are completed, performance is all that matters, regardless of “facetime”. • Argument for visibility: Other participants argued visibility is “important” for building a “wider and deeper connection” and is often a practical necessity for handling “sensitive information” especially that they are working in an environment or roles that required them to handle with sensitive and confidential information. • Impact on relationships: There was a strong consensus that reduced visibility has a tangible negative impact on interpersonal bonds. It hinders the ability to build trust, reduces personal connection, and can make employees feel “left out”. • Impact on new joiners: The negative effects are amplified for new employees/joiners. Managers noted that new joiners face “significant hurdles” in integrating and learning the organizational culture, leading to feelings of isolation and lack of integration with the organization culture as well as their team mates.

Table 4.9.
Summary Findings for Research Question 3

<i>How does remote work impact employee career progression (positively, negatively, or stagnantly)?</i>	
Previous Research	Current Findings
• Hamsa et al. (2016) identified “losing the chance for promotion” as a key perceptual constraint for employees considering remote work. • Richardson & Kelliher (2015) found remote workers were concerned about becoming “invisible,” which would cause them to be overlooked for career opportunities and development. • McDonald et al. (2008) argued that “facetime” and near-constant physical visibility remain a key component of professional success, implying a negative impact for those without it. • Beauregard et al. (2019) suggested remote work could create a “dual-track career path” where remote workers are not considered eligible for leadership positions, resulting in stagnant progression on moving up the leadership ladder.	• The findings confirmed a powerful “Visibility-Progression Nexus”. The impact of remote work on careers was the central anxiety for participants. • This fear was substantiated with tangible, negative outcomes. One participant shared a direct experience where their higher visibility led to promotion, while a less-visible teammate was overlooked and subsequently resigned because of the said reason. • However, the impact was not universally negative. The findings revealed a “Performance vs. Presence Debate”. • Evidence of neutral impact: Participants in operational roles with clear, objective KPIs felt insulated from bias. They stated progression was “not affected” and based solely on performance, such as error rates or client reviews. • Evidence of negative/stagnant Impact: Participants in subjective roles, or those in traditional “facetime” cultures, strongly believed progression was negatively impacted. They noted that senior management (the ultimate decision-makers) still value in-person presence. • The risk of negative impact is disproportionately higher for new employees, who “might face some delays” because they lack the established relationships and social capital of tenured colleagues.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter interprets the significance of the study's primary finding: the "Visibility-Progression Nexus". This nexus captures a central tension in the post-pandemic workplace, where the lack of physical visibility inherent in remote work is perceived to hinder career advancement due to persistent, presence-based evaluation metrics.

However, the analysis reveals that this risk is not universal but highly context-dependent. The impact of reduced visibility is amplified or mitigated by the organization's strategic approach (High Road vs. Low Road) and the objectivity of the employee's specific role. Crucially, new employees lacking pre-existing social capital emerged as the most vulnerable group within this new model. By positioning these findings within the broader academic discourse, this chapter outlines theoretical and practical implications, offers recommendations for key stakeholders, and acknowledges the study's limitations.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

This section transitions the research from the presentation of findings in Chapter 4 to the critical task of interpretation. The discussion is structured around the study's key findings, positioning them within the broader academic discourse established in the literature review. The aim is to explore what these findings mean, how they contribute to the understanding of remote and hybrid work, and how they collectively build a narrative about the lived experiences of employees in the Malaysian banking sector. The discussion will begin by analysing the organizational context, then delve into the study's central finding of the "Visibility-Progression Nexus," explore the factors that moderate its impact, and conclude by examining the specific challenges faced by new joiners.

The findings reveal that organizations in the Malaysian banking sector did not adopt a pure "High Road" or "Low Road" strategy but rather a pragmatic, mixed

approach to remote work. This adds a critical layer of nuance to the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2, such as those by Osterman (2018) and Delany (2021), which often present a binary strategic choice. While the literature defines a clear distinction between investing in employee quality versus minimizing labor costs, the reality on the ground appears more complex. The data shows that organizations simultaneously exhibited Low Road tendencies (e.g., focusing on cost-cutting through digitalization) and made High Road investments (e.g., providing technology and support structures). This hybrid strategy created a complex and sometimes contradictory environment of uncertainty for employees, where the policies did not always align with a single, clear philosophy.

5.2.1 The Visibility-Progression Nexus in Context

This study's central contribution is the identification of a “Visibility-Progression Nexus” as a core tension in the post-pandemic workplace. The research confirms and substantiates the anxieties previously identified by scholars like Richardson and Kelliher (2015) and Hamsa et al. (2016) regarding the career risks of remote work. However, this study moves beyond a general fear of being overlooked by providing tangible, real-world evidence of the nexus's career-altering consequences. The participant's account of a less-visible colleague being repeatedly passed over for promotion, which ultimately led to their resignation, transforms the concept from a perceived risk into a demonstrated outcome within the Malaysian context.

5.2.2 The Vulnerability of New Joiners

A critical finding of this study is the identification of new employees as the group most vulnerable to the negative effects of remote work. The data consistently shows that the career risks associated with reduced visibility are not distributed evenly across the workforce. Lacking the pre-existing social capital and established internal networks of their more tenured colleagues, new joiners face a double bind. Their reduced visibility not only hinders their immediate social and cultural integration into the team but also curtails their ability to build the very relationships that are often crucial for long-term career progression. This finding highlights a significant challenge for

talent management and organizational socialization that is underexplored in much of the existing literature.

5.2.3 The Moderating Role of Job Function and Culture

The findings clearly demonstrate that the “Visibility-Progression Nexus” is not a universal rule but is heavily moderated by an employee's specific context. A key factor is job function. The research shows that employees in operational roles with clear, objective key performance indicators (KPIs) felt insulated from presence bias, believing their measurable results were the sole determinant of their success. This aligns with literature on the importance of robust performance management systems. Conversely, the nexus was felt most strongly in roles requiring subjective evaluation, where a traditional, presence-oriented organizational culture still holds significant sway. This confirms the arguments made by McDonald et al. (2008) that in many organizations, “facetime” remains a crucial, unwritten rule for advancement.

5.3 The Emergent Theoretical Framework

This study contributes to the academic literature by developing an emergent theoretical framework that illustrates the complex relationship between organizational approach to the implementation of remote work, workplace visibility, and career progression in adoption of the remote work arrangement by the organization. This model, visually represented in Figure 5.1, is named the “Visibility-Progression Nexus.”

