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CULTURE-DRIVEN REMOTE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRUST, AUTONOMY, AND RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Remote and hybrid work have transformed how organisational performance is managed by weakening the traditional reliance on physical visibility, direct supervision, and informal coordination. In response, this conceptual paper examines how organisational culture shapes remote performance management (RPM) in digitally dispersed work settings. Specifically, the study addresses the question of how culture influences the mechanisms through which RPM supports trust, guided autonomy, and resilience. Drawing on a conceptual synthesis of the literature on remote work, organisational culture, and performance management, the paper integrates insights from Self-Determination Theory and the Job Demands-Resources model to develop a culture-driven framework of RPM. The analysis shows that organisational culture functions as a central coordinating mechanism that shapes communication clarity, trust-based autonomy, capability development, and well-being support in remote and hybrid contexts. These mechanisms are presented as interdependent pathways through which culture enables sustained performance beyond physical co-presence. The paper contributes to the literature by positioning organisational culture as an active explanatory force rather than a background condition, and by offering an integrated conceptual model that connects communication, autonomy, development, and resilience within a single RPM framework. Practically, the study suggests that organisations should design remote performance systems around trust, clarity, developmental support, and employee well-being rather than relying primarily on monitoring and control.

KEYWORDS: Remote Performance Management; Organisational Culture; Trust; Guided Autonomy; Resilience; Hybrid Work; Employee Well-Being.

1. INTRODUCTION

Remote and hybrid work have moved from being temporary organisational responses to becoming enduring features of contemporary employment systems. This shift has fundamentally altered how performance is observed, interpreted, and managed across organisations. Traditional performance management (PM) systems were largely designed for co-located settings in which managers could rely on face-to-face interaction, direct observation, and routine informal exchanges to communicate expectations, monitor progress, and provide developmental feedback. In such settings, performance management operated within a relatively stable social and spatial context. However, once work became digitally mediated and geographically dispersed, many of the assumptions underpinning conventional PM systems became less tenable (Wang et al., 2021; Bloom et al., 2015). As a result, organisations have increasingly been required to rethink not only the tools of performance management, but also the social conditions that make those tools effective.

The rapid expansion of remote work during and after the COVID-19 pandemic exposed these limitations with unusual clarity. In many organisations, employees lost the day-to-day interpersonal contact that previously supported coordination, belonging, and immediate clarification of tasks. At the same time, managers faced growing difficulty in evaluating performance without direct visibility into employees' activities and work routines. Under these conditions, uncertainty around expectations, communication quality, and evaluation fairness became more pronounced (Kniffin et al., 2021). Some organisations adapted by suspending or loosening formal appraisal systems, while others intensified digital monitoring in an effort to preserve control and accountability (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Yet both responses revealed a deeper problem: many existing PM systems were not designed for environments in which performance depends less on physical presence and more on communication quality, self-management, trust, and psychological support. Where such systems remained overly control-oriented, they often produced stress, weakened autonomy, and contributed to employee disengagement (Bick et al., 2023).

These developments have increased scholarly and managerial interest in remote performance management (RPM). Emerging research suggests that RPM can support communication, role clarity, and capability development in remote settings when

it is thoughtfully designed (Chong et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of RPM does not depend solely on digital tools, formal metrics, or technological oversight. Rather, its success is shaped by the broader organisational context within which it operates. In particular, when RPM practices are poorly aligned with organisational culture, they may intensify employee strain, reduce engagement, weaken belonging, and undermine trust. Under such conditions, performance management becomes experienced less as a developmental process and more as a source of pressure, surveillance, or ambiguity. This indicates that the central challenge of RPM is not merely technical, but also cultural.

Organisational culture is especially important in remote and hybrid work because it provides the shared meanings, assumptions, values, and norms that guide behaviour when physical supervision is limited (Schein, 2017). In dispersed work settings, culture helps define how communication should occur, how accountability should be interpreted, how autonomy should be exercised, and how support should be provided. In this sense, culture does more than surround performance management; it actively shapes the mechanisms through which performance is coordinated and sustained. When cultural norms reinforce trust, fairness, psychological safety, and clarity, they enable employees to work more confidently and adaptively across digital environments. By contrast, weak, fragmented, or misaligned cultures may intensify communication breakdowns, role ambiguity, monitoring tensions, and burnout risks. Accordingly, remote work has made visible what was previously easier to overlook in co-located organisations: effective performance management depends not only on systems and procedures, but also on the quality of the cultural infrastructure that supports them.

Despite growing interest in remote work and performance management, the literature remains fragmented in at least two important respects. First, much of the existing research focuses on isolated practices such as digital monitoring, communication technologies, employee productivity, or remote leadership, without offering a sufficiently integrated explanation of how these elements connect within a broader performance management system. Second, organisational culture is often treated as a contextual backdrop rather than as an active explanatory mechanism that shapes how RPM functions in practice. As a result, current scholarship offers limited conceptual clarity regarding the processes through which culture enables RPM to support desirable outcomes in remote work environments. In

particular, insufficient attention has been given to how culture shapes trust, guided autonomy, and resilience as interrelated mechanisms through which performance can be sustained under conditions of digital dispersion, reduced visibility, and heightened job demands.

This gap is significant for both theory and practice. Theoretically, it limits the development of a coherent model capable of explaining why some RPM systems foster engagement, adaptability, and sustained performance, while others generate mistrust, overload, and withdrawal. Practically, it leaves organisations with limited guidance on how to design RPM systems that move beyond surveillance-oriented control and instead reinforce the social and psychological conditions necessary for effective remote work. Addressing this gap requires a shift in emphasis: from seeing culture as peripheral to RPM, to viewing it as foundational to how RPM operates. On this basis, the present study asks the following research question: How can organisational culture shape the mechanisms through which RPM supports trust, autonomy, and resilience in remote work settings?

