



Title With the launch of the government's 'Anywhere Working' initiative: from the perspective of remote or flexible workers/employees with perceived high self-efficacy – what might be the preferred performance target and appraisal process, as part of the performance management system?

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Abstract

Labour markets are changing, demographics are changing; the world is becoming more global with traditional offices being superseded by 'landscapes of mobility' (Hardill & Green 2003) and workers too are changing and demanding change with subsequent rise in remote and flexible working. This study recognises that remote workers may have and demand different performance management and appraisal systems based on their levels of perceived self-efficacy; based on Bandura's (1978) social cognition theory (Bandura 1978) of self-efficacy concerns the judgement an individual makes about their ability to execute a particular behaviour and 'belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations' (Bandura 1995). This study utilises a mixed-method of quantitative questionnaire and interpretivist qualitativism to reach a snowball sample of remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy and examines their responses to questions concerning their preferred performance management and appraisal systems and procedures; the results found in this sample including levels of autonomy, styles of communication and systems of feedback might be present in across many remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy which has implications for organisational cultures and objective setting at organisational through to individual level. Recommendation and limitations are expressed along with further ideas for future studies.

1 Introduction

“Leading businesses’ call for greater adoption of flexible working practices gets support from the Government” (BITC 2011).

Business in the Community (BITC) helped form the ‘Anywhere Working’ consortium along with Microsoft, Nuffield, Regis and Vodafone, which was backed by the Department for Transport, Transport for London and the TUC. The initiative is intended to emphasise the ‘dual priorities of economic prosperity and carbon reduction’ (Ways2Work Conference 2012) and the Anywhere Working group initiative was formed to show businesses how they can ‘save time, money and the environment through remote working’. Roger Berry of Vodafone (2012, www.anywhereworking.org) tells us, its aim is to encourage more effective, efficient ways of working thus ‘radically improving employee’s work life balance’ highlighting, according to Celia Donne of Regus (2012, www.anywhereworking.org) the importance of ‘agile working’ as ‘55% of desks are unused each day’ in a typical organisation. For agile working, substitute flexible or, for this study, remote working, which is becoming ever more commonplace across all varieties of organisation and worker – 82% of European businesses allow flexible working (www.anywhereworking.org) – and it’s going to make a difference to the way businesses function.

In their report, Busch *et al* (2011) find that our world is becoming ‘more global and diverse’ with organisations competing to attract and retain top talent. They believe that organisations often no longer are traditional ‘in-office work environments’ and that there has been a big shift towards virtual working. The work-model of 2012 might be said to be characterized by movement; where working lives have become ‘landscapes of mobility’ (Hardill & Green 2003) with the performance of work assignments taking place remotely, or virtually, in traditional office but also at home, or on the road, or in the client’s office, or in cyberspace. Work is no longer a static entity and with that reality and concept comes subsequent challenges and opportunities for organisations adopting remote working.

The labour market is changing; demographics are changing. In the UK, an Institute of Internal Communications ('IoIC') survey (HR Director 2009 cited on www.ioic.org 2012) found that 11% of the UK workforce were now home or remote workers and *Work Wise UK*, cited in the survey – an initiative aimed at making the UK one of the most progressive economies in the world – believes that this can practically be extended to 50% of the workforce in 5 years. The Flexible Working/Family Friendly Hours Taskforce, established in 2009, by the UK government is 'made up of experts from business and organisations that represent business, employees and families, non-government bodies and government departments' and from its report 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business' it states that 'flexibility in the workplace is about developing modern workplace practices to fit the needs of the 21st century' suggesting that organisations and employees should consider, and encourage working arrangements that suit all parties (with supporting evidence and case studies) – 'enabling organisations to adopt to changing business conditions and individual employees to better balance their work and family life'. The taskforce published a report 'Flexible Working: working for families working for business', which recommends a business case for flexible working.

As economic and competitive forces are, according to Bandura (1997), 'pruning the hierarchies of bureaucratic management,' it may be that now 'operational decisions and management functions are being assigned to the workers themselves in an effort to improve productivity and employee satisfaction', removing 'bureaucratic impediments to initiative, creativity and getting things done', also Bandura (1997). If this pruning over-arches across remote workers and also their line managers, this results in questions of how to manage people you can't see and the possible importance of self-efficacy levels in workers who are, or have to be more autonomous. The self-efficacy construct is derived from Bandura's social cognitive theory, (Gist & Mitchell 1992) and is described by Bandura (1978), himself as 'the judgement an individual makes about his or her ability to execute a particular behaviour' and (Bandura 1995) 'belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations' – and asks if their ability will enable them to succeed or even try to attempt an action to try to succeed. Further described by Gist (1987) as 'cognitive appraisal of one's capabilities' with Bandura (1982) writing that self-efficacy 'affects one's choice of settings and

activities, skill acquisition, effort expenditure and the initiation and persistence of coping efforts in the face of obstacles'. Bandura further posits that people, or workers, with 'moderate to high perceived self-efficacy' will expand further effort and for longer on tasks than those with low perceived self-efficacy who will 'give up more easily under adversity and evidence less mastery'. Therefore, might those with moderate to high perceived self-efficacy be more amenable and indeed more appropriate to the challenges of remote working and might they be able to self-guide, or follow tasks – and indeed set tasks – more independently of their supervisors. Might they be able to manage themselves more or will they still require, or indeed, need supervisory input. This is a key area of this study.

Bandura (1997) reported that having workers manage themselves changes the model of supervisory manager-ship, and therefore, the changes in how performances of remote workers are managed and appraised. According to Cascio (2000) virtual and remote workplaces and workers will become more commonplace in the future with, he also writes, 'sound business reasons for establishing' these but also that 'their advantages are offset' by cultural clashes, some fiscal costs and also loss of trust. This presents challenges at strategic levels for organisations with solutions that might do well to cascade from top down and pervade company culture. Some organisations are addressing this, report Tietze and Musson in their 2005 paper addressing that there are 'changing managerial strategies and changing cultural expectations about the location of (paid) work' with 'organisations seen [by some] as flexible networks, virtually dispersed in time and space, so that work can be conducted with anybody, anytime, anywhere'.

Cascio (2000) further posits that managers will need to 'shift from a focus on time to a focus on results' and that organisations will need to recognise that these new workplaces will 'instead of needing fewer managers, require better supervisory skills amongst existing managers' and that if this is done correctly, this will led to 'stunning improvements in productivity, profits and customer service'.

The changes to working practices, at statutory, at organisational and at worker level requirements might well, therefore mean a new way of working not just for a few, possibly knowledge workers; but might it not be an easy way forward for all workers

or indeed organisations? O2 recently launched its 'Joined Up People Service' – a service and app aimed at helping organisations to implement flexible working practices and 'support organisations in managing the complex societal changes affecting their business operations' (CBR 2011). This might suggest that organisations do need assistance with the adoption of flexible and remote working (referring to technological assistance here). Other forms of resistance could be the apparent importance of being visible at work, with performances being measured by time in the office, or inputs (a classic example is hours billed in the legal profession), not on outputs – successful or otherwise. O2's report findings suggest that performance appraisal systems do not support or account for flexible and remote working with over a quarter of employees feeling that their employers don't understand the benefits of flexible working both for the organisation and for the worker themselves aiming to achieve an appropriate work/life balance.

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The CIPD (2011) describe performance management, when 'fully realised' as a 'holistic process bringing together many elements that make up the successful practice of people management' using Armstrong & Baron's definition of it 'as a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance'. As Carroll & Schneier (1982, cited by Gist 1987) write 'organisational objectives of performance appraisal systems include performance improvement, employee development and motivation through goal-setting'. There should also be feedback systems to ensure 2-way communications, by e-communication, or verbally and also in writing for the formal performance management process.

Much research has concluded that self efficacy beliefs have a powerful influence on the ability to complete tasks and in decision making (Wood & Bandura 1989, cited by Bandura 1992) and that challenging goals raise the level of motivational and performance attainment (Locke & Latham 1990). However, it appears, according to many authors, that the adoption of a goal, or decision to accept or take on a work project 'without knowing how one is doing in the absence of a goal has no lasting motivational impact (Bandura & Cervone 1983, Becker 1978, Strang, Lawrence & Fowler, 1978) all cited by Bandura (1992) in his chapter in Ralf Schwarzer's edited work 'Self Efficacy Thought in Action' (1992). Moreover, Bandura (1992) further

contributes with, 'but the combined influence of goals with performance feedback heightens motivation substantially' – *highlighting the importance of both motivation, and possibly just as important, performance feedback*. Also, as Ware (2009) reports, it's time for managers to catch up with their workforce and be managing remote employees outputs, not their activities. What remote employees actually produce, not how long they spend in or at their place of work or in activity. It is not the purpose of this study to explain or discuss motivational theories in length but both goal-setting theory (as pioneered by Locke 1981) and expectancy theory (as supported by Vroom 1964) are considered influential in motivational behaviour. If this study were investigating the effects of perceived high self-efficacy on performance of respondents or study participants then expectancy theory would be relevant; however, as the study is focusing on preferences of styles and types of performance management – as will be discussed in more detail shortly – then goal setting theory is very relevant. Importantly, it is often referred to as management by objectives, which is considered by many as a valid performance management tool e.g. in setting SMART goals – well-known components in this chain are: specific/measurable/attainable/relevant and time-bound and one of the most pertinent principles of these is feedback which can inform and affect these components and further, an important component of feedback is communication.

Therefore, this report's wish to examine remote workers (possibly the worker of the future) with perceived high self-efficacy (possibly the remote worker of choice with their persistence in tasks, their mastery levels, their possible ability to work more autonomously) but whom still require appropriate goals communicated in an appropriate way, may be an important starting point in understanding what may become an even more influential, major and unavoidable way of working in the future – for both organisations and for workers. In agreement with Staples *et al* (1999), 'given its successful application in many domains where individuals have considerable autonomy, self-efficacy theory appears to be particularly well suited to the virtual organisation context'. Accordingly, the objectives of this study came from the need to establish firstly a connection with workers who work remotely (frequently, infrequently, regularly or ad-hoc), a connection with remote workers with high perceived self-efficacy and then to drill down to establish what their thoughts and views are on what might be effective or appropriate appraisal and performance

to facilitate and achieve their business objectives, organisations have been exploring varying degrees of virtuality or remote working (now even more rapidly enabled by technology) and organizations and individual managers have to decide when, where and for whom such virtuality is appropriate not least to ensure that rewards are maximized for both staff and for the organization (Helms & Raiszadeh 2002). Do organisations that embrace the 'multi-site, multi-organisational and dynamic' (Cascio, 2000) approach have all members 'joined in an alliance to exploit complementary skills in pursuing common strategic objectives' or are there major challenges arising from the physical separation of locations. This instigates many challenges; as Helms & Raiszadeh also suggest, successful virtual offices are about more than just technology – they require radical new approaches to evaluating, educating, organising and informing workers – with a major challenge being designing the organization structure and processes to achieve agreed goals. These new approaches might require a different kind of worker too.

For remote workers and especially organizations that hybrid remote and office-based working, a remote worker may feel – and may behave differently through choice or from necessity than less marginal members of the team or organisation (Burke *et al* 1999). Hardill (2002) suggests a need to recognize the proliferation and effect of both spatial mobility and temporal flexibility; 'especially by managers and professionals' with connections, links and blurring now established between work, home and a 'variety of locations', *with the corresponding need to understand and manage this 'new economy'*, (Hardill & Green 2003). Perhaps previously, autonomy and status were associated with remote working, (Jacobs 2004) but it has seemingly become more commonplace amongst all levels of staff from manual through key knowledge workers to senior management. An increase in flexible working, often remote, working, *raises the question in some, but probably, and importantly, not all, organisations of how to manage people you can't see.* (K) Jacobs (2004) suggests there are challenges associated with this working around loss of social interaction, possible loss of sense of belonging and, also importantly for the worker, and importantly for the manager (or supervisor) and the organisation, possible loss of management control. Cascio (2000), defines this as 'the first managerial challenge of the virtual workplace' or indeed any workplace with virtual or remote workers. Indeed, as *'remote employees enjoy considerable work autonomy'* (Staples *et al*,

1999), a key objective for organizations – and for this research – who wish to partially or wholly implement or establish remote working would appear to be how to ‘permit greater employment flexibility without sacrificing managerial control’. Some managers are ready for this; according to Peter Thompson, author of ‘Future Work’ (cited in Evening Standard, March 2012), 66% of managers agree that there is a revolution in working practices coming in the next decade’, recognising that ‘more of us want control over our lives’ and that we have to address the fact that ‘we still have management practices left over from a Victorian era and that has to change’. The Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei, cited in the Evening Standard 2012) has produced statistics reflecting the emerging change in demographics with 7 out of 10 managers believing the 9-5 work day is disappearing in favour of more flexible ways of working with 36% of the population likely to be over 50 within 10 years and Denise Keating, CEO of enei suggests that ‘getting rid of the same-old approach to work means changing who we have in the workforce’.

