REMOTE REVOLUTION: UNRAVELLING EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION DRIVERS IN MALAYSIA'S BANKING SECTOR THROUGH ALDERFER'S ERG MODEL

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Abstract:

This research investigates the influence of remote work on employee motivation in the context of the banks of Malaysia. The research employed Alderfer's ERG theory, and the quantitative method was used. In relation to this, a survey with self-administered questions was distributed among employees of various banks to investigate whether remote work condition influences their motivation. A response rate of 78% with 313 participants was received. After the data analysis, it was revealed that remote conditions do influence motivation. Additionally, it was found that such aspects as teamwork, social interaction, and personal development opportunities are improved, leading to higher motivation of employees. Moreover, it was found that working conditions and career advancement positively influenced motivation, while well-being did not have a significant effect. This implies that motivation is mainly influenced by the issues of relatedness and growth. In such a way, the conclusion can be drawn that banks should consider improving their remote work conditions. The existing research adds to the literature, as it investigated how different aspects of remote work affect motivation, which may guide the implementation of human resources strategies in the banking sector.

Keywords: motivation, work condition, well-being, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, career advancement, banking sector

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of remote work on the motivations of employees in the banking sector of Malaysia. With facilitating technology, the contemporary era has experienced sizeable modifications in the conventional work environment (Antonio, 2022). As a changed reality to the need of the hour, remote work has been accepted as a fast-growing concept. The present work environment enables individuals, especially in the banking sector, to work from any place. Still, the challenges faced by employees to be productive and motivated without having a physical presence with other colleagues have generated varied opinions about the relevance of conducting research to ascertain whether the motivation of employees is related to remote work.

This area has been heavily studied, but further exploration is still required among more aspects of remote work life today and its implications (Virtanen & Milana, 2020). The world of business has undergone an epoch-making transformation. The advent and widespread use of information technology, together with changes in organizational paradigms, has transformed global business today. Remote work, a concept not exactly new, is booming up all over the world in various industries and across an ever-increasing range of businesses (Amir *et al.*, 2021). This shift has been notably significant in the banking sector, where employees can fulfil their roles remotely without the need for frequent customer interactions.

One of the key theoretical frameworks of the present research is Alderfer's ERG theory, which divides human needs into three main groups, namely, existence, relatedness, and growth (Chang *et al.*, 2021; Muin *et al.*, 2019). In this context, this research aims to determine the association between remote work and employee motivation using Alderfer's ERG theory of motivation. Alderfer's ERG theory (Alderfer, 1969) is an extension of Maslow's need hierarchy theory and is aimed at providing new insights into human motivation (Putri, 2020). The framework will be utilised to explore worker motivation when it comes to working from home in Malaysia's banking sector. The research being conducted focuses on the banking sector in Malaysia; as such, the results of this study could provide a foundation for multiple banking organisations to improve resource management, policies, and employee motivation. Additionally, this comprehensive exploration could be particularly useful for banking associations that are willing to integrate into the new modern environment.

1.2 Research Problem Statement

The need for rapid implementation of remote work, in particular, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to significant changes in the work environment of all industries, including the banking sector of Malaysia. Although remote work allows for more flexibility and potential enhancement of work-life balance, it also creates a number of problems affecting motivation on the side of the employees. For instance, the nature of relationships between remote work conditions, well-being, social interaction, teamwork,

personal development, and career development with the motivation of employees is not well understood within the context of the changes in Malaysia's banking industry.

Even though there are multiple studies discussing remote work, most of them feature considerable gaps and misunderstanding, as well as conflict findings in terms of relationships between the aforementioned factors. As such, (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) claim that the more freedom is given by the employees' ability to control their work conditions, the better motivation is developed. On the other hand, occupational stress caused by teleworking may lead to decreased well-being (Prasad *et al.,* 2023), which means they will not be motivated towards work as well. Stay-in-touch contacts become a significant motivation factor according to (Ansari 2019; Kirkman & Stoverink, 2021). At the same time, the negative impact of working conditions and lack of communication may also lead to a decline in motivation (Barilli *et al.,* 2022; Atobishi & Nosratabadi, 2023).

In addition, the application of Alderfer's ERG Theory (Alderfer, 1969) which stands for Existence, Relatedness, and Growth, may offer insights into the issue of motivational factors underpinning remote work. Although previous studies such as those by (Thangal *et al.,* 2021; Amir *et al.,* 2021) indicate the relevance of the theory for a better understanding of the problem of burnout and motivation, the motivation needs that impact remote work within the banking sector of Malaysia require further exploration. The current conditions caused by the widespread adoption of remote work across Malaysia's banking industry also necessitate understanding how different factors, including work conditions, well-being, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, and career advancement, might impact employee motivation. For example, previous research by (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) suggests that remote work may positively affect work motivation due to autonomy and flexibility. However, other previous works, such as those by (Prasad *et al.,* 2023; Danielak & Wysocki, 2022), highlight the issue of social determinants of work remoteness, such as social isolation or occupational stress that may undermine motivation.

However, the on-going review of the works representing the empirically-based theoretical framework revealed the gaps that remained in exploring the relationship between remote work conditions and employee motivation. Therefore, this research sets the purpose of narrowing the defined gaps by studying how remote work conditions affect employee motivation in Malaysia's banking sector with the help of Alderfer's ERG theory (Alderfer, 1969). In such a way, the research investigates how individual conditions, especially, work itself, well-being, and social, while the research is carried out, it seems that adaptation, teamwork, growth, and getting promoted affect employee motivation in remote work conditions. The results of the survey will identify significant patterns in the identified relationships and assumptions. Thus, the results will be beneficial for explaining the relationships within the frame of reference and developing recommendations on how to motivate remote bank employees. This research problem is aimed at investigating the motivational challenges and opportunities inherent in remote work in the banking sector, and, therefore, it is detailed and relevant for academic and applied social science.

1.3 Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between working conditions and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between well-being and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between social interaction and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teamwork and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between personal development and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia?

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between career advancement and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia?

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as stated below:

RO1: To examine the relationship between work conditions and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.

RO2: To scrutinize the relationship between well-being and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.

RO3: To study the relationship between social interaction and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.

RO4: To examine the relationship between teamwork and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.

RO5: To investigate the relationship between personal development and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.

RO6: To analyse the relationship between career advancement and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

This section examines the underpinning theory, the variable that is influenced by other variables, and the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, which in turn leads to the formulation of the hypothesis.

2.1 Underpinning Theory

This research is designed based on what has been learned in Alderfer's ERG theory (Alderfer, 1969) to analyse employee motivations in new virtual workplaces. The Existence-Relatedness-Growth (ERG) theory of motivation was proposed by Clayton P. Alderfer in 1969. The theory was a follow-up of Abraham Maslow's 5 stages hierarchy of needs theory. It examines how to apply three core categories of the ERG theory as a means for determining individual motivations in remote environments, focusing on those

categories and whether remote employers have abandoned them. It can be seen that whilst existence needs to apply in homes and home offices, growth and relatedness suffer in remote places. Growth can be seen as the most fundamental of the ERG needs, the main motivation for people to get up in the morning and fight on to complete another day's work. It is also true that remote employers have a tendency to overlook existence factors leading to the drop, attrition and retention statistics of virtually all employees up, down, and everywhere in between on the employment elation scale. Research into the impact of remote environments on existence, relatedness, and growth will largely match much the same thesis for driving employee motivations in place. The research carried out for this paper using empirical studies is mirrored in (Amir *et al.*, 2021) study on COVID-19 pandemic effects, (Thangal *et al.*, 2021) study on burnout and motivation, (Barnes, 2018) study on workplace isolation, and (Putri, 2020) findings, support the importance of effective management of Existence, Relatedness, and Growth needs in remote work arrangements.

