

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND JOB SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES WORKING REMOTELY: A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Purpose: The pandemic has brought new challenges for management and the labor market all over the world, among which the most significant is the transition to remote work. As remote work changes working conditions and communication methods, it is essential to investigate how organizational factors impact the attitudes of remote workers, including satisfaction, which leads to numerous positive outcomes.

Design/methodology/approach: This study analyzes the relationship between remote employee satisfaction and organizational culture, exploring the role of specific organizational dimensions. The research is based on a sample of 811 participants- 511 employees from Poland and 300 from the United States. The data was collected online through validated questionnaires: The Denison Organizational Culture Survey (Denison, 1990) and Brief Job Satisfaction Measure (Judge et. al.,1998)

Findings: results highlight a positive relationship between remote employee satisfaction and organizational culture's dimensions. The most significant dimensions are: Involvement and Mission, which means that building engagement and teamwork, as well as sharing a clear mission and vision positively impacting overall satisfaction. Interestingly, in the American sample, organizational culture dimensions explained variability in satisfaction over twice as much as in the Polish sample, and the Mission trait has significantly stronger impact on satisfaction than in the Polish group.

Research limitations/implications: In future research, it is worth expanding the sample and compare more countries. Also introducing more variables into the model, both organizational and individual (like technical possibilities for remote work, level of social support, as well as personality traits) would be beneficial to comprehensively explain the model of remote work satisfaction.

Practical implications: The results provide valuable guidance for cultivating a satisfied remote workforce- managers of dispersed teams can influence satisfaction primarily through transparent communication, setting a clear vision and achievable goals, as well as mutual understanding, promoting teamwork and ensuring that employees feel valued and empowered. It is also essential to analyze the national culture of employees, as it can also influence their satisfaction.

Originality/value: The results fill the cognitive gap in the field of remote employees' satisfaction and organizational factors affecting it, taking into account cultural differences, allowing for an interdisciplinary perspective on job satisfaction.

Keywords: organizational culture, employee satisfaction, remote work.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

Introduction

Both organizational culture and employee satisfaction are issues that have recently gained significant interest. This is linked to the continuously growing awareness of the importance of "soft areas" in human resource management. However, a literature analysis indicates that these two constructs require in-depth research, particularly from the perspective of changes initiated as a result of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The pandemic has reshaped the world and the way work is conducted. In March 2020, many companies had to implement remote work as the prevailing norm. It is estimated that by the end of March 2020, over 3.4 billion people across 84 countries remained in their homes, signifying that many millions of employees transitioned to remote work mode (Bouziri et al., 2020). For the purpose of this article, remote work is defined as a form of work performed outside the employer's premises, utilizing information technology, in a location convenient for the employee while simultaneously meeting the employer's requirements) (Bayarma, Dijst, 2012). The challenges posed by remote work to organizations require ongoing focus on organizational factors that can support employees in achieving a balance between personal and professional life, consequently contributing to their job satisfaction, which, in turn, leads to higher effectiveness (Judge et al., 2001). However, some research shows that the level of job satisfaction is similar among employees working on-site or remotely in the same company (Morganson et al., 2010), so the mode of work is not the direct predictor of satisfaction-some other organizational factors play important roles in job satisfaction development. That is why an organizational culture, which shapes the work environment and organizational values, is assumed to be a significant factor influencing the satisfaction (Janićijević et al., 2018).

As this relationship is not broadly investigated in remote work context, there is a need to explore this research area. We designed a study to answer the following research questions: RQ1) Is there a relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction of remote employees? RQ2) Which organizational culture dimensions are most significant for variability of job satisfaction? RQ3) Are there any differences between samples from different cultures in experiencing job satisfaction and do other organizational culture dimensions explain its variability? We chose the model of organizational culture proposed by Denison as it is focused on four different dimensions of the culture: Involvement, Consistency, Adaptability and Mission (Denison et al. 2012), aimed to strengthen the flexibility of the company, which is

crucial in hybrid and remote work. In the methodological step, Spearman's correlation coefficient between variables were analysed, and in order to determine which organizational culture trait explain the variability of job satisfaction, stepwise multiple regression was used. The results fill the cognitive gap in this field and bring interesting insight in cross-cultural differences.

