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Effects of Work–Family Conflict and Work Anxiety on Self-Efficacy and Task Performance: The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Remote e-Working

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how work-family conflict (WFC) and work-related anxiety shape self-efficacy and task performance in remote e-working, and it examines emotional intelligence (EI) as a personal emotional resource. Drawing on social cognitive theory and appraisal theory, we distinguish WFC as a situational stressor, self-efficacy as a cognitive appraisal of capability, and anxiety as a proximal affective response. Data were collected from 281 public servants in administrative sectors of Brazilian state and federal public organizations and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The findings show that WFC undermines task performance indirectly by reducing self-efficacy. Work-related anxiety, by contrast, is more directly related to lower task performance and is not transmitted through self-efficacy. EI is positively associated with self-efficacy, but it does not significantly buffer the negative effects of WFC or anxiety. The study contributes to accounting and public-sector management research by clarifying the psychological sequence through which remote e-working conditions influence performance and by showing the boundary conditions of individual emotional resources in domestic work environments.

KEYWORDS

Self-efficacy; Work-Family Conflict; Work-Related Anxiety; Task Performance; Emotional Intelligence; Remote E-Working

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1 Introduction

Technological advancement has transformed how people live and work (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016), affecting organizational processes and task execution (Vazquez et al., 2019). The expansion of digital technologies has made it possible for employees to access information, communicate with managers and colleagues, and perform tasks from locations outside the traditional office. These developments gave rise to remote e-working practices (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016; Silva & Rosa, 2023), which were accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic in both public and private organizations (Lengen et al., 2021; Silva & Rosa, 2023).

Remote e-working is especially consequential in public organizations because public servants must often maintain service quality, accountability, and coordination while working at a distance from colleagues, managers, and citizens (Van Rinsum & Verbeeten, 2012; Silva & Rosa, 2023). Remote work offers benefits such as reduced commuting time and greater temporal flexibility (Lister & Harnish, 2011; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012), but it also creates distinctive demands, including social isolation, blurred work–family boundaries, intensive video meetings, family interruptions, inadequate equipment, and limited informal feedback from supervisors and coworkers

(Charalampous et al., 2019; Lengen et al., 2021). These conditions make remote e-working a relevant setting for examining how psychosocial factors influence task performance.

Management literature explains this issue through appraisal and social cognitive theories. Appraisal theory differentiates stressors, cognitive appraisals, emotional responses, and behavioral outcomes (Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), while social cognitive theory views self-efficacy as perceived capability shaped by experience, task demands, resources, and constraints (Bandura, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Together, they suggest that, in remote e-working, work–family conflict acts as a stressor, self-efficacy as the coping appraisal, anxiety as the emotional response, and task performance as the outcome. Importantly, work–family conflict differs from anxiety: it reflects interference between work and family roles, which can undermine employees' perceived ability to work effectively at home (Gutek et al., 1991; Lupu et al., 2018).

Despite growing research on remote work, important gaps remain. First, prior studies often examine remote work outcomes without clearly differentiating stressors, cognitive appraisals, emotional responses, and behavioral performance. Second, although self-efficacy has been linked to performance, less is known about whether it operates similarly when employees work from home and face overlapping work and family roles. Third, research on EI has often emphasized its direct benefits, whereas its limits in remote e-working remain less understood. These gaps are particularly relevant in public organizations, where task performance is linked to continuity, accountability, and quality of public services.

To address these gaps, this study analyzes the relationships among work-family conflict, work-related anxiety, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and task performance in the context of remote e-working. Using survey data from 281 Brazilian public servants

and PLS-SEM, we examine whether work-family conflict reduces performance through self-efficacy, whether work-related anxiety has a more direct effect on performance, and whether EI is associated with self-efficacy and/or attenuates negative psychological effects.

This research contributes to the literature by demonstrating that self-efficacy can reduce the effects of anxiety and family–work conflict on task execution. This research expands the models that integrate the relationships between family and work (Lupu et al., 2018) and increases the understanding of the asymmetric effects of family–work conflict and its impact on work activities (Zheng et al., 2021). In practice, this contribution highlights the need for managers and policymakers to implement strategies (e.g., training, support, and appropriate working conditions) to mitigate the negative effects of anxiety and family–work conflicts in remote work.