In an organization, workers who participate remotely will have communication needs that differ from those who are totally office based suggests Steve Doswell (2009) Director at Institute of Internal Communication. Bandura (1997) reports four factors that affect self-efficacy, these being ‘mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, physiological arousals’ and verbal persuasion – or affects on behaviours – through verbal exchanges. Doswell suggests that, whilst unintentional, if managers or supervisors do not recognize or plan for distinct communication requirements (verbal or otherwise) of non-workplace based employees this could adversely affect performance right across the business. In an ideal world, Jacobs (2004) suggests that this type of working is characterised by an increase in flexibility, autonomy and empowerment, with employees participating equally in collaborative relationships. However, this might suggest a homogeneity amongst flexible, remote workers across industries, functions and roles that may only exist in an ideal world – flexible or remote workers may chose to work remotely and may be successful; however, there may be others to which remote working is neither welcome nor suited. Those who do work successfully remotely, might agree with Bandura (1997) that as economic and competitive forces are ‘pruning the hierarchies of bureaucratic management,’ so ‘operational decisions and management functions are being assigned to the workers themselves in an effort to improve productivity and employee satisfaction’, which also

removes 'bureaucratic impediments to initiative, creativity and getting things done. Remote workers may be expected – and encouraged to work more independently in one organisation, whereas in another, they may be expected to work remotely (or may choose to do so) but be expected to behave in the same manner as if in a shared office space. Bandura further finds that having workers manage themselves changes the model of supervisory manager-ship supporting the theory behind the one of the objectives of this study – that *remote workers (particularly those with high perceived self-efficacy) may want a different performance management and appraisal relationship and reward system to those who do not work remotely; referring back to Helms & Raiszadeh (2002) supposition that rewards must be appropriate. Staples et al (1999) state that 'given its successful application in many domains where individuals have considerable autonomy, self-efficacy theory appears to be well suited to the virtual (or remote) organization context' – and our study examines a selection of remote workers' responses to questions regarding supervisory relationships which are at the heart of a performance management system as the supervisor – or line manager – is generally expected to conduct the appraisal on behalf of the organisation, whatever its generic policy.*

2.2 Self-Efficacy

The self-efficacy construct, derived from Bandura's social cognitive theory, (Gist & Mitchell 1992) is described by Bandura himself in 1978 and cited by Staples *et al* (1999) as 'the judgement an individual makes about his or her ability to execute a particular behaviour'; and in his 1982 paper, Bandura supports the 'the predictive value of self-efficacy judgements' as having 'now been established under a variety of assessment arrangements'. Gist & Mitchell (1992) – referring to Wood & Bandura 1989 – define self-efficacy as: 'one's beliefs and capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands' and Bandura (1995) explains that self-efficacy "refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations". The theory originated as a psychological theory concerning expectations of personal efficacy levels and level of effort and how long the behaviour will be sustained in the face of 'obstacles or aversive experiences

(Bandura 1977). Bandura, in his 1977 model proposed that expectations of personal efficacy are 'derived from four principal sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological states – a broad range of sources. The objectives of this study take us toward the communication of *verbal persuasion – found within the performance management and appraisal feedback communications from a supervisor to a remote worker with perceived high self-efficacy*. Described by Snyder & Lopez (2007) as 'a judgment about one's ability to execute a particular behaviour pattern, or perhaps *more simply self efficacy might be described as what an individual believes he or she can accomplish using his or her skills under certain circumstances*'; the '*certain circumstance*' for this study is a remote working situation. The judgement referred to is a perception concept and perceived self-efficacy may help account for a wide range of diverse phenomena in coping (Bandura 1982b) and includes career pursuits – relevant for this study. It should be noted that the theory originated from a psychological application and concepts such as stress reactions. As Bandura (1982b) states, however, there has been a 'convergence of theory and research' and while 'although the research (as at 1982) is conducted from a number of different perspectives and under a variety of names, the basic phenomenon being addressed centres on people's sense of personal efficacy to produce and regulate events in their lives'. The authors referenced in this study opine that where people's beliefs (or perceptions) in their ability to exercise control over their lives and that where people believe their ability and actions will produce the deserved outcomes, they will be more motivated to act to produce those desired outcomes; conversely, if people do not believe their actions will produce the desired effects, they will be less likely to begin to maintain efforts towards desired outcomes. Bandura (1982b) also states, relevant to this study, that 'efficacy in dealing with one's environment is not a fixed act' and involves a 'generative capability', which in itself is 'only as good as its execution'. He further posits – again relevant to this study's examination of preferred performance management and appraisal style of respondents with high self-efficacy – that '*operative competence requires orchestration and continuous improvements...to manage ever-changing circumstances*'. *Ever changing circumstances that might refer to the possibility that remote working may be non-static; the situation or environment may change infrequently or regularly.*

In assigning operational decisions and management functions, managers need to ensure that employees are happy to and are able to work remotely; that if they are going to be required to make and facilitate decisions that they are happy to and capable of doing so also. The increase in 'global interdependence', (Bandura 1995) and subsequent increase in remote working – both as a requirement by organisations and by workers themselves – 'place heavy pressure on people's capabilities' (Bandura 1995). Gist & Mitchell (1992, citing Bandura 1977, 1986) describe self-efficacy as a theory positing a triadic reciprocal causation model in which behaviour, cognitions, and the environment all influence each other in a dynamic fashion'. Jerusalem & Mittag (1995) in 'Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies' edited by Albert Bandura (1995), suggest that those who have a 'high sense of perceived efficacy trust their own capabilities to master different types of environmental demands', seeing demands or problems not as obstacles but controllable challenges. Relevant for our research, Jerusalem & Mittag (1995) purport that people with high-perceived efficacy can encounter 'stressful demands with confidence, feel motivated by physiological arousal and judge positive events as caused by effort and negative events as due primarily to external circumstances'. Remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy may have more 'external circumstances' to contend with than those cocooned in a head office. It is relevant to this study to examine if perceived high self-efficacy might be more effective workers *per se* and might be the most appropriate worker to be placed in a remote environment by the organisation – and it is still usually the line manager or supervisor's role to manage that worker, to appraise and to performance manage that worker in the organisation and in the most appropriate fashion to ensure they are engaged and productive.

Bandura (1997) states that 'people guide their lives by their perceived belief of personal efficacy'. Indeed, remote workers may chose to work remotely, that is, their perceptions of their own high self-efficacy may engender a wish to work remotely and – even if requested to by their organisation, rather than through application for a remote role or by request for home/office working balance – it is possible that they may embrace it more enthusiastically than colleagues with lower perceptions of self-efficacy. Also relevant to remote working, Bandura further reports that 'changes in occupational activities are occurring rapidly nowadays, requiring a higher sense of personal efficacy and versatility' and that perceived self efficacy will govern one's

capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action. He further purports that this perceived self-efficacy can have an effect on efforts, courses of action, environmental, career choices and can be self hindering if perceived as low and self aiding if perceived as high.

Schwarzer in his book '*Self-Efficacy: Thought Control of Action*' (1992) describes how 'human functioning is facilitated by a personal sense of control' with a person 'who believes in being able to cause an event can conduct a more active and self-determined life course' with a 'can-do cognition'. Referring back to Staples *et al* (1999) on the probable importance and suitability of the acceptance and encouragement of autonomy there is the probability that managers might have to allow a level of autonomy for remote workers and the question is raised as to how to incorporate this without 'sacrificing managerial control'.

Schwarzer (1992) purports that self-efficacy beliefs can enhance or undermine performance where 'personalised goal-setting is influenced by self appraisal of capabilities'. Pajares (1996) stated that beliefs about capabilities can be greater predictors of behaviour and capabilities than by what their actual capabilities might be. Relevant to this research, these self-efficacy perceptions can help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills that they have. Pajares (1996) further surmised that beliefs about what people create, develop and hold to be true about themselves are virtual forces in their success or failure. According to Gecas (2004) people behave in the way that executes their initial beliefs; thus, self-efficacy functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Van der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett (2002) support the view that individuals with perceived high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in activities that they have perceived high self-efficacy for and this principle will also specify how long they will spend on tasks or activities. Setting *the right tasks, goals and objectives would appear to be relevant to remote workers*. Hackett (1995) stated that 'career interests are not likely to develop in areas where perceived efficacy is weak' – *suggesting that workers with perceived high self-efficacy should be set challenging tasks and activities either by themselves or by their line manager or supervisor*. Research by Betz & Hackett (1981, cited by Hackett 1985) found that occupational self-efficacy was predictive of the range of possible occupational options of students tested in their research which relates to this study's examination

of whether remote workers, with perceived high self-efficacy, might prefer a specific style of performance management – if students might already have nurtured and self-discovered a self-efficacy level they may choose an occupation that allows that to be expressed which is relevant to human resource management across selection across graduate schemes and succession planning.

Applebaum & Hare (1996) suggest that there is potential to influence task performance by increasing self-efficacy beliefs and that self-efficacy can be manipulated; at the same time, these authors suggest that ‘the field of human resources management has (apparently) been slow to address and technically incorporate the applied aspects of social cognition theory and self-efficacy, despite the impressive empirical support it has received’. Indeed, Gist (1987 cited by Applebaum & Hare 1996) also writes that ‘there is little evidence that so much attention has been paid to organisational applications’. *For remote workers with high-perceived self-efficacy, the notion or perception that their supervisor might be affecting their self-efficacy levels with possibly unwelcome affects on performance might be unwelcome.*

Schwarzer (1992) further defines self efficacy as increasing confidence in one’s competencies, enhancing motivation and allowing them to chose more challenging tasks, setting higher goals and anticipating positive scenarios. Locke *et al*’s 1981 studies found that specific goals affected performance with feedback being used to aid process; however they also stated that it would be useful to examine the effects of goal setting if self-set and that ‘self-esteem may be the most promising individual difference variable’. This supports Busch *et al* (2011) who argue that some of the key competencies for successful remote working found across literature research include self-motivation, self-discipline, effective communication skills and self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) states that ‘Self-efficacy beliefs regulate human functioning through four major processes’ including ‘cognitive, motivational, affective and selective processes’. Perception levels of self-efficacy may be key to focusing on and selecting types of reward. Applebaum & Hare (1996) suggest that self-efficacy judgments by individuals may be ‘influenced greatly by information from the environment’ and other self-efficacy determinants including ‘level of ability, the person’s general perceived efficaciousness’ and beliefs regarding ‘internal versus

external locus of control' – considered by Applebaum & Hare (1996) as a personality attribute 'thought to influence the development of self-efficacy'. *Internal locus of control* personalities will feel they are in control of their surroundings or environment whereas those individuals who have *external locus of control* feel controlled by their surroundings or environment – which, referring back to remote workers perceptions of levels of self-efficacy – will affect the type of reward they prefer. As Applebaum & Hare (1996) further suppose, externally oriented individuals who feel controlled by their environment will, or may, prefer intrinsic rewards and those personalities who are internally controlled will prefer intrinsic rewards including 'feeling of accomplishment or achievement'. They further, and importantly for this study, state: *'the implication is fairly clear; managers who understand their subordinates' loci of control can better tailor their reward systems to reflect individual needs'. Therefore, those individuals with high-perceived self-efficacy might be more likely to feel in control of their environment – or job or project or work place – and might be more likely to want to have more control with more self-appraisal than a worker who seeks security or reward from their line manager.*

Tying in with motivational process theories in self-efficacy, we have seen how self efficacy might lead to expectation of favourable outcomes; how before embarking on a project, a person's thought processes would utilise pre-existing knowledge to construct and predict opinions. (Schwarzer 1992). Much research has concluded that self efficacy beliefs have a powerful influence on the ability to complete tasks and in decision making (Wood & Bandura 1989, Schwarzer 1992) and that challenging goals raise the level of motivational and performance attainment (Locke & Latham 1990). However, and importantly for management object setting and for human resource management; no matter how self-efficacious, an employee, who is employed by or contracted to provide services to an organization must align their tasks and their and their department or team's objectives with the objectives of the management and organization. Referring back to motivational processes, tasks, goals and objectives must be assigned, understood and realized. However, it appears, according to many authors, that the adoption of a goal, or decision to accept or take on a work project 'without knowing how one is doing in the absence of a goal has no lasting motivational impact (Bandura & Cervone, 1983, Becker 1978, Strang, Lawrence & Fowler, 1978, cited by Bandura, 1992). Bandura (1992) further

contributes with, *'but the combined influence of goals with performance feedback heightens motivation substantially' – highlighting the importance of performance feedback – which for this paper refers to preferred style of management and appraisal for remote workers, generally from their manager or supervisor. This might appear to be very relevant when decisions are made on management preferences for remote-workers.*

With cognitive processes the 'stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goals, people set for themselves and the firmer their commitment to them', (Bandura 1992); this is relevant to this research, where supervision and guidance from a supervisor may help develop and maintain the strong sense of self-efficacy required 'to remain task oriented in the face of pressing situational demands' which may occur when working remotely (Bandura 1992). The extent to which to an employee can influence or control their environment is considered an important belief system by Bandura (1992); in a simulation exercise it was found that participants who could not exercise control over their environment lost 'faith in their decision making capabilities even when performance standards were within easy reach' and 'those who operated under a cognitive set that organizations are controllable, displayed a strong sense of managerial efficiency'. If this concept is to be applied to remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy – it might be presumed that autonomy, lower-key supervision might be significantly central to the performance management system so as to not disaffect the employee as they might wish to have a high level of autonomy, yet wish for intrinsic reward and feedback, in moderation, from their supervisor (or manager, or line manager – semantics dictated by the organisation). It would be advantageous for organisations to factor in that though high perceptions of self-efficacy might be advantageous as a key competency; it might by the lack of homogeneity and varied nature of their work, their environments, roles and personalities might make it an advantageous commodity for all workers. Also, as Applebaum & Hare (1996) suggest, new information or new experiences can influence self efficacy judgements – which suggests it needs to be managed carefully by the organisation and most importantly, by the supervisor.

Bandura 1977 wrote that the theory of perceived self-efficacy and how it influences performance is 'not meant to imply that expectation is the sole determinant of

behaviour' and that 'expectation alone will not produce desired performance' – therefore, capabilities, skills, incentives are also implicit in successful outcomes. However, Bandura in the same paper did posit that 'given appropriate skills, and adequate incentives, efficacy expectations are a major determinant of people's choice of activities'. It might seem reasonable to suppose, based on this theory, that a supervisor of a remote worker with high perceived self-efficacy would be most supportive of the worker by ensuring the right skills and most appropriate incentives are in place to allow that worker to function effectively remotely and therefore, more autonomously. This would presume that the manager or supervisor has the necessary skills to understand that this might be the most effective way of managing this type of worker.

Performance management and the opportunity for two-way communication between the worker and the supervisor would appear to be essential. There appears to be a conundrum however; workers with perceived high levels of self-efficacy would appear to prefer some autonomy, retaining influence, control and decision making, but would also appear to require goal and task setting input with performance feedback to maintain motivation.