1. The Impact of Remote Work on Employee Satisfaction

Initially, it seemed that introducing remote work could enhance productivity and employee satisfaction, partly due to reduced commuting time. However, changes in collaboration methods, communication, or time management of remote employees were quickly noted. Today, we are well aware that these changes had a direct impact on employees' well-being and their job satisfaction (Azarbouyeh, Naini, 2014). According to the research conducted by the American Gallup Institute, only 33% of surveyed employees reported a good level of overall well-being (Raport MIT Solan, 2023), however, in line with the People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View report (Richardson, Antonello, 2022), individuals working remotely exhibited a higher level of job satisfaction than their colleagues remaining in the office, while simultaneously indicating that their mental well-being was poorer. From these reports, it emerges that transitioning to remote work can enhance productivity, but it often comes at the expense of employees' well-being (Subel et al., 2022). Therefore, satisfaction may increase in terms of supervisor control or time management, but over time, as well-being deteriorates, it may start to decrease. Research shows that the shift towards a digital work setting has generated an immediate necessity to address the overwhelming amount of data, the detachment from work, and the declining social connections among employees caused by their isolation, leading to reduced trust and a diminished sense of empowerment (Van Wart et al., 2019). Although remote work provides greater autonomy in terms of time and space, it leads to work intensification and additional workload for employees (Bathini, Kandathil, 2019). While working remotely, on one hand, it's easier to experience a collision between professional and personal responsibilities, which results in interference in employees' personal lives (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Gálvez et al., 2020; Ferreira, Gomes, 2023), on the other hand, remote work offers greater flexibility in fulfilling family responsibilities for many employees, as they can work from anywhere and at any time (Fedakova, 2017; Kłopotek, 2017).

Research shows that the satisfaction of remote employees can change due to pay and progression, work-life balance, wellbeing and family considerations, as well as a company's corporate values (Richardson, Antonello, 2022). That is why we considered organizational culture, defined as a set of shared values, beliefs, and norms guiding an organization's actions, to significantly influence the remote work environment and, consequently, job satisfaction levels.

2. Organizational Culture and job satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is one of the mostly discussed construct in relation to organizational behavior. Based on some research, a satisfied employee is quite often more efficient (Judge et al., 2001), more attached to the organization (Qureshi et al., 2011) or more devoted to his or her company (Christian et al., 2011). Satisfaction is usually perceived as the attitude resulting from the individual's reaction to the surrounding work conditions (Judge, Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). That is why we chose to analyse the organizational culture along with satisfaction. Locke and Latham (Lock, Latham, 1990) even proposed so called high performance cycle model, which purpose is to ensure high efficiency derived from job satisfaction. Although job satisfaction studies have been conducted multiple times (Suyono et al., 2019), they primarily focused on on-site work. Remote work has altered the work conditions and consequently, different values and norms may now have a greater impact on job satisfaction than before the shift to remote work. Examining remote employees' satisfaction is valuable, as it helps determine if individuals find fulfillment in specific work aspects (Oleksa, 2017). This is why exploring the connection between satisfaction and organizational culture can bring valuable insights.

Job satisfaction is closely associated with organizational culture (Spector, 1997; Lund, 2003; Belias, Koustelios, 2014). B. Groysberg et al. (2018) summarized various definitions of organizational culture used in management studies and highlighted four main elements:

- Sharedness – culture must exist within a group, in its norms and expectations, not solely in the mind of an individual employee.
- Universality – culture permeates different levels of the organization, is expressed in the behaviors of employee groups, rituals, symbols, and even in the physical space of the organization.
- Persistence – culture influences employees' behaviors and attitudes in the long term. It develops through critical events within the organization and is not subject to rapid modifications.
- Perceptibility – while not all elements of organizational culture are consciously recognized, organization members internalize its values and instinctively react in accordance with cultural assumptions.