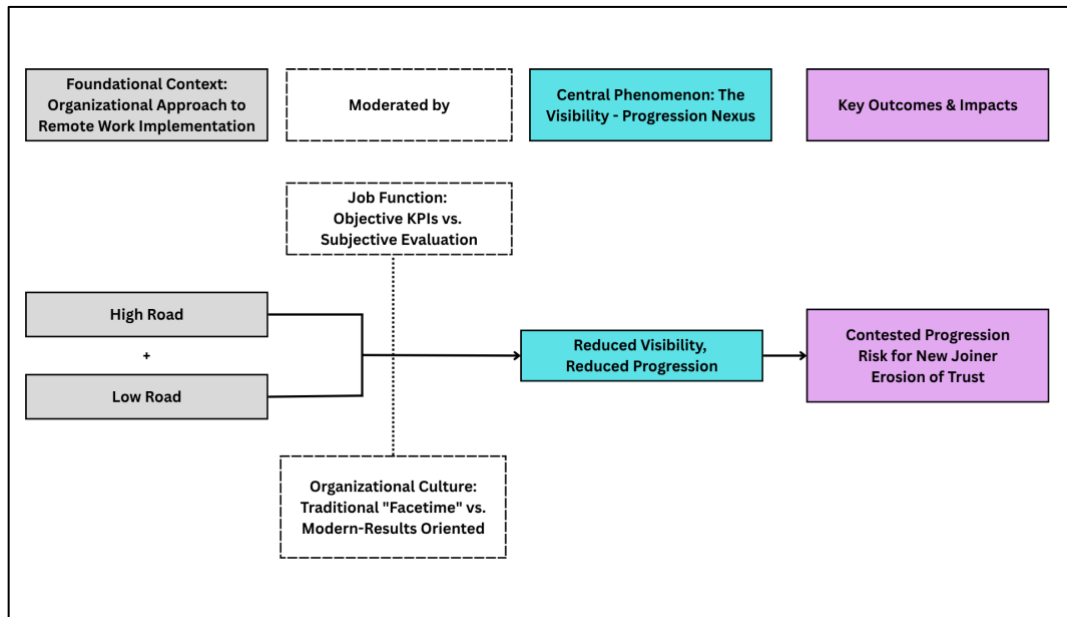


Figure 5.1. Visibility-Progression Nexus
(Source: Developed for this research)

The framework is initiated by the Foundational Context: Organizational Approach to Remote Work Implementation, which reflects the strategic choices made by firms when deciding to pursue the work arrangement. The findings indicate that organizations typically adopt a pragmatic Mixed “High Road” and “Low Road” strategy. This approach, balancing investments in employee welfare and technology with clear goals for cost-efficiency and managerial control, sets the essential environment in which visibility bias takes hold and develops.

The strategic foundation established by the firm directly influences the severity of the Central Phenomenon: The Visibility-Progression Nexus. This central finding, represented by the core empirical relationship that Reduced Visibility leads to Reduced Progression, is dynamically moderated by two key contextual factors flowing from the organizational environment. Firstly, Job Function dictates the risk: roles assessed by objective KPIs offer insulation from presence bias, whereas those reliant on subjective evaluation consequently experience a heightened risk. Conversely, Organizational Culture functions as the second critical determinant; in cultures maintaining a traditional “Facetime” emphasis, the Nexus is amplified, while modern, results-oriented cultures serve to mitigate this relationship. This active moderation confirms that for many employees, navigating the impact of reduced visibility is perceived as a fundamental shift in the unwritten rules governing career advancement.

5.4 Implications of the Study

The findings carry significant implications for the Malaysian banking sector, where the institutionalisation of hybrid work remains constrained by security protocols and presence-based cultures. Theoretically, this study extends the High Road/Low Road framework by demonstrating that in banking, the strategic choice is often a ‘hybridized’ approach, where High Road investments in digital infrastructure are paradoxically coupled with Low Road controls driven by data security mandates.

Practically, these findings imply that banking institutions must re-engineer their performance management systems to decouple long-term career progression from physical office attendance, effectively mitigating the systemic ‘proximity bias’ identified in this research. For human resource policymakers, this necessitates a shift away from traditional presence-based metrics toward output-oriented appraisal systems that better account for the unique performance realities of distributed banking professionals

5.4.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the academic literature in several important ways. First, it adds a layer of practical complexity to the “High Road/Low Road” strategic framework, demonstrating that organizations in a post-pandemic reality often adopt a mixed approach rather than a pure binary strategy. Second, it provides powerful, real-world evidence for the “Visibility-Progression Nexus,” confirming and extending the theoretical concerns about career penalties for remote workers previously raised by scholars like Richardson and Kelliher (2015). Third, the study highlights that, by identifying new joiners as a uniquely vulnerable group, this research highlights a critical gap in the literature on organizational socialization, suggesting that theories of employee integration need to be re-evaluated for the hybrid or remote work era.

5.4.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several actionable insights for key stakeholders in the modern workplace:

For Employers and Managers: The research underscores the urgent need for intentional leadership in a hybrid remote work environment. Simply providing the technology for remote work is insufficient. Organizations must proactively design clear, equitable career progression pathways for remote employees, train managers to mitigate “presence bias,” and invest in new strategies for integrating and mentoring new hires to prevent creating a two-tiered workforce.

For Employees: The “Visibility-Progression Nexus” highlights the need for employees to be proactive in managing their careers in a hybrid/remote work setting. This includes intentionally seeking out opportunities for connection, clearly communicating their achievements, and building strong relationships with both colleagues and superiors, regardless of physical location and constraints. This is important for them to advance further in their career either vertically or horizontally. Building presence and connection are important no matter the career progression ladder that the employees choose to pursue.

For Policymakers: The study suggests that as hybrid/remote work becomes a permanent fixture, policymakers may need to consider developing guidelines that promote equity and protect the career advancement opportunities of remote workers. This could include encouraging fair performance management practices and ensuring that flexible work policies do not inadvertently lead to career discrimination.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings and implications discussed in the preceding sections, this study offers several recommendations aimed at fostering more equitable, effective, and sustainable remote and hybrid work environments. These recommendations are targeted at organizations, policymakers, and future researchers.

5.5.1 Organizations

The findings indicate that organizations must move beyond reactive policies and intentionally design their hybrid work models to mitigate the biases and challenges identified in this research.

1. *Develop Transparent Career Pathways for Remote and Hybrid Roles:* To counteract the “Visibility-Progression Nexus”, organizations should create

and clearly communicate performance-based career ladders that are not dependent on physical presence. Performance metrics should be results-oriented and applied consistently to all employees, regardless of their work location.

2. *Invest in Training for Hybrid Management:* The data shows that management style is a critical factor in the success of remote work. Organizations should invest in mandatory training for all managers on how to lead distributed teams effectively. This training should focus on mitigating “presence bias,” building trust, and evaluating employees based on output and contribution rather than physical visibility.
3. *Implement a Structured Onboarding and Mentorship Program for New Joiners:* Given the disproportionate risk faced by new employees, organizations must create structured programs to facilitate their integration. This should include a formal mentorship system that pairs new hires with established colleagues and a deliberate “in-office” schedule for the initial months to help them build crucial social capital and internal networks.

Banking institutions should transition toward ‘Visibility-Neutral’ performance frameworks to address the identified “Visibility-Progression Nexus”. Given the sector’s high-security requirements which limit remote data access, performance management should be pivoted toward quantitative, results-based output metrics rather than observation-based presenteeism. Furthermore, to address the disproportionate career risk faced by new joiners, banks must implement structured ‘Social Capital Integration’ programs. These programs should mandate a specific duration of in-office mentorship during the initial onboarding phase, ensuring that new employees can effectively build internal networks and absorb institutional culture, which is otherwise inaccessible in purely remote or loosely structured hybrid environments.

5.5.2 Policymakers

The shift to hybrid work has implications that extend beyond individual organizations, suggesting a role for broader policy guidance.

1. *Establish Guidelines for Equitable Hybrid Work:* Policymakers, such as the Ministry of Human Resources, in consultation with Bank Negara Malaysia,

could develop a national framework or “Code of Practice” for flexible working arrangements. This would not be a rigid mandate but would provide guidance on best practices for performance management, career development, and ensuring equitable opportunities for remote and in-office employees, building upon the spirit of the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022.