2 Theoretical Basis and Development of Hypotheses

2.1 Work-family conflict, self-efficacy, work-related anxiety and task performance

Remote e-working can reduce commuting time and operating expenses (Nakrošienė et al., 2019), but it can also expose employees to stressors that are less visible in traditional workplaces (Song & Gao, 2020). In appraisal theory, stressors are environmental or role-related demands that may exceed an individual's available resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Hobfoll, 1989). Work-family conflict is one such stressor. It occurs when the demands of work and family roles are mutually incompatible, so that participation in one role makes participation in the other more difficult (Gutek et al., 1991; Eby et al., 2005). In remote e-working, this conflict can be intensified because the home becomes both the work site and the family site, increasing the likelihood of interruptions, role overlap, and competing expectations.

Social cognitive theory suggests that employees respond to such demands partly through self-efficacy judgments. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their ability to organize and execute courses of action required to attain desired performance (Bandura, 1997). These beliefs are not merely dispositional; they are formed through task analysis, prior mastery experiences, social persuasion, and the interpretation of situational constraints (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Wood & Bandura, 1989). In remote e-working, work-family conflict may lower self-efficacy because employees perceive fewer resources, less control, and more competition for time and attention. Reduced self-efficacy should, in turn, impair task performance because employees feel less capable of planning, prioritizing, persisting, and completing work accurately. The impact of remote e-working post-pandemic (COVID-19) is particularly relevant, as the substantial increase in this situation can substantially alter the complexity of the environment and tasks, thus providing room for empirical investigation. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H1a: Work-family conflict is negatively associated with self-efficacy in remote e-working.

H1b: Self-efficacy is positively associated with task performance in remote e-working.

H1c: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and task performance, such that work-family conflict reduces self-efficacy, which in turn reduces task performance.

Work-related anxiety should be distinguished from both work-family conflict and stress. Stress refers to a perceived imbalance between demands and resources, whereas anxiety is an affective state characterized by apprehension, tension, worry, and physiological or cognitive unease (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Cheng & McCarthy, 2018).

In remote e-working, anxiety may arise from uncertain expectations, reduced feedback, social isolation, information scarcity, interruptions, and the need to manage complex administrative tasks without immediate support. These factors can make employees feel unable to cope with current or anticipated demands.

Because anxiety is a proximal emotional response, its impact on task performance may be more direct than indirect. Anxiety can consume attentional resources, narrow information processing, increase rumination, and reduce concentration, all of which can affect accuracy, timeliness, and decision quality (Cheng & McCarthy, 2018; Samma et al., 2020). Although anxiety may inform self-efficacy judgments under some conditions, appraisal theory suggests that emotional responses often follow cognitive evaluations and then influence behavior. Therefore, rather than assuming that anxiety necessarily reduces task performance through self-efficacy, we expect anxiety to be directly associated with lower task performance in remote e-working. Therefore we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1d: Work-related anxiety is negatively associated with task performance in remote e-working.

At the same time, the relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety, and performance may be dynamic. A large body of research shows that self-efficacy enhances motivation, persistence, and performance (Bandura, 1997; Chen et al., 2001). However, more recent work suggests that high self-efficacy can also produce complex self-regulatory effects when individuals set very challenging goals or maintain effort in demanding environments (Vancouver et al., 2002; Vancouver & Purl, 2017). In remote e-working, where boundaries between work and family are blurred, highly self-efficacious

employees may sustain effort despite pressure, which can preserve performance but also increase exposure to strain. For this reason, we interpret the empirical relationships among self-efficacy, anxiety, and performance as theoretically important but not necessarily unidirectional over time.

Taken together, these arguments lead us to model work-family conflict as a stressor that shapes self-efficacy, self-efficacy as a cognitive resource for task performance, and work-related anxiety as an emotional state with a more immediate relationship to performance. This revised logic aligns the empirical model with the sequence stressor -> cognitive appraisal -> emotional response and/or behavior.

2.2 Emotional intelligence as an emotional resource in remote e-working

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, use, and regulate emotions in oneself and others (Goleman, 1995; Law et al., 2004). In organizational contexts, EI is commonly viewed as a personal resource that supports adaptive functioning, interpersonal effectiveness, and coping with emotionally demanding situations (Boyatzis, 2009; Pirsoul et al., 2023). In remote e-working, EI may be particularly relevant because employees have fewer informal cues and less immediate support from managers and colleagues, while also facing the emotional demands created by blurred work-family boundaries.