2.3 Performance Management and Appraisal

Gist & Mitchell (1992) state that although findings from research 'demonstrate the importance of self-efficacy for predicting an improving work performance, much remains clear about the theory'. This is probably true. It has been applied in psychological settings and in work environments, yet when I conducted a brief survey amongst current and former colleagues, in May 2012, there was little understanding of the terminology of 'self-efficacy' but a little more about the concept when described in terms of self-confidence, and application applied by some individuals and not others. Applebaum & Hare (1996, citing Gist & Mitchell 1992) suggest that "the significance of self-efficacy for motivation and performance, in work settings has been well demonstrated", (with motivation being a key performance management factors in most organisations); however, it is entirely possible that supervisors/line managers may not have been introduced to the terminology of self-efficacy nor it's

significance in motivation or performance management or appraisal methods of office-based or remote employees. It might also be worth considering, prior to introducing the concept, a more efficacious explanation or one more couched within existing management terminology.

There is a vast amount of literature on performance management and appraisal. Applebaum & Hare (1996) suggest that 'performance appraisal, as a formal process, is the focus of performance improvement, employee development and motivation through goal setting'. Originally a term for a rather basic process, performance appraisal 'has become a general heading for a variety of activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute awards (Fletcher 2001) and is a process that can bring together different approaches to management of performance (Taylor 2008). The CIPD (2012) describe performance management, when 'fully realised' as a 'holistic process bringing together many elements that make up the successful practice of people management' using Armstrong & Baron's 2004 definition of it 'as a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance'. *Relevant to this study, 'it establishes shared understanding about what is to be achieved' – they also stress the importance of culture, style and communication of the organisation.* The CIPD describe performance appraisal (2012) of one of the 'main tools of performance management' where 'an individual's manager assesses performance, potential and development' and they also impart that some organisations only carry out this process as a top-down process with some line managers seeing it 'as irrelevant form-filing designed to keep the personnel department happy'. Randell (1994) describes performance appraisal as 'the process whereby current performance in a job is observed and discussed for the purpose of adding value to that level of performance' and Fowler (1999) subdivides performance appraisal into areas covering motivation, succession planning, improvement of performance and promoting management/subordinate dialogue. Fletcher (2001), purports that performance appraisal (when part of a wider performance management strategy) plays an important but varying role in managing organization and employee and for aligning these two in one system. Taylor (2008) citing evidence by authors, including Latham and Latham (2000), Redman (2001), Bach (2005) and Torrington *et al* (2008), for

'individual performance appraisal to be linked quite specifically to defined organizational objectives'; therefore, appraisal will not be an isolated process but one which should have 'specific linkage to business goals (to) help focus employee efforts on organizational priorities whilst also ensuring that performance appraisal process is owned by line managers not just HR specialists' (Taylor 2008). As performance appraisal has developed, so has the terminology to describe it; which now includes personal development review, performance review & development (Taylor 2008) and also performance contract & development review and performance management system – all emphasizing development not in addition to the traditionally reflective appraisal of past performance.

Will some staff 'be more effective, productive and engaged if working remotely and will their belief systems act as antecedents to effective remote working (Bandura 1992) and if so, will their supervisors understand that the remote workers, who may be predisposed to work more efficiently more autonomously, may well require a different performance management and appraisal system.

Evidence has suggested that 'organisations should make a choice about whether their appraisal system is to be principally used for evaluation or developmental purposes' (Taylor 2008). There has been an identifiable split in organization and practitioner view in terms of measurement of performance output and assessments reviewing past performance, with a view to improving any future performance. Taylor (2008) cites authors such as Beer and Ruh (1976) who purport that as long as there is a clear distinction between the different objectives then appraisal for review and for objective setting can be used in tandem. The definition of performance review and development contract might be a clear label for this process. However, Taylor (2008) reflects that 'academic research into performance appraisal has rarely focused on its effectiveness in general terms' but, that it tends to analyse what type of approaches are being used and then, separately, what problems are evident with schemes. For this report it is particularly pertinent, as Taylor (2008) writes, that it is 'difficult to come to any firm and defensible conclusion about their overall effectiveness in different situations'. In addition Taylor (2008) writes there are 'criticisms of the way that managers carry them (appraisals) out in practice. Williams (2002), writes that ignorance of managers or situations can be a problem where the appraising manager

may be insufficiently familiar with what the employee concerned does or how they perform to be able to effectively implement an appraisal. This may lead to significant problems and challenges – as Bandura (1997) states, ‘supervisors have an important impact on the morale and productivity of an organization. Yet they are often selected for their technical competencies and job-related knowledge’ and ‘not their adaptable interpersonal supervisory skills to guide and motivate those they supervise’. Bandura (1997) suggests mastery modelling as a way to teach supervisors ‘the interpretive skills they need to work effectively through others’. Fletcher (2001) surmises that performance appraisal has been enabled to move forward, allowing both appraisal content (the ‘what’) and appraisal process (the ‘how’) – both of these are relevant to the remote working context.

A barrier to employer embracement of remote working could be the fear of the unknown for both organization and manager – a most frequent and generic question in research, press, management journals has involved the phrase: how can you manage your employees if you can’t see them? Should employers employ a panoptic style of management employing state of the art ‘spy-style’ management (keystroke measurements, webcams, constant Skyping)? Stuart Chapman, Compensation and Benefits Manager at Finning (Pollitt 2006) highlighted the need for managers to ‘develop an understanding of the impact of managers of working with remote teams and identify appropriate tools and techniques that will help them to be more effective’. As Pollitt (2006) suggests, following on from Chapman’s programme for Remote Teams at Finning (UK); a way to develop remote team managers is by sharing experience and identifying best practice and exploring the ‘performance management issues associated with managing remote teams and *identifying appropriate process that will ensure effective performance*’. Latham and Latham (2000) found that appraisals previously could have occurred in isolation to any strategic plans without consideration of how appraisals, as part of performance management, could help implement any strategic plans. If an organization is beginning to or has already implemented remote (or flexible) working as part of its strategic plan then it might be good practice for appraisals, as part of performance management systems, to integrate and reflect this.

Subscribers to the Total Quality Management approach argue, as reported by Taylor

(2008), that 'supervision, particularly when it involves the inspection of subordinates' work as a 'means of achieving quality' will, with performance appraisal, reinforce 'the significance of the supervisor-subordinate relationship' creating 'fear' and encouraging 'the development of adversarial relationships' which 'robs people of their right to pride of workmanship' and that 'appraisal reduces motivation' and 'wastes organizational resources'. Fletcher (2004, cited by Taylor 2008) also argues that traditional approaches to appraisal are inappropriate for modern organizations that have less traditional flatter hierarchies, may be knowledge-based and may need to maximize flexibility in order to compete effectively' (Taylor 2008). Supporting this, Jacobs (2004), notes that remote working can generate unique communication issues with supervision, which might be disadvantageous for remote workers. Hardill (2002), suggests a need to 'recognize the proliferation and effect of both spatial mobility and temporal flexibility'; 'especially by managers and professionals' with connections, links and blurring now occurring between work, home and a 'variety of locations' thus establishing a corresponding need to understand and manage this 'new economy' (Hardill & Green 2003).

Bandura (1997) finds that having workers manage themselves, changes the model of supervisory manager-ship, and therefore, initiates changes in how performances of remote workers are managed and appraised. Cascio (2000) (2000) posits that virtual and remote workplaces and workers will become more commonplace in the future with 'sound business reasons for establishing' but 'their advantages are offset' with cultural clashes and also loss of trust – and also changes in communication systems.

Taylor (2008) suggest that if more professional, knowledge (and remote) workers are employed the 'the less appropriate traditional forms of top-down appraisals are'. They need to be less 'managerialistic interventions (Redman, 2001, cited by Taylor, 2008) with a downgrading of 'appraisal activity' (Murphy & Cleveland 1995). However, Taylor (2008) also suggests that although appraisal is 'far from a perfect management technique', it could still be 'an effective tool of management control' and that formally setting objectives will increase the chances of organizational and personal business objectives being met. Taylor further states that this is not the only means to manage and motivate performance and should be integrated with other systems. Helms & Raiszadeh (2002) suggest that managers must develop new

supervision techniques specific to managing and supervising remote workers – trust being a key element in this relationship. This moves organisations and working patterns ever further away from the traditional managerial system of panoptic close control of employees. Managers must adapt, requiring a ‘shift from command and control to more empowering forms of management’ (People Management 2005); moving away from constantly visible face-to-face style of management where socialisation plays an important part in forming a relationship between supervisor/manager and employee/remote worker. Pati & Kumar (2010) purport that ‘participative decision making with adequate supervisor support is a must to initiate and enhance engagement.

Objectives of this study include examining how highly self efficacious remote workers might wish to be managed; In the MIT Sloan Management Review (Mulki *et al*, 2009) the authors suggest that successful managers should endeavour to discuss ‘good practice’ with remote workers which ‘means formulating an communicating practices that aim to facilitate...prioritize tasks and provide frequent feedback’. This might suggest that supportive feedback and a mutually agreeable setting and monitoring of objective might enable the remote worker to fulfil their objectives an obligations to their organisation – which may only be possible with an organizational culture which understands the remote worker/supervisor requirements. As remote workers may need to be able to address and solve problems, make autonomous decisions and act independently, setting objectives and tasks in advance, with planning and contingency plans could well be important to allowing autonomy and maintenance of self-efficacy. The MIT approach to try to discuss good practice’ suggests a way to establish trust and mutual understanding. Self-efficacy levels, if noted by and understood by the organization, might be incorporated into performance management processes and this is relevant to our study.

Staples *et al* (1999), from the results of their study, suggest that ‘for remote workers to be effective, they need managers who are good communicators’ with ‘good listening skills’ with the ability to manage their employees’ time effectively. Staples *et al* further refer to the use of information technology by both supervisor and employee as being key to an effective relationship but also coaching and provision of support for employee needs.

CIPD Advisor, Rebecca Clark (People Management 2005) suggests that 'the focus should be on monitoring and measuring by outputs and results' and based on quality not quantity. A report by Murphy & Cleveland (1995) appears to support this. They considered the consequences of the increase in flexible working practices – including more remote working, flexible hours, teleworking, home working or 'general flexibility in terms of precisely when and where individuals work'. Their report surmised that 'trends designed to increase operational flexibility are greatly reducing the amount of day-to-day contact between employees and their line managers'. Combined with the level of autonomy required of remote workers 'the result is much less opportunity for supervisors to observe their subordinates actually performing their jobs' and therefore, 'in such situations, it is natural for appraisers to focus more on results in compiling their evaluations than on employee behaviour'. Selden & Sowa (2011) suggest managing individual performance as part of overall organization performance where 'managers primarily control performance by influencing inputs and by feedback provided by outputs' – objectives, motivators, goals, projects assessments. They further suggest that the performance management process highlight an 'organisation's goals, priorities and expectations' but that it is 'subject to interpretation by individual employees with employees reacting to signals in varying ways' and there is a real need, therefore, to factor 'employee perceptions into the performance appraisal and management process' – suggesting a 2-way process might be the most effective mechanism. Rebecca Clark, CIPD Advisor, in People Management (2005) suggests that effective management practices and also clear communications channels are crucial along with the requirement of trust for remote appraising.

Selden & Sowa (2011) further posit that managers will need to 'shift from a focus on time to a focus on results' and that organisations will need to recognise that these new workplaces will 'instead of needing fewer managers, require better supervisory skills amongst existing managers' and that if this is done correctly, this will led to 'stunning improvements in productivity, profits and customer service'. Relevant to this research is the probable need to establish a model of performance management

and appraisal – that adapts to objectives of all parties and evaluates in a manner that is beneficial to western organisations and remote workers, with perceived high self-efficacy. This paper will limit the appraisal definitions or discussions to Western or Anglo-Saxon business cultural models where cultural norms allow for active and expected employee participation in appraisal systems. (Taylor 2008).

Mulki *et al* (2009), further suggest that managers or supervisors co-ordinate and manage all communications and tasks with all employees (managers, supervisors and employees) alike ‘sharing social experience, interpersonal co-ordination, modelling of work behaviours and giving and seeking advice’. They further suggest that the performance management process highlight an ‘organisation’s goals, priorities and expectations’ but that it is ‘subject to interpretation by individual employees with employees reacting to signals in varying ways’ and there is a real need, therefore, to factor ‘employee perceptions into the performance appraisal and management process’. There are suggestions that performance approaches should involve the participation of the employee or evaluatee and *rather than dictate or manage time in the traditional fashion*, ‘supervisors and managers must become facilitators to provide guidance, resources and support to enable effective work practices (Stewart & Manz 1995). Bandura’s further input (1987) is a key premise in this paper – ‘*supervisors have an important impact on the morale and productivity of an organisation*’.

Gist (1987, supports the importance of feedback, citing Bandura & Cervone 1983), in formulating efficacy perceptions that interact with goal setting to enhance performance motivation. Ivancevich and McMahon (1982, cited by Gist 1987) carried out an experiment on a group of engineers who generated their own structured continual feedback, reporting their progress to their supervisor once a quarter. They performed better than another group of engineers who were given feedback by their supervisor once a quarter with no self-monitoring. Staples *et al*’s study (1999) found that ‘the more an employee’s manager utilizes effective remote management and working practices, the higher the employee’s remote work self-efficacy. Therefore, the key to maintaining self-efficacy might also be the key to managing it and utilizing it effectively. *For this study, it might be important to remember – and to facilitate questions around – the premise that the perceptions of people whom ‘regard*

themselves as highly efficacious attribute their failures to insufficient effort' (Bandura 1994) so the exercise of control given, and allowed, to the participants could appear to be key to understanding the preferred systems of workers with perceived high-self efficacy; especially true for remote workers with the ever present shadow of panopticism. Based on an 18th century French prison design – the panopticon – whose shape and central observation tower ensured prisoners might always be watched – and also ensuring they were aware of this – Foucault's panoptic-based theory (1975, translated 1977) is a 'metaphor for societal surveillance' (Bain & Taylor 2000) who further surmise that this is relevant 'in relation to the monitoring and surveillance of workers' activities'. With the rise of the call centre, 'the panopticon increasingly was perceived to be electronic in its workplace application and a control devise habitually utilised by management as an essential component of just-in-time/total quality management production systems' (Bain & Taylor 2000). In summary, for the modern workplace, a type of surveillance or control by managers utilising methods such as electronic / information technology for example log in / log out time for call centre workers, or keystrokes utilised on the computer; modern day spying – trust in remote workers or permanent visibility (Foucault 1975).