2. *Promote Research and Data Collection:* Government bodies could encourage and fund further research into the long-term impacts of hybrid work on the national workforce. Collecting data on productivity, employee well-being, and career progression across various industries would provide a stronger evidence base for future labour policies.

Policymakers and regulatory bodies, such as Bank Negara Malaysia, should provide guidance on updating labour standards to specifically address the career advancement of remote workers in highly regulated industries like finance. Current policies under the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022 focus largely on the mechanics of flexible work applications, but future guidelines should incorporate provisions for ‘career equity’ to protect remote talent from systematic career stagnation caused by this presence/visibility bias. By establishing a national code of practice that encourages output-oriented performance management, policymakers can help banks mitigate the ‘High Road’ vs. ‘Low Road’ strategic tension, ensuring that flexible work does not equate to career marginalisation.

5.5.3 Future Researcher

This qualitative study has opened several avenues for future scholarly inquiry.

1. *Conduct a Quantitative Study:* A large-scale quantitative study could test the findings of this research, particularly the “Visibility-Progression Nexus,” across a wider sample of the Malaysian banking sector or other industries. This would help to determine the statistical prevalence of the perceptions identified here.
2. *Undertake a Longitudinal Study:* A longitudinal study that tracks the careers of a cohort of new employees some remote, some hybrid, some in-office

over several years would provide invaluable data on the actual, long-term impact of work arrangements on career progression.

3. *Explore Different Industries and Cultures*: This research was confined to the Malaysian banking sector. Future qualitative or comparative studies could explore how these dynamics play out in different industries (e.g., tech, public sector, creative industries) or different national cultures to see if the “Visibility-Progression Nexus” is a universal or culturally specific phenomenon.

Ultimately, future researchers should leverage these distinct qualitative themes to transition the broader academic discourse from a generalised evaluation of flexible work rewards toward a critical, structural examination of distributed talent pipelines. By expanding upon the emergent “Visibility-Progression Nexus” framework validated in this inquiry, subsequent empirical investigations can systematically map whether presence-based career penalties are an exclusive artifact of traditional corporate environments or a persistent feature across digitized, output-driven structures.

Special emphasis must be directed toward quantitatively modelling how the strategic friction between High Road quality maximisation investments and Low Road cost minimisation mandates, directly shapes the voluntary turnover intentions of early-career professionals. Resolving these empirical gaps remains a mandatory prerequisite for constructing sustainable human resource frameworks capable of decoupling long-term professional growth from physical workspace attendance permanently.

5.6 Limitations of The Research

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study to provide a balanced perspective on the findings. As outlined in Chapter 1, this research was conducted within certain constraints that may influence the generalizability of its results.

First, the study utilized a small, purposive sample of eight participants. While this is appropriate for a phenomenological study aimed at achieving depth and understanding lived experiences, the findings are not statistically generalizable to the entire Malaysian banking sector. The perspectives gathered are illustrative and insightful, but they may not represent the full spectrum of experiences across the industry.

Second, the research is contextually specific, focusing solely on the banking industry within the Klang Valley region of Malaysia. The culture, regulations, and operational nature of banking are unique. Therefore, the findings, particularly the “Visibility-Progression Nexus”, may manifest differently in other industries, such as the tech sector or public service.

Finally, as with all qualitative research, the findings are based on the subjective experiences of the participants and the interpretation of the researcher. Despite rigorous thematic analysis procedures, complete objectivity in interpreting lived experiences cannot be fully achieved.

5.7 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

This research began with the objective of exploring the lived experiences of employees in the Malaysian banking sector as they navigated the shift to remote and hybrid work. It sought to understand the organizational approaches to this new model, the subsequent impact on workplace visibility, and the ultimate effect on career progression. Through a phenomenological inquiry, this study has provided a deep and nuanced account of the central tensions defining the post-pandemic workplace.

The analysis culminated in the identification of a “Visibility-Progression Nexus” as the core concern for many employees, where a lack of physical presence is perceived to directly threaten career advancement. This nexus, however, is not a universal rule but is heavily moderated by organizational context (specifically, the prevailing “High Road” or “Low Road” strategy) and an employee’s job function. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the disproportionate risk faced by new employees, who are most vulnerable to the career-related challenges of a hybrid environment.

This study contributes to the academic discourse by providing rich, empirical evidence of these career anxieties in the Malaysian context, adding a practical layer of complexity to existing theoretical frameworks on remote work and human resource management. More importantly, it underscores a critical message for the future of work: that successful and equitable hybrid models require more than just technological solutions. They demand intentional leadership, a culture of trust, and a commitment to developing fair and transparent pathways to success for all employees, regardless of where their work is done.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Aziz, A. F., & Ong, T. (2024). The call for hybrid work arrangement post-pandemic. *Human Resources Management and Services*, 6(3), 3417.
<https://doi.org/10.18282/hrms.v6i3.3417>
- Abu Hassan Asaari, M. H., Mat Desa, N., & Subramaniam, L. (2019). Influence of salary, promotion, and recognition toward work motivation among government trade agency employees. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 14(4), 48. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v14n4p48>
- Adams, C. J., Khan, H. T. A., Raeside, R., & White, D. I. (2007). *Research methods for graduate business and social science students*. SAGE Publications.
- Adilah, N., Karia, N., & Hassan, H. (2015). Nature of Works for Quantity Surveyors to Homeworking. *Advances in Environmental Biology*, 9.
- Adom, D., Hussein, E. K., & Agyem, J. A. (2018). Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: Mandatory Ingredients of a Quality Research. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 7 Issue 1. [https://www.worldwidejournals.com/international-journal-of-scientific-research-\(IJSR\)/article/theoretical-and-conceptual-framework-mandatory-ingredients-of-a-quality-research/MTM5NDE=?is=1](https://www.worldwidejournals.com/international-journal-of-scientific-research-(IJSR)/article/theoretical-and-conceptual-framework-mandatory-ingredients-of-a-quality-research/MTM5NDE=?is=1)
- Ahmad, H., & Halim, H. (2017). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities: The Case of Organizational Research. *Selangor Business Review*, 2(1), 20–34.
<http://sbr.journals.unisel.edu.my/ojs/index.php/sbr/article/view/12>
- Ahmed, S. M., & Khalil Md, N. (2021). Continuance adoption of working from home after the COVID-19 outbreak: Empirical evidence from Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Asian Finance Economics and Business*, 8(7), 67–78.
<https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no7.0067>
- Akanji, B., Mordi, C., & Ajonbadi, H. A. (2020). The experiences of work-life balance, stress, and coping lifestyles of female professionals: insights from a developing country. *Employee Relations*, 42(4), 999–1015.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/er-01-2019-0089>
- Akkermans, J., Richardson, J., & Kraimer, M. L. (2020). The Covid-19 crisis as a career shock: Implications for careers and vocational behavior. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 119(103434), 103434.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103434>
- Alexander, A., De Smet, A., Langstaff, M., & Ravid, D. (2021, March 31). *What*

