

Autonomy Orientation and Remote Work Performance: The Moderating Role of Digital Trust in the Philippine Business Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of autonomy orientation on remote work performance in the Philippine Business sector, with digital trust examined as a moderating variable. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory and the Job Demands-Resources model, the study explores whether autonomy orientation directly enhances performance and how digital trust strengthens this relationship in virtual work settings. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed, with 207 remote and hybrid employees completing structured questionnaires. Descriptive results show consistently high levels of autonomy orientation, digital trust, and remote work performance among respondents. Regression analysis confirms that autonomy orientation significantly predicts remote work performance, while moderation analysis reveals that digital trust amplifies this relationship, with the interaction effect reaching statistical significance. These findings highlight the importance of fostering digital trust to maximize the benefits of autonomy in remote contexts. The study contributes to understanding how individual motivation and technological resources jointly shape performance, offering practical guidance for organizations designing policies that support trust, autonomy, and effectiveness in remote teams.

Keywords: Autonomy orientation, Digital trust, Remote work performance, Remote work, Self-Determination Theory, Philippine business sector

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The remote work era has transformed how businesses operate, offering flexibility, reducing overhead costs, and expanding access to a global talent pool. As remote work shifts from being a temporary solution to a long-term strategy, organizations are prioritizing ways to sustain and improve employee performance in this new environment.

The rapid growth of remote and hybrid work has reshaped industries worldwide, especially in sectors that heavily rely on digital platforms such as information technology, business process outsourcing (BPO), finance, and professional services. These industries benefit from flexible work arrangements that reduce operational costs and expand access to global talent pools, but they also face challenges in sustaining employee performance in digitally mediated environments (Beauregard et al., 2019). In the Philippines, remote work has become a strategic approach adopted by many companies, particularly in the IT-BPO sector, where digital communication and collaboration tools are essential for daily operations.

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on the relationship between autonomy orientation, digital trust, and remote work performance. Autonomy orientation refers to an individual's inclination to regulate behavior based on personal values and self-endorsed motivations, enabling employees to function effectively without constant supervision (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Worktime autonomy has been shown to directly predict remote work performance, allowing employees to succeed independently in virtual settings (Donati et al., 2024). Similarly, job autonomy strongly influences remote job satisfaction, a critical dimension of work performance (Shafizadeh, 2024). Digital trust, meanwhile, represents employees' confidence in digital tools, platforms, and systems, encompassing security, privacy, and data stewardship (Abraham et al., 2019).

In the Philippine context, organizations adopting flexible work arrangements encounter persistent challenges, such as limited employee autonomy, managerial distrust, communication gaps, and difficulty measuring performance outcomes. These issues hinder employee productivity and engagement, making it vital to understand how autonomy orientation and digital trust influence performance in remote settings.

While international studies have already explored autonomy, digital trust, and remote work performance in various contexts, limited empirical evidence exists that focuses on the Philippine setting. The Philippines presents a unique case due to its strong reliance on the IT-BPO sector, its rapid adoption of remote and hybrid work, and its ongoing challenges in digital infrastructure and managerial culture. These contextual differences mean that findings from Western and other Asian countries cannot be assumed to apply directly to Filipino employees. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how autonomy orientation and digital trust interact to influence remote work performance, specifically within the Philippines, where flexible work arrangements are increasingly becoming a long-term strategy.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research:

- Does autonomy orientation affect the remote work performance of employees in the Philippines?
- Does digital trust moderate the effect of autonomy orientation on remote work performance?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Autonomy Orientation, Remote Work Performance, and Digital Trust are the three variables of this study based on confirmed literature. Autonomy Orientation is how one self-regulates behavior by self-endorsed choice and volition over external control. Ryan and Deci (2000) define autonomy as being at the core of intrinsic motivation, wherein people act based on interest and internalized values. It is also associated with innovation and creativity in organizational settings, as workers who are given autonomy in their jobs are likely to create new ideas (Papachristopoulos & Arvanitis, 2024). Performance of remote work, on the other hand, describes the level at which the employees attain productivity, quality results, and flexibility when working outside of a conventional office premises. It is influenced not only by personal motivation and job satisfaction, but also by organizational and environmental determinants like leadership sponsorship and availability of resources (Beauregard et al., 2019). Digital Trust, the third variable, is about trust in the safety, reliability, and openness of digital platforms and tools. Abraham et al. (2019) contend that digital trust is essential for productivity and cooperation in virtual environments, while Chen et al. (2024) highlight its function in the achievement of satisfaction and involvement. However, Hassan et al. (2025) demonstrate how a lack of trust in digital platforms erodes productivity, as workers are reluctant to invest fully in technology when trust is absent. These three constructs together define the discussion of how autonomy orientation affects remote work performance and how digital trust acts as a moderator.