Applebaum & Hare (1996) suggest that feedback is an 'important determinant of self-efficacy judgments provided through the performance appraisal process (and) must be considered carefully'. This suggests that the feedback can effect the self-efficacy levels, which might decrease the performance outcomes of the remote worker, but more pertinent to our study, Gist & Mitchell (1992) propose that to be maximally effective, the content and sign of the feedback must be appropriate for the individual (based on self-efficacy level and task). Any formal performance management processes might be best employed alongside on-going appraisals and include feedback (Selden & Sowa 2011).

Our survey and questions will ask respondents if they work remotely and if they perceive themselves as highly self-efficacious, it will further ask for self perceptive responses around the value – and acceptance – of supervisory input, appraisal and feedback and how important, relevant and beneficial do they perceive feed back might be as part of performance appraisal system might be to them and what suggestions might they have around constructive/helpful feedback, do they perceive

any conflict between requirements of autonomy and alignment with organisational objectives.

Modelling influences do more than simply provide a social standard against which to judge one's own capabilities' Bandura (1995) posits that people seek out those who possess competencies to which they aspire. Also Bandura (1995) suggests that 'through their behaviour and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands' – acquisition of better means raises perceived self-efficacy' (also Bandura 1995).

'Successful efficacy builders do more than convey positive appraisals. In addition to raising people's beliefs in their capabilities, they structure situations for them in ways that bring success'. (Bandura 1995). From the research we will examine various performance management areas including: control, panopticism, autonomy, feedback and supervisory relationships, communication, motivation, goal/objective setting and culture.

3. Methodology

3.1 Establishing the focus of the study

Having worked flexibly and from home – remotely – regularly in recent years and observing the seemingly rapid increase in the attraction of and possible individual and organisational benefits of remote working (many variations) this became of greater professional interest after the launch of the ‘Anywhere Working’ initiative highlighting the rapid increase in the attraction of and possible individual and organisational benefits of remote working. Equally, the possible individual and organisational challenges of remote working were of interest leading to questions around; are there certain types of individual and worker who might be predisposed to working remotely and, if so, do their levels of perceived self-efficacy affect how they wish to be managed or how they perform and how might they be incorporated effectively for all parties into organisations embracing them and remote working as a new infrastructure and benefit? Whilst researching this topic, it became apparent that a mixed-method approach would be required; quantitative to collect data from a wider sample, followed up by a qualitatively interpretive approach as whilst some aspects of the study have been studied in great detail, for example, remote working or self-efficacy levels or performance management/appraisals – there was little theoretical or practical research, which incorporated questions or examinations combining all three areas.

3.2 Establishing the objectives of this study

The objectives came from the need to establish firstly a connection with workers who work remotely (frequently, infrequently, regularly or ad-hoc), a connection with remote workers with high perceived self-efficacy and then to drill down to establish what their thoughts and views are on what might effective or appropriate appraisal and performance management for them. As previously referred to, the importance of this to organisations might ultimately be attraction, retention and attrition of workers who can work effectively remotely – through volition or at their organisations’ request – and in a way that is appropriate for them, that engages, and does not disengage

them as it might be reasonable to suppose that an engaged worker might work more productively, might form a psychological contract with the organisation and may well remain with the organisation longer than if these criteria were not achieved.

To refer to the objectives of this study again:

- **To identify the level of perceived self-efficacy in samples of remote or flexible workers/employees across virtual and SME organisations.**
- **To examine and ask from the *workers'/employees' perspective* - what might the appropriate performance target and appraisal system be as part of the performance management process/system for those remote or flexible workers/employees with perceived high self-efficacy**

The follow up qualitative questions would be required to establish opinions on/attitudes to their performance management ideology – what might be the most appropriate performance management and appraisal system for them as individuals (as opposed to a homogenous group) which might be useful to build an understanding for organisations wishing to establish effective systems of this type for remote workers and for the future.

3.3 Participants / Sample

3.3.1 Snowball Sampling

Sampling is 'a deliberate choice of a number of people to represent a greater population' (Anderson 2004); snowball sampling may be 'defined as a technique for gathering research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is used to provide the names of other actors' (Atkinson & Flint 2001). Babbie (2009) describes snowball sampling as a 'nonprobability-sampling technique, which some consider to be a form of accidental sampling. This procedure is appropriate when members of a special population are difficult to locate'. Further definition is provided 'in snowball sampling, the researcher collects data on the few members of the target population he or she can locate, then asks those individuals to provide the

information needed to locate other members of that population whom they happen to know'.

Babbie (2009) also explains 'it used for exploratory purposes' and a variation of snowball sampling is used in this study to reach a wide cross-section of respondents from cross-industry / cross-role / cross-location to allow for as wide a sample of remote worker to be reached as possible, with relative ease, in a relatively short time scale. It is used for exploratory purposes – as per the objectives of the study – for reaching remote workers with possible perceived high self-efficacy and questioning and examining their views and perceptions on what they might perceived to be appropriate performance management systems for them. There are pre-assumptions as some of the respondents know each other and the research but it can be utilised to locate and identify respondents with shared characteristics – in this study remote working.

Participants in this study were drawn from previous colleagues (recent and not recent), friends and connections to these respondents. An appropriate questionnaire utilising the Survey Monkey tool was created and which was issued utilising social networking sites such as Facebook where this study had its own 'Remote Workers' Facebook page (owned, administered by the author), Twitter, Email, Linked-In. The actual number the survey reached is unknown although there is a possibility it could have reached over 1000 possible respondents, however it is more probable that it was not read by all those it reached; it is therefore, difficult to establish a response rate percentage which could vary from 6%+

The response had 70.3% of the respondents were UK based with 10.8% based across Europe, 10.8% based in the USA, 5.4% in Asia and 2.7% in Africa.

There were a total of 60 respondents, with 2 non-completed questionnaires, which were excluded from the survey. 49 respondents worked remotely (either always or sometimes) and these respondent's answers were examined and followed up with the remaining being excluded as they did not work remotely and for the purposes of this study their answers were not relevant.

3.4 Research Measurements and Procedure

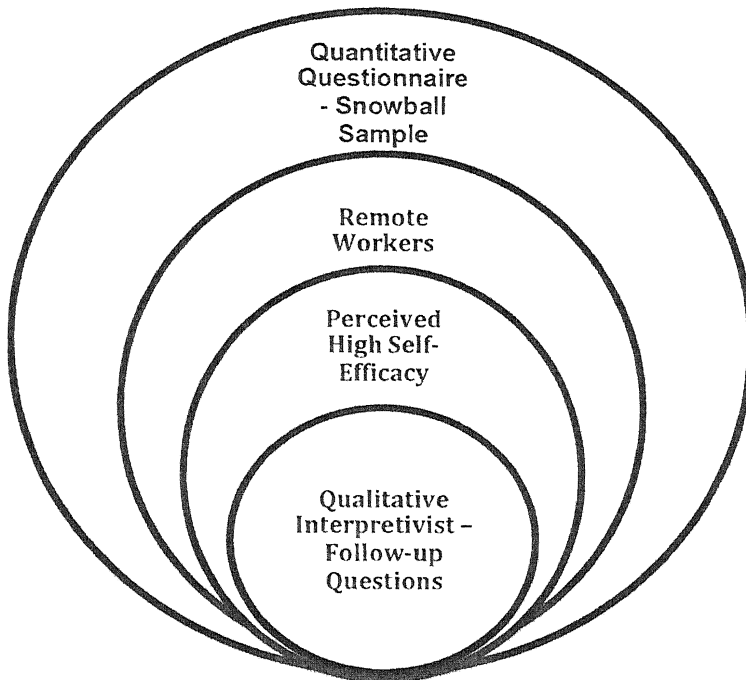


Figure 1

Figurative description of the focus for this study's sample

3.4.1 Mixed Method

A mixed-method was utilised with snowball sampling to gather research subjects and data/information.

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie in their 2004 paper 'Mixed Method Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come' purport that 'mixed methods research as the natural complement to traditional qualitative and quantitative research'. They explain – here in summary – and citing Nagel 1986, how quantitative purists only wish for objectivity with 'time and context-free generalisations' to reliably determine the 'real causes of social scientific outcomes'. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie further state in their 2004 paper that 'Qualitative purists (also called constructivists and interpretivists) reject what they call positivism' and contend that multiple-constructed realities abound and that time and context-free generalisations are neither desirable nor

possible'. Qualitative purists might write more descriptively and believe that research is always value bound, state Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) who cite Howe (1988) who stated that both parties 'advocate the incompatibility thesis which posits that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, including their associated methods, cannot and should not be mixed'. The authors of 'Mixed Method Research' suggest that the 'goal of mixed method research is not to replace either of these approaches but rather draw from the strengths and weaknesses of both in single research studies...with mixed method research' covering areas across both continuums and pulling up a metaphorical third chair. The authors further suggest that this combinational approach offers a way 'describe and develop techniques that are actually closer to what researchers actually use in practice'.

3.4.1.1 Quantitative

A quantitative questionnaire was used in the first instance to facilitate the collection of primary data and information from a geographically diverse and dispersed sample.

- The facilitative tool, 'Survey Monkey' was used as the basic infrastructure for the questionnaire: participation in remote working was established; perceptions of self-efficacy questions were incorporated; questions ascertaining responses regarding supervisory feedback and relationships, motivation. The full questionnaire can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- Survey Monkey enabled a global reach. A 'Page' was established on Facebook owned by the researcher and all contacts asked to join and participate in the questionnaire. This was replicated across other pages including postings to members pages (researcher a member) in Singapore and UK, LinkedIn, Twitter, emails to groups, private members club in London plus a snowball approach was further utilised with contacts forwarding the questionnaire and associated links to colleagues across their organisations.
- The first question was designed to establish remote working frequency if at all with 3 responses: Always, regularly, never.

- Self-Efficacy Questions – the next 10 questions in the questionnaire.
Bandura (1977) suggests that for an expectancy analysis to be at least adequate, a ‘detailed assessment of magnitude, generality and strength of efficacy expectations commensurate with the precision with which behavioural processes’ should be measured. As Schwarzer & Jerusalem have devised an appropriate measurement, the questionnaire questions for self-efficacy measurement were based on the psychometric Schwarzer & Jerusalem General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) for the assessment of Perceived Self-Efficacy, which facilitates goal-setting, persistence, and investment of effort (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995). The scale has been previously tested for validity and reliability with 40 studies and samples from 23 nations with 18000 results and in samples Cronbach’s Alpha’s ranged from .76 to .90. Permission is generically granted for use. (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995).
 - The self-efficacy scale questions are designed to be self-administered and to be mixed into other questions relevant to the study, as the self-efficacy scale questions are not specific to behaviour change. Scoring is on a 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Moderately Agree, Strongly Agree.

- ‘Other’ questions in the questionnaire.
To facilitate the ability to analyse the respondent’s views more than just quantitatively and without the need to follow up with every respondent, there were opportunities for some questions to have ‘Other’ answers where respondents were asked to explain, expand on and rationalise their responses if they wished to do so. These were invaluable and helped form the basis of the qualitative method section of the study. The ‘other questions were designed to examine and research perceptions regarding issues relating to remote working, supervisory relationships, performance management and appraisal issues including feedback, (frequency, importance and style of). Examples include: ‘I feel more motivated when I work remotely’ – stage 1 of the question is the multiple choice and stage 2

asks the respondent to please explain further (if they wish). Some of these were then chosen to follow up for further communication. Please see 3.4.2.

- A universal 'Master' excel spread sheet was created with all information from the questionnaire incorporated including all names, contacts and answers to both multiple choice questions and corresponding 'other' questions. Each respondent was assigned a number, for example, Respondent 1 becomes R1. The spread-sheet, along with the questionnaire is confidential.

3.4.1.2 Qualitative – interpretivist

- Follow-up interviews were conducted based on the answers given to questions in the questionnaire.
- Due to location of respondents, there were no opportunities to conduct face-to-face interviews; instead the follow-up interviews were conducted by emails and by phones conversation interviews with the aim of probing specific areas of respondents who work remotely (in some capacity – this being Always, Regularly, Never) and included questions concerning feedback frequency and magnitude, supervisory importance and preferred style of performance management amongst others.

3.5 Ethics

- An ethical approval application form has been completed, submitted and approved via the University of Bedfordshire, via my tutor, Caroline Bolam.
- To preserve confidentiality and anonymity, all respondents are referred to as **R1, R2, R3**, etc., as referred to in **3.4**.

- Quantitative research when referred to directly is referred to and abbreviated to **QN**. Fully completed questionnaires will not be included with this paper, as this would breach confidentiality. However, the full uncompleted questionnaire can be found in **Appendix X**
- Qualitative interpretivist research is referred to as **QL**. Thus, for example, if referring to a quotation from a transcript from a follow up communication with Respondent 7, this will be referred to as **QL R7**. As respondents must be referred to in this paper by abbreviations.
- Full transcripts will not be included with the paper, as this might breach confidentiality.

3.6 Replicability and the quantitative/qualitative debate

Further to 3.4.1 this study will utilise mixed methods; both quantitative and interpretivist qualitativism and the two methods will be combined to try to compliment each other. This study's methodology, therefore, is based around an interpretivist and 'methodological pluralism approach' – Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004 – who point out, citing Sechrest and Sidana (1995) that 'both methodologies "describe their data, construct explanatory arguments from their data, and speculate about why the outcomes they observed happened as they did"' and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, again in their 2004 paper, cite Biesta & Burbules (2003), who suggest that 'regardless of paradigmatic orientation, all research in social sciences represents an attempt to provide warranted assertions about human beings (or groups of human beings) and the environments in which they live and evolve'

The results of both quantitative and qualitative will be subjective – the questions are set by and interpreted by the researcher and begin inductively from the research and personal knowledge of the working environment and then examine on a more deductive basis. The procedure

would be replicable for further research – with this study’s quantitative questionnaire being applied in other circumstances. However, as this study is a mixed-method methodology and utilised qualitative interpretivist it is not fixed and could be subjective. Any replication will include the subjectivity of the next researcher. The sample will be different in the next instance and the results would most probably depend on the sample and the variables of percentage of remote workers response, the variables of self-efficacy of respondents and the variability of the researcher is noted as above.