- employees are saying about the future of remote work.* Mckinsey.com;
McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com>
- Amadebai, E. (2021, March 28). *The Importance of Data Analysis in research.* Analytics for Decisions. <https://analyticsfordecisions.com/importance-of-data-analysis-in-research/>
- Ambikapathy, M., & Ali, A. (2020). Impact and challenges towards employees work from home during covid-19 (MCO) period. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 2(4), 97–107.
- Ansong, E., & Boateng, R. (2018). Organisational adoption of telecommuting: Evidence from a developing country. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 84(1), e12008. <https://doi.org/10.1002/isd2.12008>
- Arokiasamy, L., Ismail, M., Ahmad, A., & Othman, J. (2011). *Determinants of career advancement of academics in private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia.*
- Bailey, J. (2008). First steps in qualitative data analysis: transcribing. *Family Practice*, 25(2), 127–131. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/cmn003>
- Barrero, J. M., Bloom, N., & Davis, S. (2021). *Why working from home will stick.* National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Baruch, Y. (2000). Teleworking: benefits and pitfalls as perceived by professionals and managers. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 15(1), 34–49.
- BBC News. (2021, March 1). Zoom sees more growth after “unprecedented” 2020. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-56247489>
- Beatson, M. (2019). *Megatrends: Flexible working.* https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/megatrends-report-flexible-working-1_tcm18-52769.pdf
- Beauregard, T. A., Canonico, E., & Basile, K. A. (2019). “The fur-lined rut”: telework and career ambition. In *Work, working and work relationships in a changing world* (pp. 17–36). Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Beño, M. (2021). The advantages and disadvantages of E-working: An examination using an ALDINE analysis. *Emerging Science Journal*, 5, 11–20.
- Berthiaume, E. (2020, August 17). *Jack Nilles tried to ignite a work-from-home trend 48 years ago. It's finally here.* Lawrence.edu. <https://blogs.lawrence.edu/news/2020/08/jack-nilles-tried-to-ignite-a-work-from-home-trend-48-years-ago-its-finally-here.html>

- Bhattacharjee, A. (2019, October 11). *Propositions and Hypotheses*. Social Sci LibreTexts; Libretexts.
[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Social_Work_and_Human_Services/Social_Science_Research_-_Principles_Methods_and_Practices_\(Bhattacharjee\)/02%3A_Thinking_Like_a_Researcher/2.03%3A_Propositions_and_Hypotheses](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Social_Work_and_Human_Services/Social_Science_Research_-_Principles_Methods_and_Practices_(Bhattacharjee)/02%3A_Thinking_Like_a_Researcher/2.03%3A_Propositions_and_Hypotheses)
- Björntoft, S., Hallman, D. M., Mathiassen, S. E., Larsson, J., & Jahncke, H. (2020). Occupational and individual determinants of work-life balance among office workers with flexible work arrangements. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(4), 1418.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17041418>
- 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>
- Blount, Y., & Gloet, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Anywhere working and the New Era of telecommuting*. IGI Global.
- Blum, K., Korrapati, R., Goes, J., Morelli, F., Salerno, C., & Edwards, R. (2006). Teaching students how to write a chapter four and five of a dissertation. Retrieved from Community. Csums. Edu/Mod/Resource/View. Php.
https://community.saybrook.edu/writingcenter/PublishingImages/Pages/Dissertation-Resources/Teaching%20Students%20How%20to%20Write%20a%20Chapter%20Four%20and%20Five%20of%20a%20Dissertation_%20Blum,%202006.pdf
- Böckerman, P., Skedinger, P., & Uusitalo, R. (2018). Seniority rules, worker mobility and wages: Evidence from multi-country linked employer-employee data. *Labour Economics*, 51, 48–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2017.11.006>
- Bontrager, M., Clinton, M. S., & Tyner, L. (2021). Flexible work arrangements: A human resource development tool to reduce turnover. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 23(2), 124–141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422320982930>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative,*

- neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic Analysis. In *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences* (pp. 843–860). Springer Singapore.
- Buchanan, N. T., & Settles, I. H. (2019). Managing (in)visibility and hypervisibility in the workplace. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 113, 1–5.
- Byrd, M. Y. (2021). A new normal: The changed landscape of human resource development in the wake of COVID-19. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 23(1), 3–4. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422320973957>
- Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(5), 545–547. <https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547>
- Castells, M., Fernandez-Ardevol, M., Qiu, J. L., & Sey, A. (2009). *Mobile Communication and Society: A Global Perspective*. MIT Press.
- Cerqueira, E. D. V., Motte-Baumvol, B., Chevallier, L. B., & Bonin, O. (2020). Does working from home reduce CO2 emissions? An analysis of travel patterns as dictated by workplaces. *Transportation Research. Part D, Transport and Environment*, 83(102338), 102338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2020.102338>
- Charalampous, M., Grant, C. A., & Tramontano, C. (2021). “It needs to be the right blend”: a qualitative exploration of remote e-workers’ experience and well-being at work. *Employee Relations, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1108/er-02-2021-0058>
- Chen, Y., & Fulmer, I. S. (2018). Fine-tuning what we know about employees’ experience with flexible work arrangements and their job attitudes: Flexible work arrangements. *Human Resource Management*, 57(1), 381–395. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21849>
- Cherryholmes, C. H. (1992). Notes on pragmatism and scientific realism. *Educational Researcher (Washington, D.C.: 1972)*, 21(6), 13–17. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x021006013>
- Choudhury, P., Foroughi, C., & Larson, B. (2019). Work-from-anywhere: The productivity effects of geographic flexibility. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3494473>
- Church, N. F. (2015). Gauging Perceived Benefits from Working from Home as a Job

- Benefit. *International Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 3(3), 81–89. <https://doaj.org/article/8d776671a0ec4cd38e882b520a134c79>
- Çivilidağ, A., & Durmaz, Ş. (2024). Examining the relationship between flexible working arrangements and employee performance: a mini review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1398309. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1398309>
- Clancy, M. (2020). *The Case for Remote Work*. <https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/handle/20.500.12876/22621>
- Collins, M. (2005). The (not so simple) case for teleworking: a study at Lloyd's of London. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 20(2), 115–132.
- Como, R., Hambley, L., & Domene, J. (2021). An exploration of work-life wellness and remote work during and beyond COVID-19. *Canadian Journal of Career Development*, 20(1), 46–56. <https://cjcdrdc.ceric.ca/index.php/cjcd/article/view/92>
- Cox, W. (2009). *Improving quality of life through telecommuting*. The Telework Coalition. <http://www.telcoa.org/news/%E2%80%9Cimproving-quality-of-life-through-telecommuting%E2%80%9D/>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications ;SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Crosley, J. (2021, April 16). *What is thematic analysis? Simple definition + examples*. Grad Coach. <https://gradcoach.com/what-is-thematic-analysis/>
- Cutcliffe, J. R. (2000). Methodological issues in grounded theory. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 31(6), 1476–1484. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2000.01430.x>
- Daniels, K., Lamond, D., & Standen, P. (2001). Teleworking: Frameworks for organizational research. *The Journal of Management Studies*, 38(8), 1151–1185. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00276>
- Daud, K., Turiman, M. S., Rahmat, N. H., & Kasi, P. M. (2021). Working From Home In The New Normal: Perceived Benefits And Challenges. *International Virtual Symposium: Research, Industry & Community Engagement (RICE 2021)*, 161–167.
- de Klerk, J. J., Joubert, M., & Mosca, H. F. (2021). Is working from home the new