From an appraisal perspective, EI should operate primarily at the level of emotional processing and coping. Employees with higher EI may be better able to recognize their emotions, regulate frustration or worry, and maintain constructive interactions with colleagues and family members. These abilities can support a stronger sense of personal capability and control. Therefore, in addition to examining whether EI

buffers the effects of specific stressors, we theorize that EI has a direct positive relationship with self-efficacy in remote e-working.

H2: Emotional intelligence is positively associated with self-efficacy in remote e-working.

We nevertheless also examine whether EI attenuates the negative effects of work-family conflict and work-related anxiety on self-efficacy as supplementary moderation tests. This additional test is relevant because prior research has linked EI to coping with work-family conflict and emotionally demanding work situations (Ganesh & Ganesh, 2022; Garavan et al., 2022; Robinson et al., 2025). However, the buffering role of EI may be limited when the demands are structural rather than primarily emotional. For example, EI may help employees regulate emotions, but it cannot by itself remove interruptions, workload pressure, inadequate equipment, or the absence of managerial support. Thus, EI is an emotional resource that may strengthen self-efficacy directly while also allowing for the possibility that its buffering role is weaker in fully remote domestic work contexts.

Figure 1 summarizes the theoretical model. Work-family conflict is modeled as a situational stressor that can undermine self-efficacy and, through self-efficacy, task performance. Work-related anxiety is modeled as a proximal emotional state expected to relate directly to task performance. Emotional intelligence is modeled as a personal emotional resource associated with self-efficacy, with supplementary tests of whether it attenuates the negative effects of work-family conflict and anxiety on self-efficacy.

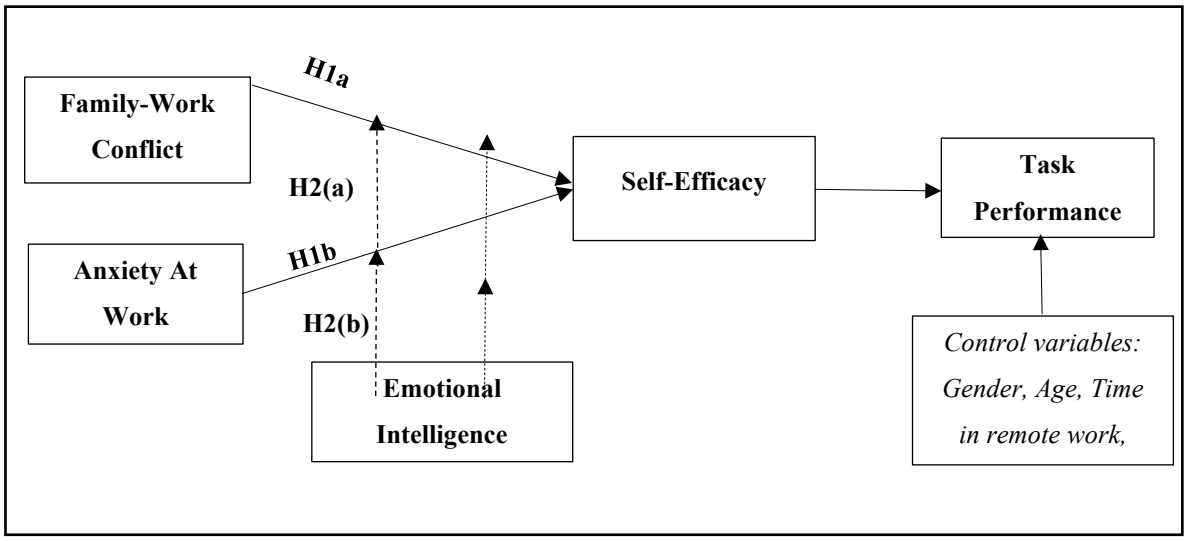

Figure 1. Theoretical Model

Source(s): Developed by the authors

3 Research methodology

3.1 Research context and sample

With the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, approximately 3 million people employed in the Brazilian public sector (federal, state, and municipal spheres) began working remotely (IPEA, 2021). Given the complexity of this modality, Brazil enacted Law No. 14,442 in 2022, which regulates remote work and defines the rights and duties of public workers and servants (Brasil, 2022). In the following years, remote work remained a consolidated practice in the public sector, representing, for example, 16% of the federal workforce (Lima, 2024). In this context, our research was carried out with 4,000 public servants from the administrative sectors (accounting and management), who perform tasks in remote *e-working* for federal and state public organizations in Brazil. This target population was obtained from the official websites of public organizations, which support remote work, as well as requested via the Access to Information Law. These lists were used due to the obligation of Brazilian public organizations to publish information

monthly on their official websites, including the name, position and place of assignment of all servers engaged in remote work.