Autonomy has for a long time been known in organizational psychology as an imperative performance and participative driver in flexible work arrangements. As Ryan and Deci (2000) stressed, people who feel greater autonomy are more likely to be intrinsically motivated, thus maintaining their energy and initiative in task completion. When workers feel that they have control over the means and timing of their work, they are likely to perform better than what is expected of them even in environments where direct supervision is minimal. Autonomy in this manner becomes not just a structural pre-requisite, but also a psychological asset that boosts motivation, innovation, and productivity in general.

Even more recent evidence also points to the relationship between autonomy and creativity. Evidence suggests that when employees are given the freedom to venture out with fresh ideas and decide things on their own, innovative work behavior thrives (Papachristopoulos & Arvanitis, 2024). This innovation is as much helpful to the individual as it is to organizational resilience, especially in digital and remote environments where change at a fast pace is a standard. Also, feedback mechanisms combined with autonomy have been found to positively enhance job satisfaction (Shafizdeh, 2024). Increased levels of satisfaction then lead to healthier performance

results in a remote work environment since employees are empowered and appreciated. Considered together, these viewpoints imply that autonomy orientation is a key platform for maintaining motivation, well-being, and high-quality work performance in digitally mediated settings.

Simultaneously, the role of digital trust as a moderator of work in remote settings has emerged as a focal theme in recent scholarship. Abraham et al. (2019) contend that digital trust, which refers to trust in the dependability, security, and openness of digital systems, is critical for teamwork through virtual platforms. Where face-to-face contact is minimal, trust in the digital infrastructure forms the nucleus of collaboration and productivity. Workers are likely to participate effectively when they feel the digital tools on which they depend are secure and reliable. Consistent with this, studies have identified that digital trust promotes employee satisfaction, and this, in turn, boosts both engagement and performance (Chen et al., 2024). On the other hand, if digital trust does not exist, performance drops significantly because employees refrain from using the available tools to their capacity (Hassan et al., 2025). In reality, digital trust is not just a technological attribute but a relational and cultural aspect that influences how well remote teams can perform. But not all studies capture autonomy and digital trust in a uniformly favorable light. Even in highly trusted environments, fatigue and loneliness can undermine performance. For example, Ficapal-Cusí and colleagues (2024) demonstrate that remote workers can still grapple with psychosocial issues that compromise productivity even if they trust digital tools. Aside from subjective experience, Beauregard et al. (2019) indicate that telework performance depends on organizational and environmental factors like leadership support, team cohesion, and availability of resources. This suggests that autonomy alone cannot guarantee better performance; rather, it must be supported by adequate structures, policies, and interpersonal dynamics. Without these, autonomy may result in role ambiguity or disengagement, particularly when employees feel disconnected from their teams or unsupported by leadership.

The organizational design of telework policies also plays a significant role in shaping how autonomy influences performance. Bošković (2021) writes that trusting and flexible policies grant workers the authority to use autonomy constructively and thus support remote performance. Conversely, strict managerial control and strict rules can undermine the benefits of autonomy, generating frustration rather than enthusiasm. Self-Determination Theory offers a theoretical framework for these results by hypothesizing that autonomy works best in conjunction with competence support and relatedness. Under conducive circumstances, autonomy results in higher job satisfaction and involvement, both of which directly relate to productivity in remote working contexts. Here, digital trust emerges as a crucial moderating factor since it offers the framework that enables autonomy to be applied confidently and efficiently. Other studies indicate that digital trust not only preserves responsibility but also enhances faith in the digital infrastructures workers have to rely on every day (Brunelle & Fortin, 2021).