- workplace panacea? Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for the future world of work. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 47.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v47i0.1883>
- de Lucas Ancillo, A., del Val Núñez, M. T., & Gavrilă, S. G. (2021). Workplace change within the COVID-19 context: a grounded theory approach. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 34(1), 2297–2316.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677x.2020.1862689>
- Delany, K. (2021). What challenges will organisations face transitioning for the first time to the new normal of remote working? *Human Resource Development International*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2021.2017391>
- Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2021). *Labour Force, Malaysia July 2021*.
https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=124&bul_id=Z3N0eVgwUFJNRXRlVpBmdmdOaGRlQT09&menu_id=Tm8zcnRjdVRNWWlpWjRlbmtlaDk1UT09
- Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2021). *Current Population Estimates, Malaysia, 2021*.
https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=155&bul_id=ZjJOSnpJR21sQWVUcUp6ODRudm5JZz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09
- Di Martino, V. (2001). *The high road to teleworking*.
<https://labordoc.ilo.org/discovery/fulldisplay/alma993452863402676/>
- Diab-Bahman, R., & Al-Enzi, A. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on conventional work settings. *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 40(9/10), 909–927. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijssp-07-2020-0262>
- Dikkers, J., Geurts, S., den Dulk, L., Peper, B., & Kompier, M. (2004). Relations among work-home culture, the utilization of work-home arrangements, and work-home interference. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 11(4), 323–345. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.11.4.323>
- Dorai, P. T., Vasudevan, A., Mohammad, S. I., Sain, Z. H., & Sowmya, K. R. (2026). Sustainable work practices and work–life balance in Malaysia’s financial sector: A conceptual model with organizational support as a moderator. *Architecture Image Studies*, 7(1), 239–255. <https://doi.org/10.62754/ais.v7i1.828>
- Dutta, S., & Sommerin, P. (2021, August 1). *How banks are reimagining their global workforce and remote working strategy*. www.ey.com; EY.

https://www.ey.com/en_bh/financial-services/how-banks-are-reimagining-their-global-workforce-and-remote-working-strategy

- Dwyer, R. J. (2003). Career progression factors of Aboriginal executives in the Canada federal public service. *Journal of Management Development*, 22(10), 881–889. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710310505476>
- Elengoe, A. (2020). COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia. *Osong Public Health and Research Perspectives*, 11(3), 93–100.
- Elkatawneh, H. H. (2016). The five qualitative approaches: Problem, purpose, and questions/the role of theory in the five qualitative approaches/comparative case study. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2761327>
- Elsbach, K. D., Cable, D. M., & Sherman, J. W. (2010). How passive ‘face time’ affects perceptions of employees: Evidence of spontaneous trait inference. *Human Relations; Studies towards the Integration of the Social Sciences*, 63(6), 735–760. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726709353139>
- Faragher, E. B., Cass, M., & Cooper, C. L. (2013). The relationship between job satisfaction and health: A meta-analysis. In *From Stress to Wellbeing Volume 1* (pp. 254–271). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Flick, U. (2007). *Managing quality in qualitative research*. SAGE Publications.
- Flick, U. (2008). *Designing Qualitative Research*. SAGE Publications.
- Flick, U. (2017). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection* (U. Flick, Ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Fonner, K. L., & Roloff, M. E. (2012). Testing the connectivity paradox: Linking teleworkers’ communication media use to social presence, stress from interruptions, and organizational identification. *Communication Monographs*, 79(2), 205–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2012.673000>
- Ghiara, V. (2020). Disambiguating the role of paradigms in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 14(1), 11–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689818819928>
- Gibbs, G. R. (2007). *Analysing Qualitative Data*. SAGE Publications.
- Gigauri, I. (2020). Challenges HR managers facing due to COVID-19 and overcoming strategies: Perspectives from Georgia. *Archives of Business Research*, 8(11), 1–18.
- Gill, C., & Meyer, D. (2008). High and low road approaches to the management of human resources: An examination of the relationship between business strategy,

- human resource management and high performance work practices.
International Journal of Employment Studies, 16(2), 67–112.
<https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.704897656691995>
- Gittell, J. H., & Bamber, G. J. (2010). High- and low-road strategies for competing on costs and their implications for employment relations: international studies in the airline industry1. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(2), 165–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190903509464>
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597–606. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2003.1870>
- Gold, J. R. (1978). Book Review: The Telecommunications-Transportation Tradeoff: by JACK M. NILLES, F. Roy CARLSON, JR, PAUL GRAY and GERHARD J. HANNEMAN. London: John Wiley. 1976. pp. 196. £17.50. *Urban Studies*, 15(1), 122–124.
- Golden, T. D. (2021). Telework and the Navigation of Work-Home Boundaries. *Organizational Dynamics*, 50(1), 100822.
- 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), 103348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.103348>
- Gonsalves, L. (2020). From face time to flex time: The role of physical space in worker temporal flexibility. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 65(4), 1058–1091. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839220907891>
- Green, C. R. (2019). *Examining the Effects of Negative Work Outcomes on Telecommuting* (J. Van Hein, Ed.) [Middle Tennessee State University]. <http://search.proquest.com.ezaccess.library.uitm.edu.my/dissertations-theses/examining-effects-negative-work-outcomes-on/docview/2228924111/se-2?accountid=42518>
- Greenstein, S. (2021). Remote Work. *IEEE Micro*, 41(3), 110–112. <https://doi.org/10.1109/mm.2021.3073433>
- Groen, B. A. C., van Triest, S. P., Coers, M., & Wtenweerde, N. (2018). Managing flexible work arrangements: Teleworking and output controls. *European Management Journal*, 36(6), 727–735.
- Haar, J. M. (2007). Exploring the benefits and use of flexitime: similarities and

- differences. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 4(1), 69–82.
- Hamsa, A. A. K., Oniyirimba, L. C., & Ahmad, S. (2002). An exploratory analysis of factors toward the emergence of teleworking in Malaysia. *Proceedings of the Thirtieth Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 4, 99–109 vol.4.
- Hamsa, Abdul Azeez Kadar, Jaff, M. M., Ibrahim, M., Mohamed, M. Z., & Zahari, R. K. (2016). Exploring the effects of factors on the willingness of female employees to telecommute in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Transportation Research Procedia*, 17, 408–417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trpro.2016.11.082>
- Hashim, J. H., Adman, M. A., Hashim, Z., Mohd Radi, M. F., & Kwan, S. C. (2021). COVID-19 Epidemic in Malaysia: Epidemic Progression, Challenges, and Response. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9, 247.
- Hashim, R., Bakar, A., Noh, I., & Mahyudin, H. A. (2020). Employees' Job Satisfaction and Performance through working from Home during the Pandemic Lockdown. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, 5(15), 461–467.
- Helling, A., & Mokhtarian, P. L. (2001). Worker telecommunication and mobility in transition: Consequences for planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 15(4), 511–525. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08854120122093168>
- Herr, E. L. (2001). Career development and its practice: A historical perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 49(3), 196–211.
- Hirsch, A. S. (2023, December 21). *Preventing proximity bias in a hybrid workplace*. Shrm.org. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/employee-relations/preventing-proximity-bias-hybrid-workplace>
- Hite, L. M., & McDonald, K. S. (2020). Careers after COVID-19: challenges and changes. *Human Resource Development International*, 23(4), 427–437. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2020.1779576>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *The American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513–524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.44.3.513>
- Hoekstra, H. A. (2011). A career roles model of career development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 78(2), 159–173.
- Horak, S., & Yang, I. (2019). Whither seniority? Career progression and performance orientation in South Korea. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(9), 1419–1447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1362659>

