# Promoting well-being and performance in remote teams:

# The moderating effect of supportive leadership

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# Promoting well-being and performance in remote teams: The moderating effect of supportive leadership


Abstract

**Purpose**: This study explores how team conflict in remote settings impacts employee well-being (burnout and psychological distress), trust and communication, and job performance, moderated by supportive leadership.

**Methodology**: Data from 421 remote workers were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), yielding robust support for the research model and hypotheses.

**Findings**: Findings reveal that team conflict affects well-being and trust and communication, while burnout and psychological distress hinder trust and communication. These findings suggest that while supportive leadership plays a crucial role in managing team conflict and preventing burnout, additional mechanisms such as enhancing technological tools for communication, creating structured opportunities for social interaction, and fostering team resilience may be needed to directly strengthen trust and communication in remote settings.

**Originality/value** : This research extends the body of knowledge by demonstrating the applicability of established theoretical frameworks—such as Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources Model—to the remote work context. Ultimately, the findings underscore the critical importance of conflict resolution strategies, well-being promotion, and nurturing supportive leadership behaviors for the efficacy of remote teams.



**Keywords**: Remote work; well-being; team conflict; job performance; supportive leadership.

# Introduction

The global shift to remote work varies across regions but remains widespread. This transformation was significantly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced companies worldwide to adopt remote practices almost overnight (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021). Large economies like the US and India, as well as smaller ones like Portugal, are embracing it (Haan & Holznienkemper, 2023; Hann & Main, 2024 ; (Mateus, 2024). In the US, 32.6 million workers (22% of the workforce) are expected to work remotely by 2025, reflecting steady growth. Demand is high, with 98% of workers preferring remote options. India follows a similar trend, with 12.7% of employees fully remote and 28.2% in hybrid roles by 2024. Portugal is also adopting remote work, with over one million workers (20.5% of the workforce) engaged in it by early 2024, driven by technology and evolving worker preferences.

This shift emphasizes the importance of understanding key factors that can hinder team performance in remote work settings. According to Idrissi and Fourka (2022), effective remote team functioning depends on several interconnected elements, including communication, trust, and leadership. Furthermore, the well-being of remote workers remains a critical issue. Research suggests that remote work is often associated with loneliness, psychological distress, and burnout (Costin et al., 2023). For example, Hayes et al. (2020) reported that remote workers were more likely to experience burnout and stress, compared to those who work exclusively on-site. Additionally, reduced social interaction and the absence of nonverbal cues in remote teams can increase the risk of misunderstandings and conflict—for instance, a message intended as neutral may be perceived as critical or dismissive(Idrissi & Fourka, 2022).

Effective conflict management is therefore crucial to promote healthy remote work environments (Sarker et al., 2018). Gupta et al. (2023) argue that effective conflict management positively influences performance, well-being, and team satisfaction, highlighting its importance in remote work environments. Throughout this study we use the term remote teams to refer to groups of employees

who work primarily from locations other than a central office, regardless of the frequency or duration of their on-site work. This includes both fully remote workers and those who work in a hybrid arrangement combining remote and on-site work (Cheng et al., 2016).

Traditional leadership styles often rely on physical presence and in-person interactions while remote work environments require a different approach, emphasizing the importance of building trust and connections virtually. Supportive leadership fosters trust, collaboration, and well-being, aligning with transformational leadership, which emphasizes motivation through vision and individualized support (Lundqvist et al., 2022). A charismatic and supportive leadership style plays a significant role in motivating and enhancing task performance in both remote and face-to-face contexts by nurturing trust among team members ( Ernst et al., 2022). However, remote environments present challenges like poor socialization, and reduced spontaneous communication (Moe & Smite, 2008).

The contributions of this work are threefold, First, it examines how team conflict increases burnout and psychological distress due to limited face-to-face interaction and reliance on digital communication, while exploring mitigation strategies. Second, it analyzes conflict's negative impact on trust and communication and how supportive leadership can moderate these effects. Third, it investigates how worker well-being influences trust and communication, highlighting the role of leadership in providing support and fostering psychological safety.

## 2. Theory and hypotheses development

While remote work offers flexibility, it also introduces interpersonal challenges that affect team cohesion and well-being (Breuer et al., 2016; Molino et al., 2020). The absence of face-to-face interactions may aggravate feelings of isolation and hamper conflict resolution processes, ultimately affecting employee morale and productivity (Charalampous et al., 2019). Positive communication channels and a foundation of trust can create a sense of psychological safety, encouraging employees to share ideas, collaborate effectively, and ultimately deliver optimal performance (Sarker et al., 2014).