Digital trust has a more expansive role to play than mere task accomplishment. Trust in digital systems such as communication and project management systems has been proven to enhance job satisfaction, thereby influencing motivation and performance (Qalati et al., 2021). When workers are assured that their digital tools are safe and reliable, they tend to be less apprehensive or resistant to embracing full remote work. Trust reduces pause, uncertainty, and brings a sense of psychological safety that aligns with the advantages of autonomy orientation. That is, trust bridges the gap of physical distance by making workers feel supported, connected, and secure in their work.

However, researchers warn against giving too much weight to autonomy or digital trust alone. Although autonomy orientation is instrumental, its effect of facilitating performance relies significantly on organizational support, leadership behavior, and access to resources. Without the prompt feedback of peers or exposure to suitable technologies, freedom of action can become daunting instead of liberating. Social exclusion is also still an enduring issue, as staff without a sense of belonging to a team might find it hard to stay motivated irrespective of trust in information systems or autonomy. These interactions highlight that remote work performance is multi-faceted and demands a systemic solution.

In short, all the literature indicates that autonomy orientation boosts remote work performance but only in the presence of digital trust. Autonomy alone will not guarantee long-term performance because it interacts with other organizational and individual variables, including feedback, leadership style, and digital tool design. A thorough approach that joins autonomy with digital trust, and underpins them with facilitating policies, resources, and

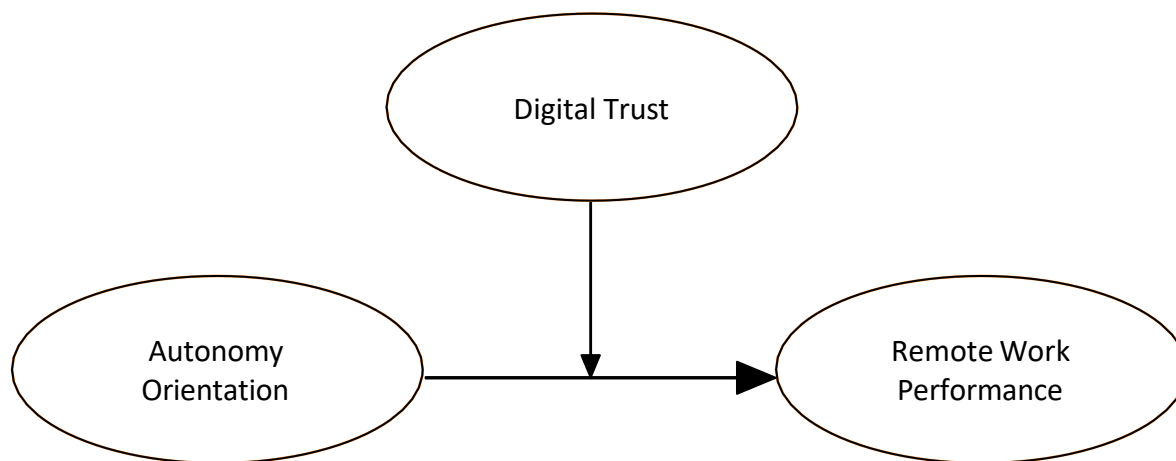
cultural practices, is most effective in ensuring the optimal delivery of remote work. Therefore, this research confirms that the performance of remote work thrives not on autonomy but at the nexus of autonomy and digital trust, moderated by organizational and environmental factors.

Hypothesis

This research proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a significant effect of Autonomy Orientation on Remote Work Performance.
- H2: There is a significant moderating effect of Digital Trust on the effect of Autonomy Orientation on Remote Work Performance.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employs a quantitative, cross-sectional, non-experimental correlational survey design to investigate the moderating effect of digital trust in the relationship between autonomy orientation and remote work performance. Through moderated multiple regression and simple-slopes analysis, this study aims to explain the moderating role of digital trust on the effect of autonomy orientation on remote work performance.

This study used a non-probability convenience sample and snowball sampling of remote or hybrid employees, recruited through the researchers' professional networks and via snowball referrals via email and various social media platforms. This approach enables time-efficient data collection and quick, low-cost access to remote workers. The limitation, however, is that the sample was non-probability and subject to network-based selection bias, so the findings may not generalize to all remote workers in the Philippines. To mitigate this, the study gathered a relatively large sample size ($n = 207$) and ensured diversity across age, sector, job level, and years of remote work experience. Since the study focuses on testing relationships rather than estimating population parameters, the use of non-probability sampling was deemed acceptable.