To address this question, the paper adopts a conceptual approach consistent with established guidance on theory-building scholarship (Hage, 1972; Reese, 2023). Rather than testing a single empirical relationship, the study synthesises insights from the remote work, organisational culture, and performance management literatures to develop an integrated conceptual model of RPM. The analysis is further informed by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017) and the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), which together provide a useful foundation for explaining why trust, autonomy, support, and well-being are central to performance in remote contexts. Self-Determination Theory highlights the importance of autonomy, relatedness, and competence as conditions for motivation, while the Job Demands-Resources model explains how performance and well-being depend on the balance between intensified job demands and the resources available to employees. Taken together, these perspectives support the argument that organisational culture functions as a critical resource system through which RPM can enhance motivation, reduce strain, and strengthen resilience.

The paper makes three main contributions. First, it advances RPM theory by positioning organisational culture as an active coordinating mechanism rather than a passive background condition. Second, it develops a culture-driven

conceptual model that explains how trust, guided autonomy, and resilience emerge as interdependent mechanisms within remote performance systems. Third, it provides a more integrated account of RPM by linking communication clarity, capability development, and well-being support to broader cultural dynamics in digitally dispersed work settings. In doing so, the study responds to the need for a more coherent and practically relevant framework for understanding performance management beyond the assumptions of co-located work.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. The next section reviews the literature on RPM and identifies the cultural mechanisms that shape key remote work challenges. The paper then develops four propositions to explain how organisational culture influences the functioning and outcomes of RPM. Next, a culture-driven conceptual model is introduced, showing how communication clarity, capability development, and engagement with well-being reinforce trust, autonomy, and resilience in remote contexts. Finally, the paper discusses the theoretical implications, practical relevance, limitations, and directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Organisational Culture in Remote Performance Management*

Recent scholarship shows that remote and hybrid work have changed performance management by altering the social and organisational conditions under which performance is coordinated, evaluated, and sustained. Rather than depending primarily on physical visibility or direct supervision, remote work increases reliance on shared norms, communication quality, leadership support, and employees' perceptions of fairness and belonging. Review research suggests that remote work reshapes coordination through multiple forms of distance—social, temporal, technological, and structural—thereby making organisational culture more central to how employees interpret expectations and managerial practices (Leonardi et al., 2024). Empirical studies further indicate that organisational job resources such as participative leadership, goal clarity, and resource adequacy improve remote work experiences and strengthen employees' capacity to cope with work demands (Bullini Orlandi et al., 2024). In addition, identity-based leadership has been shown to reinforce team connectedness in remote settings, highlighting the cultural and relational foundations of coordination beyond formal control

systems (Shi et al., 2024).

More recent evidence also suggests that culture matters because remote and hybrid work intensify questions of belonging, psychological safety, and evaluation fairness. Research on hybrid work shows that employees' sense of belonging depends heavily on how organisations sustain social inclusion and shared identity across dispersed work arrangements (Urrila et al., 2025). Similarly, studies of performance management in remote and hybrid environments indicate that managers increasingly need to rely on communication, support, and trust-building rather than conventional observation-based practices (Mabaso et al., 2024). Recent work on electronic monitoring further suggests that the effects of monitoring on psychological safety depend less on monitoring alone than on how it is implemented and interpreted within the organisational context (Andrade et al., 2025). Relatedly, telecommuting employees have been found to perceive lower fairness in performance evaluation unless leadership support and supervisor communication are sufficiently strong (Aggarwal and Hoang, 2025). Taken together, these studies support a culture-centred view of RPM in which performance depends not only on systems and metrics, but also on the shared norms that shape trust, connectedness, support, and legitimacy.

2.2. Reframing Performance Management for Remote Work

Remote and hybrid work have weakened the traditional foundations of performance management, especially physical visibility, informal interaction, and spontaneous clarification. As work becomes more distributed, performance depends increasingly on how coordination is structured across place, time, and modality. Recent research shows that hybrid work is not simply an extension of office work but a distinct arrangement with its own coordination demands and HR implications (Lauring and Jonasson, 2025; Zheng et al., 2024).

This shift means that conventional performance routines are often poorly suited to dispersed settings. Although hybrid work can increase flexibility and autonomy, it can also create communication delays, weaker team integration, and coordination problems unless organisational norms are redefined (Manole et al., 2025; Hanzis and Hallo, 2024). Effective RPM, therefore, requires more than procedural adjustment. It requires a cultural reframing centred on trust, supportive leadership, communication quality, and clear coordination norms rather than observation and control alone (Kohont, 2025; Shin et al., 2025;

Siegel et al., 2025).

2.3. Communication Gaps and Cultural Clarity

Communication is especially vulnerable in remote and hybrid work because employees rely more on mediated interaction and have fewer opportunities for spontaneous clarification. Recent studies show that distributed work can slow communication, increase dependence on technology, and heighten misunderstanding by reducing visual cues, immediacy, and informal exchanges (Handke et al., 2024; Aguillon and Cronin-Gilmore, 2024). Flexible work arrangements may also reduce spontaneous social interaction, making communication gaps more consequential for both well-being and performance (Petitta et al., 2025).