To collect the data, a questionnaire was developed from the literature, and the questions were translated from English to Portuguese with the support of bilingual specialists to ensure linguistic accuracy and conceptual equivalence. A pretest was subsequently carried out with 5 researchers in the field and 5 professionals to verify the inconsistencies and interpretation of each of the questions.

The results led to small changes in the wording of some questions. Finally, we emailed a cover letter to 4,000 state and federal employees in which we explained the purpose of the survey, ensured anonymity and data protection (Brazilian Data Protection Law), and provided a *link* to the questionnaire (Appendix A).

To increase the number of responses, we also sent requests via *LinkedIn*. At the end of this process, a total of 334 completed questionnaires were obtained (approximately 8% of the target population). However, 23 were excluded because they were public servants who performed activities in nonadministrative areas (accounting), and 20 were excluded because they were no longer engaged in remote *e-working* activities, resulting in a total of 281 valid questionnaires. The questionnaire was sent from December 2023 to March 2024. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the public servants who responded.

Table 1. Profile of the public servant respondents

Gender	**Count**	**%**	**Age**	**Count**	**%**
Female	176	62.63	From 21–30 years	7	2.49
Male	105	37.30	From 31–40 years	82	29.18
			From 41–50 years	111	39.50
			From 51–60 years	64	22.78
			Over 60 years	17	6.05
Time performed tasks – remote			**Time performed tasks - serv. Public**	**Count**	**%**
From 1 month–5 years	275	97.86	From 1 month–5 years	19	6.76
From 6–10 years	6	2.14	From 6–10 years	58	20.64
			From 11–15 years	80	28.47
Marital status			From 16–20 years	56	19.93
Married	168	59.79	From 21–25 years	17	6.05
Single	53	18.86	From 26–30 years	21	7.47
Stable union	44	15.66	From 31–35 years	13	4.63
Divorced	14	4.98	Over 36 years	17	6.05
Widow	2	0.71			

Source(s): Developed by the authors

3.2 Measures

We developed our measurement instrument using established scales from the relevant literature with minor adaptations for remote e-working in the public sector, as shown in the Appendix. All constructs used seven-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The questionnaire was translated from English to Portuguese and reviewed by bilingual specialists to ensure linguistic accuracy and conceptual equivalence. A pretest with researchers and professionals was used to assess item clarity and contextual fit.

Work-family conflict (8 items): We measured work-family conflict based on Gutek et al. (1991). Because the scale captures both family interference with work and work interference with family, we treat the construct as bidirectional role conflict rather than as a purely family-to-work variable. This clarification is important in remote e-working, where domestic and professional role boundaries are intertwined. Examples of items include: "I am worried about my work during my free time", and "My personal obligations are so numerous that they keep me away from my work."

Work-related anxiety symptoms (6 items): We measured work-related anxiety symptoms following Samma et al. (2020). We interpret this scale as capturing negative affective symptoms associated with anxiety in remote e-working, including worry, low mood, hopelessness, and depletion. Some items are direct indicators of anxiety, whereas others capture affective-somatic manifestations that often accompany anxiety at work. To avoid overclaiming, we clarify that the measure is not intended to reproduce the full Parker and DeCotiis (1983) job-stress scale; rather, it is an adapted symptom-based work-related anxiety measure used in prior organizational research. Examples of items include: "In remote e-working, my feelings are low, characterized by anxiety and hopelessness", and "I feel tired or low on energy."

Self-efficacy (8 items): We measured self-efficacy based on Chen et al. (2001). Consistent with social cognitive theory, the construct captures the public servant's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute remote-work tasks. Examples include: "When facing difficult tasks in remote e-working, I am sure that I will perform them", and "I am confident that I can effectively perform the different tasks in remote e-working."

Task performance (6 items): We measured task performance based on Van Scotter & Motowidlo (1996); Befort & Hattrup (2003); Kappagoda et al. (2014), which included work accuracy regarding the accounting tasks performed, quantity of work performed, quality of work, operational efficiency and punctuality in meeting delivery deadlines.