Research Participants

The target population of this research is remote and hybrid workers employed in the Philippines. The workforce in a remote or hybrid environment relies on digital platforms for performance delivery, communication, and teamwork. Because of their work settings, they can be used to evaluate the ways in which autonomy orientation could affect remote work performance, with digital trust acting as a moderating factor.

Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a structured survey questionnaire, divided into sections for demographics, digital trust, autonomy orientation, and remote work performance. The demographics section collected the respondents' age, years employed as a remote worker, sector, and job level.

The succeeding sections for digital trust, autonomy orientation, and remote work performance utilized a structured questionnaire that includes a 7-point Likert scale to assess the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups. Participants rated their level of agreement with a series of statements, which ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The survey questions were adapted from previous research conducted by Gigi and Sangeetha (2020), Rizmaldi and Jayadi (2022), Susilo (2020), and Radu et al. (2023).

The study was conducted using the online survey platform Google Forms. The responses in the survey were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). To facilitate the interpretation of mean scores, the scale below was used to translate mean scores into qualitative descriptors for reporting and convert them into evaluative categories. This ensured that numerical values obtained from the analysis could be described in qualitative terms that reflect the respondents' overall perceptions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Likert Scale Responses for Interpreting Means

Mean Range	Agreement Scale	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.49	Strongly Disagree	Extremely Low
1.50 – 2.49	Disagree	Very Low
2.50 – 3.49	Slightly Disagree	Low
3.50 – 4.49	Neutral	Neutral
4.50 – 5.49	Slightly Agree	Moderate
5.50 – 6.49	Agree	High
6.50 – 7.00	Strongly Agree	Very High

Data Gathering Procedure

The study was conducted as a survey, with data collected through the online survey platform Google Forms. The survey was distributed via messaging apps and emails to ensure a smooth distribution process. The survey link included a message explaining the purpose of the survey and encouraging participants to complete the questionnaire. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and consent will be obtained in accordance with Data Privacy regulations. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Respondents completed the questionnaire at their own pace. The link expired two weeks after it was distributed, allowing as many respondents as possible to participate. The responses were extracted from the Google Forms as a CSV file and were organized using Excel.

Statistical Analysis

All statistical analyses were conducted using Jamovi. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies for demographic variables and means with corresponding interpretations for digital trust, autonomy orientation, and remote work performance, were first generated to provide a clear overview of respondent characteristics and construct levels. The interpretation of mean scores followed a pre-specified 7-point scale rubric to classify responses into appropriate descriptive categories.

To evaluate the hypothesized relationships, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to assess both the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model analysis included the evaluation of indicator loadings, reliability, and validity measures, while the structural model analysis focused on testing direct and moderating effects among the study variables. Specifically, this study used moderation analysis to examine whether digital trust strengthens the effect of autonomy orientation on remote work performance. The interaction term ($AO \times DT$) was computed and included in the model to assess conditional effects.

For significant interaction effects, a simple-slopes (conditional effects) analysis was performed to interpret the moderation pattern. The slopes of autonomy orientation on remote work performance were analyzed at three levels of digital trust (-1 SD, mean, and $+1$ SD), and the corresponding inferential statistics and 95% confidence intervals were reported. This approach ensured a comprehensive interpretation of how digital trust alters the magnitude of the autonomy-performance relationship within remote work contexts.

RESULTS

Table 2 Respondents' Age Demographics

Age	Counts	% of Total	Rank
21 to 30 years old	162	78.3%	1
Above 40 years old	7	3.4%	3
31 to 40 years old	38	18.4%	2

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents are aged 21 to 30 years, comprising 162 individuals, or 78.3% of the sample. The next largest group is those aged 31 to 40, totaling 38 respondents, which represents 18.4%. Only seven respondents, or 3.4%, are over 40 years old. Overall, 81.6% of the participants are 40 years old or younger, highlighting that the respondent profile is predominantly composed of young adults, particularly those in their twenties, with minimal representation from older age groups.