These problems are not only technical but also interpretive. When informal cues are limited, employees depend more on how messages are framed, how responsive others are, and whether communication feels open and supportive. Evidence shows that dialogic communication strengthens engagement and relatedness in remote work, while task ambiguity can reduce employees' sense of connection even when they increase coordination efforts (Qin, 2024; Mühl et al., 2025).

For this reason, organisational culture is central to communication clarity in RPM. Cultural norms shape response expectations, feedback practices, and the role of informal interaction in coordination. Survey evidence shows that informal communication helps employees feel both informed and connected (Denner et al., 2024). Thus, cultural clarity does not remove communication challenges, but it provides the shared framework that makes remote communication more understandable, consistent, and performance-supportive.

2.4. Monitoring Tensions, Trust, and the Limits of Control

Monitoring has become a contested feature of RPM because digital work reduces direct visibility while increasing the ability to track behaviour and output. However, recent research suggests that monitoring does not reliably improve performance and may instead increase strain and weaken job attitudes (König, 2025). Employees also respond negatively when monitoring is perceived as excessive, unnecessary, or intrusive, with surveillance linked to higher distress, lower job satisfaction, and reduced autonomy (Fritsch et al., 2025; Glavin et al., 2024). These findings suggest that monitoring in remote settings can shift from a coordination tool to a source of stress and resistance.

For this reason, trust is central to understanding the limits of control in RPM. Evidence shows that monitoring affects employees not only through its presence but also through how it is interpreted within the managerial relationship. Leader monitoring can weaken follower trust, while active monitoring may lower engagement and job appeal in remote work settings (Golden and Ford, 2025; Holt and Lang, 2025). Privacy concerns related to keyboard and camera monitoring also increase reactance and reduce job satisfaction, whereas trust in the employer leads to more positive attitudes toward monitoring (Brinson et al., 2024). Sector-based evidence further suggests that the effects of monitoring vary by organisational context (Flatøy and Lund-Tønnesen, 2025). Accordingly, effective RPM cannot rely on control alone; it must be grounded in trust, transparency, and legitimate accountability.

2.5. Autonomy, Self-Management, and the Need for Structure

Remote and hybrid work are often associated with greater autonomy because employees have more discretion over where, when, and how they work. However, recent research shows that autonomy alone does not guarantee effective performance. In remote settings, employees perform better when they can manage time, maintain focus, adapt to change, and work without close supervision, suggesting that autonomy is effective only when supported by strong self-management capabilities (Allen et al., 2024; Kesenheimer et al., 2025).

At the same time, autonomy can become problematic when it is not supported by sufficient structure. Evidence shows that flexibility may coexist with longer hours, blurred boundaries, disengagement, and burnout, especially when employees lack fit between preferred and actual work arrangements or face role ambiguity and technostress (Vassiley et al., 2025; George et al., 2025; de Oliveira Malaquias et al., 2025). This suggests that the key issue is not autonomy itself, but whether organisations provide enough structure to make it sustainable.

For this reason, structure should be seen as a complement to autonomy rather than its opposite. In RPM, clear goals, defined responsibilities, feedback channels, and developmental support help prevent discretion from becoming uncertainty. Research on hybrid work leadership similarly shows the importance of reflection, discussion, and knowledge sharing across digital and physical workspaces (Wallo et al., 2025). From this perspective, effective

RPM depends on guided autonomy—autonomy supported by clarity, leadership, and shared expectations.

2.6. Digital Strain, Well-Being, and Cultural Support

Digital strain has become a major challenge in remote and hybrid work because flexibility is often accompanied by constant connectivity, digital fatigue, and blurred work-life boundaries. Recent studies show that while digital technologies can support coordination and productivity, they can also increase burnout, stress, and exhaustion when employees remain continuously exposed to online demands (Bondanini et al., 2025; Baurai et al., 2025). This suggests that digital strain is not a peripheral issue, but a core factor affecting employees' ability to sustain performance over time.

In this context, well-being cannot be treated as an individual responsibility alone. Evidence shows that leaders, coworkers, and organisational support improve job satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall well-being in remote and hybrid settings, while also buffering some of the harmful effects of technostress (Buonomo et al., 2024; Dara et al., 2025; Ward and Harunavamwe, 2025). At the same time, recent findings indicate that recovery and psychological detachment remain critical, since technostress can still contribute to burnout when employees struggle to disconnect from work (Whelan et al., 2025). Accordingly, effective RPM requires a supportive culture that legitimises recovery, clarifies boundaries, and treats well-being as a necessary condition of sustained performance.

2.7. Belonging, Cohesion, and the Social Basis of Performance

Belonging and cohesion remain important in remote and hybrid work because physical distance reduces informal interaction and can weaken employees' sense of connection to colleagues and the organisation. Recent studies show that connectedness in remote work varies widely and is shaped by work arrangements, workplace identity, and employees' social experiences, with some evidence indicating that remote work can increase feelings of isolation (Toivonen et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2025; Smaoui Hachicha et al., 2025). These findings suggest that the social foundations of work can become more fragile when performance is organised across distance.

At the same time, belonging is not only a relational outcome but also a performance-relevant resource. Evidence shows that organisational

belongingness can improve performance and mental health while reducing conflict and perceived constraints, and that team social cohesion and leader support can strengthen employees' willingness to contribute beyond formal job requirements in remote settings (Petitta and Ghezzi, 2025; André, 2026). Recent work on hybrid teams also emphasises that trust, psychological safety, and collaboration are necessary for sustaining performance across dispersed environments (Hincapie et al., 2024). Accordingly, RPM should treat belonging and cohesion as core conditions of performance rather than as secondary cultural concerns.