Emotional intelligence (16 items): We measured emotional intelligence based on Law et al. (2004). EI is defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate one's own emotions and those of others in social and work environments. In the revised model,

EI is treated primarily as an emotional resource that can support self-efficacy and coping, rather than as a universal buffer against all contextual stressors.

Control variables: We chose control variables that may provide an alternative explanation for task performance, including gender, age, experience (length of work in the public sector and length of time working remotely) and marital status. With respect to gender, for example, women report greater psychological distress (Matud, 2004) and higher psychosomatic complaints than men do (Nimnuan et al., 2001); compared with men, women experience more family–work conflicts (Eby et al., 2005) and may experience higher levels of work-related anxiety (Xie & Johns, 1995). Like gender, age can affect perceptions of self-efficacy, as younger people tend to report more psychosomatic symptoms (Nimnuan et al., 2001). On the other hand, experience is also a factor because, depending on the Task Performance (TC,) more experienced public servants and/or those with more experience in *remote e-working* may perform better than less experienced workers (Chung and Monroe, 2000). However, experience may also increase anxiety because of obligations to develop improved tasks (Chen et al., 2016). The presence or absence of children and marital status can also affect family–work conflict (Adkins & Premeaux, 2012). The respondents were asked to indicate their marital status: single, married, or common-law marriage. Age and experience (time in public service and in remote work) are captured through responses to an open question. The gender item offers 4 choices: female, male, nonbinary, and I prefer not to answer.

3.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling were used for analysis. Structural equation modeling aims to examine the structure of the interrelationships between the constructs of the analysis. It combines the use of multivariate methods of

factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. Statistical analysis is performed with the help of SmartPLS software.

The analysis was carried out in three stages: first, the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis; second, the measurement model; and, later, the structural model. In the measurement model, in accordance with Hair Jr. et al. (2022), four main components are evaluated: reliability: (i) internal and (ii) compound; validities: (iii) convergent and (iv) discriminant.

In the analysis of the structural model, we sought to verify whether there were relationships between the constructs and the connections. This process, according to Hair Jr. et al. (2022), confirms the adequacy of the measurement model and attests to the significance of the relationships between the study constructs.

4 Results

4.1 Measurement model

To apply the PLS-SEM, tests were performed on the reflective measurement model to verify its adequacy. The results (see Table 2) were analyzed according to the criteria recommended by Hair Jr. et al. (2022). The factor loading values excluded from the model are presented in Appendix A. To ensure convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was analyzed, which presented values greater than 0.5. For internal consistency reliability, the composite reliability values were determined, which were greater than 0.7, and the Cronbach's alpha values were close to or greater than 0.6, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the measurement model

Constructs	Factor loading		Reliability		Conv. validity
	Minor	Major	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Work–Family Conflict	0.642	0.815	0.862	0.887	0.529
Job Anxiety	0.706	0.852	0.883	0.911	0.633
Self-Efficacy	0.790	0.893	0.936	0.947	0.691
Emotional Intelligence	0.536	0.813	0.919	0.931	0.515
Task Performance	0.693	0.771	0.590	0.784	0.548

Source(s): Developed by the authors

To verify discriminant validity, which assesses whether latent variables are independent of each other (Hair Jr. et al., 2022), we used the Fornell–Larcker criterion, demonstrating the highest loadings in the corresponding variables (main diagonal).

Table 3. Discriminant validity - Fornell-Larcker

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Work–family conflict	**0.728**									
2. Work anxiety	0.631	**0.796**								
3. Self-efficacy	-0.447	-0.472	**0.831**							
4. Emotional intelligence	-0.366	-0.503	0.512	**0.718**						
5. Task performance	-0.205	-0.365	0.506	0.418	**0.740**					
6. Marital status	0.073	0.018	-0.059	-0.061	-0.008	-				
7. Gender	-0.049	-0.018	0.097	0.170	0.110	-0.030	-			
8. Age	0.049	-0.082	0.067	0.244	0.157	0.097	0.145	-		
9. Public service time	0.084	-0.051	0.066	0.238	0.180	0.097	0.081	0.729	-	
10. Remote work time	0.019	0.050	0.101	0.035	0.165	0.053	-0.030	0.025	0.142	-

Source(s): Developed by the authors

We also assessed discriminant validity (see Table 4) using the heterotrait–monotrait method (HTMT), which presented values lower than 0.8. Thus, discriminant validity is not a problem in our model.