The aforementioned principles indicate that organizational culture constitutes a relatively stable set of diverse values and norms shared by employees, influencing their work, behaviors, and even well-being. Hence, it is worthwhile to explore the relationship between culture and satisfaction. To examine this relationship in the context of remote employees, we selected D. Denison's organizational culture model as the theoretical framework. D. Denison, one of the leading researchers in organizational culture, developed the model after two decades of research, consisting of four main dimensions and subdivided into twelve specific strategies that

differentiate companies by high and low performance. The premise of this model is the presence of fundamental beliefs within companies about organizational functioning, its members, market position, and approach to customers, which shape organizational strategies and structure. Furthermore, companies, while pursuing various goals and tasks, frequently face the choice of actions along two axes: external orientation - internal orientation and flexibility-stability. Given the existence of fundamental beliefs and assumptions along with orientations, the model highlights four core dimensions (Denison et al., 2012):

- Mission - the clarity of the organization's purpose, enabling the formulation of strategies and a vision for the company's future.
- Consistency - the level of integration within the organization in terms of aligning the mission with actions, sharing fundamental organizational values, and the consistency of attributes (attire, procedures) that express the core assumptions of the company.
- Involvement - the degree of emphasis on human capital development, primarily through enhancing employees' skills and building effective teams.
- Adaptability - the level of flexibility and the ability to respond to changes in the environment.

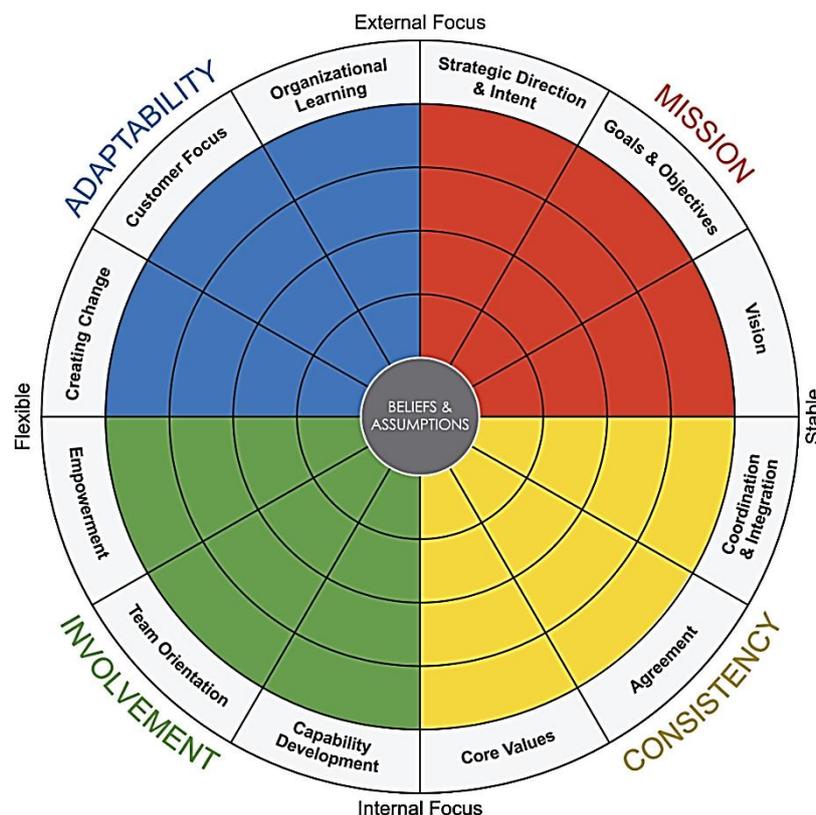


Figure 1. Organizational Culture Model of D. Denison.

Source: Denison, Hooijberg, Lane, Lief, 2012, p. 8.

The Denison model stands out from other popular organizational culture models (e.g. the Competing Values Framework coined by Cameron and Quinn (Cameron, Quinn, 2006), or Organisational Culture Inventory by Cooke and Lafferty (Cook, Szumal, 2013)

because it doesn't presuppose the existence of cultural types, but rather the possibility of balancing its dimensions, thereby enabling organizations to operate more flexibly and respond to market needs more swiftly. Departing from typological models allows for the creation of organizational culture tailored to the specific and unique goals of various enterprises. This becomes particularly crucial in the face of dynamic market changes that have been amplified by the pandemic, as well as the widespread shift to virtual spaces (e.g., in terms of hybrid/remote work).