2.8. Performance Ambiguity and Cultural Fairness

Remote and hybrid work can increase ambiguity in performance evaluation because managers have fewer opportunities to observe how work is carried out and may rely more heavily on outcomes, visibility, or incomplete digital signals when judging employees. Recent evidence shows that smart and remote work can increase psychological distance between evaluators and employees, which shifts attention toward results rather than effort or process (Seo and Park, 2025). Related research also shows that telecommuting can trigger specific evaluation bias: managers may judge telecommuting mothers less favorably than telecommuting fathers when outcomes are weak, largely because effort is inferred unfairly rather than directly observed (Wang et al., 2025). More broadly, recent public-sector evidence identifies confirmation, similarity, anchoring, central tendency, and leniency or severity biases as continuing risks in appraisal systems, particularly when evaluation criteria are not sufficiently clear or consistently applied (Tarigan et al., 2025).

For this reason, fairness in RPM depends not only on what is measured, but also on how the evaluation is communicated, interpreted, and legitimised. Recent research suggests that performance appraisal systems are perceived as fairer when they include rater–ratee feedback sessions and calibration mechanisms, which help reduce inconsistency and strengthen employee engagement (Micacchi et al., 2024). Related evidence from algorithmic performance management also indicates that transparency improves employee responses by making evaluation processes more understandable and less opaque (Cai and Wang, 2024). Taken together, these findings suggest that cultural fairness in remote settings requires clear expectations, transparent criteria, and credible feedback processes so that performance judgments are seen as legitimate

rather than arbitrary.

2.9. Toward an Integrated Cultural View of Remote Performance Management

Recent research suggests that remote and hybrid work require a broader rethinking of performance management because dispersed work changes how communication, coordination, and accountability are organised across place and time (Maity and Lee, 2025; Lauring & Jonasson, 2025). This means that RPM cannot be explained through any single factor, such as monitoring, autonomy, or communication alone. Instead, performance in distributed settings depends on how multiple organisational resources are aligned, including task design, feedback, support, and access to information (Lamovšek et al., 2025; Charles, 2025).

From this perspective, organisational culture provides the integrating framework that gives coherence to RPM. Recent studies suggest that remote and hybrid work require organisations to move beyond visibility-based assumptions and to rely more on trust, communication, equity, and support in shaping performance systems (Bilderback and Kilpatrick, 2024; Mabaso, 2026). Accordingly, an integrated cultural view suggests that RPM is most effective when communication clarity, trust, autonomy, cohesion, and well-being are treated as interdependent conditions of sustained performance rather than as separate managerial issues.

Although scholarship on remote and hybrid work has expanded considerably, current knowledge remains conceptually fragmented. Prior studies have generated valuable insights into communication, monitoring, autonomy, well-being, belonging, and appraisal fairness, yet they have offered limited integration of these dynamics within a single RPM framework. More importantly, organisational culture has rarely been theorised as the central mechanism through which these dimensions are coordinated and made meaningful in dispersed work settings. This leaves insufficient explanation of how trust, guided autonomy, cohesion, and employee well-being are jointly shaped through culture to sustain performance beyond physical co-presence. To address this gap, the present study proposes a culture-driven conceptual model of RPM that brings these interdependent mechanisms into a more coherent theoretical framework.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF REMOTE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

This study draws on Self-Determination Theory

(SDT) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model to explain RPM in digitally dispersed work settings. These perspectives are well-suited to the study because they address two central issues: the motivational conditions that support effective performance beyond direct supervision, and the organisational resources needed to sustain performance under remote-work demands such as ambiguity, connectivity pressure, and reduced social support. Taken together, SDT and the JD-R model provide a coherent basis for explaining why culture-driven RPM systems are more likely to foster trust, guided autonomy, resilience, and sustained engagement than systems based primarily on monitoring and control.

3.1 Self-Determination Theory and the Motivational Basis of RPM

Self-Determination Theory explains motivation through three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000). These needs are especially relevant in remote and hybrid work, where employees operate with greater independence, less face-to-face interaction, and fewer informal sources of support. In this context, RPM is more effective when it supports employees' ability to regulate their work, develop competence, and remain connected to the organisation through communication and cultural inclusion.

This perspective is important because remote work weakens many of the informal cues that usually sustain motivation, such as visible routines and spontaneous interaction, making employees more vulnerable to uncertainty and disengagement (Wang et al., 2021; Chong et al., 2023). As a result, RPM systems based heavily on surveillance or rigid control may undermine motivation, whereas systems grounded in trust, meaningful autonomy, and supportive communication are more likely to strengthen commitment (Deci et al., 2017). SDT also suggests that autonomy should not be viewed as unrestricted independence, but as guided autonomy supported by clear expectations, credible support, and shared meaning. From this perspective, RPM is most effective when it reinforces trust, competence, and relatedness rather than relying primarily on monitoring and control.

3.2 The JD-R Model and the Resource Logic of RPM

While SDT explains the motivational side of remote performance, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model explains how organisations can sustain performance under intensified remote-work

pressures. The model views work as a balance between demands that drain energy and resources that help employees cope, learn, and stay engaged (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023). In remote and hybrid settings, demands often increase through digital overload, role ambiguity, constant connectivity, monitoring pressure, and reduced informal support. When these demands are not matched by adequate resources, employees are more likely to experience fatigue, strain, disengagement, and lower performance.