Table 4. Quality criteria

Constructs	R2	R2 Adj	Q^2	Max. VIF
Self-efficacy	0.366	0.354	0.244	2.801
Task performance	0.324	0.304	0.152	2.226

Source(s): Developed by the authors

4.2 Structural model

The structural model tests the strength and direction of variables by examining collinearity (VIF), structural model relationships (hypothesis testing), the coefficient of determination (R^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) (Hair Jr. et al., 2022). The results of the analyses of direct and mediation relationships are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Path relationships

Panel A – Direct relationships				
Path	**β**	**T value**	**P values**	
Family–work conflict -> Self-efficacy	-0.208	3.454	0.001***	
Family–work conflict -> Task performance	0.132	1.588	0.112	
Anxiety at work -> Self-efficacy	-0.143	1.603	0.109	
Anxiety at work -> Task performance	-0.247	2.381	0.017**	
Self-efficacy -> Task performance	0.422	4.924	0.000***	
Emotional intelligence -> Self-efficacy	0.357	5.380	0.000***	
Marital status -> Task performance	-0.004	0.084	0.933	
Gender -> Task performance	0.064	1.278	0.201	
Age -> Task performance	0.027	0.350	0.726	
Public service time -> Task performance	0.087	1.281	0.200	
Remote work time -> Task performance	0.121	2.357	0.018**	
Panel B – Mediation Analysis				
Path	**B**	**T value**	**P values**	**Hypothesis**
Family–work conflict -> Self-efficacy -> Task performance	-0.088	2.694	0.007***	H1a
Anxiety at work -> Self-efficacy -> Task performance	-0.060	1.506	0.132	H1b
Panel C – Moderation Analysis				
Path	**B**	**T value**	**P values**	**Hypothesis**
Family–work conflict x Emotional intelligence -> Self-efficacy	0.134	1.503	0.133	H2a
Anxiety at work x Emotional intelligence -> Self-efficacy	-0.039	0.437	0.662	H2b

*Note: * p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01.*

Source(s): Developed by the authors

Next, the structural model was evaluated to verify the relationships of the theoretical model in which the relationships between the variables and their predictive capabilities were observed. Hair Jr et al. (2022) recommend evaluating the structural coefficient (β), the t value (β/standard deviation) and the p value of each relationship, also, applying the bootstrap technique with a resampling of 5,000.

The results in Table 5 indicate that work-family conflict is negatively associated with self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.208$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1a. Self-efficacy is positively associated with task performance ($\beta = 0.422$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1b. The indirect effect of work-family conflict on task performance through self-efficacy is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.088$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1c. These results suggest that work-family conflict undermines task performance primarily by reducing employees' perceived capability to deal with remote-work demands.

Work-related anxiety is negatively associated with task performance ($\beta = -0.247$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H1d. By contrast, the relationship between work-related anxiety and self-efficacy is not significant ($\beta = -0.143$, $p > 0.10$), and the indirect effect of work-related anxiety on task performance through self-efficacy is not supported ($\beta = -0.060$, $p > 0.10$). This pattern is consistent with the revised theoretical position that anxiety is a proximal emotional state that may impair attention, concentration, and task execution more directly than it reshapes self-efficacy beliefs.

Emotional intelligence is positively related to self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H2. However, the supplementary moderation tests are not significant. The interaction between emotional intelligence and work-family conflict in predicting self-efficacy is not confirmed ($\beta = 0.134$, $p > 0.10$), nor is the interaction between emotional intelligence and work-related anxiety in predicting self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.039$, $p > 0.10$). The control variables marital status, gender, age, and time in public service do not show

significant relationships with task performance, whereas time spent working remotely is positively related to task performance.

4.3 Discussion

The findings support the argument that work-family conflict functions as a remote-work stressor that undermines task performance indirectly through self-efficacy. When public servants experience competing family and work demands in the same physical space, they may perceive less control over time, attention, and task completion. This reduced appraisal of capability lowers task performance. The result is consistent with social cognitive theory, because efficacy beliefs shape how employees mobilize effort and persist when they face demanding tasks (Bandura, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). It also extends research on remote e-working by showing that the performance consequences of role conflict depend on cognitive appraisals of capability, not only on the presence of conflict itself.