Consciously shaping organizational culture provides the opportunity to enhance organizational efficiency and, as research indicates, elevate the level of employee satisfaction, which is often a result of culture evaluation (Belias, Koustelios, 2014; Mesfin et al., 2020; Oleksa-Marewska, Tokar, 2021). Moreover, culture defines a set of values and the corresponding norms, influencing behaviors, both desired and those the organization seeks to avoid. Employee behaviors will significantly change based on their level of job satisfaction. In light of the above considerations grounded in D. Denison's organizational culture model, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: Higher assessment of organizational culture corresponds to higher level of employee satisfaction.

H2: Higher level of satisfaction are significantly correlated with a positive assessment of all dimensions of organizational culture.

Organizational culture, seemingly to national culture, can vary depending on the mentality of both managers and employees. The Denison model is based on the analysis of primarily American enterprises operating internationally or locally. However, there is a lack of broader research comparing employees from different countries, especially in remote work context. Therefore, it was valuable compare American and Polish employees - the pandemic has led to a substantial convergence in work modes and methods, yet issues of national culture and mentality may still impact the perception of organizational culture and its influence on satisfaction.

H3: There are differences in the level of satisfaction between the studied groups of respondents, depending on the assessment of dimensions of organizational culture.

3. Research Methodology

To validate the stated hypotheses, primary data was collected using a meticulously designed research approach. The research was conducted from February to March 2022. It was imperative to enlist remote or hybrid workers as respondents, ensuring an international scope by including participants from Poland and the United States. It was also important to have an international sample so as to be able to draw conclusions in an extended context.

Because of this, non-probability sampling was chosen, and the selection of respondents was done with assistance from reputable research agencies. The analysis was based on two questionnaires: the Organizational Culture Survey and the Job Satisfaction Survey. Subsequently, statistical methods were applied to analyze the quantitative data derived from the surveys. This allowed for the interpretation of the results and facilitated comparisons of correlations between satisfaction and various cultural traits in both participant groups. Additionally, regression models were utilized to identify the cultural trait that exerted the most significant influence on satisfaction levels.

Sample, procedure and measures

The sample comprised of respondents employed in Poland (511) and those employed in the United States (300 individuals). The authors compared the Polish sample with the American one since the culture assessment tool was primarily developed on an American sample, making this aspect particularly interesting. In both samples, a similar percentage of women (59.3% in the Polish sample, 54% in the American sample) and men (40.51% and 46%) were present, and one participant from the Polish sample identified as non-binary. Regarding education, the Polish sample was dominated by individuals with higher education: master's degree (48.92%), followed by bachelor's degree (29.94%), and engineering degree (15.26%). In the American sample, individuals with bachelor's degrees predominated (50.67%), followed by engineering degrees (19.33%), and high school diplomas (18%). Only 8.67% of individuals in the American sample held master's degrees, indicating significant differences in the educational model between the two studied countries.

The sample encompassed individuals with diverse work experience (ranging from a few months to 38 years) working in organizations of various sizes, from small, several-person teams to those employing over 250 individuals. Notably, from the perspective of organizational culture analysis, a significant portion of the participants worked in a remote/hybrid mode after the onset of the pandemic (83% in Poland, 71% in the United States). However, the remaining portion of respondents performed their duties in this manner before the pandemic began. All respondents completed the electronic survey. The data gathered through two questionnaires were analyzed: Job satisfaction was measured on the five-item scale called the Brief Job Satisfaction Measure, proposed by T. Judge et al. (1998), which showed satisfactory reliability (0.88), and the organizational culture was assessed with the use of Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS), which consists of 48 statements investigating 4 dimensions of organizational culture. Reliability of all four subscales of DOCS was also satisfactory (from 0.88 to 0.97) (Gillespie et al., 2008).

4. Results of Analysis

Using the R programming language for statistical modeling, correlation analyses between variables, regression models, and group comparisons were conducted. Given that the variables did not follow a normal distribution, Spearman correlations were applied. Figure 2 presents the graphical model of tested variables.