2.2 Employee Motivation

To sustain motivation in remote work contexts, a multifaceted strategy is essential. (Michaud & Conceicao, 2023; Kanapathipillai, *et al.*, 2023), highlight that motivation becomes particularly critical in remote environments, acting as the driving force behind work and outcomes. Kanapathipillai *et al.* (2023), underscore that workers, influenced by both internal and external factors, exhibit higher job retention rates is an important aspect in settings devoid of physical interaction.

Furthermore, the impact of remote work on individuals' motivation accentuates the need to cultivate a culture that promotes personal growth and job satisfaction, as (Felstead & Henseke, 2017), point out. Studies, including that by (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007), consistently demonstrate a positive relationship between motivation and the autonomy and flexibility afforded by remote work. Control over one's work environment and schedule plays a significant role in enhancing job satisfaction and commitment. Moreover, the effective use of technology and communication is vital for keeping remote teams motivated (Kirkman & Stoverink, 2021). Unrestricted access to communication channels, virtual team-building exercises, and collaborative technologies are instrumental in fostering connection and engagement among remote workers.

Leadership also plays a crucial role in the motivation of remote workers, as highlighted by (Kniffin *et al.*, 2021). Leaders who offer clear expectations, regular feedback, and emotional support significantly boost motivation. Leadership styles that focus on trust-building and empowerment are particularly effective in remote contexts. Additionally, engaging employees in virtual teams necessitates maintaining social relationships and fostering a sense of community (Ansari, 2019). Techniques such as regular video conferences, informal communication channels, and online team-building activities can enhance motivation and reduce feelings of isolation. These initiatives allow remote team members to communicate in real time, form spontaneous connections, and collaborate on projects, fostering a sense of community and purpose.

Moreover, recognition and opportunities for advancement remain crucial for the motivation of remote workers (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023), especially in settings where physical presence is lacking. The shift to remote work arrangements has significantly impacted employees' professional development trajectories. Employing Social Learning Theory, the concept of belongingness, and self-empowerment (Yarberry & Sims, 2021) research examines the profound impact of remote work settings on career advancement and how remote environments have redefined traditional notions of professional growth and personal development. The study highlights how remote work scenarios open new channels for information exchange, skill development, and self-directed learning, emphasizing the importance of fostering a sense of community among remote workers and the significance of self-empowerment in navigating virtual workplaces.

Therefore, for remote work to be effective, it is crucial to implement a strategy that encompasses granting individuals autonomy in their roles, promoting effective communication, providing supportive leadership, and acknowledging achievements. Creating a motivated and efficient remote team involves recognizing and addressing the unique challenges of remote work. Organizations should concentrate on maintaining employee motivation as they transition to remote work models, ensuring a resilient workforce and a productive team that contributes to overall organizational success.

2.3 Relationship between Work Conditions and Employee Motivation of Remote Working Employees

Remote work has become increasingly prevalent, offering employees the flexibility to work from anywhere, including their preferred geographic locations (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023; Choudhury, 2020). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work, leading to a significant shift in organizational practices (Baumann & Marcum, 2023; Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023). Research suggests that employee motivation for working remotely is influenced by various factors, including remote work conditions and workplace environment. Workplace spirituality contributes to employees' sense of belonging and meaningfulness at work (Pawar, 2016). Trust in relationships fosters teamwork and engagement (Okello & Gilson, 2015), and involving employees in decision-making and recognizing their efforts enhances motivation and ownership (Anjum *et al.*, 2021). Stress and job satisfaction are interconnected, with stress negatively impacting motivation (Bartels *et al.*, 2019; Jamal & Siddiqui, 2020; Şeşen & Ertan, 2021). Spirituality at work and spiritual leadership positively influence employee motivation and willingness to help others (Walt & Klerk, 2014; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2020). Balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is crucial for employee engagement and care for the public (Grant & Kim, 2018). Granting employees freedom and meaningful roles can combat dullness and lack of motivation caused by rigid rules and bureaucracy (Kang *et al.*, 2022). Remote work conditions, such as having the right tools and support, impact employee happiness and productivity (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2020). Creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and supported leads to better performance and well-being (Mohamed *et al.*, 2017; Zubir bin Seeht Saad, 2018). Self-determination,

connection to the team, and alignment with company goals contribute to employee motivation and happiness in remote work settings (Vallerand, 2000; Grant & Wrzesniewski, 2010). While physical environment and company policies may not have a significant impact, understanding individual needs and motivations is crucial for improving employee motivation (Smith & Brown, 2018; Patel, 2021; Williams & Chen, 2020).

However, some previous studies have shown that the shift to remote work has brought about challenges, particularly in managing work-family boundaries, as the work role becomes intertwined with the family domain, leading to work intruding upon family life and causing preoccupation with work even when at home (Eddleston & Mulki, 2015). Despite the potential benefits of remote work, such as increased work-life balance and enhanced psychological and physical comfort for employees, studies have shown that a high proportion of employees working remotely can negatively impact the scale of benefits, reducing productivity compared to companies with fewer remote workers (Urbaniec *et al.*, 2022). In line with this, (Barilli *et al.*, 2022; Mariana *et al.*, 2023; Atobishi & Nosratabadi, 2023) also mention that poor working conditions at home and limited communication with managers demotivate remote workers.

Additionally, the lack of interpersonal interactions and face-to-face collaboration in remote work settings can lead to challenges in teamwork and the development of competencies, particularly in areas like project management, which leads to demotivation (Danielak & Wysocki, 2022). According to (Ziomek, 2023; Barczyk *et al.*, 2022), the impact of remote work on employee motivation is influenced by communication with managers and social relationships at work.

Therefore, while remote work offers numerous advantages, including flexibility and improved work-life balance, it also presents challenges related to motivation. Therefore, previous studies have revealed contradictory findings on the relationship between working conditions and employee motivation, which reveals gaps in the literature. Thus, based on the literature review above, it can be hypothesized as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between work conditions and employee motivation of remote working employees.

2.4 Relationship between Well-being and Employee Motivation of Remote Working Employees

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the number of people working at home has been increasing at an unprecedented rate. And many workers were also making the switch from "in-person" to "in-home" type of work (Kanapathipilllai *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, whether remote work can improve employee motivation has become a hot topic among scholars. Some research argues that telework may lead to decreased employee well-being, because of occupational stress (Prasad *et al.*, 2023). Other studies suggest that for most people who work remotely, overall well-being is high (Gross-Gołacka *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the prospect of being able to work from home is seen as a determinant in

whether employees continue to be job-holders: more workers have jobs that support telecommuting (Carli, 2020).

There are many potential influences on people's motivation to work when they are in remote environments. Studies show that information, communication, and necessary technical support provided to workers can give a boost in motivation (Ziomek, 2023). It has also stressed the importance of trust in creating loyalty as well as productivity for workers in a remote-work situation (Hanjanto, 2023). At the same time, however, remote work can reduce motivation. Studies have shown that employees who feel they don't have a choice in where they work suffer (Pura, 2022).

Employee well-being and remote work are intertwined in a number of ways. While one set of evidence suggests that working exclusively remotely can harm employees' well-being in terms of workplace relationships and work-life balance (Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021), there are others who claim most IT industry employees who do not go into the office have high levels of enjoyment with their lives (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023; Gross-Gołacka *et al.*, 2022). Studies that have looked at factors such as job burnout, training, and telecommuting experience have found that these can have a positive impact on telecommuting, which in turn affects job security, flexibility, and overall productivity for people working in in-home offices (Khodaparasti & Garbollagh, 2022).