Table 3 Respondents' Years as Remote Work Employees Demographics

Years as an RW employee	Counts	% of Total	Rank
Less than 1 year	46	22.2%	2
1 to 3 years	122	58.9%	1
4 to 6 years	28	13.5%	3
More than 6 years	11	5.3%	4

Table 3 shows that most respondents have been employed as remote workers for 1 to 3 years (122, 58.9%), followed by those with less than 1 year of experience (46, 22.2%). A smaller proportion reported 4 to 6 years (28, 13.5%), while only 11 respondents (5.3%) have more than 6 years of experience. Overall, 81.2% of the sample have three years or less remote work experience, indicating that the workforce is largely composed of relatively new to moderately experienced remote employees, with limited long-term tenure.

Table 4 Respondents' Sector Demographics

Sector	Counts	% of Total	Rank
Private Sector	178	86.0%	1

Public Sector	26	12.6%	2
Academe	3	1.4%	3

Table 4 shows that most respondents are employed in the private sector, comprising 178 participants, or 86.0%. In contrast, a smaller group works in the public sector, totaling 26 respondents (12.6%). Only three respondents (1.4%) come from the academic sector, making it the least represented group. These findings indicate that the sample is predominantly concentrated in the private sector, with minimal representation from government and academic institutions.

Table 5 Respondents' Job Level Demographics

Job Level	Counts	% of Total	Rank
Rank and File	140	67.6%	1
Supervisory	20	9.7%	4
Managerial	21	10.1%	3
Executive	26	12.6%	2

Table 5 reveals that the majority of respondents hold rank-and-file positions, with 140 individuals making up 67.6% of the total. In contrast, smaller percentages occupy higher roles: supervisory positions account for 20 respondents (9.7%), managerial roles for 21 respondents (10.1%), and executive positions for 26 respondents (12.6%). This distribution indicates that nearly two-thirds of the sample consists of employees in non-supervisory roles, while less than one-third are in leadership or decision-making positions. Consequently, the perspectives captured in this study are predominantly influenced by rank-and-file employees, with comparatively fewer contributions from those in supervisory, managerial, and executive levels.

Table 6 Interpretation of Score and Mean Values

Mean Range	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.49	Extremely Low
1.50 – 2.49	Very Low
2.50 – 3.49	Low
3.50 – 4.49	Neutral
4.50 – 5.49	Moderate
5.50 – 6.49	High
6.50 – 7.00	Very High

Table 6 presents the interpretation of the mean scores derived from the survey responses. The mean scores are categorized into specific ranges and interpreted using the evaluative categories. This scale standardizes how we interpret responses across the study's variables.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics Result of Digital Trust

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
DT1	6.11	1.08	High
DT2	6.24	1.1	High
DT3	6.1	1.14	High
DT4	6.17	1.04	High

DT5	6.09	1.15	High
Level of Digital Trust	6.14	1	High

Table 7 illustrates that respondents reported a high level of digital trust, with an overall mean score of 6.14 (SD = 1). All indicators received high scores, with means ranging from 6.09 to 6.24, indicating consistent responses across the measures. These results suggest that respondents generally have high digital trust in performing their remote work digital platforms and tools necessary.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics Result of Autonomy Orientation

Mean		SD	Interpretation
AO1	6.05	1.114	High
AO2	6.21	1.075	High
AO3	6.01	1.143	High
AO4	6.17	1.157	High
AO5	5.86	1.362	High
Level of Autonomy Orientation	6.06	0.989	High

Table 8 presents the results indicating that respondents have a high level of autonomy orientation, with an overall mean score of 6.06 (SD = 0.99). The mean scores for individual items ranged from 5.86 to 6.21, all of which fell within the high category. This suggests that respondents predominantly view themselves as driven by autonomy orientation in their work.

Table 9 Remote Work Performance Descriptive

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
RWP1	6.21	1.03	High
RWP2	5.61	1.493	High
RWP3	6.06	1.205	High
RWP4	6.12	1.115	High
RWP5	6.18	1.187	High
Level of Remote Work Performance	6.04	0.979	High

Table 9 indicates that respondents reported high performance while working remotely, with an overall mean score of 6.04 (SD = 0.98). The mean scores ranged from 5.61 to 6.21, all falling within the high-performance category. This suggests that respondents generally view themselves as productive, effective in completing tasks, and capable of meeting performance standards in a remote work environment.