Trust plays a critical role in encouraging disclosure in workplace relationships, especially when sensitive or stigmatized information is involved. Employees are more likely to disclose personal challenges or mental health concerns when they trust their leader, as trust reduces the fear of negative consequences, such as stigmatization or damage to their professional image.

Similarly, Pischel and Felfe (2023) found that health-oriented leadership nurtures disclosure beyond transformational leadership, especially in cases involving mental health. When leaders are seen as health-oriented, they create an atmosphere in which employees are more comfortable about sharing information. This relationship highlights the bidirectional nature of trust and disclosure, as trust encourages open communication, which in turn allows leaders to better address the employees' needs (Pischel et al., 2023).

Supportive leadership can positively impact well-being in both remote and face-to-face environments (Lundqvist et al., 2022). However, remote teams' leaders face additional challenges. Remote teams are often culturally diverse, which can lead to more frequent conflicts (Staples & Zhao, 2006). These conflicts can negatively affect team members' well-being (Shaukat et al., 2017), requiring remote teams' leaders to take on a monitoring role to mitigate such issues (Garrison et al, 2008).

## 2.1 Team conflict on well-being.

Unresolved conflict can exacerbate feelings of isolation and frustration (Garlatti Costa et al., 2023). Without in-person communication and clarification negative emotions may arise and persist. Team members may experience heightened levels of emotional exhaustion, leading to burnout (Wu et al., 2018). Both the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory suggest that the depletion of personal and job resources due to team conflict in remote work environments can intensify emotional strain, ultimately affecting employee well-being (Garlatti Costa et al., 2023).

The COR theory provides a useful lens for understanding how this emotional exhaustion occurs. It posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources, such as emotional energy, motivation, and social support, to maintain their well-being (Westman et al., 2004). In remote settings, the lack of informal social interactions, which are vital for maintaining emotional and psychological well-being, leads to faster depletion of personal resources, especially when team conflict adds additional stress (Consiglio et al. 2023; Gupta et al., 2023).

The JD-R model emphasizes that employee well-being hinges on the balance between job demands (e.g., workload, cognitive demands, and stressors like team conflict) and available job resources (e.g., team camaraderie and social support) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In remote teams, job demands such as increased cognitive load from technology (e.g., managing multiple digital platforms) and the pressure of constant availability can outweigh the resources provided by team camaraderie, leading to heightened stress (Sardeshmukh, et al., 2012). Without the benefit of face-to-face interactions in remote settings, conflicts often escalate, leading to increased stress, emotional exhaustion, and diminished team cohesion (Breuer et al., 2016; Molino et al., 2020). When these job demands exceed available resources, employees are more likely to experience burnout and psychological distress, as predicted by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Therefore, we posit:

**H1a**: In remote environments team conflict has an impact on burnout.

**H1b**: In remote environments team conflict has an impact on psychological distress.

## 2.2 Team conflict on trust and communication.

Van Zoonen and Sivunen (2022) mention that the lack of rich, nonverbal cues in face-to-face interactions can lead to a lack of trust, impede communication, and make it difficult to share information. Team members may hesitate to share ideas, offer constructive criticism, or engage in open discussions due to fear of conflict, which can erode performance (Hill & Bartol, 2016). When trust is compromised, overall team performance can suffer, as trust is a foundational element for effective communication, collaboration, and task coordination (Costa et al., 2018). In remote teams, conflict can further create a stressful and unproductive work environment, exacerbating feelings of discouragement, demotivation, and cynicism about the team's ability to function cohesively (Hinds et al., 2005; Gibson & Gibbs, 2006). Therefore, we posit:

**H1c:** In remote settings team conflict has an impact on trust and communication.

## 2.3 Well-being on trust and communication.

The shift to remote work offers flexibility but also poses risks to employee well-being, particularly burnout and psychological distress (Charalampous et al., 2019). In remote settings, managers struggle to detect distress due to the lack of physical cues, which can silently impact performance (Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022). Burnout, marked by exhaustion and detachment, reduces motivation, especially when isolation and blurred work-life boundaries worsen disengagement (Goehring et al., 2005; Costin et al., 2023). Additionally, psychological distress (which includes anxiety, depression, and difficulties with concentration) is another major threat to team performance in remote work environments (Li et al., 2016). Research indicates that a greater frequency of remote work correlates with higher levels of

psychological distress, as employees struggle to manage boundaries between work and personal life (Charalampous et al., 2019;  Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022). Therefore, we posit:

**H2**: In remote settings burnout affects trust and communication.

**H3**: In remote settings psychological distress affects trust and communication.

## 2.4 Trust and communication on job performance.

Trust and communication are crucial for organizational and project success. According to Aubert and Kelsey (2003), effective communication is a key differentiator that sets high-performing teams apart from those with lower performance, highlighting its essential role in team dynamics and outcomes. When teams have access to consistent and transparent communication channels along with equal access to information, they are better equipped to achieve high levels of performance. In remote teams, where face-to-face interactions are absent, maintaining trust becomes more challenging but remains essential for job performance  (Chang et al., 2011). Jarvenpaa and Leidner (1999) emphasize that trust is essential for successful remote team collaboration, as it compensates for the lack of physical presence and informal interactions. When team members trust each other, they are more likely to engage in open and transparent communication, which is crucial for achieving project goals in a distributed environment. Without clear, regular communication, remote teams face misunderstandings and misalignment, reducing overall effectiveness. (Lin et al.,2008). Therefore, we posit:

**H4**: In remote settings trust and communication affect job performance.

## 2.5 Moderating effect.

### 2.5.1 Supportive leadership on team conflict and well-being

In remote teams effective leadership plays a pivotal role in mitigating misunderstandings and promoting well-being (Contreras et al., 2020). The limited or nonexistent informal socialization can

lead to communication barriers, increasing the risk of misinterpretations and conflict (Cimperman, 2023). Effective leadership can positively influence team members' well-being (Winston, 2022). However, team conflict can harm well-being, as unresolved disputes create stress and strain relationships (Leon-Perez et al., 2016). This is especially important in remote teams, where the lack of face-to-face interaction and diverse cultural backgrounds can lead to more frequent misunderstandings and conflicts, and leaders must therefore put in additional effort to manage these conflicts (Garrison et al., 2008; Moe & Smite, 2008). Supportive leaders help to bridge such gaps by fostering clear communication, ensuring alignment to goals, and providing emotional support. This not only reduces team misunderstandings but also positively influences team members' well-being, reducing stress and promoting a collaborative work environment (Schmitt, 2024). Therefore, we posit:

**H5a**: Supportive leadership in remote settings moderates the relationship between team conflict and burnout.

**H5b**: Supportive leadership in remote settings moderates the relationship between team conflict and psychological distress.

2.5.2 Supportive leadership on team conflict and trust and communication

According to Chang and Lee (2013) the leadership style affects conflict management mode. Transformational Leaders who create opportunities for collaboration and team bonding, motivating team members with charisma and motivation, have better outcomes when solving conflict than leaders who focus only on goals and use reward and punishment for motivation. One challenge exacerbated by remote work is team conflict, which can greatly impact performance (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Effective leadership can offset the negative effects of conflict and achieve positive organizational outcomes (Cerni et al., 2014) such as increased employee engagement, greater job satisfaction, improved team performance, and enhanced organizational commitment (Khan et al.,

2020). Therefore, leaders who encourage clear and respectful communication build trust and psychological safety within the team. However, the fragile trust and communication problem poses an additional problem to remote teams' leaders (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999). Therefore, we posit:

**H5c**: Supportive leadership in remote settings moderates the relationship between team conflict and trust and communication.

2.5.3 Supportive leadership on well-being and trust and communication

Whether in remote work settings or traditional office settings, leadership plays a pivotal role not only in driving team performance but also in safeguarding the well-being of remote workers (Marescaux et al., 2019). In remote teams, leaders have to act as crucial facilitators in mitigating the detrimental effects of work-life conflicts and psychological distress while simultaneously fostering job satisfaction among their remote teams. Additionally, remote leaders face the delicate balance of monitoring team activity to mitigate conflict and provide support, while avoiding the perception of practicing abusive supervision, which can increase psychological distress among subordinates, particularly when coupled with overly controlling or regulatory communication (Garrison et al., 2008 ; Tepper et al., 2017). Qin and Men (2023) highlight the role of organizational trust in mediating the effects of communication on employee well-being, suggesting that trust within the organization positively influences employee psychological well-being, especially when supported by corporate symmetrical communication and supportive peer communication.

Therefore, we posit:

**H5d**: Supportive leadership in remote settings moderates the relationship between burnout and trust and communication.

**H5e**: Supportive leadership in remote settings moderates the relationship between psychological distress and trust and communication.

### 2.7 Control Variables

We incorporate sociodemographic control variables (age, gender, and education) (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016) to account for potential confounding effects.

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1 Measurement

The measurement scales for all constructs were adapted from the literature, as shown in Table 1 of Appendix A.

### 3.2 Sampling and data collection

The survey was distributed to remote or hybrid workers via email and LinkedIn. A pilot study involving 35 participants was conducted to evaluate the survey's clarity and comprehensibility. Following this the final survey was translated from English to Portuguese by a professional translator and reviewed by a second translator to ensure accuracy and consistency. We developed an online survey using Qualtrics, targeting remote workers across various sectors. Only 16% of the participants had experience with remote work before the COVID-19 pandemic, while the remaining 81% transitioned to remote work during or after the pandemic. By the end of 2023, 64% of the participants were still engaged in remote work, indicating a pronounced shift in work dynamics over time. Notably, 77% of respondents currently live and work in Portugal, and approximately 80% are employed by Portuguese companies.