The results also clarify the role of work-related anxiety. The nonsignificant anxiety -> self-efficacy path and the significant anxiety -> task performance path indicate that anxiety is not best understood here as a stressor that necessarily operates through self-efficacy. Rather, consistent with appraisal-based reasoning, anxiety appears to be a proximal affective response that can impair task execution directly. In remote e-working, anxious employees may struggle with concentration, decision quality, and punctuality even when their general beliefs about capability remain relatively stable. This interpretation helps explain why the originally expected anxiety-mediated pathway was not supported and why the direct effect of anxiety on performance is more robust.

The findings regarding emotional intelligence are also theoretically informative. EI is positively associated with self-efficacy, suggesting that employees who are better

able to perceive and regulate emotions tend to report stronger capability beliefs in remote e-working. However, EI does not significantly moderate the negative effects of work-family conflict or anxiety on self-efficacy. This pattern indicates that EI should not be treated as a universal buffer. In domestic remote-work environments, structural and contextual conditions - such as workload, interruptions, technology, workspace quality, and managerial support - may exceed what individual emotional regulation can offset.

Finally, the results invite a more nuanced interpretation of self-efficacy. Although self-efficacy is positively related to task performance in this study, remote e-working may generate dynamic and potentially bidirectional relationships among efficacy beliefs, stress, anxiety, and performance. Highly self-efficacious employees may persist and perform well under pressure, but such persistence may also expose them to sustained demands over time (Vancouver et al., 2002; Vancouver & Purl, 2017). Longitudinal research is therefore needed to examine whether self-efficacy remains uniformly beneficial or whether its effects depend on workload, recovery opportunities, and organizational support.

5 Conclusion and Contributions

5.1 Conclusion

This paper analyzed how work-family conflict, work-related anxiety, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence are associated with task performance in remote e-working. Drawing on appraisal theory and social cognitive theory, the revised manuscript distinguishes among situational stressors, cognitive capability appraisals, emotional responses, and behavioral outcomes. Data from 281 Brazilian public servants were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The findings indicate that work-family conflict reduces self-efficacy and, through this mechanism, undermines task performance. Work-related

anxiety, by contrast, is more directly associated with lower task performance and is not transmitted through self-efficacy.

These findings show that the psychological mechanisms affecting performance in remote e-working differ across constructs. Work-family conflict appears to threaten employees' sense of capability because it creates competing demands and weakens perceived control over work. Anxiety appears to affect task performance more immediately by disrupting attention, concentration, and execution. For managers and policymakers, this distinction matters: interventions designed to reduce role conflict and strengthen self-efficacy may not be sufficient to address anxiety-related performance losses, which may require more direct psychological and organizational support.

Emotional intelligence was positively associated with self-efficacy but did not significantly moderate the relationships between work-family conflict and self-efficacy or between work-related anxiety and self-efficacy. This result suggests that EI is useful as a personal emotional resource, but its capacity to compensate for structural remote-work demands is limited. In fully remote domestic environments, organizational practices - such as workload management, clear performance expectations, flexible scheduling, manager support, and adequate technology - may be necessary to complement individual emotional competencies.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it advances research on remote e-working by integrating appraisal theory and social cognitive theory to clarify the sequence linking remote-work stressors, cognitive appraisals, emotional responses, and performance. Second, it shows that self-efficacy is a key mechanism through which work-family conflict affects task performance among public servants working remotely.

Third, it refines the role of emotional intelligence by showing that EI is positively associated with self-efficacy but does not necessarily buffer the effects of work-family conflict or anxiety. This distinction is important because it identifies the boundary conditions of individual emotional resources in domestic remote-work contexts.

5.3 Practical implications

The findings offer practical implications for public-sector managers. Because work-family conflict reduces performance through self-efficacy, managers should create conditions that strengthen employees' perceived control over remote-work tasks. Examples include clearer task priorities, predictable communication routines, realistic deadlines, training for remote task management, and flexibility that helps employees manage role boundaries. Because anxiety is directly associated with lower performance, organizations should also provide resources aimed at reducing anxiety itself, such as psychological support, workload monitoring, frequent feedback, and manager availability. Finally, EI-related training may be valuable, but it should complement rather than replace structural support for remote work.