4. Results, Analysis & Discussion

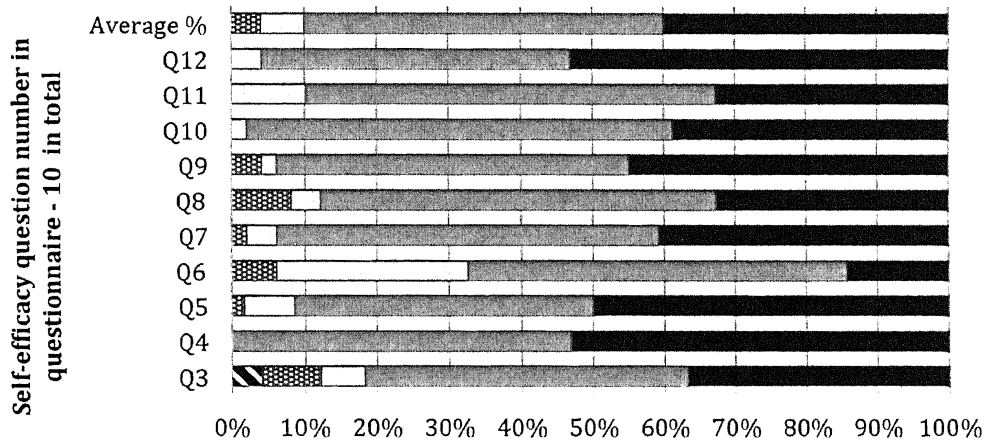
There were a total of 60 respondents to the questionnaire, with 2 not finishing the questionnaire. *Table 1* shows that of the 58 respondents who finished the questionnaire, 84.5% worked remotely either regularly or always, with 15.5% not working remotely. The questionnaire was specifically aimed at those who work remotely; however, it was made clear that anyone could participate if they wished to do so. *The questionnaire was not a tool to ascertain how many remote workers there are in the work place; but it is relevant that this study specifically only focuses on those respondents who work remotely – therefore all data, information, responses and results shown are from respondents to this questionnaire who are remote workers (either always or regularly).*

Answer Options	Response Percent / Remote	Response Count / Remote	Total Response Percent	Total Response Count
Yes - always	32.7%	16	27.6%	16
Yes - regularly	67.3%	33	56.9%	33
No - never	n/a	n/a	15.5%	9
Respondents who work remotely		49	84.5	58
Respondents who did not complete the questionnaire				2

There many examples in the ‘Other’ response area in the questionnaire to support Cascio’s 2000 views on how virtual and remote working is or, since 2000 (12 years ago) has become more commonplace – for example: **R18** ‘My employer doesn’t have an office - there is no office’; **R10**, My work often takes me working in other organisations, in offices, perching on stools, cafe’s or rented office space by the hour / day; who said in the follow up conversation that ‘I knew when I joined the organisation this would be how my role would pan out’. **R20**: ‘We have no base office now. Sometimes I have to work from other offices run by the organisation but usually I am at home’ and **R22** ‘I do not have a set base but hot desk around the organisation, as well as working from home’.

Figure 2 shows the responses to the 10 questions (Q3-Q12 in the questionnaire) regarding self-perceptions of self-efficacy; 51% of the respondents moderately agreeing with the self-efficacy questions and also with just over 40% strongly agreeing. For the purposes of this study, we will combine the ‘moderate agreeing’ with the ‘strongly agreeing’ as both can be considered to reflect perceived high self-efficacy.

Figure 2: Responses from remote workers to all questions on perceived self-efficacy



	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Average %
Strongly Disagree	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Moderately Disagree	4	0	1	3	1	4	2	0	0	0	4.08
Neither Disagree nor Agree	3	0	4	13	2	2	1	1	5	2	6.12
Moderately Agree	22	23	24	26	26	27	24	29	28	21	51.02
Strongly Agree	18	26	29	7	20	16	22	19	16	26	40.82

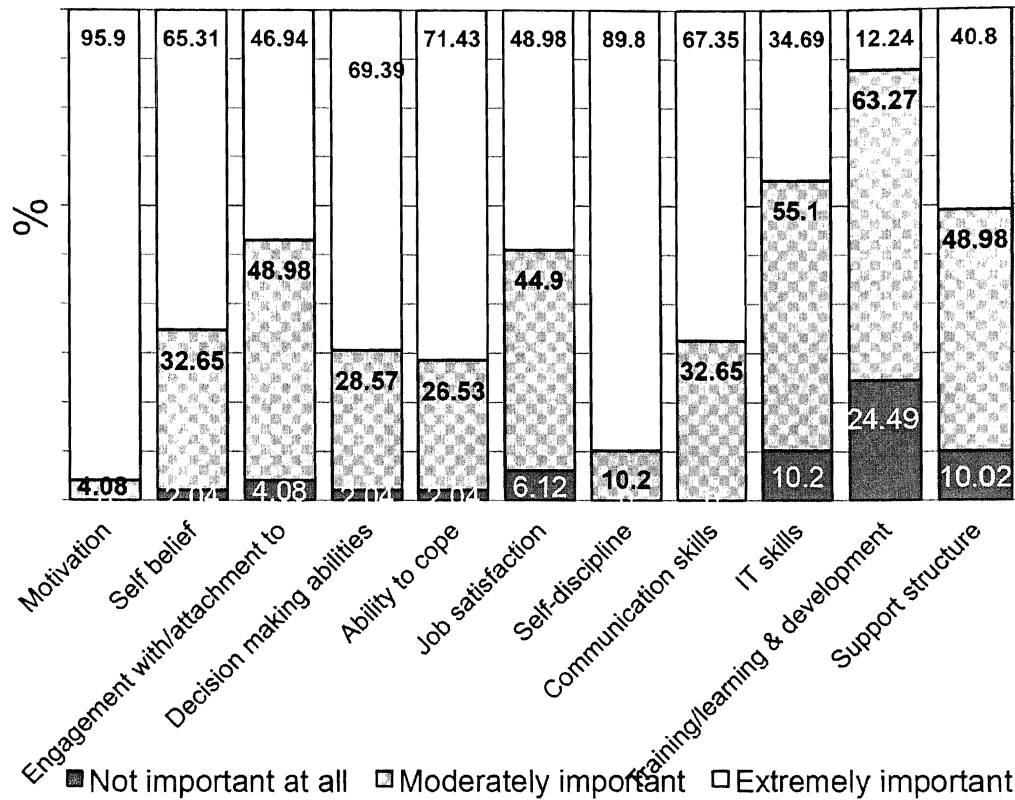
After establishing perceived self-efficacy levels amongst respondents, it was important to try to ascertain views from remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy regarding performance management systems, appraisals and all that entails. Over 90% of the respondents agreed – on average – strongly or moderately with the high self-efficacy questions with a very high 40% finding strong agreement with the very high perceptions of self-efficacy and over half with moderate agreement. The combination of those who did not find agreement with the self-efficacy questions was around 4% with a further 6% neither disagreeing nor agreeing on average across the 10 questions. *We might be able to assume, therefore, that the majority of respondents agreed with the self-efficacy questions either strongly or moderately,*

and indeed a more in-depth analysis showed that many of the respondents agreed to some questions strongly and some moderately.

In **Figure 3** the results are shown to the questions concerning the importance of various factors that might be considered to be important to remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy. The results show that Self-Discipline is considered to be extremely important by 89.9% of respondents with Decision Making Abilities being considered extremely important by almost 70% combined with those selecting 'moderately important' (at just under 30%) taking the total to almost 100%. The closest other perceived as most important by these particular respondents were Ability to Cope (relevant to Self-Efficacy again), Decision Making Abilities at 69.30% and Communication Skills were also ranked as extremely important by 67% of respondents. Support Structure was only ranked as 'extremely important' by 41% but also ranked as Moderately Important by just under 49% taking this total to 89%. Self-belief (used as a more accessible term for self-efficacy for the purposes of this question) elicited a response rate of 65.31%, with 5 other options eliciting higher responses for 'extremely important' for this question.

The lowest recipient for 'Not important at all' was found across three categories which have been found to be pertinent to this study in the literature review: self-discipline (for example, Busch *et al* 2011) and communication skills (for example, Doswell 2009, Bandura 1997) and motivation (for example Staples *et al* 1999 and Bandura & Cervone 1983, Becker 1978, Strang, Lawrence & Fowler, 1978, cited by Bandura, 1989), which have found to be important in the literature research.

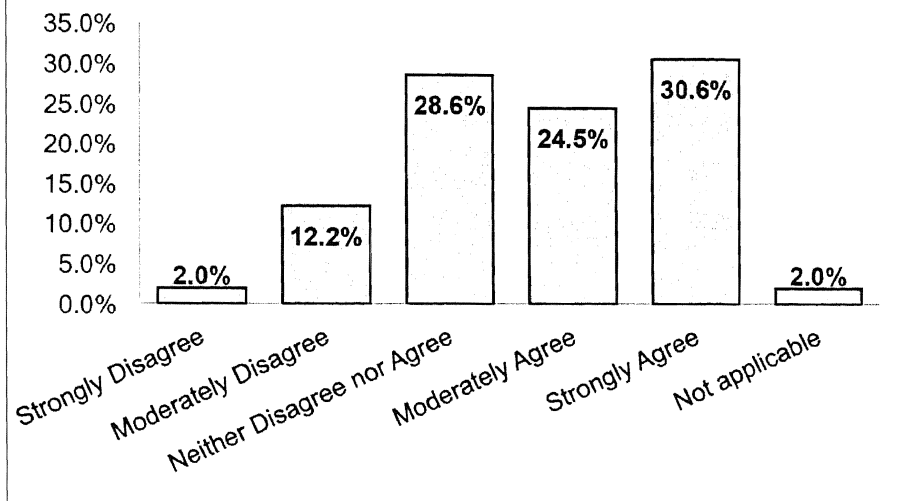
Figure 3: How important would you think the following to be in enabling a remote worker to be effective?



The highest percentage of 'Extremely Important' was for Motivation at 95%; with no respondents marking motivation as 'Not Important at All' and only 3.1% marking it as 'Moderately Important'. It might be very relevant to remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy to be motivated – and a more pertinent question for this study is the type of motivation and who facilitates it – the individual or the supervisor/line manager.

This refers back to the literature review and Bandura's (1992) contribution concerning the importance of feedback along with setting goals in order to influence and maintain motivation – thus not only contributing to ensuring self-efficacy can be harnessed effectively but also that maintaining it can be managed and could be attributed to the supervisor as well as the individual.

Figure 4: I feel more motivated when I work remotely



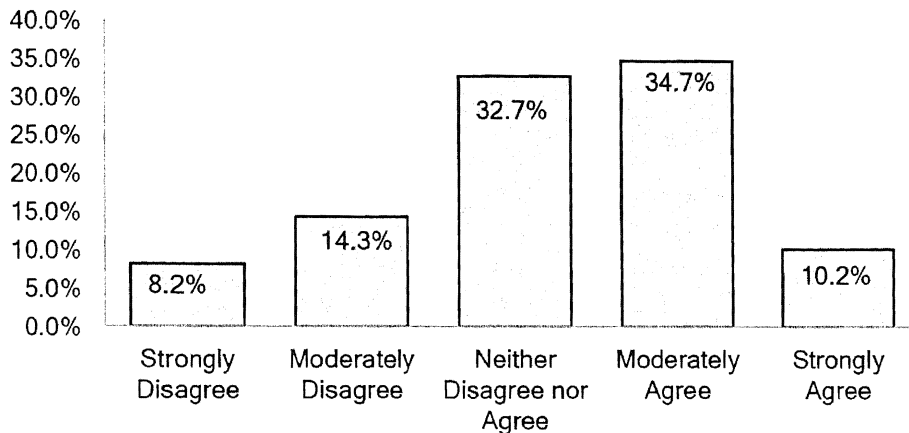
In **Figure 4**, the results from the question ‘I feel more motivated when I work remotely’ show over 55% *moderately* and *strongly agree* that they do – almost 100% more than those neither disagree/nor agree and 4 times more than those who moderately and strongly disagree.

QL R4 answered that they were more motivated when working remotely: “Quid pro quo.... Work allows me to work from home, so I feel more obligated to do good stuff...”, implying a contractual relationship between the worker and the organisation – a quid pro quo. Follow up to **R19** elicited the following:

QL R19 “Feel I have more freedom and hence accepting the responsibility to deliver largely unsupervised is both satisfying and motivating; they also find that project plans need to be flexible but eventually will lead to achieving the objective of a given task. A supervisor adds to the team collaboration. “Also, sound planning and well briefed supervision prior to engaging me as a remote worker. Up front clear task requirements and scheduling with intermittent supervision monitoring” - supporting the literature that a supervisor can support and enable motivation if the right objectives are set and in a collaborative and an empowering way

From **Figure 5** it can be seen from the respondents’ answers that over 44% – nearly half – agree that their current organisation or employer provides an adequate

Figure 5: My organisation provides a performance management system which suits my role.



performance management system for their role; however, only 10% of that figure merits a 'strongly agree' response.

R10 answered in the questionnaire 'other' for this question: 'We have a performance management system that reflects the needs of developing management consultants. There is a high level of autonomy and purpose in our role'. The **QL R10** follow elicited the following responses "It's not rocket science for me, I chose to work for this organisation and know there is no micromanagement, it might not suit all, but if I felt there was too much feedback whilst on the job, I'd see this a challenge to my abilities...undermining me... so I value feedback after a job or when I request it. This links to the question in **Figure 6** regarding the importance of feedback and also **Figure xxx** about the frequency of feedback.