To address common method bias (CMB) we conducted Harman's single-factor test, which accounted for 31% of the variance, and Marker variables analysis, yielding a correlation value of 0.058564 between the marker variable and latent variables (Eichhorn, 2014). Both methods revealed minimal CMB, as the variance explained by a single factor was well below the conventional threshold of 50%. Additionally, the low correlation values between the marker variable and latent variables further supported the absence of substantial common method bias in our study.

# 4. Data Analysis

## 4.1 Measurement Model

To enhance construct measurement reliability and validity we eliminated specific items (SL3, BRT2, BRT3, BRT4, and Tflict2) due to inadequate loadings relative to cross-loadings (Götz et al., 2009). Additionally, items T&C3, T&C4, and JP4 were removed because they contributed to poor model fit. Specifically, these items displayed high residual variances and low standardized factor loadings, which negatively impacted the overall model's fit indices. After their removal, the model fit improved substantially, aligning with accepted thresholds for good model fit (e.g., CFI and TLI $\geq .90$, RMSEA $\leq .08$, and SRMR $\leq .08$) as outlined by Hu and Bentler (1999). Regarding the reliability and validity measures for the model constructs, each latent variable exceeded the threshold of both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (.70) (Table 1), indicating high consistency among the items within each construct in capturing the underlying phenomenon (Nunnally, 1978). The model's validity were assessed in two ways. We examined the average variance extracted (AVE), which indicates the proportion of variance captured by the construct relative to variance attributable to measurement error. Table 2 in Appendix reports that the square root of the AVEs (in bold) consistently exceeds the correlation between constructs, thus meeting the recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Discriminant validity was assessed using two methods. First, the cross-loadings criteria was applied, demonstrating that each item exhibited stronger loading on its intended factor than on any other factor, thereby confirming discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2016). Second, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was examined, with all HTMT values falling below the recommended threshold of .90 , indicating discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). To further assess the quality of the model we calculated the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) as a model fit indicator, following recent recommendations for PLS-SEM) (Henseler et al., 2015). The SRMR value for the estimated model was .078, which is below the commonly accepted threshold of .08, indicating a good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Henseler et al., 2016). This provides additional support for the robustness of the model's results. Both the cross-loadings and HTMT tables can be found in Tables 3 and 4 of Appendix B.

## 4.2 Structural Model

The structural model was analyzed, including control variables (age, gender, and education). Bootstrapping analysis (5,000 resamples) determined path coefficient significance and stability. All indicators had VIF values below the recommended threshold (5), confirming no multicollinearity (Hair Jr. et al., 2021). Figure I present the results of the hypotheses. The model accounted for 58% of burnout, 48% of psychological distress, 57% of trust and communication, and 21% of job performance variance. Team conflict significantly explained burnout ($\beta = .692$, $p < .001$), psychological distress ($\beta = .579$, $p < .001$), and trust and communication ($\beta = -.371$, $p < .001$), confirming H1a, H1b, and H1c. Burnout significantly influenced trust and communication ($\beta = -.149$, $p < .05$), supporting H2, while psychological distress significantly influenced trust and communication ($\beta = -.145$, $p < .05$), confirming H3. Trust and communication significantly impacted job performance ($\beta = .456$, $p < .001$), supporting H4. Gender, age, and education had nonsignificant effects on job performance (gender: $\beta = .047$, $p > 0.05$; age: $\beta = .038$, $p > 0.05$; education: $\beta = .047$, $p > 0.05$).

Figure 1: Theoretical model with hypotheses' results.

## 5. Discussion

Our analysis revealed that while team conflict can increase burnout and psychological distress in any work setting, remote environments amplify these challenges due to isolation and the lack of spontaneous face-to-face interactions that typically help resolve misunderstandings, thereby supporting hypotheses H1a and H1b. These findings align with Fay and Kline (2011), who highlighted the distinct challenges faced by remote workers, including social isolation and the increased risk of misunderstandings due to the limitations of communication technologies. Additionally, excessive video meetings and blurred work-life boundaries can contribute to burnout and negatively impact employee well-being, as emphasized by Grant et al. (2013). These results underscore the importance of effective conflict management strategies to mitigate the adverse effects on well-being and mental health, as noted by Gupta et al. (2023). Our analysis revealed that when team conflict arises in remote work environments, it significantly undermines trust among team members and hampers effective communication channels, thereby supporting hypothesis H1c. This highlights the fact that lack of face-to-face interaction in remote teams can lead to an increase in relational conflicts, as team members miss out on the spontaneous, informal communication that helps to build rapport (Fay & Kline, 2011). Similarly, Degbey and Einola (2020) emphasize that virtual teams must proactively develop resilience to navigate common setbacks and maintain cohesion. The lack of face-to-face interaction makes it especially difficult to detect subtle social cues, which is crucial when working under pressure, as even minor misalignments can quickly escalate into conflict or exclusion.