- Houseman, S. (n.d.). *Labor market flexibility: A view from the United States*. iab.de. Retrieved December 9, 2021, from https://doku.iab.de/veranstaltungen/2011/ws_flex_Houseman_Presentation.pdf
- Huang, L. V., & Liu, P. L. (2017). Ties that work: Investigating the relationships among coworker connections, work-related Facebook utility, online social capital, and employee outcomes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 72, 512–524. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.02.054>
- ILO. (2020, June 5). *Defining and measuring remote work, telework, work at home and home-based work*. Ilo.org. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/image/wcms_747078.jpg
- Iphofen, R., & Tolich, M. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research ethics* (R. Iphofen & M. Tolich, Eds.). SAGE Publications.
- Jalagat, R., & Jalagat, A. (2019). Rationalizing remote working concept and its implications on employee productivity. *Global Journal of Advanced Research*, 6, 95–100.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), 112–133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689806298224>
- Jooss, S., McDonnell, A., & Conroy, K. (2021). Flexible global working arrangements: An integrative review and future research agenda. *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(4), 100780. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2020.100780>
- Kamis, J., Abd. Rahim, Z., Yusoff, Y., Azilah Husin, N., & Yuliviona, R. (2023). A review on hybrid work and Work Performance during Post-Pandemic. *KnE Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i13.13756>
- Kawaguchi, D., & Motegi, H. (2021). Who can work from home? The roles of job tasks and HRM practices. *Journal of the Japanese and International Economies*, 62(101162), 101162.
- Kenton, W. (2022, September 7). *SWOT Analysis: How To With Table and Example*. Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/swot.asp>
- Klindžić, M., & Marić, M. (2019). Flexible work arrangements and organizational performance – the difference between employee and employer-driven practices. *Drustvena Istrazivanja*, 89–108. <https://doi.org/10.5559/di.28.1.05>
- Kossek, E. E., & Lee, K.-H. (2017). Work-family conflict and work-life conflict. In

Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Business and Management. Oxford University Press.

- Kossek, E. E., & Van Dyne, L. (2008). Face-time matters: A cross-level model of how work-life flexibility influences work performance of individuals and groups. In *Handbook of Work-Family Integration* (pp. 305–330). Elsevier.
- Kotey, B. A. (2017). Flexible working arrangements and strategic positions in SMEs. *Personnel Review*, 46(2), 355–370. <https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-04-2015-0089>
- Kumar, R., & Mokashi, U. M. (2020). COVID-19 and work-life balance: What about supervisor support and employee proactiveness? *Annals of Contemporary Developments in Management & HR (ACDMHR)*, 2(4), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.33166/acdmhr.2020.04.001>
- Ligita, T., Harvey, N., Wicking, K., Nurjannah, I., & Francis, K. (2019). A practical example of using theoretical sampling throughout a grounded theory study: A methodological paper. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 20(1), 116–126. <https://doi.org/10.1108/qrj-07-2019-0059>
- Lund, S., Madgavkar, A., Manyika, J., Smit, S., Ellingrud, K., & Robinson, O. (2021, February 16). *The future of work after COVID-19*. Mckinsey.com; McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-after-covid-19>
- Ma, G., Hen, K. W., & Chooi, T. F. (2019). Telecommuting adaptation in Malaysia: Demographics, beliefs and practices. *Asian Social Science and Humanities Research Journal (ASHREJ)*, 1(1), 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.37698/ashrej.v1i1.2>
- Mahmud, R., Lim, B. F. Y., Pazim, K. H., Lee, N. F. C., Mansur, K., & Abdullah, B. (2020). A Review of Working From Home (WFH) and Work Productivity. *BIMP-EAGA Journal for Sustainable Tourism Development*, 9(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.51200/bimpeagajtsd.v9i1.3174>
- Maity, R., & Lee, K. L. (2025). The impact of remote and hybrid work models on small and Medium-sized enterprises productivity: a systematic literature review. *SN Business & Economics*, 5(10). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43546-025-00931-7>
- Malaysia, R. (2022, June 14). *2022 malaysia country report*. Com.My; Randstad Malaysia. <https://www.randstad.com.my/hr-trends/employer-brand/2022-malaysia-country-report/>
- Matysiak, A., Kasperska, A., & Cukrowska-Torzewska, E. (2025). Mechanisms underlying the effects of work from home on careers in the post-covid context.

- Work, Employment & Society: A Journal of the British Sociological Association*, 39(5), 1103–1126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170251325769>
- McDonald, P., Bradley, L., & Brown, K. (2008). Visibility in the workplace: still an essential ingredient for career success? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19(12), 2198–2215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190802479447>
- Mei Min, C., & Cheak Poh Choo, A. (2023). Determinants of job satisfaction among work-From-Home Malaysians during pandemic: Application of Job Demands-Resources Model. *International Journal of Economics and Management*, 17(2), 151–163. <https://doi.org/10.47836/ijeam.17.2.01>
- Michielsens, E., Bingham, C., & Clarke, L. (2013). Managing diversity through flexible work arrangements: management perspectives. *Employee Relations*, 36(1), 49–69. <https://doi.org/10.1108/er-06-2012-0048>
- Miles, D. (2017). *ARTICLE: “Research Methods and Strategies Workshop: A Taxonomy of Research Gaps: Identifying and Defining the Seven Research Gaps.”* 1, 1.
- Mohd Arifin, S. R. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CARE SCHOLARS*, 1(2), 30–33. <https://journals.iium.edu.my/ijcs/index.php/ijcs/article/view/82>
- Mohd, I. H. (2013). *Minimum wage and HR practices: The perspective and implications for the Malaysian hotel industry* [Doctoral dissertation, Flinders University]. <https://theses.flinders.edu.au/view/f1aff4d2-0863-4da0-97a4-a974399c12a8/1>
- Mohd Rahim, N. I., Abdul Rahman, A., & A. Iahad, N. (2018). The overview for implementing work from home (WFH) in Malaysia higher education institution (HEI) context. *International Journal of Innovative Computing*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.11113/ijic.v8n3.182>
- Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: Methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 48–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678906292462>
- Morgan, D. L. (2014). Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research. *Qualitative Inquiry: QI*, 20(8), 1045–1053. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413513733>
- Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification

- strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 13–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690200100202>
- Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. SAGE Publications.
- Mumin, N., Siganul, R. S., & Ooi, A. Y. (2014). The rethoric and reality of alternative work arrangements (AWA) in Malaysia. *International Journal of Commerce, Business and Management*, 3(1), 12–17.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326648316_The_rethoric_and_reality_of_alternative_work_arrangements_AWA_in_Malaysia
- Murabula, P. (2022). *The Worklife/Progression Trade-Off: How Flexible Work Arrangements Relate to Job Satisfaction and Career Success* [Doctoral dissertation]. Auckland University of Technology.
- Naithani, P. (2010). Overview of work-life balance discourse and its relevance in current economic scenario. *Asian Social Science*, 6(6).
<https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v6n6p148>
- Nakrošienė, A., Bučiūnienė, I., & Goštautaitė, B. (2019). Working from home: characteristics and outcomes of telework. *International Journal of Manpower*, 40(1), 87–101. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijm-07-2017-0172>
- Nativel, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Skills upgrading, new policy perspectives: Local economic and employment development new policy perspectives*. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Nilles, J. M., & etc. (1976). *Telecommunications-Transportation Tradeoff: Options for Tomorrow*. Krieger Publishing Company.
- Noble, H., & Mitchell, G. (2016). What is grounded theory? *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 19(2), 34–35. <https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2016-102306>
- OECD. (2017). Policies and practices for improving skills utilisation locally. In *Better Use of Skills in the Workplace: Why It Matters for Productivity and Local Jobs* (pp. 13–47). OECD Publishing.
- Oly Ndubisi, N., & Kahraman, C. (2005). Teleworking adoption decision-making processes: Multinational and Malaysian firms comparison. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 18(2), 150–168.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/17410390510579891>