Referring to the literature review and thoughts from Gist (1987) and Applebaum & Hare (1996) - if the individual cannot circumnavigate or compensate for or resolve the idea that a supervisor or line manager in their managerial capacity is controlling the individual and in doing so, affecting their self-efficacy (and their ability to perform to their fullest capabilities) remedial action might be need to be taken and the remote worker – who might have been performing productively – may have to consider their position leading to possible organisational staffing attrition.

R57 answered varying 'other' options from the questionnaire and the following are examples around performance management at their organisation and also

relationship with and feedback from supervisor, which show that the relationship is not controlling and the respondent appears to be fairly happy or content with the relationship. The responses show that the supervisor utilises a 'hands-off' approach and might appear to understand – with what appears to be a successful assessment – the personal and professional requirements and wishes of the respondent:

“Supervisor involved me in planning / reviewing my performance. Setting objectives”

“experience of and understanding that I prefer to be more autonomous and not kept under the thumb. He also manages people in the office and works with them but some people prefer more supervision.

“Prefer feedback often but not every day - and when we both require it - not just for the sake of checking up”

This relates to measuring the output of the self-efficacious remote worker - not checking up on the daily input. The supervisor appears to understand the employee and has the leadership and managerial ability to be able to effectively remote manage.

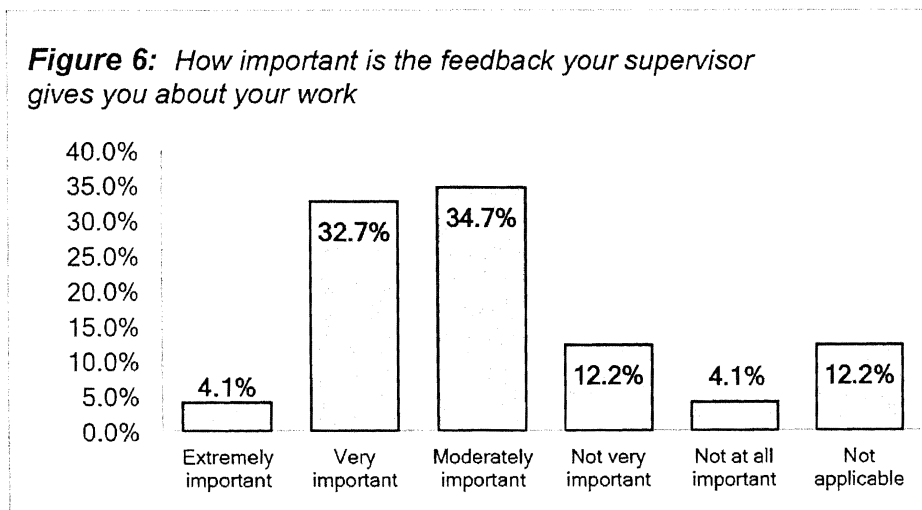


Figure 6 addresses the importance of feedback from supervisor to individual remote worker. Almost three-quarters, nearly 75% of respondents expressed their view that

feedback was important to them in varying magnitudes with a similarity between very important and moderately important. In the literature review, *Bandura (1987)* is quoted as stating: *'supervisors have an important impact on the morale and productivity of an organisation'*.

QL 10 follow up conversation explored the possible importance of feedback based on the 'other' answers in the questionnaire – eliciting the following exchange. Q: your response included your enjoyment of autonomy established through the supervisory questions but that you also valued feedback/input.... '

"Yes, I have a clear view of my objectives before I work with the client, this is established through pre-briefings with my manager and also the client – we work together to ensure that the time I have in the client's office is utilised to the full for the client, not spent on the phone to my manager"

This supports the literature surrounding setting meaningful objectives for remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy; whilst this should also be true and relevant for non-remote workers, it is almost more important to set the objectives together at the start of the project or period of work as the communication may be less frequent with less time or ability to pop into each other's desk space.

R10 also commented in 'other' in the questionnaire to feedback questions.

"My preference is that feedback must be timely, focussed, authentic and relevant. Most useful in our business is coaching based feedback - positive and negative. Anyone who tries to give a feedback "sandwich" is not taken seriously in our business."

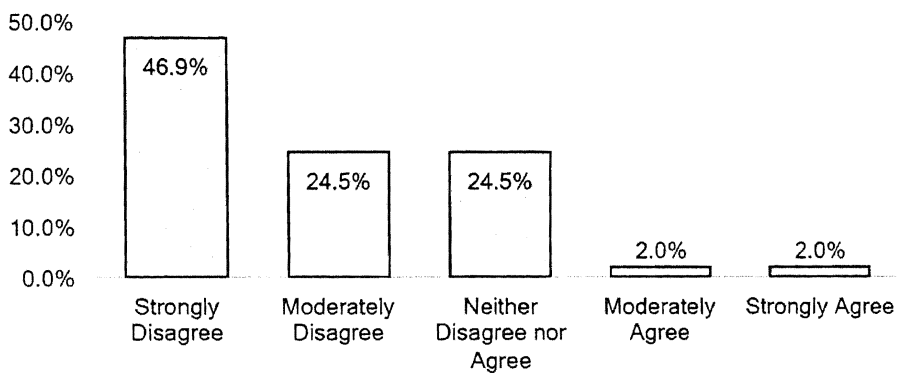
This response might highlight an aversion to manager manipulation and that the worker (in this instance a management consultant) would not be impressed by textbook performance management feedback techniques highlighting the importance of the depth of understanding between supervisor and work. It appears to be important that there is a level of autonomy here, however feedback is also seen as important eliciting the following follow up questions for **QL R10**:

Q: I can see some of your views clearly from the questionnaire, can you elaborate a little on your views on feedback, appraisal and your ideal performance management system?

QL R10: *"Its not rocket science for me [as previously referred to], I chose to work for this organization, so I knew that there would be no micro-management, it might not suit all but if I felt that there was too much feedback whilst on the job, I'd see this as a challenge to my abilities denting my confidence and undermining me, so I value feedback, after a job, or when I request it. As far as appraisal is concerned, I understand what my organisation is trying to achieve with its yearly performance management meetings with us, where we discuss the mission and objectives and how we can all meet these. It's more an equal meeting where I can discuss how I can input, not just this is what you need to do, that wouldn't work for me. I know I'm an employee but my opinion is valued and that is very important to me as a professional and with experience at what I do."*

Referring to close supervision and the concept of 'panopticism' or being watched that came up many times in the questionnaire 'other' answer areas, **Figure 7** shows that over 71%, nearly three-quarters of respondents did not believe that they worked more productively when closely supervised – with 46.9 % - nearly one half – strongly disagreeing with the statement in the question that they believe they work more productively when closely supervised. One quarter neither disagreed nor agreed and only 4% wanted to be more closely supervised to enable them to work more productively.

Figure 7: *I believe I work more productively when closely supervised*



R55 answered this question further in 'other' with:

"Hands-off trust. Needs to ensure the person is connected to the team and that they are not forgotten and included in performance targets, motivation days and so on"

R17 also answered this question further in 'other with:

"Trust is key here - I work more productively when not micromanaged. It causes resentment and for me to feel not connected - engaged? - with the company."

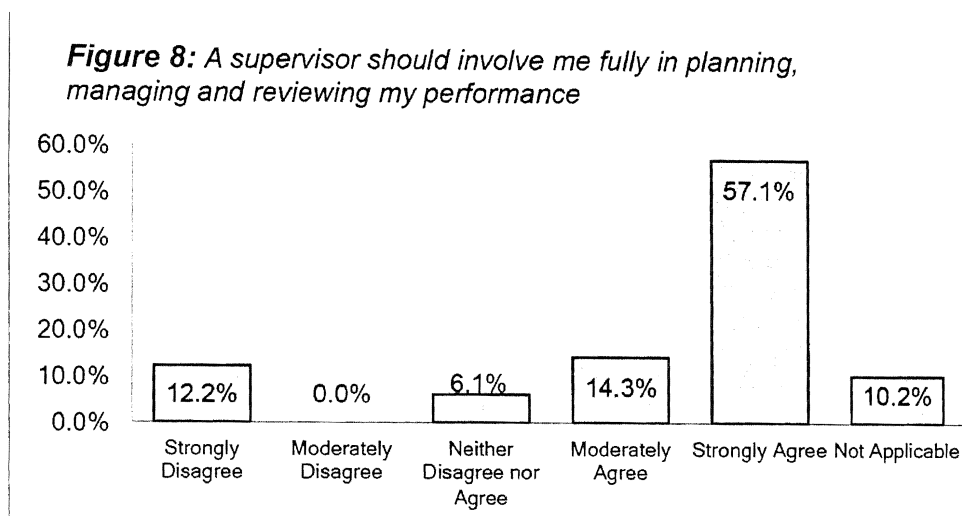
The high percentage of respondents who do not believe they work more productively when closely supervised, apparently supported by the respondents quoted above, might indicate that this might be pertinent when creating a performance management system. If the worker – with perceived high self-efficacy – does not feel that close supervision is beneficial to them, and if the line manager is unable to or does not feel it appropriate to manage without close supervision then there may or will be discord. If an individual or worker feels able to determine if their ability is sufficient to perform tasks or projects and the outcome is successful, the supervisor should address the performance management of that individual – and ensure, as the literature research has suggested, that the worker's performance is measured by output not by input or time spent on a task with overly regular supervision.

As referred to in the literature remote employees and this research would appear to suggest that greater flexibility is needed – and it's how to do that without removing all managerial control – and performance management procedures that would be important to organisations moving into or expanding their remote working processes or strategies.

Figure 8 shows that over 70% of respondents felt that their manager or supervisor should involve them fully in planning, managing and reviewing their performance.

R48 in the 'other' section for comments noted that: *"It is preferable for people to write own performance management objectives and appraisal for discussions and agreement with line manager"*, which supports Jacobs' (2004) views which were suggested, and repeated here from the literature, that remote working 'is

characterised by an increase in flexibility, autonomy and empowerment, with employees participating equally in collaborative relationships'. With reference to appraisal procedure, and also management of personnel, collaboration might be seen to be very important for self-efficacious workers – both remote and office based – empowerment may lead to engagement whereas loss of empowerment and indeed, loss of trust, may lead to disengagement or loss of that all-important psychological contract. *This is important for the future workplace; if the workplace is constantly changing then performance management and appraisals must keep abreast.*



Roberts (2003) suggests that participation of the employee is important and this is supported by the **QL R53** answers from the 'other' in the questionnaire: "My preference is to be left to achieve objectives, but have access to support when required and "A good supervisor will always give employees an opportunity to express their views and consider these in decision-making" - and as per the objective this might indicate that – as supported by Stewart & Manz (1995 and quoted from the literature review) that supervisors need to be able facilitate guidance and provide support not 'manage time in the traditional sense'.

With regards to supervisory input and also feedback, **R11** mentioned in the questionnaire that '*all feedback is good – so long as constructive*'. My follow up questions included: would that include feedback at any time? I note you are

performance managed from a distance so how is the feedback constructed and how is it communicated and how might you improve if it all?:

QL R11: *“Well, all feedback is good as I do work which involves many clients and a number of managers who are heads of the departments, which involve my clients. I travel every week to Asia or Africa or the US and meet with clients who are, in fact, often subsidiaries of our head office organisation. If I don’t phone in with updates, the departments won’t know if the system is working, if the subsidiaries are doing what they are supposed to be doing. I also meet my heads once a month and every year we have a big management conference in somewhere like Buenos Aires where we share feedback wins and failures – it’s a good win-win scenario. I like the system – it allows me to be an effective manager and be managed and shows trust in me as a manager”.*

Q: Thank you for that. I note that you call in, so I would assume that you take the initiative to update as and when?

“Yes, that’s right it’s my responsibility as part of my role to ensure that any issues are highlighted, if I didn’t and the subsid [subsidiaries] carried on with problems it’s effectively my fault for not communicating it to those who can fix it”.

Q: And do you feel that this works effectively?

“It does, I’ve built up a relationship with the subsid and we have a trust base to work from.

Q: May I ask about how you set objectives – is it done on a short-term basis or is your year planned out as you have such a large area and scope to cover?

“We set objectives yearly, I input into these. I have too as it’s my role and I have been doing it for several years very successfully. As per my questionnaire answers, I like task-oriented systems – objectives set and then reviews on an on-going and then set basis. It works. I wouldn’t be here if it didn’t as it allows me to do my job effectively and successfully. I have to be measured by my success – if the subsid fail, it could be my fault”

Q. Have you had the same heads or managers for a while?

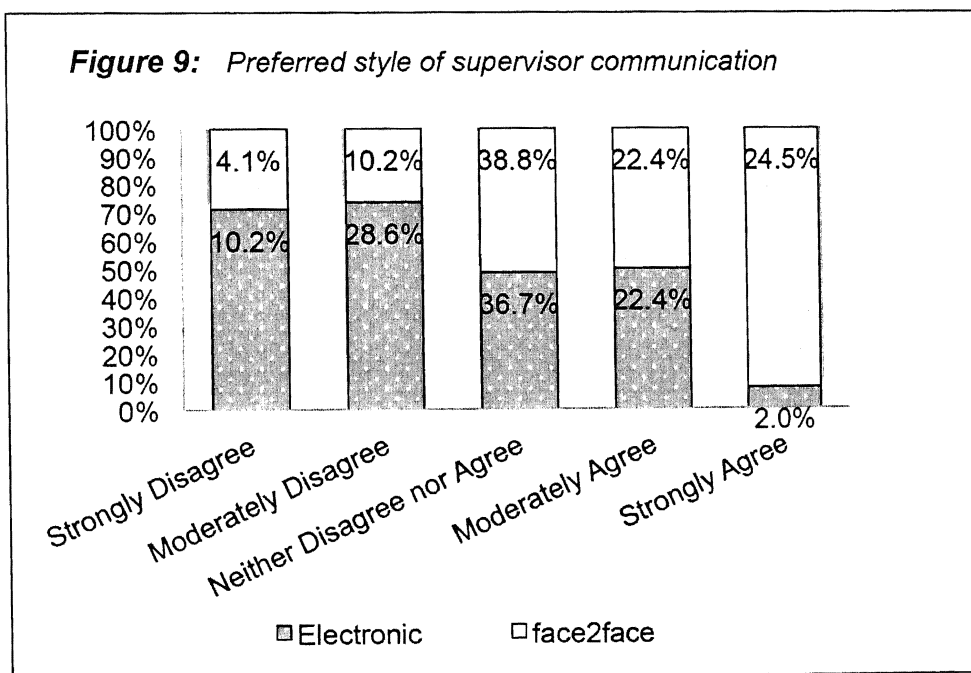
"Yes, a couple of years. Not all though. There is change in such a large organisation and we were bought out about 5 years ago and there were redundancies. I was not asked to put my self forward and was actually promoted. I hope I'm doing something right!"