Given the interpersonal challenges discussed earlier, it is not surprising that our findings show burnout and psychological distress are both negatively associated with trust and communication in remote environments, thereby confirming hypotheses H2 and H3. While these relationships between well-being and team dynamics are well documented in traditional face-to-face settings (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007), in remote settings, the lack of non-verbal cues and immediacy that are critical in building trust and resolving misunderstandings introduces unique challenges that exacerbate these effects (Consiglio et al., 2023). These results underscore the importance of addressing employee well-being and mental health concerns in remote settings (Costin et al., 2023).

Our study reveals a positive relationship between trust, communication, and job performance in remote teams, thereby supporting hypothesis H4. These findings emphasize the pivotal role that trust and communication play in fostering collaboration, coordination, and task completion, even in remote settings. While the link between trust, communication, and job performance is well established in face-to-face teams (Cheung et al., 2013), in remote teams the absence of spontaneous interactions, limited non-verbal feedback, and the reliance on digital communication tools can weaken trust and slow the flow of information (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999). These obstacles highlight the need for robust communication strategies and trust-building mechanisms to ensure optimal performance in remote settings. As demonstrated in our findings, when trust and communication are effectively nurtured in remote teams, they strongly enhance job performance.

We examined supportive leadership as a moderator in the relationships between team conflict, burnout, psychological distress, and trust in remote settings. The findings suggest that supportive leadership reduces the negative impact of team conflict on burnout and distress (H5a, H5b). While traditional leadership frameworks emphasize the importance of supportive leadership on employee well-being (Sharma & Pearsall, 2016; Inceoglu et al. (2018), remote leadership requires unique strategies. Leaders must address digital fatigue, isolation, and communication barriers, which can exacerbate the effects

of team conflict and hinder well-being (Lee & Kim, 2023). Supportive leadership in these environments involves more than simply offering guidance or emotional support; it requires leaders to be proactive in facilitating regular, clear communication, fostering a sense of psychological safety, and providing resources to manage remote work stressors (Contreras et al., 2020 ; Tautz et al., 2022).

For instance, leaders who actively support their team members through regular check-ins and clear communication reduce feelings of isolation and help manage digital overload, reducing burnout and psychological distress (Molino et al., 2020; Spagnoli et al., 2020). Additionally, supportive leadership can help diffuse team conflict in remote settings, where misunderstandings are more likely due to the absence of non-verbal cues and the nuances of face-to-face interaction (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006). By reinforcing trust and promoting open dialog, supportive leaders weaken the impact of conflict on both burnout and distress, thereby enhancing overall team cohesion and well-being. These findings underscore the importance of tailoring leadership strategies to remote environments, in which traditional approaches may fall short in addressing the specific challenges of digital workspaces. Figure 2 in Appendix A shows that supportive leadership is an effective buffer against the negative effects of team conflict, notably burnout and psychological distress.

Our findings highlight the crucial role that supportive leadership plays in mitigating the negative consequences of team conflict in remote work settings. Interestingly, the study did not find support for the moderating effect of supportive leadership on the relationship between burnout/psychological distress and trust and communication, nor on the relationship between team conflict and trust and communication, and thus hypotheses H5d, H5c, and H5e were not supported. In remote environments trust and communication are more difficult to encourage due to the lack of physical presence and non-verbal cues, which are essential for building rapport and resolving misunderstandings (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Gibson & Gibbs, 2006). While effective in addressing direct conflict and promoting well-being, supportive leadership may struggle to fully compensate for these structural communication

barriers. In remote settings leaders often have limited visibility into day-to-day team dynamics and individual stress levels, which can reduce the leaders' ability to intervene effectively in issues related to trust and communication (Breuer et al., 2016).

Moreover, burnout and psychological distress may impair team members' ability to engage meaningfully in communication, regardless of leadership support. In remote teams employees experiencing burnout often withdraw from collaborative efforts, leading to disengagement that supportive leadership alone may not be able to mitigate (Molino et al., 2020). Similarly, psychological distress can reduce individuals' capacity to trust others or communicate effectively, and while supportive leadership can provide a buffer, it may not be sufficient to restore the level of trust and communication necessary for high-functioning remote teams (Contreras et al., 2020).