The impact of remote work on employee motivation and relations between employees has been highlighted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Danielak & Wysocki, 2022). Additionally, factors such as job burnout, telecommuting experience, and training have all served to affect the corporate culture around telecommuting, which in turn can impact company competitiveness (Khodaparasti & Garbollagh, 2022). Besides, the description of employee motivation and job satisfaction in Denmark and Norway during the pandemic shows how enterprises should deal with such new situations and what direction remote workers' motivation and satisfaction take (Sonnenschein *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, how human resource management practices affect the well-being of workers has been studied. Studies such as Labour utilization practice, motivation practice and opportunity provision in China's cultural context have all been found to have some impact on employee health (Xing-gui *et al.*, 2020). In addition to this, having a well-being champion within a work unit, along with the company's commitment to employees' health, is accompanied by better employee engagement, satisfaction, and a sense of motivation (Wieneke *et al.*, 2019).

Therefore, the relationship between employee motivation, well-being, and remote work is complex. While some studies have pointed out the potential negative effects of wellbeing on motivation of remote workers (Mariana *et al.*, 2023; Prasad *et al.*, 2023; Gunadi *et al.*, 2022; Blake *et al.*, 2020; Fotiadis *et al.*, 2019) due to poor workstation design, work intensification, difficulty in switching off from work, lack of social interaction with supervisors and colleagues, work-life balance issues, and ineffective digital communication others claim that for many employees in various industries, the impact of well-being on motivation for on-site workers are positive (Zhoc *et al.*, 2022; Tanoto &

Evelyn, 2019; Ferrara *et al.*, 2013) because the organizations can cultivate a constructive work environment that fosters motivation and enhances overall productivity prioritizing employee wellbeing and considering intrinsic drivers of motivation. Being aware of these dynamics is very important for any organization that wants to upgrade the well-being and motivation of remote employees. Therefore, previous studies have revealed conflicting findings on the relationship between well-being and employee motivation, which discloses gaps in the literature. Thus, based on the literature review above, it can be hypothesized as follows:

H2: There is a significant relationship between the well-being and employee motivation of remote working employees.

2.5 Relationship between Social Interaction and Employee Motivation of Remote Working Employees

The relationship between social interaction and employee motivation in remote work settings has gained significant attention as remote work becomes more prevalent. Social connections among colleagues enhance feelings of belonging, motivation, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. However, remote work poses challenges in maintaining these connections. Baber (2021) emphasizes the importance of social engagement, not only in the workplace but also in online learning during the pandemic, highlighting its broader benefits.

Lal *et al.* (2021) underscore the critical role of technology in facilitating social connections for remote workers, which is essential for maintaining productivity and normalcy. The authors argue that beyond communication tools, deliberate efforts to foster team dynamics are crucial to counteract the isolation often experienced in remote work. Wang *et al.* (2020) further highlight the importance of quality communication facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in supporting the well-being and motivation of remote employees.

Rietveld *et al.* (2021) suggest that the absence of peer-to-peer interactions in remote work can diminish intrinsic motivation, emphasizing the motivational role of social interactions. Moreover, research by (Leigh-Hunt *et al.*, 2017; Lucas *et al.*, 2008; Srivastava *et al.*, 2008; Kushlev *et al.*, 2018) collectively demonstrates that social engagement significantly improves mental health, mood, and overall well-being, underlining the importance of social connections in maintaining psychological health and motivation.

Challenges such as loneliness and difficulty maintaining relationships are highlighted by Allen *et al.*, 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) note that remote work can contribute to feelings of loneliness, which hampers motivation. Mote *et al.* (2021) illustrate the benefits of online meetings designed to encourage social interaction, which can alleviate loneliness and enhance well-being.

Additionally, (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023; Shultz & Wang, 2011) discuss how social isolation in remote work can lead to fatigue and impact both physical and psychological well-being. Similarly, (Sardeshmukh *et al.*, 2012) explore the adverse effects of social

isolation on employee engagement, noting that remote workers may struggle to feel connected to their team and the organization's goals.

Therefore, previous studies have revealed opposing findings on the relationship between social interaction and employee motivation, which reveals gaps in the literature. Barsness *et al.* (2005) report that the development of new technology facilitates constant communication, which allows remote workers to interact and be motivated to perform their work. On the other hand (Prasad *et al.*, 2023) give a completely different picture. They point out that remote workers get lonely and demotivated without social interactions. Thus, based on the literature review above, it can be hypothesized as follows:

H3: There is a significant relationship between social interaction and employee motivation of remote-working employees.

2.6 Relationship between Teamwork and Employee Motivation of Remote Working Employees

The relationship between teamwork and employee motivation in remote work environments is intricate. As remote work becomes more common, understanding this connection is vital for maintaining productivity and employee motivation. Organizational development strategies, including goal setting, performance evaluation, and collaboration, have been shown to significantly enhance motivation and task output in remote settings (Voraphani & Chungviwatanant, 2019). Additionally, promoting a green culture and environmentally friendly practices can be adapted to remote work, potentially improving sustainability, efficiency, and teamwork (Rosyanti *et al.*, 2023).

Additionally, (Hopeapuro, 2019; Gallie *et al.*, 2012) mention that maintaining high job performance and motivation in remote work is closely tied to teamwork. A supportive remote work environment, particularly one that facilitates social support through teamwork, is crucial for achieving work-life balance and enhancing motivation (Vaidya *et al.*, 2023). Similarly, (Salas *et al.*, 2014) discovered that organizational policies promoting teamwork, collaborative spaces, and rewards based on team performance can positively influence employee motivation. The work design approach offers insights into optimizing remote work to mitigate challenges such as work-home interference and communication barriers, which significantly impact job satisfaction and motivation (Wang *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, (Ananda & Eriza, 2023) in their research show that work motivation and teamwork are critical to employee performance in remote work setups. Furthermore, remote work has broader implications beyond individual and organizational performance, influencing urban mobility and environmental impacts (Roberto *et al.*, 2023).

Effective management techniques that enhance motivation, teamwork, and well-being are essential for improving job satisfaction and performance in remote work. Salas *et al.* (2017) emphasize that teamwork and positive interpersonal interactions are key

factors to enhance the motivation of remotely working employees. Likewise, (Körner & Wirts, 2020) found that communication among team members working remotely fosters a positive environment and heightened motivation. Trust and effective use of technology also play pivotal roles in the success of virtual teams, which improves motivation (Leonardi *et al.*, 2021).

While teamwork generally boosts motivation, certain challenges, such as social isolation and occupational stress, can negatively impact employee well-being in remote work environments, according to (Prasad *et al.*, 2023). In line with this, a previous study (Gagné & Deci, 2005) suggests that teamwork may not significantly influence motivation in remote workers. Moreover, teamwork is likely to compromise motivation among remote workers, according to (Vogl, 2009). In highlighting the role of genuine collaboration between remote workers and organizational systems, (Vogl, 2009) notes management-induced forms of teamwork potentially weaken motivation.

Therefore, previous studies have revealed contrasting findings on the relationship between teamwork and employee motivation, which unveils gaps in the literature. Thus, based on the literature review above, it can be hypothesized as follows:

H4: There is a significant relationship between teamwork and employee motivation of remote working employees.

2.7 Relationship between Personal Development and Employee Motivation of Remote Working Employees

The relationship between personal development and employee motivation in remote work settings has become increasingly important, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023; Choudhury, 2020). Remote work offers flexibility and independence, but it also presents challenges such as balancing work and personal life, communication breakdowns, and the need for self-discipline, which can negatively impact motivation (Wang *et al.*, 2020).