- Omar, Muhamad Khalil. (2013). Non standard work arrangements and affective commitment: The mediating role of work-life balance. *Procedia, Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 107, 4–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.392>
- Omar, Muhammad Khalil, Mohd, I. H., & Ariffin, M. S. (2015). Workload, role conflict and work-life balance among employees of an enforcement agency in Malaysia. *International Journal of Business Economics and Law*, 8(2), 52–57. <http://ijbel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Bus-22.pdf>
- Onken-Menke, G., Nüesch, S., & Kröll, C. (2018). Are you attracted? Do you remain? Meta-analytic evidence on flexible work practices. *BuR - Business Research*, 11(2), 239–277. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-017-0059-6>
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Burke, R. (2006). The validity issue in mixed research. *RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOLS Mid-South Educational Research Association*, 13(1), 48–63. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.534.5506&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Open University Malaysia, Henry, C., Omar, S. S., & Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia. (2024). A survey on effects of working remotely on job performance in banking sector in Sabah, Malaysia. *Journal of Techno-Social*, 16(1), 12–25. <https://doi.org/10.30880/jts.2024.16.01.002>
- Osterman, P. (2018). In search of the High Road: Meaning and evidence. *Industrial & Labor Relations Review*, 71(1), 3–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793917738757>
- Pande, M., & Bharathi, S. V. (2020). Theoretical foundations of design thinking – A constructivism learning approach to design thinking. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 36(100637), 100637. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100637>
- Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Tomaney, J. (2016). *Local and Regional Development*. Routledge.
- Plano Clark, V. L. (2019). Meaningful integration within mixed methods studies: Identifying why, what, when, and how. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 57, 106–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.01.007>
- Poon, J. M. L., Briscoe, J. P., Abdul-Ghani, R., & Jones, E. A. (2015). Meaning and determinants of career success: A Malaysian perspective. *Revista de Psicología Del Trabajo y de Las Organizaciones*, 31(1), 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rpto.2015.02.002>

- Popovici, V., & Popovici, A.-L. (2020). Remote work revolution: Current opportunities and challenges for organizations. *Ovidius University Annals, Economic Sciences Series*, XX(1), 468–472.
<https://ideas.repec.org/a/ovi/oviste/vxxy2020i1p468-472.html>
- Prodanova, J., & Kocarev, L. (2021). Is job performance conditioned by work-from-home demands and resources? *Technology in Society*, 66, 101672.
- Proudfoot, K. (2023). Inductive/deductive hybrid thematic analysis in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 17(3), 308–326.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15586898221126816>
- Randstad Malaysia. (2022, June 14). *2022 malaysia country report*. Com.My.
<https://www.randstad.com.my/hr-trends/employer-brand/2022-malaysia-country-report/>
- Rationalization of network segregation for continuity of financial services following COVID-19. (2021). *KSII Transactions on Internet and Information Systems*, 15(11). <https://doi.org/10.3837/tiis.2021.11.016>
- Reiter, S., Stewart, G., & Bruce, C. (2011). A Strategy for Delayed Research Method Selection: Deciding Between Grounded Theory and Phenomenology. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 9.
- Research with Dr Kriukow [QualitativeResearcher]. (2019, March 19). *Exploratory sequential design (Mixed methods #4)* [Video]. Youtube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn0LYAUCoAg>
- Richardson, J., & Kelliher, C. (2015). Managing visibility for career sustainability: a study of remote workers. In *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Careers* (pp. 116–130). Edward Elgar Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782547037.00013>
- Richardson, J., O’Neil, D. A., & Thorn, K. (2022). Exploring careers through a qualitative lens: an investigation and invitation. *Career Development International*, 27(1), 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cdi-08-2021-0197>
- Roberts, R. E. (2020). Qualitative interview questions: Guidance for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(9), 3185–3203.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4640>
- Saludin, N. A., Karia, N., & Hassan, H. (2020). *Working from Home (WFH): Is Malaysia ready for digital society*. 981–989.
- Sandoval-Reyes, J., Idrovo-Carlier, S., & Duque-Oliva, E. J. (2021). Remote work,

- work stress, and work-life during pandemic times: A Latin America situation. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(13), 7069.
- Savić, D. (2020). COVID-19 and Work from Home: Digital Transformation of the Workforce. *Grey Journal*, 16, 101–104.
- Sayers, J., & Monin, N. (2005). *The Global Garage: Home-based Business in New Zealand*. Thomson, Dunmore Press.
- Sekaran, U. S., & Bougie, R. J. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach* (7th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Shimura, A., Yokoi, K., Ishibashi, Y., Akatsuka, Y., & Inoue, T. (2021). Remote work decreases psychological and physical stress responses, but full-remote work increases presenteeism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 730969. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.730969>
- Shodimu, O. A., Mensah, K., & Oriji, F. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on the U.s. financial sector: A shift towards digitalization and remote banking. *Iconic Research and Engineering Journals*, 5(5), 526–543. <https://www.irejournals.com/paper-details/1710142>
- Simon, M. K., & Goes, J. (2017). *Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for: 2018 edition*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Smith, J. (2013, July 19). *The Top 25 Companies For Work-Life Balance*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2013/07/19/top-companies-for-work-life-balance/?sh=5fe6861a7df0>
- Soroui, S. T. (2021). Understanding the drivers and implications of remote work from the local perspective: An exploratory study into the dis/reembedding dynamics. *Technology in Society*, 64(101328), 101328. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2020.101328>
- Spall, S. (1998). Peer debriefing in qualitative research: Emerging operational models. *Qualitative Inquiry: QI*, 4(2), 280–292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049800400208>
- Spurk, D., & Straub, C. (2020). Flexible employment relationships and careers in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 119(103435), 103435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103435>
- Staples, D. S. (2001). A study of remote workers and their differences from non-remote workers. *Journal of organizational and end user computing: an official*