These findings suggest that while supportive leadership plays a crucial role in managing team conflict and preventing burnout, additional mechanisms such as enhancing technological tools for communication, creating structured opportunities for social interaction, and fostering team resilience—may be needed to directly strengthen trust and communication in remote settings. The challenges of remote work environments, including digital fatigue and isolation, likely amplify the disconnect between leadership support and its influence on communication and trust dynamics.

## 5.1 Implications for theory

This study makes valuable contributions to the body of knowledge on conflict management theories by contextualizing them within remote work settings. Traditional theories of conflict management, such as those posited by Rahim and Katz (2020), typically emphasize face-to-face interactions. Our findings indicate that the dynamics of conflict in remote teams differ substantially from those in co-located teams, calling for an adaptation of these theories to accommodate the special challenges posed by remote communication channels. Specifically, the exacerbation of burnout and psychological

distress due to team conflict highlights the need for conflict management frameworks that address mental health and well-being explicitly in remote work contexts.

The study extends the occupational health literature by including the impact of remote work on burnout and distress and aligning with the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004). Additionally, traditional models of trust-building, such as the integrative model of organizational trust of Schoorman et al. (2007), emphasize the role of interpersonal interactions and shared experiences. Our findings suggest that in remote settings the detrimental impact of team conflict on trust and communication is more pronounced. This calls for a reevaluation of trust-building mechanisms in remote teams that incorporates factors such as digital communication efficacy and the role of asynchronous communication in maintaining trust.

Supportive leadership, characterized by behaviors that promote a positive work environment and provide emotional support, was found to buffer the negative impacts of team conflict on burnout and psychological distress. This finding is consistent with the job demands-resources (JD-R) model of Xanthopoulou et al. (2007). However, the lack of a moderating effect on the relationship between well-being and trust/communication suggests that supportive leadership primarily influences the initial stress response rather than the subsequent interpersonal dynamics. This delineation calls for a refined application of the JD-R model in remote contexts in order to account for the unique nature of virtual communication. Unlike traditional settings, in which leaders can more easily observe and intervene in interpersonal issues, remote environments often lack informal interactions that build trust and maintain communication. Therefore, leadership interventions in remote settings may need to focus more on facilitating communication structures, offering technical support for digital collaboration, and creating opportunities for social bonding, in addition to emotional support. This refined approach suggests that in remote contexts leadership should not only act as a resource to reduce stress but also actively shape the communication landscape to prevent trust erosion and ensure effective team collaboration.

## 5.2 Practical Implications

The findings offer valuable insights for managers, who should prioritize implementing effective conflict management strategies tailored to remote work environments (Paul et al., 2004) and invest in tools and practices that facilitate effective virtual communication and trust-building.

Organizations should invest in leadership development programs focused on cultivating supportive remote-team leadership behaviors. Companies should offer virtual counseling services, stress-management workshops, and resilience training to help employees cope with the special challenges of remote work, along with regular check-ins and surveys to assess employee well-being.

## 5.3. Limitation and future research

The cross-sectional nature of our study precludes establishing causal relationships between variables, while longitudinal designs would allow tracking changes over time, providing insights into the trajectory of conflict resolution efforts and the sustainability of interventions aimed at improving remote team dynamics. Also, results based solely on questionnaire responses may introduce common method biases. The Harman's single-factor test and marker variable analysis revealed minimal CMB, as did the low correlation values between the marker variable and latent variables. Future research could include more diverse samples to enhance external validity and explore different leadership styles.

# 6. Conclusion

We investigated the intricate relationships between team conflict, well-being (burnout and psychological distress), trust/communication, supportive leadership, and job performance in remote work settings. The findings support the hypotheses related to the negative impact of conflict on well-being and trust/communication. The findings underscore the importance of addressing team conflict

and promoting supportive leadership behaviors to enhance employee well-being and performance in virtual workspaces. The practical implications of this study provide a roadmap for organizations to enhance the well-being and performance of their remote workforce.

## 7. Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in Zenodo repository at https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11460234.

## 8. Acknowledgments

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## 9. Brief biographical statements

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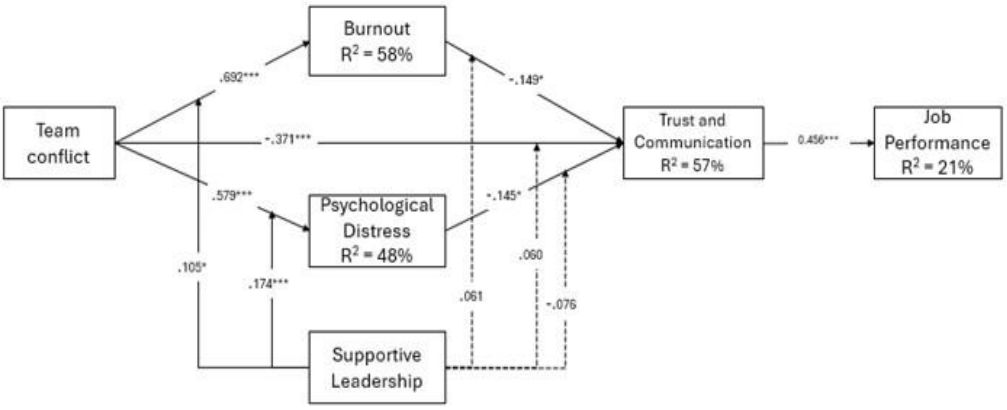