The JD-R model is especially useful here because it allows organisational culture to be understood as a critical job resource. In remote work, culture shapes resources such as communication clarity, psychological safety, fair expectations, developmental support, and norms around recovery. These cultural resources influence whether employees experience remote work as manageable or exhausting. From this perspective, RPM is most effective when it strengthens resources that support engagement and resilience, rather than intensifying demands through excessive control or unclear expectations. This helps explain why communication clarity, supportive leadership, capability development, and recovery-oriented norms are central to RPM.

3.3 Integrating SDT and JD-R for a Culture-Driven View of RPM

Together, SDT and the JD-R model provide a strong basis for a culture-driven view of RPM. SDT explains the motivational conditions of effective performance, especially autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while the JD-R model explains the resources needed to sustain performance under demands such as ambiguity, digital pressure, and reduced social support. Combined, they show that RPM is not simply a technical system for evaluating output, but a broader organisational process that shapes both motivation and resilience.

This integrated view helps explain why similar remote work arrangements can produce different outcomes across organisations. Where culture supports trust, communication clarity, learning, and well-being, employees are more likely to experience autonomy as enabling and demands as manageable. Where culture is weak or control-oriented, the same conditions may instead produce ambiguity, overload, and distrust. Accordingly, this study uses SDT and the JD-R model as complementary foundations for a culture-driven framework of RPM, leading directly to the propositions that follow.

4. CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF REMOTE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Remote and hybrid work have changed the conditions under which performance is communicated, evaluated, and sustained. As shown in the preceding sections, dispersed work weakens the role of physical visibility and informal interaction while increasing employees' dependence on communication quality, trust, self-management, social connection, and supportive work conditions. Under these circumstances, organisational culture becomes central to RPM because it shapes how expectations are interpreted, how accountability is exercised, and how employees experience autonomy, support, and fairness.

Building on the literature review and the theoretical foundations of SDT and the JD-R model, this study develops four propositions that position organisational culture as a key coordinating mechanism in RPM. Together, these propositions explain how culture helps translate remote work conditions into either sustained performance or strain. In particular, they focus on four interrelated areas: communication clarity, trust-based autonomy, capability development, and resilience with well-being.

4.1 Proposition 1

One of the most immediate challenges of remote work is reduced clarity in communication, expectations, and role interpretation. In co-located settings, much of this clarity is supported informally through observation, spontaneous conversations, and rapid clarification. In remote settings, however, employees must rely more heavily on mediated communication and formal signals, which increases the risk of ambiguity. When expectations are not clearly communicated, employees are more likely to experience confusion, weaker coordination, and lower confidence in how their performance is judged.

Organisational culture plays an important role in reducing this ambiguity. Shared norms around communication, responsiveness, feedback, and role expectations provide employees with an interpretive framework that helps them make sense of remote work demands. A culture that values openness, consistency, and clear communication can therefore improve the effectiveness of RPM by reducing uncertainty and reinforcing shared understanding. In this sense, culture supports not only information exchange but also the legitimacy and consistency of performance management processes.

From an SDT perspective, such clarity supports competence and relatedness by helping employees

understand what is expected and how they remain connected to organisational goals. From a JD-R perspective, communication clarity functions as a resource that reduces the strain associated with ambiguity and coordination difficulties. Accordingly, the first proposition is advanced:

Proposition 1: Remote performance management is more effective when organisational culture provides communication clarity that reduces ambiguity and creates shared understanding of performance expectations.

4.2 Proposition 2

Remote work reduces direct visibility and often encourages organisations to increase monitoring to maintain oversight. Yet the literature suggests that control-based approaches can weaken trust, reduce intrinsic motivation, and heighten employee stress. When monitoring is experienced as excessive or intrusive, employees may interpret performance management as surveillance rather than support. Under such conditions, performance may become defensive, compliance-oriented, or strained rather than genuinely engaged and sustainable.

A more effective alternative is trust-based autonomy. In remote settings, employees often need discretion to organise their work, respond flexibly to changing demands, and manage tasks independently. However, this autonomy is most productive when it is supported by cultural norms of trust, fairness, and accountability. Where employees believe that managers trust them and that evaluation systems are credible, autonomy is more likely to promote ownership and commitment. By contrast, when culture is dominated by suspicion or control, autonomy may be undermined by fear, reactance, or uncertainty.

This proposition is strongly supported by SDT, which emphasises autonomy as a basic psychological need, and by the JD-R model, which highlights trust as a resource that can buffer strain and sustain engagement. Thus, autonomy in RPM should not be understood as the absence of structure, but as discretion exercised within a culture of confidence and legitimate accountability. This leads to the second proposition:

Proposition 2: Remote performance management is more effective when autonomy is supported by organisational cultures of trust and accountability rather than by monitoring-driven control.

4.3. Proposition 3

Remote and hybrid work increase the importance of digital competence, self-management, communication skills, and adaptive learning.

Employees are often expected to manage tasks more independently, use digital platforms effectively, and coordinate across distance with less immediate support. Under these conditions, RPM cannot focus only on evaluating outcomes; it must also support the development of the capabilities that remote work requires.

Organisational culture is critical in determining whether development is treated as a core part of performance management or as a secondary concern. Cultures that value learning, feedback, and continuous improvement are more likely to align RPM with capability development. In such environments, performance management becomes developmental rather than merely evaluative. Employees receive guidance, support, and opportunities to build the skills needed for remote work success. By contrast, cultures focused narrowly on short-term outputs may weaken long-term capability growth and leave employees underprepared for the demands of dispersed work.