Continuous personal development is crucial for maintaining high levels of employee motivation in remote settings. Opportunities for ongoing learning, skill enhancement, and career progression can significantly boost motivation and job performance (Al-kharabsheh *et al.*, 2023). A supportive work environment that offers clear career paths and aligns with individual values is essential for nurturing a motivated remote workforce (Iis *et al.*, 2022; Fletcher, 2019). Previous studies have also shown that factors such as employee recognition, working conditions, and personal development contribute to enhancing staff motivation (Odukah, 2016).

Research by (Johnsen *et al.*, 2023) highlights the importance of fostering a workplace culture that encourages continuous learning and professional advancement, especially in remote settings where traditional forms of skill development and career progression may be limited. The role of managerial support, autonomy in work, and the meaningfulness of tasks are significant mediators in the relationship between personal development and motivation (Ertosun, 2022; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020).

Moreover, studies emphasize the need for organizations to create remote work environments that facilitate personal growth through flexible work schedules, autonomous work practices, and access to training opportunities (Staniulienė & Zaveckis, 2022; Vincenzi *et al.*, 2022). This approach not only supports the well-being and growth of individual employees but also contributes to the overall success and resilience of the organization in the remote work landscape.

On the other hand, the negative impact of personal development on the motivation of remote workers can be attributed to various factors, including increased work-related fatigue, lack of social interaction, work-home interference, and ineffective communication (Prasad *et al.*, 2023; Yoon *et al.*, 2021; Yang *et al.*, 2022). These challenges can lead to decreased job satisfaction, lower levels of engagement, and overall reduced motivation among remote workers (Gillet *et al.*, 2022; Bellmann & Hübler, 2020; Celuch *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the lack of separation between work and personal life can impede personal development efforts, as individuals may find it challenging to dedicate time and energy to their growth outside of work hours, according to (Gross-Gołacka *et al.*, 2022). To keep remote workers motivated and engaged, companies must adopt innovative strategies that promote personal development and address the unique challenges posed by remote work, such as reduced social interaction and limited opportunities for hands-on learning (Creswell *et al.*, 2019; Shah & Asad, 2018).

Therefore, previous studies have revealed conflicting findings on the relationship between personal development and employee motivation, which uncovers gaps in the literature. Thus, based on the literature review above, it can be hypothesized as follows:

H5: There is a significant relationship between personal development and employee motivation of remote working employees.

2.8 Relationship between Career Advancement and Employee Motivation of Remote Working Employees

The relationship between career advancement and employee motivation in remote work environments is increasingly recognized as vital for maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023). Studies by (Smithwick *et al.*, 2023; Al-kharabsheh *et al.*, 2023) highlight the importance of providing advancement opportunities and integrating digital HRM practices to enhance employee motivation and performance. According to (Tripathy *et al.*, 2016) factors such as job burnout, poor personal health, job insecurity, and limited career development opportunities can significantly demotivate individuals. During the COVID-19 pandemic (Ziomek, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2020) underscored the need to address challenges such as work-home interference and optimize communication to ensure effective remote work, aligning career growth opportunities with employee motivation.

Career advancement in remote work goes beyond traditional promotions and includes acquiring new skills for diverse roles, as discussed by (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023). Organizations should create environments that encourage continuous learning

and acknowledge individual achievements, aligning personal goals with organizational objectives. Coaching, as emphasized by (Samora *et al.*, 2022), plays a crucial role in remote work, addressing unique challenges such as isolation and focusing on well-being and skill development.

Emotional intelligence, resilience, adaptability, and lifelong learning are also crucial for career advancement in remote contexts, as noted by (Masten, 2018; Cross *et al.*, 2019). The role of technology, diversity, inclusivity, and networking is pivotal, with digital HRM practices significantly enhancing employee engagement and performance (Al-kharabsheh *et al.*, 2023).

Moreover, workplace diversity and inclusion, particularly in the context of remote work, are critical for providing equitable opportunities for all employees, including those from marginalized groups (Mahat & Aithal, 2022; Chauhan *et al.*, 2022). Addressing social and professional isolation in remote work is essential, as it has significant implications for organizational commitment and employee satisfaction (McLaughlin, 2017).

Remote work presents unique challenges and opportunities for career advancement, but career advancement plays a significant role in motivating employees, as it is seen as a form of capacity building and a means of ensuring that leaders within a system have experience and a strong performance record (Bellerose *et al.*, 2021). However, the impact of career advancement on motivation can vary depending on individual factors. For instance, older workers may face preconceived notions that they are not interested in further advancement, which could negatively affect their motivation (Hennekam, 2016). Late-career disengagement can also be influenced by proximity to retirement and past career experiences, highlighting the complex interplay between career stage, motivation, and work engagement (Damman *et al.*, 2013).

Therefore, previous studies have revealed opposing findings on the relationship between career advancement and employee motivation, which discloses gaps in the literature. Thus, based on the literature review above, it can be hypothesized as follows:

H6: There is a significant relationship between career advancement and employee motivation of remote working employees.

2.9 Proposed Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 presents the conceptual framework model, and it is based on the theoretical basis and evaluation of existing research to examine the relationships between the independent variables (work conditions, well-being, social interactions, teamwork, personal development, career advancement) and the dependent variable (employee motivation). The framework is based on Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and the factors combine the characteristics of working from home by (Abdullah *et al.*, 2020)., At the basic level, existence through flexibility, remote workers need trust from their employers to perform their work at home. When flexibility is achieved, remote workers would feel that they can achieve a sense of relatedness with the work while still attending to the needs of their families. This helps them to strike a work-life balance while working remotely.

The highest level is growth, and this is achieved through the remote workers' work performance.
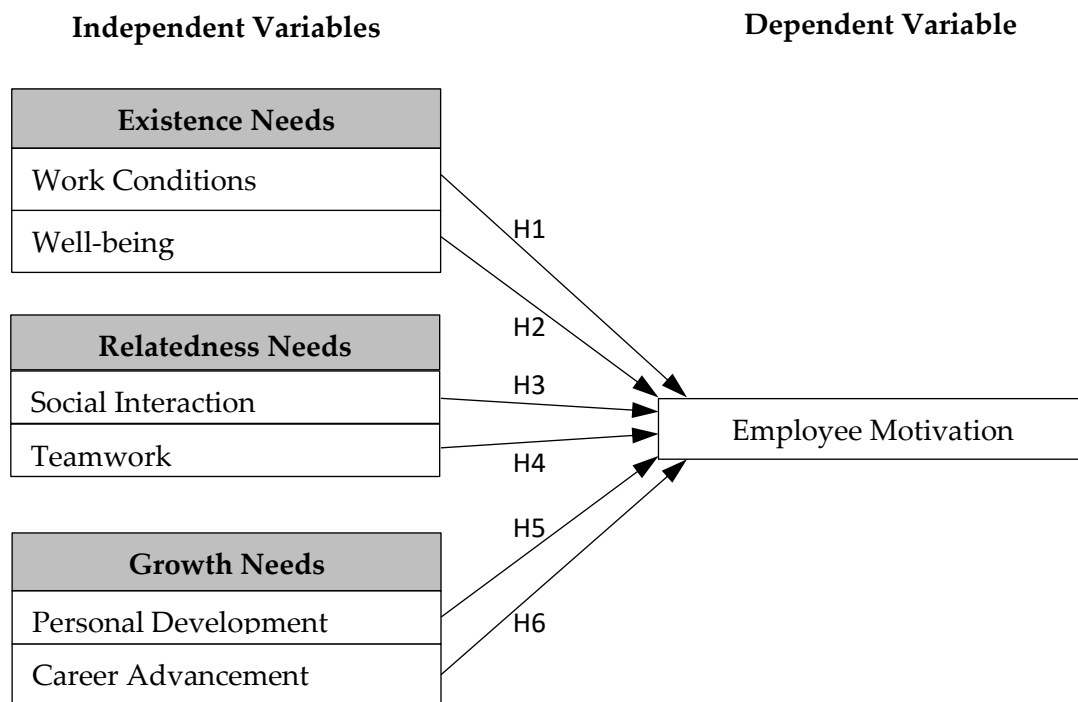
Independent Variables   **Dependent Variable**

Existence Needs
Work Conditions
Well-being

Relatedness Needs
Social Interaction
Teamwork

Growth Needs
Personal Development
Career Advancement

H1
H2
H3
H4
H5
H6

Employee Motivation

Figure 2.1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

The following section provides the reliability analysis, population, sampling, and measurements used in this research.