**Figure I**: Structural model results

**Source**: Authors own creation.

APPENDIX A

**Table 1**– Questionnaire for the constructs.

| Constructs | | Item | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Team Conflict** | Tflict1 | I feel like when we work from home, my team pays less attention to work. | (Wang & Wang, 2023) |
| | Tflict2 | When we work from home the team experiences moments of peace and ease, even when things get hectic and stressful. | (Wang & Wang, 2023) |
| | Tflict3 | I feel like when we work from home, there are many personality clashes between team members. | (Wang & Wang, 2023) |
| | Tflict4 | I feel like when we work from home, there are less friction between team members. | (Wang & Wang, 2023) |
| **Psychological Distress** | PD1 | During the past week I felt sad, downhearted, or uninterested in life. | (Ciarrochi et al., 2022) |
| | PD2 | During the past week I felt anxious or nervous. | (Ciarrochi et al., 2022) |
| | PD3 | During the past week I felt stressed. | (Ciarrochi et al., 2022) |
| | PD4 | During the past week I felt angry. | (Ciarrochi et al., 2022) |
| | PD5 | During the past week I felt like not having the social support I needed. | (Ciarrochi et al., 2022) |
| **Burnout** | BRT1 | Even working from home, I get exhausted just thinking about everything I have to do in my daily work activities. | (Roskam et al., 2018) |
| | BRT2 | I feel emotionally exhausted at work when I go to the office. | (Trockel et al., 2018) |
| | BRT3 | When I work from home, I am able to do my job and not burnout. | (Haider et al., 2018) |
| | BRT4 | I feel I am working too hard on my job when I work from home. | (Bloom et al., 2015) |
| | BRT5 | I feel emotionally drained from my work when I work from home. | (Bloom et al., 2015) |
| **Trust and Communication** | T&C1 | I trust my colleagues when the team works remotely. | (Gefen & Straub, 2004) |
| | T&C2 | When I work remotely, I find it difficult to trust my colleagues due to many factors. | (Gefen & Straub, 2004) |
| | T&C3 | My remote coworkers cannot be trusted due to too many uncertainties. | (Turel & Serenko, 2012) |
| | T&C4 | When I work remotely, I only listen to my leaders' opinions. | (Shukuan Zhao et al., 2020) |
| **Supportive Leadership** | SL1 | When I work from home, in addition to my work activities, my leaders are also concerned about my well-being. | (Hartog et al., 1997) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | SL2 | I am encouraged by my leader to help my team when I work from home. | (Liden et al., 2008) |
| | SL3 | When I work from home, my leaders and I touch base more frequently than usual. | (Kelley & Kelloway, 2012) |
| | SL4 | I can be counted my leaders when I work from home. | (Kelley & Kelloway, 2012) |
| **Job Performance** | JP1 | When I work from home, I can jointly perform tasks effectively | (Salehan et al., 2017) |
| | JP2 | Working from home enables me to accomplish tasks more quickly | (Tam & Oliveira, 2019) |
| | JP3 | Working from home makes it easier to accomplish tasks. | (Tam & Oliveira, 2019) |
| | JP4 | When I work from home, I can find a better way to do business activities. | (Salehan et al., 2017) |

Notes: **BRT**-Burnout, **SL**-Supportive Leadership, **PD**-Psychological Distress, **T&C**-Trust and communication, **Tflict**- Team conflict, **JP**-Job performance.

**Source**: Authors own creation.

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APPENDIX B

**Table 2 –** Reliability and Validity measures

| | MEAN | SD | CA | CR | BRT | SL | PD | T&C | Tflict | JP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BRT** | 3.725 | 1.610 | 0.784 | 0.787 | **0.907** | | | | | |
| **SL** | 5.135 | 1.176 | 0.773 | 0.783 | -0.246 | **0.829** | | | | |
| **PD** | 3.649 | 1.567 | 0.924 | 0.927 | 0.725 | -0.37 | **0.876** | | | |
| **T&C** | 5.187 | 1.107 | 0.880 | 0.815 | -0.319 | 0.580 | -0.330 | **0.916** | | |
| **Tflict** | 3.793 | 1.632 | 0.880 | 0.883 | 0.753 | -0.265 | 0.674 | -0.406 | **0.899** | |
| **JP** | 5.190 | 1.041 | 0.772 | 0.814 | -0.246 | 0.474 | -0.210 | 0.521 | -0.245 | **0.824** |

**CA**- Cronbach's alpha, **CR**- Composite reliability, **BRT**-Burnout, **SL**-Supportive Leadership, **PD**-Psychological Distress, **T&C**-Trust and communication, **Tflict**- Team conflict, **JP**-Job performance.