- publication of the Information Resources Management Association*, 13(2), 3–14.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/joeuc.2001040101>
- Starks, H., & Trinidad, S. B. (2007). Choose your method: a comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), 1372–1380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307307031>
- Stirpe, L., & Zárraga-Oberty, C. (2017). Are High-Performance Work Systems always a valuable retention tool? The roles of workforce feminization and flexible work arrangements. *European Management Journal*, 35(1), 128–136.
- Stock, R. M., Strecker, M. M., & Bieling, G. I. (2016). Organizational work–family support as universal remedy? A cross-cultural comparison of China, India and the USA. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(11), 1192–1216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1062039>
- Streefkerk, R. (2019, April 18). *Inductive vs. Deductive research approach (with examples)*. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/inductive-deductive-reasoning/>
- Strunz, U. G. (2021). General Research Objectives. In *FOM-Edition Research* (pp. 67–72). Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Subramaniam, G., Ramachandran, J., Putit, L., & Shariff, S. H. (2021). Exploring malaysian academics' perception on working from home (WFH) as a flexible working arrangement during Covid-19 pandemic. *SMART Journal of Business Management Studies*, 17(2), 54–64. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2321-2012.2021.00017.8>
- Sundram, V. P. K., Shamsul Bahrin, A., Govindaraju, V. G. R. C., Mohd., R., Mohamed Sayuti, N., & Othman, A. A. (2016). *Research methodology tools, methods and techniques*. Malaysia Logistics & Supply Chain Association (MLSCA).
- Sürücü, L., & Maslakçi, A. (2020). Validity and Reliability in quantitative research. *Business And Management Studies: An International Journal*, 8(3), 2694–2726. <https://doi.org/10.15295/bmij.v8i3.1540>
- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, 68(3), 226–231. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- Tan, L. (2022, January 6). *HSBC Malaysia is empowering employees to work from home or from office via its hybrid work model for 2022*.

- Humanresourcesonline.net. <https://www.humanresourcesonline.net/hsbc-malaysia-is-empowering-employees-to-work-from-home-or-from-office-via-its-hybrid-work-model-for-2022>
- Tashakkori, A. M., & Teddlie, C. B. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques in the social and behavioral sciences*. SAGE Publications.
- Teh, B. H., Ong, T. S., & Loh, Y. L. (2012). The acceptance and effectiveness of telecommuting (work from home) in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Research in Business Management*, 3(3), 1–19.
<https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:apjrbm&volume=3&issue=3&article=001>
- ten Brummelhuis, L. L., & Bakker, A. B. (2012). A resource perspective on the work-home interface: the work-home resources model. *The American Psychologist*, 67(7), 545–556. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027974>
- The Star Online. (2013, January 2). The Klang Valley has finally arrived to be in a top spot in world business. *Toronto Star*.
<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2013/01/02/the-klang-valley-has-finally-arrived-to-be-in-a-top-spot-in-world-business>
- Tietze, S., Musson, G., & Scurry, T. (2009). Homebased work: a review of research into themes, directions and implications. *Personnel Review*, 38(6), 585–604.
- Tillman, M. (2021, November 23). *Zoom vs Microsoft Teams vs Google Meet: What's the best video conferencing service?* Pocket-Lint. <https://www.pocket-lint.com/apps/news/151947-zoom-vs-microsoft-teams-vs-google-meet-what-s-the-difference>
- Timonen, H., & Vuori, J. (2018). Visibility of work: How digitalization changes the workplace. *Proceedings of the 51st Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*.
- Tipping, S., Chanfreau, J., Perry, J., & Natcen, T. (2012). *The fourth work-life balance employee survey*. Ioe.ac.uk. <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/14867/1/12-p151-fourth-work-life-balance-employee-survey.pdf>
- Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Tsen, M. K., Gu, M., Tan, C. M., & Goh, S. K. (2021). Does flexible work arrangements decrease or increase turnover intention? A comparison between

- the social exchange theory and border theory. *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print).
<https://doi.org/10.1108/ijssp-08-2021-0196>
- Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work: QSW: Research and Practice*, 11(1), 80–96.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010368316>
- van Zoonen, W., Sivunen, A. E., & Blomqvist, K. (2024). Out of sight – Out of trust? An analysis of the mediating role of communication frequency and quality in the relationship between workplace isolation and trust. *European Management Journal*, 42(4), 515–526. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2023.04.006>
- Vyas, L. (2022). “New normal” at work in a post-COVID world: work–life balance and labor markets. *Policy & Society*, 41(1), 155–167.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/polsoc/puab011>
- Walker, D., & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: an exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(4), 547–559.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305285972>
- Wang, M., Lu, C.-Q., & Lu, L. (2022). The positive potential of presenteeism: An exploration of how presenteeism leads to good performance evaluation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2604>
- Wertz, F. J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L. M., Josselson, R. H., Anderson, R., & McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis: Phenomenological psychology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry*. Guilford Publications.
- White, B. (1995). The career development of successful women. *Women in Management Review*, 10(3), 4–15.
- Wimpenny, P., & Gass, J. (2000). Interviewing in phenomenology and grounded theory: is there a difference? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 31(6), 1485–1492.
<https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2000.01431.x>
- World Health Organization. (2020). *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Reports*. Who.int. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>
- World Health Organization. (2021, December 23). *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How is it transmitted?* Who.int. <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-how-is-it-transmitted>

- World Health Organization. (2022, March 27). *About the virus*. World Health Organization. <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
- Wright, S., & Silard, A. (2021). Unravelling the antecedents of loneliness in the workplace. *Human Relations; Studies towards the Integration of the Social Sciences*, 74(7), 1060–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720906013>
- Wu, A.-C., & Kao, D.-D. (2022). Mapping the sustainable human-resource challenges in Southeast Asia's FinTech sector. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 15(7), 307. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm15070307>
- Wyld, D. C. (2022). The Black Swan of the Coronavirus and how American organizations have adapted to the new world of remote work. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 7(1), 9–19. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2022.7.1.1170>
- Yarberry, S., & Sims, C. (2021). The impact of COVID-19-prompted virtual/remote work environments on employees' career development: Social learning theory, belongingness, and self-empowerment. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 23(3), 237–252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15234223211017850>
- Yeoh, W. W. (2022). The empirical study on TAM framework towards the shift into the working from home culture in Malaysia. *Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies*, 2(1), 8–13. <https://doi.org/10.56556/jssms.v2i1.338>
- Younas, A., & Porr, C. (2018). A step-by-step approach to developing scales for survey research. *Nurse Researcher*, 26(3), 14–19. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2018.e1585>
- Zhang, C., Yu, M. C., & Marin, S. (2021). Exploring Public Sentiment on Enforced Remote Work During COVID-19. *JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY*, 106(6), 797–810.
- Zhang, L., Fan, C., Deng, Y., Lam, C. F., Hu, E., & Wang, L. (2019). Exploring the interpersonal determinants of job embeddedness and voluntary turnover: A conservation of resources perspective. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 29(3), 413–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12235>
- Zhu, P., & Mason, S. G. (2014). The impact of telecommuting on personal vehicle usage and environmental sustainability. *International Journal of Environmental Science and Technology: IJEST*, 11(8), 2185–2200. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13762-014-0556-5>

Zohrabi, M. (2013). Mixed method research: instruments, validity, reliability and reporting findings. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(2), 254–262.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE



Ummu Ubaidah Binti Muhamad Fauzi is a Master of Science (Business Management) candidate at Universiti Teknologi MARA, specialising in Human Resource Management. With a professional background as a full-time employee, her research focuses on the evolving landscape of remote work within the Malaysian banking sector. Her academic work particularly explores the “Visibility-Progression Nexus”, investigating how organisational strategies and workplace visibility influence long-term career advancement in a post-pandemic economy.

LIST OF PUBLICATION

Muhamad Fauzi, U. U., & Mohd, I. H. (2023). Approach to remote working: perceptions, visibility at workplace, and the impact on the career progression. *Social and Management Research Journal (SMRJ)*, 20(1), 189-207.