Table 10. Validity and Reliability Results

Construct	Item	Loadings	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)
	DT1	0.811	0.653	0.901

Digital Trust (DT)	DT2	0.846		
	DT3	0.782		
	DT4	0.829		
	DT5	0.798		
Autonomy Orientation (AO)	AO1	0.802	0.621	0.889
	AO2	0.843		
	AO3	0.768		
	AO4	0.811		
	AO5	0.751		
Remote Work Performance (RWP)	RWP1	0.872	0.686	0.914
	RWP2	0.803		
	RWP3	0.829		
	RWP4	0.857		
	RWP5	0.799		

Table 10 shows the measurement model results, which indicate that all three constructs—Digital Trust (DT), Autonomy Orientation (AO), and Remote Work Performance (RWP)—demonstrate strong psychometric properties. All item loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, showing that each indicator adequately represents its corresponding construct. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for DT (0.653), AO (0.621), and RWP (0.686) are all above the acceptable level of 0.50, confirming good convergent validity and indicating that the constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators. Additionally, the Composite Reliability (CR) values range from 0.889 to 0.914, surpassing the 0.70 criterion and supporting strong internal consistency reliability. Overall, the results suggest that the measurement scales used in the study are valid and reliable for assessing digital trust, autonomy orientation, and remote work performance in the context of this research.

Table 11. Moderation Analysis Results

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Autonomy Orientation (AO)	0.5622	0.0361	15.50	< .001
Digital Trust (DT)	0.3902	0.0302	12.90	< .001
AO × DT	0.0433	0.0189	2.29	.022

Table 11 illustrates the effect of autonomy orientation on remote work performance, with digital trust acting as a moderating variable. Autonomy orientation has a positive and statistically significant relationship with remote work performance (Estimate = 0.5622, $p < .001$), indicating that employees with higher levels of autonomy orientation tend to report stronger performance in a remote setting. Further, digital trust also shows a positive and significant effect (Estimate = 0.3902, $p < .001$), indicating that confidence in digital platforms independently contributes to higher performance outcomes.

The interaction between autonomy orientation and digital trust is also positive and significant (Estimate = 0.0433, $p = .022$). This indicates that digital trust has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between autonomy orientation and remote work performance. Specifically, the positive effect of autonomy orientation on remote work performance is stronger when employees have higher levels of digital trust, which means that the strength of the positive effect of autonomy orientation on performance depends on employees' levels of digital trust.

Table 12 Simple Slope Estimates

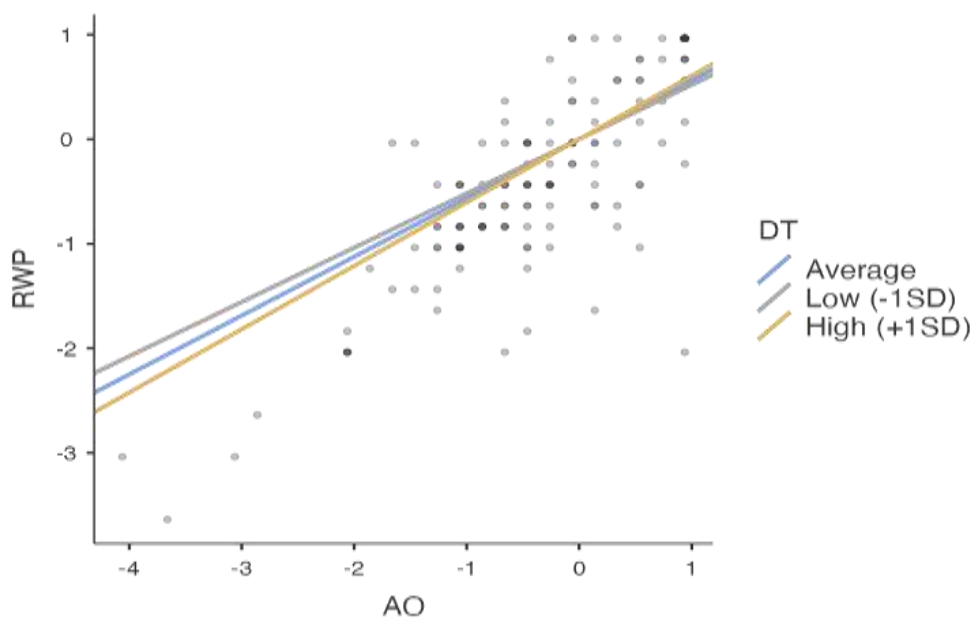
	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Average	0.562	0.0362	15.5	<.001
Low (-1SD)	0.519	0.0309	16.8	<.001
High (+1SD)	0.606	0.0490	12.4	<.001