**Source**: Authors own creation.

**Table 3**– Cross loadings.

| | BRT | SL | PD | TC | Tclif | JP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BRT1 | **0.902** | -0.222 | 0.635 | -0.514 | 0.666 | -0.202 |
| BRT2 | **0.912** | -0.225 | 0.680 | -0.570 | 0.698 | -0.205 |
| SL1 | -0.190 | **0.826** | -0.166 | 0.348 | -0.160 | 0.334 |
| SL2 | -0.220 | **0.863** | -0.224 | 0.447 | -0.239 | 0.449 |
| SL4 | -0.200 | **0.799** | -0.194 | 0.429 | -0.252 | 0.370 |
| PD1 | 0.663 | -0.234 | **0.893** | -0.506 | 0.573 | -0.174 |
| PD2 | 0.608 | -0.143 | **0.873** | -0.411 | 0.536 | -0.118 |
| PD3 | 0.612 | -0.204 | **0.862** | -0.479 | 0.568 | -0.157 |
| PD4 | 0.642 | -0.213 | **0.893** | -0.516 | 0.639 | -0.149 |
| PD5 | 0.647 | -0.235 | **0.857** | -0.532 | 0.623 | -0.234 |
| T&C1 | -0.301 | 0.499 | -0.311 | **0.908** | -0.388 | 0.435 |
| T&C2 | -0.285 | 0.562 | -0.294 | **0.924** | -0.358 | 0.501 |
| Tflict1 | 0.653 | -0.267 | 0.591 | -0.522 | **0.856** | -0.188 |
| Tflict3 | 0.675 | -0.225 | 0.603 | -0.598 | **0.914** | -0.177 |
| Tflict4 | 0.700 | -0.227 | 0.623 | -0.631 | **0.924** | -0.227 |
| JP1 | -0.279 | 0.473 | -0.254 | 0.502 | -0.318 | **0.844** |
| JP2 | -0.151 | 0.358 | -0.118 | 0.330 | -0.143 | **0.839** |
| JP3 | -0.144 | 0.307 | -0.109 | 0.278 | -0.088 | **0.788** |

Notes: **BRT**-Burnout, **SL**-Supportive Leadership, **PD**-Psychological Distress, **T&C**-Trust and communication, **Tflict**- Team conflict, **JP**-Job performance.

**Source**: Authors own creation.

**Table 4**- Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)

| | BRT | SL | PD | T&C | Tflict | JP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BRT** | | | | | | |
| **SL** | 0.315 | | | | | |
| **PD** | 0.850 | 0.275 | | | | |
| **T&C** | 0.773 | 0.627 | 0.664 | | | |
| **Tflict** | 0.900 | 0.318 | 0.744 | 0.792 | | |
| **JP** | 0.244 | 0.546 | 0.188 | 0.517 | 0.211 | |

**Source**: Authors own creation.

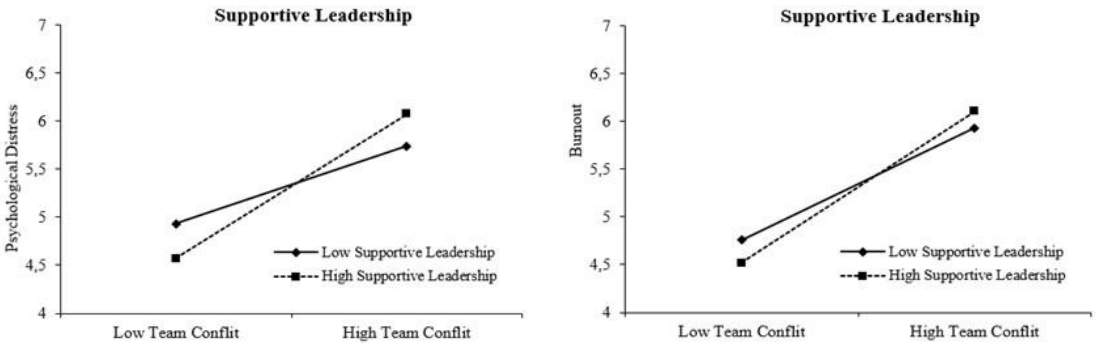


**Figure II:** Moderator Effects

**Source**: Authors own creation.