The measuring on the 'success' as indicated by **R11** might be supporting the literature review research into the real requirement due to both distance and, say, employee dignity to use a term to cover the wish to not be panoptically managed or checked up on as **R17** answered in their 'other' section regarding working productively when less supervised *"Trust is key here – I work more productively when not micromanaged. It causes resentment and for me to not feel connected – engaged (?) with the company"* (sic). **R18** also felt similarly *"It depends on the form the supervision takes – breathing down my neck does not make me more productive"*. This might also support Cascio (2000) view that managers will need to 'shift from a focus on time to a focus on results'. Managers will need to be trained and acclimatized to what may be an entirely new way of working for some – whether office-based or not, there are managers are not able to trust, or allow more autonomy. In performance managing – managing – workers, managers should be supported to encourage and gain competencies that allow them to bring an appropriate skill and attitudinal set to managing remote workers to encourage engagement and achievement of goals. ACAS support the view that objectives should be agreed with 'a shared understanding of what your organisation is trying to achieved' (ACAS 2010) with business plans and organisational and individual objectives (not forgetting team or departmental objectives either) being discussed frequently and regularly with employees and ensuring that they understand what their contribution is, and how it can make a difference and with full opportunity to revert with their own ideas.

The analysis of the previous respondent touched on communication needs in an organisation with some, or all, remote workers. In the literature, Doswell (Institute of internal Communications, IoIC, 2009) is quoted as suggesting that remote workers will have different communication needs from workers who are based in the office. As also reported in the literature, Bandura (1997) 'four factors' include as I stated

verbal persuasion – or affects on behaviours – through verbal exchanges. With further reference to communication, Doswell (IoIC 2009) suggests that (as again reported earlier in the literature) that ‘whilst unintentional, if managers or supervisors do not recognize or plan for distinct communication requirements (verbal or otherwise) of non-workplace based employees this could adversely affect performance right across the business’.

R57 perceives the most appropriate performance management practices for remote workers to be: “Remote workers should have more on-going performance management – on-going appraisal - cannot just leave to ‘end of year stuff.’” This supports the high percentage of respondents who strongly agree that they should be involved with planning, managing and reviewing their performance and is relevant to the objectives of this study.



The question posed in the questionnaire as reflected in **Figure 9**, concerning the respondents preferred style of supervisor communication, could be said to be one of the most important to this study. Based on the literature regarding verbal persuasion and its importance to remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy, these results might indicate that these workers prefer face-to-face (aka face2face as shown in **Figure 9**) communications with their supervisor with 24.5% strongly agreeing and

with 22.49% moderately agreeing a preference. Only 2% strongly agreed that they preferred electronic communications with their supervisor and who is most usually the person most likely to conduct their performance management/appraisal so it might appear that this is would be an important inclusion when creating the most appropriate performance management system or procedure for these workers. Staples *et al* (1999) suggest that to be effective, managers should ensure that there is 'establishment of realistic expectations about the amount of face-to-face time that will be available' – it could be said that this is a two-way process; with remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy, autonomy is important and therefore, they should probably be involved in establishing an appropriate schedule for communication – face-to-face and otherwise. It could be that sufficient face-to-face communications – on a regular established basis, would remove or at least lessen any managerial worries about loss of managerial control. Also, as information technology is now so advanced – Staples (1996) suggests that IT 'appears to be a key driver of remote work, allowing companies to establish virtual arrangements that permit greater employee flexibility without sacrificing managerial control. IT systems could be established to allow communication by virtual face-to-face, for example Skype or video conferencing. It might be that our respondents have responded with more positivity towards face-to-face communication because the IT communication is either unsuitable (emails can be misconstrued as they have no vocal tone) or is being used incorrectly and would suggest that any 'spying' type of electronic communication – for example, time spent on computer, key strokes recording would be seen to be unreasonable and panoptic.

Getting the communication right is important for managers of remote and office based workers – Tina Oakley in an article 'On My Agenda' for People Management (August 2012) said that there was a real need for her employer Gatwick to 'facilitate honest conversations'. She reports how performance management was rarely used and staff often didn't know personal objectives or even who their supervisor was sometimes. This from an organisation with staff on one site – should be a lesson to share with employers who have an even greater need to ensure effective and possibly multi-site (including home) communication. In another People Management article (April 2004), Carolyn Axtell from the Institute of Work Psychology was quoted as saying (2004): 'Having employees who work remotely makes it much harder to

paper over the cracks in best practice...with additional structure and planning required to managed dispersed workers as there is a greater likelihood of misunderstandings due to communication difficulties'. *In the same article*, Martin Galpin, an occupational psychologist agreed: 'if you don't know someone and you aren't aware they haven't got all the information to hand, a first instinct is to blame them for poor performance'. Galpin suggests that 'frequent performance reviews' are paramount for remote workers as 'six-monthly appraisals are not nearly enough'. However, the results, which do stress the importance of communication, do appear to dispute this; the respondents have clearly stated – across all response options that, as a majority, they prefer more autonomy, with feedback and with on-going approach to appraisals.

Also, with reference to communications, **R15** answered the following to 'other' question regarding supervision, communication and importance of and type of feedback: *'Supervision should not be intrusive. Checking in and reporting are reassuring and validating and If supervision implies having someone 'keeping tabs', an intrusive presence, then I would feel distracted"* and *"I like touching base on a regular basis. That way both sides get regular temperature checks and adjustments are made more easily"* – also relevantly to the observations on equality and 'control' – *"It feels like a conversation between equals rather than top down"*. This relates to equating lack of success with lack of effort – one of the follow up questions I asked was how did the respondent feel about being contacted (based on the 'other' answers) and was this, for **QL R15**, the usual way for the supervisor to contact them and was that the office culture and protocol?

"Yes, if I don't call then he calls me and if I call first he doesn't call me but I do feel he's waiting for me to call regularly. It feels a bit of a struggle sometimes I mean if I have nothing to report then it's a waste of time and id rather get on"

It might be that the respondent feels that by 'keeping tabs' on them, their supervisor is questioning their ability, which the respondent does not and it might also relate to the respondent feeling their input or effort or decision making ability (to complete a task or with reference to, for example, a client, is being called into question – leading to discord.

With reference to the question regarding remote workers needing different performance management skills, **R20** elaborated in 'other' – "If there is no line manager or support structure on site the remote worker needs different/additional skills' and 'A good Manager will respond to individual differences, whether remote or not'. The follow up questions – **QL R20** – began with:

Q: Can you think of any different or additional skills that you as a remote worker needs

"Yes, definitely need to be able to talk to the clients and then make decisions with them. With no manager around at the time, I need to make decisions".

Q: Would you say that is vital to being an effective remote worker?

"Absolutely, yes. I need to be able to make quick efficient decisions and if I can't ask the boss, I have to do it and be confident when I do it usually"

Q: Referring to the context of performance management and appraisal, you need additional skills, how do you anticipate what these might be and how might you acquire them as an employee?

"Well, my line manager is pretty virtual so I'd need to be able to write my requirements formally. I'd like their input, my current line manager has more experience than me, so I'd want them to be able to guide me and advise me"

Q: About acquiring skills, training maybe?

"Yes, they can help me decide. Oh, and also listen to me when I call them about future developments"

Q: Would you expect to be able to make all decisions alone?

"God no. I want to make decisions but I don't want that. Not all decisions. It's a fine line, I'm good at my job but as I work in the medical world I don't want someone breathing down my neck all the time otherwise why bother having me"

R20's comments reflect the importance of communication with their supervisor and also the importance of feedback from a supervisor (as per **Figure 6**); all of which might be very important according to Maitland & Thompson (2011). Maitland & Thompson (2011), from Cass and Harvard Business Schools respectively, were quoted as predicting (in an article for People Management October 2011)

that 'workers to be paid by results not by hours'. The article author, Doug Shaw, 2011, stated that 'Universal flexible working and rewarding staff for results rather than contracted hours will be part of an imminent revolution of working practices, according to two leading academics' and 'offices will shift from being nine-to-five to meeting places over the next decade'.

5 Conclusions / Recommendations

5.1 Summary of research

The respondents in this and to this study, despite being less than 60, have participated fully and have enabled this study to examine, comment and reflect on the objective to try to understand and examine the preferred management – and appraisal – systems of remote workers who have perceived high self-efficacy. This study also successfully found respondents who were remote workers and who did perceived themselves with high self-efficacy.

As can be seen from the results, many of our respondents already enjoy or would like – with reference to the objectives regarding their preferred management systems – collaborative relationships, non-hierarchical relationships and relationships with flexibility, effective feedback, face-to-face communication with supervisors, autonomy and a sense of empowerment; especially with supervisors who, in the words of Bandura from 1997 (and from our literature) ‘have an important impact on the morale and productivity of an organisation’.

Many respondents expressed a wish to set their own objectives, or at least participate in the setting of these and many wished to be able to reach a compromise when it came to how and when to meet or discuss performance with their supervisors. It might appear to be clear that Jacobs’ view from 2004, is relevant and pertinent to these workers – that remote working ‘is characterised by an increase in flexibility, autonomy and empowerment, with employees participating equally in collaborative relationships’ and the research and the literature of authors such as Roberts (2003) suggests that performance approaches should involve the participation of the employee or evaluatee and also Stewart & Manz (1995) ‘Rather than dictate or manage time in the traditional fashion, ‘supervisors and managers must become facilitators to provide guidance, resources and support to enable effective work practices’. ‘Trust, communication and good line management are the keys to ensuring the productivity and inclusion of remote workers’ (People Management Dec 2011); especially with remote workers who already have perceived high self-efficacy as seen in the results.

Keating of enei (cited by Evening Standard 2012) states, 'when the way we work changes, it will matter less if someone is black, female, gay, disabled or over a certain age because workers will be judged more on what they produce', not on how they socialise in the pub. Niki Chesworth, author of the same Evening Standard article writes that, according to a Randstad UK survey nearly half of all permanent workers plan to consider temporary roles when they next change jobs and with the aging demographic, organisations might probably need to amend it's working practices accordingly to attract and retain the talent it wants – most probably looking for the rewards and the work-life balance to suit them.

This study might be considered to be important, as it has begun to investigate an area of HR and organisation management that covers remote workers and self-efficacy and also performance management and appraisal systems. As the business world appears to now be constantly changing, and changing quickly, then these factors and their relationship an association to and with each other will probably need to be further studied. Also, as suggested by Jacobs, in the previous paragraph, empowerment may lead to engagement whereas loss of empowerment and indeed, loss of trust, may lead to disengagement or loss of that all-important psychological contract. This is important for the future workplace; if the workplace is constantly changing – with more possible remote or flexible working being requested both by employees and employers then worker's engagement, their self-efficacy and how they are management and appraised must be regularly and dependently addressed.

Angela Baron, CIPD Advisor, comments in the Organisation and Resourcing 2008 Podcast Episode 25, 'some of the best practice we could see was where performance management was acting as talent management'; using the performance management process to identify the right people'. Baron further comments, 'developing a standard framework can be quite a challenge especially in organisations that carry out a diverse range of work and functions'. Stephen Moir, of Cambridgeshire County Council, in the same podcast comments: 'We want to get our staff to think about performance management and outcomes. Techniques are taught to help managers – we have real cultural techniques and getting the

communications right'. Philippa Lamb responds: 'it's about getting the right communication' and 'defining performance in the right terms'. Michael Spears, Sainsbury – from the same podcast – suggests that 'setting the right targets is crucial' so 'we have a real understanding of what you did in relation to what you said you were going to do'. This ties in with the importance of outputs but Sainsbury also then confirm that the how is just as important to them – how you reached your targets – so that you didn't just 'get lucky'. Philippa Lamb asked the question that confirmed this with 'so performance isn't simply about the direct outcomes but the employees' behaviours in the delivery of these outcomes'.

It could be argued that all workers, remote or not, with perceived high self-efficacy might wish to be managed in the same way as discussed here – with no panopticism, with trust, with measurable objectives based on outputs and with mutually respect; however, the key fact to remember is that not all managers are trained to manage in this way – remote workers or not to manage – and until that happens then remote workers will be especially penalised for being 'out of sight' and apparently, apparently, un-measurable or unaccountable.

As discussed in the literature, the working world of today and the future will be a different place even from yesterday; instead of 'the past is a foreign field, they do things differently there' we, as HR practitioners will need to focus on the future, to be proactive and to offer advice, strategies and recommendations to our business colleagues – whether our employer or our employees – that suit and can accommodate everyone's needs. The business world will need to harness the technological advances and with daily launches including for example, the new ipad mini on October 23 2012 (www.thetelegraph.co.uk) aimed at keeping us all online and connectable 24/7 and keep abreast of environmental and benefit advances, for example with the launch of the government-backed 'businesscycle' – which this author attended – following on from the 'Anywhere Working' and cycle scheme initiatives. The working world is now a very different entity from what it was even a decade ago and it will be the role of HR practitioners to continue to attract, reward, train, sustain and retain the best talent for the continuously morphing organisations – especially against the turbulent moveable business and political environment of this decade and beyond.