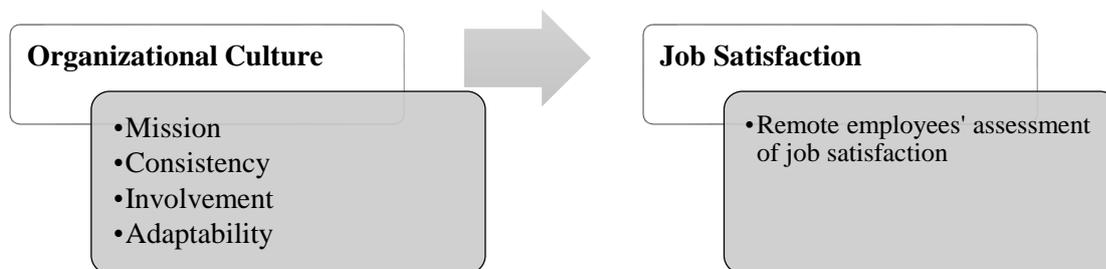


Figure 2. Graphical conceptualisation of variables.

Source: Own elaboration.

Correlation analyses revealed significant, moderate correlations between the level of employee satisfaction and the assessment of organizational culture. In the entire sample ($N = 811$), the strength of these relationships was positive and moderate ($\rho = 0.45$). These results allow to confirm hypothesis H1.

Comparing between the Polish and American groups, it was found that there are significant differences in the relationship between these variables. In the American sample, there was a significantly higher correlation between the overall assessment of culture and the level of satisfaction ($\rho = 0.52$, whereas in the Polish sample, it was $\rho = 0.41$). All dimensions of culture exhibited moderate, positive correlations with satisfaction, confirming hypothesis H2.

To ascertain significant differences between the surveyed countries in terms of satisfaction levels and assessment of cultural dimensions, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Differences between the groups in terms of satisfaction levels and the assessment of cultural dimensions

Variable	Poland (a)					United States (b)					U Mann-Whitney test			rg
	N	M	SD	Me	Mrang	N	M	SD	Me	Mrang	U	p	Difference a vs b	
Satisfaction	511	4.27	0.95	4.20	406.00	300	4.27	1.02	4.20	406.00	76521.00	0.968	a = b	0.00
Involvement	511	3.66	0.77	3.75	376.00	300	3.91	0.72	4.00	458.00	61128.00	0.000	a < b	0.20
Consistency	511	3.68	0.73	3.83	380.00	300	3.89	0.69	4.00	450.00	63315.50	0.000	a < b	0.17
Adaptability	511	3.63	0.77	3.75	380.00	300	3.85	0.72	3.92	450.00	63449.50	0.000	a < b	0.17
Mission	511	3.68	0.75	3.83	375.00	300	3.94	0.69	4.00	459.00	60735.50	0.000	a < b	0.21

Mrang = mean of rang; *U* = U Mann-Whitney statistics; *rg* = Glass's two-way correlation effect size statistic.

Source: Own elaboration.

The results of the analysis indicate significant differences between the surveyed countries in terms of the assessment of organizational culture. In the American sample, all dimensions were rated significantly higher than by respondents from Poland. The level of satisfaction with remote work was similar in both groups.

In the next step, a multivariate linear regression analysis was conducted, separately for both groups. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Comparison of linear regression analysis for the Satisfaction variable between the studied groups

Variable	Group	B	s.e.	t	p
Constant	PL	2.33	0.20	11.41	< 0.001
	USA	0.99	0.29	3.42	< 0.001
Involvement	PL	0.39	0.12	3.23	<0.01
	USA	0.39	0.18	2.09	<0.05
Consistency	PL	0.16	0.12	1.27	> 0.05
	USA	0.16	0.18	-0.89	> 0.05
Adaptability	PL	-0.12	0.11	-1.10	> 0.05
	USA	-0.08	0.15	-0.53	> 0.05
Mission	PL	0.10	0.12	0.83	> 0.05
	USA	0.68	0.18	3.73	<0.001

Source: Own elaboration.

For polish sample (N = 511) regression analysis showed significant prediction ($F(4, 506) = 26.20$; $p < 0.001$), the coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated that the regression model, considering the Involvement, Consistency, Adaptability, and Mission, explained approximately 17% of the variability of Satisfaction. One predictor was significant for explaining satisfaction variability and it was the Involvement dimension. While the assessment of other dimensions was statistically significant in terms of correlation with satisfaction, they did not significantly contribute to its increase.