3.1 Population, Sampling and Measurements

The population consists of employees who are working in the banking industry in Malaysia with job positions ranging from manager, assistant manager, front desk executive, and clerk. Therefore, understanding the factors affecting employee motivation in the banking industry can improve the performance of the banking industry in Malaysia. Employment in the financial services sector in Malaysia, covering banking institutions, stood at 366,767 persons (DOSM, 2024). The sampling technique chosen for this research is convenience sampling.

From a given population of 366,767 and based on the table in determining sample size by provided by (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), the sample size required was 384. The sampling frame consists of a list of all the constituents of the population from which the sample is collected (Glen, 2014). The unit of analysis pertains to individual banking industry personnel who have experience in adjustment to remote working arrangements. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed via Google Docs. The final response was 313, which accounts for approximately 78% response rate. The questionnaire is divided

into three sections: A (Demographic), B (Independent Variables), and C (Dependent Variable). Data was analysed using SPSS Version 29.

4. Findings and Interpretation

The following section provides the findings and the interpretation of these findings.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 313)

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	183	58.5
	Female	130	41.5
Ethnicity	Malay	102	32.6
	Chinese	73	23.3
	Indian	34	10.9
	Others	104	33.2
Age (Years)	< 25	35	11.2
	25-46	232	74.1
	47-55	37	11.8
	>55	9	2.9
Educational Level	Secondary School	11	3.5
	Diploma	90	28.8
	Undergraduate	178	56.9
	Post-Graduate	34	10.9
Working Tenure (Years)	< 5	56	17.9
	6 - 10	160	51.3
	11- 15	49	15.7
	> 15	47	15.1
Working Experience (Years)	< 5	48	15.3
	6 - 10	161	51.4
	11 - 15	52	16.6
	>15	52	16.6

Table 4.1 shows the demographic profile of 313 respondents in this study on remote work's influence on employee motivation in Malaysia's banking sector. This study reveals a predominance of well-educated males (183; 58.5%), primarily of Malay ethnicity (102; 32.6%), who are in their prime working age (25-46 years) (232; 74.1%). The majority hold undergraduate degrees (178; 56.9%), have 6 to 10 years of working experience (161; 51.4%), and have been in their current roles for a similar duration (160; 51.3%). This diverse and experienced group is expected to offer meaningful insights into how remote work affects motivation within the banking sector.

4.2 Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics (N = 313)

Factors	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Work Conditions	3.406	0.601	1	5
Well-being	3.429	0.554	1	5
Social Interaction	3.481	0.557	1	5
Teamwork	3.582	0.609	1	5
Personal Development	3.488	0.562	1	5
Career Advancement	3.571	0.562	1	5
Employee Motivation	3.534	0.567	1	5

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics indicate that, among 313 respondents, the factors "Teamwork" and "Career Advancement" are perceived most favourably, with the highest mean scores of 3.582 ± 0.609 and 3.571 ± 0.562, respectively. This suggests that employees find these aspects particularly positive in a remote work environment. In contrast, "Work Conditions" has the lowest mean score of 3.406 ± 0.601, indicating that employees may see this as the least favourable factor. The standard deviations are relatively low, reflecting some variability in responses but generally consistent perceptions across the sample. Overall, employees have a moderately positive view of the factors influencing their motivation in the banking sector during remote work.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Table 4.3 Reliability Analysis provides an overview of the internal consistency of various factors influencing employee motivation in the context of remote work in Malaysia's banking sector, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha. This reliability coefficient assesses how closely related a set of items are as a group, with a higher value indicating greater reliability.

Table 4.3: Reliability Analysis (N = 313)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Work Condition	0.871	7
Well-Being	0.912	7
Social Interaction	0.818	7
Teamwork	0.733	7
Personal Development	0.916	7
Career Advancement	0.875	7
Employee Motivation	0.724	7

The Cronbach's Alpha values for the variables range from 0.724 to 0.916, all of which are above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating that the items within each variable have good internal consistency. "Personal Development" has the highest Cronbach's Alpha at 0.916, suggesting that the items related to this factor are highly consistent in measuring the same underlying concept. Similarly, "Well-Being" also shows

high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.912, indicating that this factor is measured reliably across its items.

"Career Advancement" and "Work Condition" also exhibit strong reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.875 and 0.871, respectively. These values suggest that the items measuring these factors are consistently reflecting the intended constructs. "Social Interaction" has a slightly lower, but still robust, Cronbach's Alpha of 0.818, indicating good reliability.

"Teamwork" and "Employee Motivation" have the lowest Cronbach's Alpha values, at 0.733 and 0.724, respectively. While these are the lowest among the variables analyzed, they are still above the acceptable threshold, indicating adequate internal consistency.

Therefore, the reliability analysis of the survey instruments used in this study demonstrates that the scales used to measure these factors are reliable, with most variables showing strong internal consistency. Hence, this suggests that the questionnaire items are well-designed to measure the intended factors related to remote work and employee motivation in the banking sector.

4.4 Normality Test

The normality test in this study is done by using the Q-Q plot.
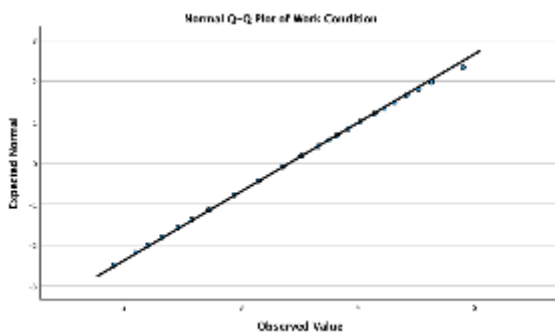
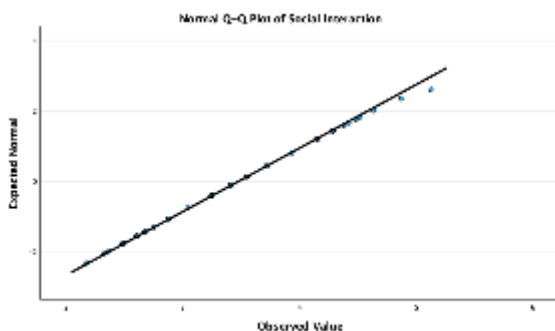Figure 4.4.1
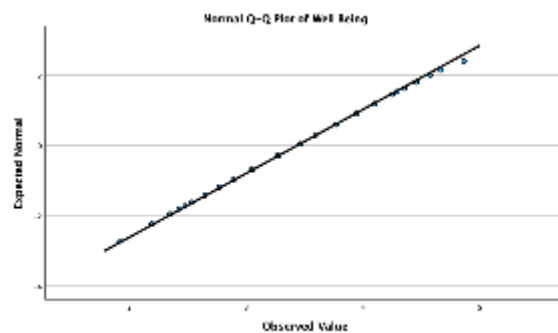
Figure 4.4.2