5.4 Limitations and future research

This study has limitations that create opportunities for future research. First, the sample consists of Brazilian public servants working remotely, so the findings may not generalize to private-sector, hybrid, or face-to-face contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference and cannot fully capture the dynamic or bidirectional relationships among self-efficacy, stress, anxiety, and performance. Third, the anxiety measure captures work-related anxiety symptoms rather than the full Parker and DeCotiis (1983) job-stress construct; future studies should compare alternative anxiety and stress instruments and

test whether direct and indirect effects depend on measurement choices. Fourth, self-reported data may differ from supervisor, coworker, or family-member assessments. Future research should use longitudinal designs, multi-source performance measures, and additional contextual variables such as organizational support, workload, workspace quality, and recovery opportunities.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization: CAS; FSR and DNG; methodology: CAS and FSR; formal analysis: CAS; FSR and DNG; data curation: CAS; writing - original draft: CAS; writing - review & editing: FSR and DNG; Supervision: CAS; funding acquisition: FSR.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI tools were not used in any part of the article.

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Appendix

Self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2001). 7-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

1. In my perception, I am able to achieve most of the goals I have set for myself in remote e-working.
2. When facing difficult tasks in remote e-working, I am sure that I will accomplish them.
3. In general, I think I can obtain results that are important to me in performing tasks in remote e-working.
4. I believe that in remote e-working, I can have maximum success in any venture I set out to do.
5. In my perception, I am able to overcome many challenges successfully in the performance of tasks in remote e-working.
6. I am confident that I can effectively perform many different tasks in remote e-working.
7. Compared with other people, I can perform most tasks very well in remote e-working.
8. Even when things are tough, I can perform very well in remote e-working.

Family–work conflict (Gutek et al., 1991). 7-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

1. When I finish remote e-working, I am too tired to do some things I would like to do at home.
2. In remote e-working, there are many tasks/activities that need to be completed that use my personal time.
3. My family does not like how often I'm preoccupied with my work while I'm at home and/or socializing.
4. My remote e-working activities interfere with the time I would like to spend with family/friends.
5. I often get very tired in remote e-working because of the things I have to do at home.
6. My personal demands are so great that they interfere with my time in remote e-working.
7. My superiors and co-workers don't like how often I become worried about my personal life during remote e-working*.
8. My personal life demands time that I would like to spend in remote e-working.

Anxiety at work (Samma et al., 2020). 7-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree (1) strongly agree (7).

1. I have little interest or pleasure in doing things in remote e-working.
2. In remote e-working, my feelings are low, characterized by anxiety and hopelessness.
3. During the period when I am performing tasks in remote e-working, I find it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep, or I sleep excessively.
4. During the period when I am performing tasks in remote e-working, I feel tired or low on energy.
5. During the period when I am performing tasks in remote e-working, most of the time, I feel a lack of appetite or overeat.
6. When I'm performing tasks in remote *e-working*, I have bad feelings about myself—for example—that I'm a failure or that I've let myself or my family down.

Task performance (Van Scotter and Motowidlo, 1996; Befort and Hattrup, 2003; Kappagoda et al., 2014).7-point Likert scale: Totally dissatisfied (1) to totally satisfied (7).

1. How often do you direct your actions to do resource-saving work in *remote* e-working? *
2. How often are you given special tasks (trust) to perform in *remote* e-working?

3. How often do you take the initiative to solve problems not defined or not foreseen by your boss in *remote* e-working?
4. How often do you perform tasks within what has been established in remote *e-working*?*
5. From 1 to 7, what grade do you think your boss would give you for your work results in remote *e-working*?*

Emotional intelligence (Law et al., 2004). 7-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

1. I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time.
2. I understand my own emotions well.
3. I really understand what I feel.
4. I always know if I'm happy or not.
5. I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior.*
6. I am a good observer of the emotions of others.*
7. I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.*
8. I understand well the emotions of the people around me.
9. I always set goals for myself, and then I try my best to achieve them.
10. I always tell myself that I am a competent person.
11. I'm a self-motivated person.
12. I always encourage myself to do my best.
13. I am able to control my temper and deal with difficulties rationally.
14. I am perfectly capable of controlling my own emotions.
15. I can always calm down quickly when I'm very angry.
16. I have good control of my own emotions.

* Omitted due to low factor loading.