This proposition aligns with SDT through the need for competence and with the JD-R model through the provision of developmental resources that strengthen employees' ability to manage work demands. In remote contexts, capability development is therefore not separate from RPM; it is one of its essential functions. Accordingly, the third proposition is as follows:

Proposition 3: Remote performance management is more effective when organisational culture supports capability development aligned with the self-management, digital, and collaborative demands of remote work.

4.4. Proposition 4

Remote work often intensifies digital strain, blurs work-life boundaries, and increases the risk of isolation, fatigue, and burnout. These conditions directly affect performance because employees cannot sustain engagement over time when work systems continually erode their cognitive and emotional resources. For this reason, well-being and resilience should not be treated as peripheral concerns in RPM, but as central conditions of sustained performance.

Organisational culture plays a major role in shaping these outcomes. Cultures that support recovery, realistic expectations, psychological safety, and social connection are more likely to help employees remain engaged and resilient under remote-work demands. In contrast, cultures that normalise constant availability, excessive pressure, or weak support may intensify strain and undermine

long-term performance. Thus, the outcomes of RPM depend not only on formal appraisal practices but also on the cultural norms that shape how employees experience workload, support, and belonging.

This proposition reflects the JD-R model by highlighting how supportive culture operates as a resource that buffers strain and supports engagement, and it also aligns with SDT by reinforcing relatedness and autonomy in ways that sustain motivation. In remote settings, resilience is therefore not simply an individual trait; it is also a culturally mediated outcome of how work is managed. This leads to the fourth proposition:

Proposition 4: The effectiveness of remote performance management depends on the organisational culture's ability to support employee well-being, resilience, and sustained engagement under remote and hybrid work demands.

4.5. Linking the Propositions

Taken together, these four propositions suggest that organisational culture is not a peripheral context for RPM, but a central mechanism through which remote performance is coordinated and sustained. Communication clarity strengthens understanding, trust-based autonomy supports motivation, capability development enhances effective self-management, and cultural support for well-being promotes resilience. These mechanisms are interdependent rather than isolated. Where culture aligns with them, RPM becomes more coherent, credible, and sustainable. Where culture fails to align them, RPM is more likely to produce ambiguity, overload, disengagement, and mistrust.

These propositions provide the conceptual bridge to the model developed in the next section. Specifically, they support a culture-driven view of RPM in which communication clarity, guided autonomy, capability development, and well-being function as mutually reinforcing pathways through which organisational culture shapes performance in dispersed work settings.

5. A CULTURE-DRIVEN CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF RPM

Figure 1 presents the proposed culture-driven model of RPM. The model positions organisational culture as the central coordinating mechanism through which communication clarity, guided autonomy, capability development, and well-being support shape sustained performance in remote and hybrid work settings.

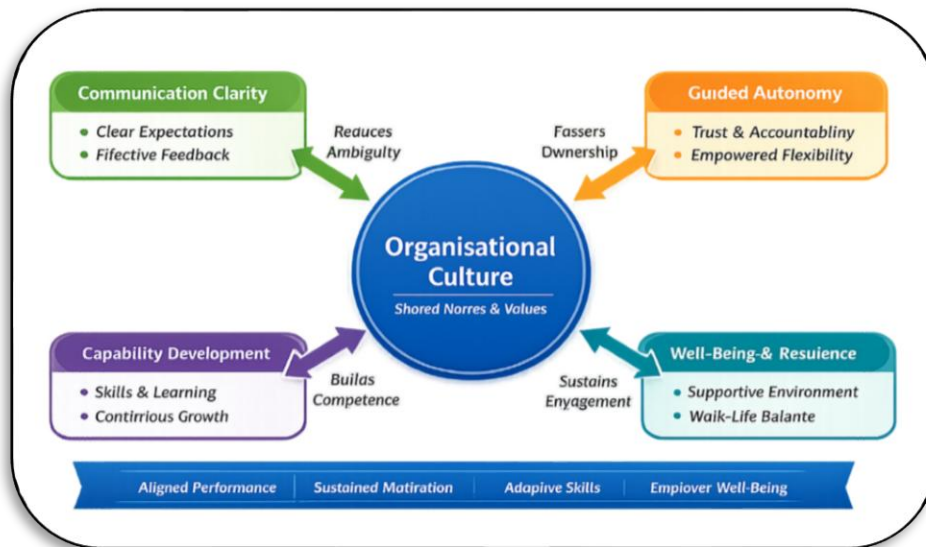


Figure 1. A Culture-Driven Model of Remote Performance Management.

Source: Developed by the author

The four propositions developed above suggest that RPM is most effective when organisational culture functions as the central coordinating mechanism linking communication, accountability, development, and employee well-being. In remote and hybrid work settings, performance can no longer be managed mainly through physical visibility or routine supervision. Instead, organisations must rely on shared norms, credible communication, trust-based expectations, and supportive work practices to sustain performance across distance. For this reason, the proposed model positions organisational culture not as a background condition, but as the foundation through which RPM gains coherence and legitimacy.

The model begins from a simple premise: when employees are geographically dispersed, culture becomes the system that helps interpret how performance should be understood, supported, and evaluated. In co-located settings, much of this interpretation is reinforced through informal interaction, visible routines, and direct managerial presence. In remote work, those signals are weaker. As a result, employees depend more heavily on cultural cues to understand what counts as effective performance, how much autonomy is appropriate, when support is available, and whether evaluation processes are fair. The model, therefore, treats culture as the integrative force that shapes how RPM operates in practice.