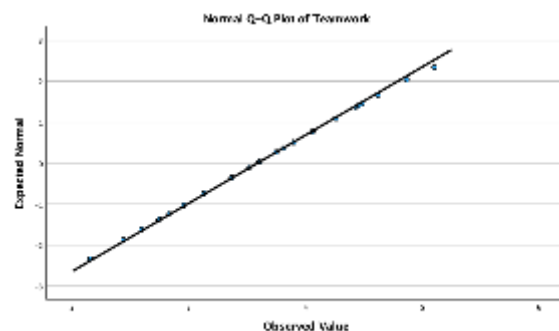Figure 4.4.3

Figure 4.4.4

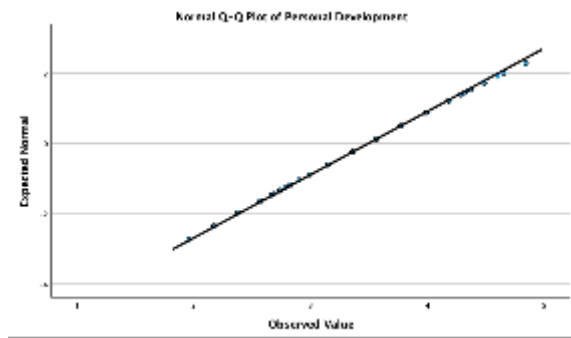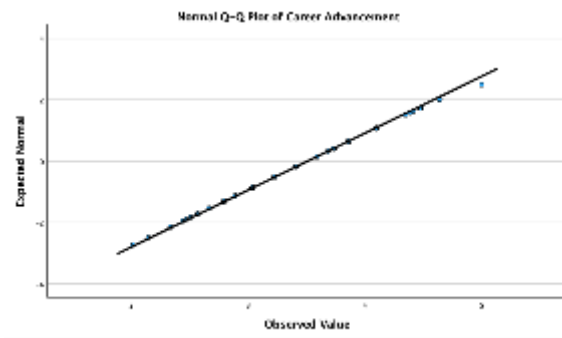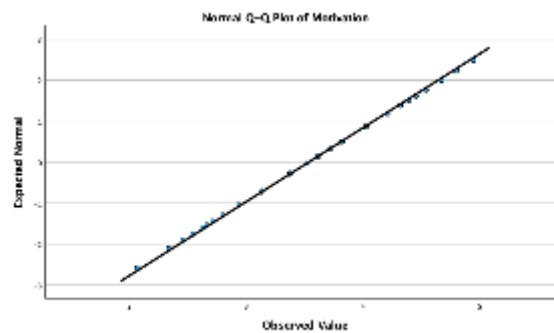Figure 4.4.5   Figure 4.4.6

Figure 4.4.7

Based on the Figures 4.4.1 – 4.4.7 Q-Q plot above, Working Conditions, Well-being, Social Interaction, Teamwork, and Career Advancement show that the observed values closely follow the expected normal line, which suggests that the data of these variables are approximately normally distributed. This is indicated by the data points that largely align along the straight line. There are a few points at the upper end that deviate slightly from the line, which could indicate some minor skewness or the presence of outliers. However, the overall pattern does not suggest any significant departures from normality. For Personal Development and Employee Motivation, the data points form a straight line that closely follows the diagonal reference line, which suggests that the variables are well approximated by a normal distribution. This adherence to the line suggests there is no significant skewness or kurtosis, and there are no evident outliers.

4.5 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Table 4.5: Pearson's Correlation Matrix (N = 313)

Factors	WC	WB	SI	T	PD	CA	EM
Work conditions (WC)	1						
Well-being (WB)	0.671	1					
Social Interaction (SI)	0.691	0.733	1				
Teamwork (T)	0.678	0.612	0.732	1			
Personal Development (PD)	0.653	0.756	0.750	0.689	1		
Career Advancement (CA)	0.532	0.641	0.659	0.635	0.750	1	
Employee Motivation (EM)	0.566	0.528	0.634	0.648	0.626	0.571	1

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.5 Pearson's Correlation Matrix reveals significant positive relationships among factors influencing employee motivation in the context of remote work in Malaysia's banking sector. Particularly, Work Conditions (WC) is strongly correlated with Social Interaction (SI) ($r = 0.691$) and Teamwork (T) ($r = 0.678$), indicating that better work conditions are closely linked to enhanced social interaction and teamwork. Well-being (WB) has a strong correlation with Personal Development (PD) ($r = 0.756$), suggesting that higher well-being is associated with greater perceived opportunities for personal growth. Employee Motivation (EM) is most strongly correlated with Teamwork (T) ($r = 0.648$) and Social Interaction (SI) ($r = 0.634$), highlighting the importance of these factors in driving motivation in a remote work setting. Overall, the matrix underscores that teamwork, social interaction, and personal development are key drivers of employee motivation in this context.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4.6.1: Model Summary

Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Est.
	0.720	0.518	0.508	0.398
Predictors: (Constant), work conditions, well-being, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, career advancement				
Dependent Variable: employee motivation				

Table 4.6.1 Model Summary indicates that work conditions, well-being, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, and career advancement collectively explain about 51.8% of the variation in employee motivation in the banking sector during remote work. The strong R value of 0.720 indicates a close relationship between these factors and employee motivation, while the adjusted R Square of 0.508 confirms the model's reliability. Overall, these factors significantly impact employee motivation in this context.

Table 4.6.2: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51.914	6	8.652	54.739	<0.001b
	Residual	48.367	306	0.158		
	Total	100.281	312			
Dependent Variable: Employee Motivation						
Predictors: (Constant), work conditions, well-being, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, career advancement						

The ANOVA table 4.6.2 shows that the regression model is highly significant, with an (F = 54.739; p < 0.001). This indicates that the factors of work conditions, well-being, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, and career advancement together have a significant impact on predicting employee motivation in the banking sector during remote work. The model explains a substantial portion of the variance in employee motivation, making it a strong predictor.

Table 4.6.3: Coefficient

Model 1	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.729	0.164		4.447	<.001
Work Conditions	0.181	0.058	0.192	3.110	0.002
Well-being	-0.950	0.070	-0.093	-1.368	0.172
Social Interaction	0.178	0.084	0.175	2.399	0.017
Teamwork	0.227	0.061	0.244	3.748	<.001
Personal Development	0.179	0.077	0.178	2.310	0.022
Career Advancement	0.130	0.065	0.125	1.991	0.047
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Motivation					

The regression analysis reveals that several factors significantly influence employee motivation in the banking sector during remote work. Teamwork has the strongest positive impact, with a coefficient of B = 0.227 and a Beta value of 0.244 (p < 0.001), indicating it is a crucial driver of motivation. Work conditions also have a significant positive effect, with a coefficient of B = 0.181 and a Beta value of 0.192 (p = 0.002). Social interaction (B = 0.178, Beta = 0.175, p = 0.017) and personal development (B = 0.179, Beta = 0.178, p = 0.022) similarly contribute positively and significantly to motivation. Career advancement has a smaller yet significant positive effect, with a coefficient of B = 0.130 and a Beta value of 0.125 (p = 0.047). However, well-being does not show a significant effect on motivation, with a coefficient of B = -0.095 and a Beta value of -0.093 (p = 0.172), suggesting that it might not be a primary factor influencing motivation in this context. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of fostering teamwork and providing opportunities for growth and development to maintain high levels of employee motivation in remote work environments.