Note. shows the effect of the predictor (AO) on the dependent variable (RWP) at different levels of the moderator (DT)

Table 11 presents the simple-slope analysis examining the moderating role of digital trust in the relationship between autonomy orientation and remote work performance. At a low level of digital trust (-1 SD), autonomy orientation is positively associated with remote work performance (slope = 0.519, $p < .001$). At the average level of digital trust, the association is stronger (slope = 0.562, $p < .001$), and at a high level ($+1$ SD) it is even stronger (slope = 0.606, $p < .001$). Overall, autonomy orientation is positively related to remote work performance across all levels of digital trust, and the magnitude of this association increases as digital trust increases.

These results demonstrate that autonomy orientation consistently predicts higher performance across all conditions. However, its impact is amplified when employees exhibit greater trust in digital tools and systems. In essence, digital trust enhances the capacity of autonomy-oriented employees to translate their self-directed motivation into higher levels of performance in remote work contexts.

Simple Slope Plot



DISCUSSION

Conclusion

The results of this study provide clear evidence that remote and hybrid employees in the Philippines demonstrate high levels of digital trust, autonomy orientation, and remote work performance. Respondents reported a strong sense of confidence in the security, reliability, and usability of digital platforms essential for accomplishing their tasks. Likewise, they largely perceived themselves as intrinsically motivated and self-directed, enabling them to effectively manage responsibilities and decision-making in remote work settings. These findings reflect a well-adapted workforce that is capable of sustaining productivity outside traditional office environments.

Moreover, the analysis confirmed that autonomy orientation has a significant positive influence on remote work performance. Employees who possess a high degree of self-regulation and initiative are more likely to excel in

virtual work arrangements. Digital trust also independently enhances performance, suggesting that reliable digital infrastructure and transparent security mechanisms are critical to maintaining high levels of effectiveness. Importantly, the moderating effect of digital trust indicates that autonomy orientation is most beneficial when employees trust the digital tools they rely on. When digital trust is high, autonomy-oriented individuals translate their motivation into even greater performance outcomes.

In summary, this study highlights the synergistic interaction between human psychological characteristics and technological assurance in shaping successful remote work experiences. As organizations continue to shift toward flexible and digitally mediated work models, reinforcing both autonomy support and digital trust becomes essential to sustaining employee productivity.

Implications

The findings contribute to the theoretical advancement of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by demonstrating that autonomy orientation remains an important psychological resource for enhancing employee performance in remote work environments. Consistent with SDT, employees who are intrinsically motivated and capable of self-directed behavior are more likely to perform effectively when given greater discretion over their work (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, the present findings further suggest that the performance benefits of autonomy are not solely a function of individual motivation. Instead, they depend on the broader digital work environment, where employees' confidence in the reliability, security, and usability of digital technologies enables autonomous behavior to translate into superior performance. This finding extends SDT by illustrating that, in digitally mediated workplaces, technological trust serves as an enabling condition through which autonomy can achieve its full motivational potential.

The study also extends the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model by positioning digital trust as a valuable job resource that strengthens the positive relationship between autonomy orientation and remote work performance. The JD-R model proposes that job resources enhance employee motivation and performance while reducing the adverse effects of job demands (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Traditionally, these resources include autonomy, supervisory support, and feedback. The present findings indicate that confidence in digital systems should likewise be considered a critical organizational resource in remote work settings. By reducing uncertainty and increasing employees' willingness to rely on digital platforms, digital trust enables workers to maximize the benefits of autonomy. This finding broadens the application of the JD-R model to digitally mediated work environments, where technological resources are increasingly central to employee performance.