5.1. Organisational Culture as the Foundation of RPM

At the centre of the model is the idea that culture provides the shared meanings that allow remote

performance systems to function consistently. Organisational culture shapes how expectations are communicated, how accountability is interpreted, and how employees respond to managerial practices. Where culture reinforces clarity, trust, fairness, and support, employees are more likely to experience RPM as enabling and legitimate. Where culture is fragmented, inconsistent, or overly control-oriented, the same system may be experienced as ambiguous, stressful, or untrustworthy.

This foundation is especially important in remote settings because formal systems alone cannot fully regulate behaviour across dispersed environments. Employees must often interpret priorities independently, coordinate through digital channels, and manage their own work without immediate supervision. Under such conditions, culture acts as the social infrastructure of performance management. It provides the norms that guide behaviour when direct oversight is limited and helps employees translate formal procedures into meaningful day-to-day practice.

5.2. Communication Clarity as a Cultural Mechanism

The first pathway in the model is communication clarity. In remote work, communication replaces proximity as the primary medium for conveying and coordinating performance expectations. Yet communication is more likely to lead to misunderstandings when employees lack informal opportunities for clarification. The model therefore proposes that culture strengthens RPM by shaping communication norms that reduce ambiguity and

create shared understanding.

When cultural expectations around responsiveness, feedback, openness, and clarification are clear, employees are better able to interpret goals, priorities, and evaluation criteria. Communication clarity thus supports alignment between managers and employees and reduces the uncertainty that often weakens remote performance. In this sense, communication is not treated as a technical channel alone, but as a culturally embedded mechanism through which performance expectations become understandable and credible.

5.3. Guided Autonomy Through Trust and Accountability

The second pathway concerns autonomy. Remote work often requires employees to exercise more discretion over how they organise tasks, manage time, and respond to changing demands. However, the model argues that autonomy becomes effective only when it is supported by trust and culturally legitimate accountability. This is why the model uses the term guided autonomy rather than autonomy in a purely unrestricted sense.

Guided autonomy refers to a condition in which employees have sufficient discretion to manage their work, but within a framework of clear expectations, mutual trust, and consistent performance standards. In such settings, accountability does not depend primarily on surveillance, but on shared norms that encourage responsible self-management. Trust, therefore, functions as a central cultural mechanism linking autonomy to performance. When employees believe that managers trust them and that systems are fair, autonomy is more likely to support motivation, ownership, and engagement. When trust is weak, autonomy may instead be undermined by fear, uncertainty, or excessive control.

5.4. Capability Development as an Enabling Mechanism

A third element of the model is capability development. Remote and hybrid work increase the importance of self-management, digital competence, communication skills, and adaptive learning. For this reason, the model treats development as an integral part of RPM rather than a separate human resource activity. Employees can only use autonomy effectively when they possess the skills and confidence required to navigate dispersed work.

Organisational culture shapes whether such development is prioritised. In cultures that value learning, feedback, and improvement, RPM is more likely to support employees through coaching,

knowledge sharing, and developmental feedback. In cultures that focus narrowly on short-term output, performance management may neglect the capabilities needed for long-term effectiveness in remote work. Capability development, therefore, serves as the mechanism through which culture translates expectations into the practical competence required for sustained performance.

5.5. Engagement, Well-Being, and Resilience

The final pathway in the model concerns employee well-being and resilience. Remote work often increases digital strain, blurs work-life boundaries, and weakens opportunities for social connection. These pressures can reduce engagement and undermine performance over time if they are not balanced by adequate support. The proposed model, therefore, positions well-being not as a peripheral outcome, but as a core condition of sustainable RPM.

In this framework, resilience is understood as the capacity to maintain effective performance despite ongoing remote-work demands. Organisational culture shapes this capacity by influencing whether employees experience the work environment as psychologically safe, supportive, and manageable. Cultures that legitimise recovery, realistic expectations, social support, and inclusion are more likely to strengthen resilience and sustained engagement. In contrast, cultures that normalise constant availability or excessive pressure may intensify strain and weaken long-term performance. Thus, the model emphasises that RPM must incorporate well-being if it is to remain effective beyond short-term output measures.

5.6. The Logic of the Model

The model proposes that organisational culture influences RPM through four interdependent mechanisms: communication clarity, guided autonomy, capability development, and well-being-supported resilience. These mechanisms are not isolated. Communication clarity strengthens trust and reduces ambiguity; trust makes autonomy more productive; capability development enables employees to use autonomy effectively; and well-being support sustains engagement under continuing demands. Their integration is what gives RPM coherence in dispersed work settings.

The value of the model lies in showing that remote performance is not produced by monitoring or technology alone. Instead, performance emerges from the interaction between cultural norms and management practices that shape how employees interpret expectations, regulate their work, and

remain engaged over time. In this sense, the model offers a culture-driven explanation of why some organisations manage remote performance more successfully than others, even when they use similar tools or face similar work arrangements.

5.7. *Implications of the Model*

The proposed model has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it moves beyond fragmented accounts of remote work by integrating communication, trust, autonomy, development, and well-being into a single RPM framework. Practically, it suggests that managers should design performance systems that strengthen shared norms, developmental support, and employee trust rather than rely mainly on control-based mechanisms. In remote and hybrid settings, effective performance management depends less on seeing employees at work and more on building a culture that enables them to work effectively without constant visibility.

This culture-driven model provides the basis for the discussion that follows. It clarifies how organisational culture can transform RPM from a set of isolated managerial practices into an integrated system capable of supporting sustained performance in distributed work environments.

6. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Remote and hybrid work have fundamentally changed the conditions under which organisational performance is managed. As work becomes more digitally mediated and geographically dispersed, traditional assumptions of visibility, direct supervision, and routine interpersonal coordination become less reliable as foundations for performance management. This study has argued that, under such conditions, organisational culture becomes central to remote performance management (RPM). Rather than viewing culture as a background feature of the organisation, the paper positions it as an active mechanism through which communication, accountability, autonomy, development, and well-being are coordinated in dispersed work settings.

Building on the literature review and the integration of Self-Determination Theory and the Job Demands-Resources model, the study developed a culture-driven conceptual model of RPM. The model explains how communication clarity, guided autonomy, capability development, and resilience with well-being function as interdependent pathways through which organisational culture shapes sustained performance. In doing so, the paper

moves beyond monitoring-centred views of RPM and proposes a broader understanding of performance management as a system that depends on trust, shared meaning, supportive leadership, and culturally reinforced norms.

In conclusion, this study argues that the future of performance management in remote and hybrid work depends less on reproducing traditional control systems and more on building cultural conditions that support sustainable performance across distance. Organisational culture is not simply an accompanying feature of RPM; it is the foundation that gives it coherence, legitimacy, and endurance. By positioning culture as the central coordinating mechanism of RPM, this paper offers a more integrated framework for understanding how organisations can sustain trust, autonomy, development, and resilience in digitally dispersed work environments.

6.1. *Theoretical Implications*

This study contributes to the growing literature on remote and hybrid work in several ways. First, it advances RPM theory by treating organisational culture as an integrating mechanism rather than as a peripheral contextual factor. Much of the existing literature examines communication, monitoring, autonomy, belonging, or well-being as separate issues. This paper brings these dimensions together within a single conceptual framework and shows how culture links them in practice.

Second, the paper contributes theoretically by integrating SDT and the JD-R model in a way that is especially relevant to dispersed work settings. SDT helps explain why trust, autonomy, competence, and relatedness remain essential to motivation in remote work, while the JD-R model clarifies why communication clarity, support, development, and recovery function as key resources under remote-work demands. Their integration strengthens the argument that RPM should be understood as both a motivational and a resource-based system.

Third, the study extends current discussions of remote work by proposing the concept of guided autonomy. Rather than treating autonomy as unrestricted independence, the paper shows that autonomy is most effective when supported by clear expectations, trust, feedback, and shared cultural norms. This contributes to a more balanced view of remote work by showing that autonomy and structure are not opposites, but complementary conditions of sustained performance.

6.2. Practical Implications

The model also offers several practical implications for organisations managing remote and hybrid employees. First, managers should place greater emphasis on communication clarity. In dispersed settings, unclear expectations can quickly lead to ambiguity, disengagement, and perceptions of unfairness. Organisations should therefore develop clear norms around responsiveness, feedback, role expectations, and performance criteria.

Second, performance systems should be designed to build trust rather than rely excessively on surveillance. While some oversight may remain necessary, the findings of this study suggest that monitoring-heavy approaches can weaken motivation and employee confidence. Managers should instead focus on transparent expectations, credible accountability, and trust-based autonomy.

Third, organisations should embed development into RPM. Remote work requires employees to exercise self-management, digital competence, and adaptive collaboration. Performance management should therefore include developmental feedback, learning opportunities, coaching, and support for capability building rather than focusing only on outcome evaluation.

Fourth, employee well-being should be treated as a core condition of performance. In remote and hybrid settings, resilience depends on whether employees can manage digital strain, maintain boundaries, and feel supported. Organisations should therefore normalise recovery, realistic workload expectations, and psychological safety as part of RPM design rather than treating them as separate well-being initiatives.

6.3. Limitations

This study is conceptual in nature, and that creates several limitations. First, the proposed model has not been empirically tested. Although it is grounded in recent literature and established theory, the relationships identified remain conceptual and should therefore be interpreted as a framework for further investigation rather than as confirmed causal effects.

Second, the paper adopts a broad view of remote and hybrid work across organisational contexts.

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While this helps develop a general framework, it may also overlook sectoral, cultural, occupational, and national differences that shape how RPM is experienced in practice. The operation of culture-driven RPM may vary across industries, public and private organisations, leadership systems, and different levels of digital maturity.

Third, the model focuses on positive cultural mechanisms that support performance, but less attention is given to how dysfunctional or conflicting cultures may distort RPM in more complex ways. Future work may need to examine how fragmented, politicised, or low-trust cultures weaken the proposed pathways and produce different outcomes.

6.4. Directions for Future Research

Several directions for future research emerge from this study. First, empirical research is needed to test the proposed model and examine the strength of the relationships among communication clarity, trust, guided autonomy, capability development, well-being, and performance outcomes. Quantitative studies could assess the model across remote and hybrid work settings, while qualitative studies could explore how these mechanisms operate in practice.

Second, future research could examine whether the model functions differently across sectors, job types, and national cultures. The cultural mechanisms that support RPM in knowledge-intensive work may differ from those in public administration, healthcare, education, or operational environments. Comparative research would therefore help clarify the boundary conditions of the model.

Third, future studies could explore the role of leadership styles, digital technologies, and appraisal systems in strengthening or weakening culture-driven RPM. This would help explain how formal systems and informal norms interact in shaping remote performance.

Finally, longitudinal research would be valuable in examining how culture-driven RPM develops over time. Since remote and hybrid work arrangements continue to evolve, it is important to understand whether trust, resilience, and guided autonomy become more stable through repeated experience or whether they erode under prolonged digital strain.

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