4.7 Linear Regression Equation

EM = 0.729 + 0.181(WC) + 0.178(SI) + 0.227(T) + 0.179(PD) + 0.130(CA)

Where,
EM = Employee Motivation,
WC = Work Conditions,
SI = Social Interaction,
T = Teamwork,
PD = Personal Development,
CA = Career Advancement.

The linear regression equation provided explains how each variable in the equation represents a specific factor that influences employee motivation, with the coefficients indicating the strength and direction of their impact.

Firstly, the constant (B = 0.729), which is the baseline level of employee motivation when all the other variables (work conditions, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, and career advancement) are set to zero. It indicates that there is a basic level of motivation inherent in the employees, even without the influence of the other factors.

Secondly, the coefficient for work conditions (B = 0.181). This means that for every one-unit increase in the quality of work conditions, employee motivation increases by 0.181 units, assuming all other factors remain constant. Work conditions include elements such as the physical work environment, tools, and resources available to employees, which play a significant role in enhancing motivation.

Thirdly, the coefficient for social interaction (B = 0.178). This suggests that improving social interaction by one unit leads to a 0.178-unit increase in employee motivation, holding other variables constant. Social interaction includes communication and collaboration among colleagues, which is vital in a remote work setting to maintain a sense of connection and teamwork.

Fourthly, teamwork, which has the highest coefficient (B = 0.227), indicating that it has the most substantial impact on employee motivation. A one-unit improvement in teamwork results in a 0.227-unit increase in motivation, all else being equal. This underscores the importance of effective collaboration and team dynamics in keeping employees motivated, especially when working remotely.

Fifthly, the coefficient for personal development (B = 0.179), meaning that an increase in opportunities for personal growth leads to a 0.179-unit rise in employee motivation, assuming other factors are unchanged. Personal development may include training, learning opportunities, and career progression, which are crucial for employee satisfaction and motivation.

Finally, the coefficient for career advancement (B = 0.130), indicating that better career advancement opportunities lead to a 0.130-unit increase in employee motivation, with all other factors held constant. Career advancement includes promotions,

recognition, and opportunities for moving up within the organization, which are important motivators for employees.

Each of the factors in this study interacts with employee motivation by contributing positively to it, but their impacts vary in magnitude. Teamwork has the largest effect, followed by work conditions, personal development, and social interaction, while career advancement, though still significant, has the smallest impact. The positive coefficients indicate that improvements in any of these areas will lead to higher employee motivation, with teamwork being the most influential factor.

Hence, to optimize employee motivation in the banking sector during remote work, it is crucial to focus on enhancing teamwork, improving work conditions, fostering social interactions, providing opportunities for personal development, and offering clear paths for career advancement.

4.8 Summary of Hypothesis Test

Table 4.6.4: Summary of Hypothesis Test

No	Hypothesis	p-value	Result
H1	H1: There is a significant relationship between work conditions and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.	0.002	Accepted
H2	H2: There is a significant relationship between well-being and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.	0.172	Not Accepted
H3	H3: There is a significant relationship between social interaction and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.	0.017	Accepted
H4	H4: There is a significant relationship between teamwork and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.	<.001	Accepted
H5	H5: There is a significant relationship between personal development and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.	0.022	Accepted
H6	H6: There is a significant relationship between career advancement and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia.	0.047	Accepted

5. Discussion

The findings from this study offer substantial insights into the factors influencing employee motivation in the context of remote work within Malaysia's banking sector. The analysis not only confirms the significance of several key variables such as work conditions, social interaction, teamwork, personal development, and career advancement, but also provides the perspectives on their roles. Additionally, the hypothesis testing results further illuminate the relationships between these variables and employee motivation, adding depth to the discussion of this study.

Firstly, this study revealed a significant positive relationship between work conditions and employee motivation, with a regression coefficient of ($B = 0.181; p = 0.002$). This finding supports Hypothesis H1, which posited that there is a significant relationship between work conditions and employee motivation in the banking sector in

Malaysia. The result aligns with previous research, such as (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), who emphasized the importance of autonomy and control over one's work environment as critical factors for enhancing motivation. Furthermore, (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2020) highlighted the necessity of having the right tools and supportive work conditions to maintain productivity and employee happiness in remote settings. However, this study's findings contrast with those of (Barilli *et al.*, 2022), who suggested that poor working conditions at home could lead to demotivation. The acceptance of H1 reinforces the argument that improving work conditions is essential for motivating employees, especially in remote environments. Consequently, the first research question is solved through this study.

Secondly, intriguingly, the relationship between well-being and employee motivation was not found to be significant in this study, with a coefficient of (B = -0.095; p = 0.172), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H2, which proposed a significant relationship between well-being and employee motivation. This finding contrasts with much of the existing literature, such as (Prasad *et al.*, 2023; Danielak & Wysocki (2022), who emphasized the importance of well-being in maintaining motivation, particularly in remote work settings where occupational stress and social isolation can be significant challenges. The lack of significance in this study suggests that well-being may not be as critical to motivation in the Malaysian banking sector as it is in other contexts or that other factors like teamwork and social interaction may play a more dominant role. The rejection of H2 opens avenues for further research to explore the role of well-being in remote work environments, particularly in different cultural and organizational settings. Therefore, the second research question is resolved through this study.

Thirdly, the relationship between social interaction and employee motivation was found to be significant, with a coefficient of (B = 0.178; p = 0.017), thereby supporting Hypothesis H3, which suggested a significant relationship between social interaction and employee motivation. This finding corroborates the work of (Wang *et al.*, 2020), who emphasized the importance of quality communication in supporting the well-being and motivation of remote employees. Baber (2021) and Lal *et al.* (2021) also highlighted the critical role of technology and deliberate efforts to foster team dynamics in mitigating the isolation often experienced in remote work. Conversely, (Prasad *et al.*, 2023) provided a different perspective, noting that remote workers might experience loneliness and demotivation without sufficient social interaction. The acceptance of H3 underscores the importance of fostering social interaction to maintain motivation, suggesting that organizations must prioritize effective communication and collaborative practices in remote settings. Subsequently, the third research question is answered through this study.

Fourthly, teamwork emerged as the most significant factor influencing employee motivation, with a regression coefficient of (B = 0.227; p < 0.001). This result supports Hypothesis H4, which posited a significant relationship between teamwork and employee motivation. The study's findings align with the conclusions of (Salas *et al.*, 2014; Voraphani & Chungviwatanant, 2019), who found that teamwork significantly enhances

motivation and task output in remote settings. Moreover, (Vaidya *et al.*, 2023) emphasized that a supportive teamwork environment is crucial for achieving work-life balance and enhancing motivation. However, (Gagné & Deci, 2005) suggested that teamwork might not always significantly influence motivation, particularly in remote work contexts where interpersonal dynamics are challenged. The acceptance of H4 highlights the crucial role of teamwork in motivating employees, especially in remote work settings, and suggests that organizations should focus on fostering strong team dynamics. Thus, the fourth research question is unravelled through this study.

Fifthly, this study found a significant positive relationship between personal development and employee motivation, with a coefficient of (B = 0.179; p = 0.022), thus supporting Hypothesis H5, which suggested a significant relationship between personal development and employee motivation. This result is consistent with the findings of (Odukah, 2016; Al-kharabsheh *et al.*, 2023), who emphasized the importance of ongoing learning and skill enhancement in maintaining high levels of motivation in remote work settings. Johnsen *et al.* (2023) also highlighted the need for fostering a workplace culture that encourages continuous learning, particularly in remote settings. However, negative aspects of personal development in remote work, such as work-related fatigue and lack of social interaction, highlighted by (Prasad *et al.*, 2023; Gross-Gołacka *et al.*, 2022), were not significantly evident in this study. The acceptance of H5 suggests that opportunities for personal development are vital for keeping remote employees motivated, indicating that organizations should prioritize providing these opportunities even in remote work environments. Subsequently, the fifth research question is unravelled through this study.