The findings are also consistent with international evidence regarding the importance of autonomy and digital trust in remote work. Studies have consistently reported that greater work autonomy improves employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance in flexible work arrangements (Donati et al., 2024; Shafizadeh, 2024). Likewise, international research has demonstrated that digital trust promotes collaboration, employee engagement, and productivity in technology-enabled workplaces (Abraham et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2024; Launer et al., 2022). Conversely, low digital trust has been associated with reduced technology utilization and lower productivity (Hassan et al., 2025). The present study corroborates these international findings within the Philippine business sector, providing evidence that the complementary roles of autonomy orientation and digital trust are applicable beyond Western contexts. Considering differences in organizational culture, digital infrastructure, and managerial practices, these findings suggest that the interaction between psychological and technological resources represents a robust mechanism for improving remote work performance across diverse organizational settings.

From a practical perspective, the findings indicate that organizations should treat autonomy support and digital trust as complementary management strategies rather than independent initiatives. Empowering employees with greater decision-making authority may not yield optimal performance unless organizations simultaneously invest in secure, reliable, and user-friendly digital systems. This observation aligns with previous research emphasizing that remote work effectiveness depends not only on employee autonomy but also on organizational support, technological reliability, and leadership practices (Beauregard et al., 2019; Bošković, 2021). Human resource managers should therefore design remote work policies that balance employee autonomy with investments in

cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and transparent technology governance. Leadership development initiatives should likewise promote trust-based management practices that encourage autonomy while maintaining organizational accountability.

Finally, the study has broader implications for organizations operating in emerging digital economies such as the Philippines. As remote and hybrid work arrangements become permanent organizational practices, digital trust should be viewed not merely as a technological attribute but as a strategic organizational capability that enhances employee performance and organizational resilience. Future studies should further validate these findings using probability-based sampling techniques and longitudinal research designs while incorporating more diverse respondents from public organizations, higher education institutions, and different age groups. Comparative cross-country studies may also determine whether cultural, technological, and institutional differences influence the moderating role of digital trust in remote work performance, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive global understanding of digitally enabled work environments.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a non-probability convenience and snowball sampling approach, which may have introduced selection bias and limited the generalizability of the results to the broader population of remote and hybrid employees in the Philippines. Although the sample included respondents from different age groups, job levels, and sectors, it was predominantly composed of employees from the private sector, younger workers aged 21–30 years, and rank-and-file positions, resulting in relatively limited representation from public organizations, academic institutions, older employees, and senior management roles. Consequently, the findings may primarily reflect the experiences of these more represented groups rather than the entire remote workforce.

In addition, the study utilized a cross-sectional research design, which captures relationships among variables at a single point in time. While the findings provide evidence of significant associations and moderation effects, they do not permit causal inferences or examination of how autonomy orientation, digital trust, and remote work performance evolve over time. Future research is encouraged to employ probability-based sampling techniques, such as stratified or random sampling, to improve external validity and enhance the representativeness of the sample. Researchers are also encouraged to recruit a more balanced respondent base by increasing participation from public organizations, higher education institutions, and a wider range of age groups and organizational levels. Furthermore, longitudinal research designs would provide stronger evidence regarding the temporal and causal relationships among the study variables and offer deeper insights into how digital trust and autonomy orientation influence remote work performance over time.

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APPENDICES

Survey Questionnaire

Table 12: Measurement Items for Digital Trust, Autonomy Orientation, and Remote Work Performance

Variable	Code	Item
Digital Trust		I trust the digital tools and technologies provided by my
	DT1	organization to perform reliably.
		I have the technology I need to help me stay connected to my
	DT2	team when working remotely.
		I trust my organization's technical and support staff to address
	DT3	digital issues promptly and effectively.
		My trust in digital systems increases when I can use them
	DT4	without being pressured or manipulated.
	DT5	I trust digital systems that allow me to set my own preferences.
Autonomy	AO1	I have the freedom to make my decisions about my work.
Orientation		I plan and organise to achieve the objectives of the job and meet
	AO2	deadlines.
	AO3	I am engaged and interested in my daily work activities.
		I feel engaged at work when I can act according to my own
	AO4	ideas and interests.
		I choose tasks that interest me, even when they are not the
	AO5	easiest or practical option.
Remote Work		I perform well in the overall job by carrying out tasks as
Performance	RWP1	expected.
	RWP2	My work is free from unnecessary interruptions and disruptions.
	RWP3	I am able to be just as productive while working remotely when
		compared to usual working location.
	RWP4	I communicate effectively with my team while working remotely.
	RWP5	I meet the criteria for performance.