For american sample (300), the regression analysis also showed significant prediction ($F(4, 295) = 35.72$; $p < 0.001$). The analysis of the coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated that the regression model explained approximately 32% of the satisfaction variability, which is significantly higher than in polish sample. In american group two dimensions were significant predictors: Involvement and Mission. Both the results of the Mann-Whitney U test and the regression analysis enable us to confirm hypothesis H3.

5. Conclusion

The obtained research results demonstrated a significant relationship between the assessment of organizational culture and the level of satisfaction among remote employees. This corresponds with other recent studies conducted on remote workers, which also indicated

that organizational culture impacts key factors contributing to job satisfaction. It can influence motivation levels, which in turn affect the level of satisfaction (Ali et al., 2023), shapes satisfactory communication (Pamula, Zalewska-Turzyńska, 2023), it can foster the development of interpersonal relationships and teamwork (Kocot et al., 2021), which particularly enhances satisfaction with remote work. In the conducted research on the entire sample, the most significant dimensions of organizational culture explaining the variability of satisfaction were the Involvement dimension (employee empowerment, team orientation, and organizational development promotion) and Mission dimension (comprising values like goal clarity, vision, and strategic direction). Similar conclusions have been drawn by other researchers: Pamula and Zalewska-Turzyńska (2023), examining culture with reference to Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework (2006), demonstrated that the highest job satisfaction among remote employees was found in a Clan culture, which emphasizes building engagement and teamwork. Similarly, studies by Bulińska-Stangrecka and Bagieńska (2021) have shown that remote employees' satisfaction is enhanced by positive interpersonal relationships, with this relationship being mediated by a sense of trust within the team. On the other hand, Kocot et al. (2021), focusing on the impact of positive interpersonal relationships promoted within organizational culture, also highlight their influence on job satisfaction in remote work. Also according to Bentley et al. (2016), promoting teamwork and providing social support, especially in a remote context, can enhance job satisfaction. Building positive relationships is an investment in creating an effective organizational culture, where a top priority is maintaining good communication with employees and keeping them informed about decisions that are important to them, so that employees feel like an integral part of the organization (Kocot et al., 2021). In the context of remote work, which lacks regular physical contact with employees and teams, this may appear to be crucial for satisfaction. Employees need to feel that the organization is building a culture of engagement and teamwork, so it is important to find ways to foster team unity and appreciate employees beyond traditional, office-based methods.

An interesting observation arises from the conducted linear regression analysis separately for the Polish and American samples. In the Polish sample, only the Involvement dimension significantly explained satisfaction variability, while the assessment of the Mission dimension among Polish employees did not lead to a substantial, significant increase in satisfaction. This finding might indicate cultural differences between the countries, as well as shifts in the job market. The Mission dimension pertains to the clarity of the organization's purpose, enabling the formulation of strategies and a vision for the company's future. Disparities in regression results could suggest the significance of a clear organizational vision and goals for American employees. Values such as transparency and equality in communication may stem from the specific traits of national culture (Hofstede et al., 2010). Additionally, these differences could reflect certain standards in the American job market, which are still developing in the Polish market, such as involving employees in understanding strategies and

presenting the company's development vision rather than just focusing on tasks to be accomplished by subordinates. Another significant difference is the percentage of explained variance in satisfaction by the organizational culture dimensions. In the American sample, it is almost twice as high as in the Polish sample, suggesting that there are more unaccounted variables or that they have a different degree of influence on the satisfaction of Polish respondents compared to the American sample. Despite cultural differences, the identified organizational traits as drivers of satisfaction exhibit similar effects across both samples.

In future research, it is worth expanding the analyses to compare with other countries. Also introducing more variables into the model explaining the level of satisfaction, both organizational ones like organizational climate or compensation, as well as individual ones (assessment of work-life balance, technical and local possibilities for remote work, social support, and even dominant personality traits) could be beneficial.

In conclusion, this study illuminates the vital connection between organizational culture and remote employee satisfaction. It is worth to balance all dimensions of culture as they are linked to higher satisfaction of remote employees. Based on the obtained results and the analysis of other research, it is crucial to prioritize teamwork and ensure that employees feel understood and accepted. Transparent communication, a clear vision, and achievable goals, as well as mutual understanding, contribute significantly to achieving this. As remote work continues to shape the modern workplace, these insights offer valuable guidance for cultivating a satisfied and motivated remote workforce.

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