Finally, the positive relationship between career advancement and employee motivation, with a coefficient of (B = 0.130; p = 0.047), supports Hypothesis H6, which posited a significant relationship between career advancement and employee motivation. This finding is consistent with the studies by (Smithwick *et al.*, 2023; Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023), who noted the importance of career growth opportunities in motivating employees in remote work environments. The study underscores the significance of integrating digital HRM practices to enhance employee motivation and performance, as discussed by (Al-kharabsheh *et al.*, 2023). However, challenges such as late-career disengagement and preconceived notions about older workers, highlighted by (Hennekam, 2016; Damman *et al.*, 2013), could negatively affect motivation. The acceptance of H6 indicates that career advancement is a critical factor in motivating employees, suggesting that organizations should ensure that clear paths for advancement are available, even in remote work settings. Subsequently, the sixth research question is deciphered through this study.

The key findings of this study present valuable contributions to scholars and the banking sector. Primarily, the authors provide empirical evidence that supplements the findings of prior research that teamwork, social interaction, and prospects for personal and professional development serve as primary drivers of employee motivation in remote work settings. In this way, the researchers demonstrate that the role of well-being as a motivator is more context-bound than one may assume.

Consequently, differences between existing assumptions and this study's findings allow the formulating of valuable insights for scholars, managers and human resource professionals that would help them enhance the motivational effect of their strategies and, thus, improve organizational performance. This study also contributes to the identified gap in human resource research, giving further recommendations for scholars and practitioners.

6. Conclusion

The first objective of this study is to examine the relationship between work conditions and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia. The significant positive relationship between work conditions and employee motivation found in this study aligns with Alderfer's ERG theory, particularly within the existence needs category. This theory posits that basic work conditions—such as a comfortable and supportive work environment—are fundamental to employee motivation. This study supports the first hypothesis and reinforces existing literature, such as the findings of (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), which emphasized the importance of autonomy and control over one's work environment. However, it also highlights a gap in the literature where the impact of poor work conditions, as suggested by (Barilli *et al.*, 2022), could demotivate employees. By providing empirical evidence from Malaysia's banking sector, this study bridges that gap by confirming that good work conditions indeed play a crucial role in enhancing employee motivation, especially in remote settings.

The second objective of this study is to scrutinize the relationship between well-being and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia. Contrary to many studies, such as those by (Prasad *et al.*, 2023; Danielak & Wysocki, 2022), which emphasize the critical role of well-being in motivating employees, this study found that well-being does not significantly impact employee motivation, leading to the rejection of the second hypothesis. This suggests that in the context of Malaysia's banking sector, other factors might be more dominant in influencing motivation. This finding challenges the general assumption that well-being is universally critical across all contexts, thus identifying a gap in understanding the contextual factors influencing employee motivation. The gap is partially bridged by suggesting that well-being might not always be a primary motivator in environments where other factors, such as teamwork or work conditions, are more influential.

The third objective is to study the relationship between social interaction and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia. The significant relationship between social interaction and employee motivation supports the third hypothesis and is consistent with the relatedness needs in Alderfer's ERG theory, which highlights the importance of social connections and belonging. This finding is corroborated by previous research from (Wang *et al.*, 2020; Baber, 2021), which emphasized the role of quality communication in maintaining motivation. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge by bridging the gap highlighted by (Prasad *et al.*, 2023), who found that a lack

of social interaction can lead to demotivation in remote settings. By focusing on the Malaysian banking sector, this study provides specific evidence that fostering social interaction is essential for sustaining employee motivation in remote work contexts.

The fourth objective of this study is to examine the relationship between teamwork and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia. Teamwork was found to have the strongest positive influence on employee motivation, thereby supporting the fourth hypothesis and aligning with the relatedness and growth needs in Alderfer's ERG theory. The theory suggests that both interpersonal relationships (relatedness) and opportunities for development (growth) are crucial for motivation. This finding is consistent with (Salas *et al.*, 2014; Vaidya *et al.*, 2023), who argued that teamwork is critical for maintaining high motivation levels, particularly in remote settings. The study addresses the gap in the literature regarding the effectiveness of teamwork in remote environments by providing strong empirical evidence that underscores its importance. This bridges the gap by demonstrating that even in remote work settings, teamwork remains a significant motivator.

The fifth objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between personal development and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia. The positive relationship between personal development and employee motivation supports the fifth hypothesis and aligns with the growth needs in Alderfer's ERG theory. The theory posits that opportunities for personal and professional development are essential for sustaining motivation. This finding is consistent with research by (Odukah, 2016; Al-kharabsheh *et al.*, 2023), who emphasized the importance of ongoing learning and career progression in remote work environments. The study contributes to the literature by addressing the gap concerning the negative impact of remote work on personal development, as highlighted by (Prasad *et al.*, 2023). By showing that personal development remains a significant motivator in the banking sector, this study bridges the gap by providing an understanding of how personal development impacts motivation in remote work contexts.

The sixth objective of this study is to analyse the relationship between career advancement and employee motivation in the banking sector in Malaysia. The study's finding that career advancement positively influences employee motivation supports the sixth hypothesis and resonates with the growth needs in Alderfer's ERG theory, which emphasizes the importance of opportunities for advancement as a motivational factor. This result aligns with the findings of (Smithwick *et al.*, 2023; Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2023), who highlighted the importance of career growth opportunities in maintaining motivation. The study addresses the gap regarding the challenges of career advancement in remote settings, particularly for older workers, as noted by (Hennekam, 2016; Damman *et al.*, 2013). By providing evidence from the banking sector in Malaysia, this study bridges the gap by confirming that career advancement is indeed a critical motivator, even in remote work environments, and highlights the need for organizations to ensure clear paths for advancement.

Hence, several gaps in the existing literature on remote work and the motivation of employees were successfully bridged by offering evidence from Malaysia's banking sector. The support for the application of Alderfer's ERG theory in remote work settings and providing evidence relevant to the factors and their levels constituted the primary finding, and on the whole, the study extended the research on the effectiveness of the theory. The results confirmed that the critical factors were connected to the enhancement of teamwork and work conditions, as well as fostering social and personal development experiences and offering clearly defined ways of advancement and growth for the employees, which were the ways of preserving a high level of motivation. The study also showed that the well-being factor was context-dependent when it came to sector and specific working conditions. As such, the evidence provided in the study supported both the academic research and the practical applications.

7. Limitations and Further Research

This study presents numerous limitations and suggests future research that could elaborate on the findings and their implications. Firstly, the reliance on the banking sector in Malaysia might limit the trait's generalizability. Still, as it has been stated that diversified characteristics of various sectors could influence the specific motivation features, this limitation might not be too important. Secondly, the cross-sectional design did not allow for the observation of changes in motivation in the long-term context. A longitudinal study could have been more beneficial in achieving more accurate results. Thirdly, the self-reported data are connected with their possible bias, which can affect the trait's validity. Fourthly, since the research does not cover technical motives, they might not be enough to describe the remote work entourage. Lastly, the ERG theory by Alderfer has also limited the consideration of other relevant motivation approaches. Future studies can address these limitations and develop a longitudinal design, encompass other sectors, and technical and cultural motivators, as well as experiment with other motivation theories to reach a broader understanding of remote employees.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors affirm that the research was carried out without any commercial or financial associations that could be interpreted as a potential conflict of interest. The authors do not have any affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity that holds a financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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