5.2 Recommendations and implications

Accordingly, therefore, it may be of real importance for organisations at this turbulent time to examine self-efficacy, possibly utilising selection processes to assess and establish levels of perceived high self-efficacy for prospective employees to establish if they will have an organisational fit and for existing employees, if they are to be considered for remote positions and ask – will the employee or prospective employee ever be the type of worker who can work effectively if measured on output not input which has been suggested is an effective way of managing or supervising remote workers. Although for workers wishing to change work patterns to incorporate more flexible or remote working the organisation will establish a business case for approval or not and there may well be no opportunity or relevant reason for testing perceptions of self-efficacy (this would be interesting for future research). This wouldn't be a challenge if the organization was not going to move to any type of remote working but with the statutory law changes most organizations will be required to establish if flexible working can be authorized in their organization and there may not be a business reason to refuse – unless they a) don't want to, as they have the 'right' type of workers or b) if they can establish that the workers do not have self-efficacy and will not be suitable for remote working and their managers will not be able to manage

According to Gecas (2004), as referred to in the literature, people behave in the way that executes their initial beliefs; thus, self-efficacy functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy and it may be supposed that an employee with lesser ability but a greater perceived level of self efficacy (than an employee with the reverse situation) will be motivated to fulfil and complete a task more effectively and with less supervision (than an employee with the reverse situation). As techniques and skills can possibly be acquired through training, it may be supposed that it might be more important for the self-efficacy perception of the prospective employee to be high – and then the skills and techniques can be set as objectives a part of a collaborative performance management review and procedure. It may be further supposed that selection processes should involve self-efficacy perceptions coupled with succession planning to ensure that appropriate training thus 'sowing the seeds' for greater autonomy of

staff and more flexible working opportunities. Pajares (1996) cites Betz & Hackett and Betz (1981) who suggest that teachers should pay as much attention to perceptions of competence as to actual competence for it is perceptions that may accurately predict students' motivations and future academic choices. This may be true for employees and their line managers or supervisors.

Training, therefore, might also appear to be an important consideration for organisations to try to keep abreast of the changes and to try to ensure they are meeting the challenges of the new workplaces head on; and this is important for the future of the workplace and HR's on-going repositioning as a strategic participant within their organisation. HR has an important part to play – as

Staples *et al* (1999) suggested – as many of the managerial skills found to be required for effective management of remote workers can be learned, therefore training interventions and investments of the remote worker's manager or supervisor are key. As Gist found in her 1987 paper, 'The Effects of Self-Efficacy Training on Training Task Performance', significant correlations were found 'between self efficacy and performance' and 'participants who received an intervention designed to enhance self-efficacy evidenced higher efficacy perceptions and performance than those who received standard training'; it might be surmised, therefore, that discussions regarding training as part of the performance management of remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy should be acted on by the manager or supervisor to ensure that interventions are appropriate. Effective management, therefore, is still paramount – even with self-efficacious remote workers.

Finally, here is a good example of an organisation rising to the very real challenge of performance managing and rewarding staff who are often remote and who not based in one site at all times – that is, they move around to different projects. The CIPD People Management Awards of 2012, as reported in September 2012's People Management has confirmed a shortlisted IT consultancy for it's Performance and Reward award. Tata Consultancy, which rolled out 'the online rewards system TCS Gems in 2007' promoting peer nominated awards, was designed to encourage staff to 'aim for more, wherever they are' – the rationale came from the challenge of how to reward and 'celebrate good work' when employees move around on different

projects across many sites. Remote workers – throwing up a challenge that was met by this organisation.

5.3 Limitations

Jacobs (2008) suggests that challenges associated with working from home are identified as possible loss of sense of belonging, loss of management control as well as potential curtailment of social interaction and knowledge sharing – knowledge sharing may be damaged or curtailed. Please refer to 5.4 item in future research.

There are arguments for and against mixed-methods; an exponent of the non-compatible argument might dismiss mixed-methods sample gathering, results and analysis.

There are limitations as the findings reflect perceptions and perspectives of the respondents

The sample size is not large – it would be of interest to analyse results from a much bigger sample size.

The respondents have diverse geographical locations and accordingly, different cultures.

The respondents have different roles and are not industry specific.

Some of the respondents are known to the author; which could possibly bias responses.

Data is self-reported – there may be a possibility of common response bias due to all respondents answering the same survey questions; however, there are 'other' sections for a number of the questions (which were heavily drawn on as the lead into the follow up questions)

The dissertation schedule is time specific, time finite and time limited: there might be limitations to the number of respondents who can be reached to answer the questionnaire in this time whilst still leaving time for analysis and completion of the dissertation

Self –efficacy is based on self-perceptions; however, the GSE scale used is verified and tested.

There are three areas of interest with a wide selection of literature on each – the area for discussion could be too broad.

Many specific areas can be studied for future – specifically engagement / psychological contract of remote workers with perceived high self-efficacy.

As Gist & Mitchell (1992) purport, there are many findings that ‘demonstrate the importance of self-efficacy for predicting and improving work performance’ but ‘much remains unclear about the construct itself’; from antecedents to outcomes. The term ‘Self-efficacy’ is difficult – from the questionnaire and follow up interviews it became apparent that the term is not well known nor understood. It might be useful to address the terminology in order to communicate and cascade the concept through the business world and industries. The concept of self-efficacy was not explained – but there might have been a possibility that this would have ‘skewed the results’

5.4 Further studies/ future research

A follow up survey on the terminology of ‘self-efficacy’ and perceived self-efficacy would be useful to address the lack of understanding of the term and to find possible alternatives, or at least communicate the terminology effectively across all industries and at more levels – to introduce as a possible performance management / succession / selection / talent management tool.

Specifically measuring levels of self-efficacy of remote workers in specific situations within perhaps specific industries or organisations – for example, many telecoms staff and teams are now remote.

Measuring if remote workers have higher levels of self-efficacy than non-remote (or office based) workers in the same organisation, or in the same industry or same role (remote or non remote).

It may be interesting to examine the effect of remote working on knowledge sharing capabilities in organisations with firstly, established knowledge transfer highways and banks and also on organisations hoping to establish these; the latter affording a long-term in-depth case study idea.

There is much literature around the challenges and in support of remote working including the following list of research topics – some of which would make for interesting research: achieving work life balance (Sturges & Guest, 2004), work-life balance and happy homes (Burnett *et al* 2012), work place isolation (Mulki *et al*, 2009, Busch *et al*, 2011); identity work and issues (Tietze & Musson 2005); organizational challenges (Rendell *et al*, 2007), partially distributed group technological challenges (Burke *et al*, 1999), distance disconnectedness matters, (Olson & Olson, 2009, Busch *et al*, 2011); lack of visibility, bias against remote workers (Golden *et al* 2009), knowledge management of remote workers (Bosch-Sijtsema *et al*, 2009); employee appropriateness (Helms & Raiszadah 2002, Staples *et al* 1999, Tietze & Musson 2005), possible lack of development opportunities for remote workers (Busch *et al*, 2011), importance of selection techniques for remote workers (Busch *et al* 2011) and self-efficacy enhancement for remote workers (Gist 1987, Bandura 1977,1978) and other-efficacy effects on remote workers (Lent & Lopez 2002).

Niki Chesworth, reporting in the London Evening Standard (March 2012), referred to earlier, on the Tomorrow's Workplaces conference stated 'it's work, but not as we all know it...what will the workplace of the future look like'. The turbulence and the speed of changes to information technology and workers' needs and wants does mean that socio-cognitive subjects such as self-efficacy – especially with the rise of

the knowledge worker *at all levels* across many industries – and management subjects such as performance management along with objectives, appraisals, when combined with the moveable hypermobility of tomorrow's IT-based workplace today will become part of everyday business parlance. Back in 1999, Peter Drucker suggested that knowledge workers and working will 'bring about fundamental changes in the structure and nature of the economic system' and in reality, in 2012 there are pressures from both worker and organisation. ' Smart business leaders, organisational and HR strategists and managers, with SMART objectives are not exactly walking into the unknown – the volume of academic and practitioner research is testimony to that effect; however, they will have to ensure that they understand 'the flexi-time, flexi-place world' (Green & Shackleton 2000) of today alongside the workers of tomorrow tomorrow – the remote workers, the more autonomous independent workers with their perceptions of high self-efficacy; the workers who demand flexibility and who are in turn demanded flexibility of to fulfil organisational aims, visions and objectives.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

How you can help me with this questionnaire/survey

This dissertation forms the completing chapter of my Masters (MSc) in Human Resource Management and it is built around social cognition theories and the evolution of the modern office. Organisations and workers alike have responded to changing demographics of the UK and global environments with a rapidly growing demand for more flexible working. Following on from the launch-pad of this government's 'Anywhere Working' initiative, the emergence of remote/home aspects of flexible working has moved up the statutory and business agenda and we acknowledge the rise of the virtual office. More exploratory research is required into how the remote worker's specific requirements will be catered for with changing business strategies and I am hopeful that this brief survey will provide useful research around psychological contracts and effective people and performance management systems going forward.

I welcome participants who do not work remotely as a comparative and I welcome explanations of answers in the boxes provided.

'Remote worker/working' refers to an employee or contractor's pattern of working; carrying out their work not in the office of their employing or hiring organisation on an ad-hoc basis, a fairly regular basis e.g. weekly/monthly or on a permanent basis. 'Not in the office' could be at home, in a virtual office, in a client's office or in a mobile situation.

'Supervisor' as referred to in the survey can mean any supervisory party from an organisation that employs you or contracts you on a regular basis, for example, your line manager, your team leader, your director, your editor, the hiring director etc.

'Performance Management' can refer to any system of people management within your organisation. Employee engagement 'can be seen as a combination of commitment to the organisation and its values and a willingness to help out colleagues (organisational citizenship). It goes beyond job satisfaction and is not simply motivation.

Engagement is something the employee has to offer: it cannot be 'required' as part of the employment contract. It helps form the building blocks for a positive psychological contract with the employer; providing the employer also delivers on their commitments to the employee this will reinforce a sense of fairness and trust. (Based on CIPD 2012)

The identity of the participants in this survey will remain confidential, no names will be used and any information published will be entirely confidential. Your participation provides confirmation that I may use the data you have provided, however, you may withdraw your support at any time and your data will not be processed into useable information and will be destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

*1. I work remotely (from a place other than my employer's office).

- Yes - always
 Yes - regularly
 No - never

Please comment/explain further

Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

*2. I chose to work remotely

- Yes - it was my personal choice
- No - my employer requested I work remotely
- No - other circumstances forced me to work remotely

Please comment/explain further

*3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

*4. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

*5. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

*6. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

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***7. I am resourceful and I know how to handle unforeseen situations**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

***8. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Do not Disagree or Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

***9. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

***10. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

***11. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

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Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

*12. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

- Strongly Disagree
 Moderately Disagree
 Neither Disagree nor Agree
 Moderately Agree
 Strongly Agree

*13. How important would you think the following to be in enabling a remote worker to be effective?

	Extremely important	Moderately important	Not important at all
Motivation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self belief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engagement with/attachment to organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision making abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to cope	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IT skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training/learning & development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support structure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*14. I feel more motivated when I work remotely

- Strongly Disagree
 Moderately Disagree
 Neither Disagree nor Agree
 Moderately Agree
 Strongly Agree
 Not applicable

Please explain your answer

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Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

*15. I feel more motivated when I work in the office

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not applicable

Please explain your answer

*16. I feel more engaged with/attached to an/my organisation when working remotely (willing to go 'that extra mile').

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not applicable

Please explain your answer

Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

*17. I feel more engaged when I am not/do not work remotely

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not applicable

Please explain your answer

*18. My organisation or employer provides a performance management system which suits my role

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please explain your response

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Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

***19. Remote workers should have a different performance management system at work from non-remote workers.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- I don't know

Please comment/explain further

20. How improved is your performance after getting feedback from your supervisor about your work?

- Extremely improved
- Very improved
- Moderately improved
- Not Applicable
- Slightly improved
- Not at all improved

***21. How often should your supervisor give you feedback about your work?**

- Extremely often
- Very often
- Moderately often
- Slightly often
- Not at all often
- Not Applicable

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Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

***22. A supervisor should involve me fully in planning, managing and reviewing my performance**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not Applicable

Please explain your response

***23. I prefer regular face to face communication and feedback from a supervisor**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

***24. I prefer electronic communication and feedback from a supervisor**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

***25. I prefer less supervision when working remotely.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not applicable

Please explain your response

Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

*26. I believe I work more productively when I am less supervised.

- Strongly Disagree
 Moderately Disagree
 Neither Disagree nor Agree
 Moderately Agree
 Strongly Agree

Please explain your response

*27. I believe I work more productivity when closely supervised

- Strongly Disagree
 Moderately Disagree
 Neither Disagree nor Agree
 Moderately Agree
 Strongly Agree

Please explain your response

28. How well does your supervisor explain why decisions change?

- Extremely well
 Very well
 Moderately well
 Slightly well
 Not at all well
 Not Applicable

Please add comment if not applicable

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***29. I believe my supervisor understands the challenges specific to employees who work remotely.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree or Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not applicable / I don't know

Please explain your answer

30. How helpful is the feedback your supervisor gives you about your work?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Moderately helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful
- Not Applicable

***31. My supervisor communicates with me effectively when I work remotely**

- Extremely well
- Very well
- Moderately well
- Slightly well
- Not at all well
- Not applicable

Other

Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

***32. How important is feedback that your supervisor gives you?**

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Not applicable

What type of feedback do you prefer and why?

***33. Tasks assigned to you by your supervisor should always help you grow professionally.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not Applicable

***34. A supervisor should always listen to your opinions when making decisions**

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not Applicable

Please explain your answer

Remote working - engagement, psychological contract and people

***35. Please describe what you perceive would be the most appropriate people/performance management system for you as a remote or non remote worker.**

***36. At which location do you work?**

- UK
 Europe
 USA
 Asia
 Australia
 South America
 Africa

Other (please specify)

***37. May I contact you with further questions relevant to the topics in this survey/questionnaire? At what email address would you like to be contacted?**

- Yes
 No

If 'Yes', please add your email address