Deciding to Adopt Telework: The Role of Experience, Trust, and Control Across Three Countries

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Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking has experienced a significant resurgence and has become the focus of extensive research. While various aspects of telework have been explored, the influence of cultural elements—particularly control and trust—as well as prior experience, has received less attention. To address this gap, this study aims to comparatively examine how these factors influence managers' decisions to implement telework. To this end, data were collected from executives in three countries—France, Switzerland, and Canada—using an online survey. The comparative analysis focused on 359 questionnaires collected from the three countries. The results show that all three countries demonstrate favorable conditions for teleworking, based on cultural elements and prior experiences. However, Canada exhibits a stronger adaptation to teleworking compared to the other two countries. Furthermore, the role of control was more pronounced in France compared to the other two countries, whereas in Canada, a lower level of control is exercised. Additionally, trust plays a key role in explaining the stronger adaptation to teleworking.

Keywords: remote work, telework decision, cultural elements, trust, control, prior experience

INTRODUCTION

The history of telework dates back several decades; however, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in late 2019 prompted many organizations around the world to transform their work and management practices by adopting telework also known as remote work or telecommuting (Fana et al., 2020). During the crisis, governments have imposed strict lockdown measures and mandated social distancing to slow the spread of the virus (Criscuolo et al., 2021). For many organizations, therefore, adopting a teleworking arrangement was the only way to keep businesses afloat and avoid forced layoffs. As the world emerged

from the pandemic, the use of telework has become a permanent fixture, but a few years have passed, and now the sustained use of telework remains uncertain in many countries, including those in developed economies. In some companies, current levels of teleworking are now three times higher than the number of full-time remote positions prior to the pandemic (Gunes, 2023).

Alternatively, some companies have adopted hybrid work policies, allowing employees to work from home on certain days (Tremblay, 2024). Some companies have rejected remote work policies, opting to return to traditional shared office spaces. This shift is often driven by concerns over maintaining employee productivity and ensuring adequate control and oversight of employees (Wagner, 2022). Managers of many large companies across different countries have likewise announced "back to the office" policies, often motivated by concerns over trust, operational efficiency, and maintaining managerial control (Lebowitz et al., 2023). Several major Canadian companies, such as Amazon, have shifted away from fully remote work policies, requiring employees to return to the office at least part of the time (Gibson et al., 2023). In France, many employees wanted to continue work from home one or more days per week post-pandemic, but there was a massive recall of employees to work on-site (Jentjens et al., 2023). A similar trend has been observed in the United States, with companies such as Twitter (Pandita et al., 2024) also rolling back their fully remote work policies and encouraging employees to return to the office.

Although researchers have cited various factors, such as concerns about productivity and innovation (Laker, 2023); challenges related to collaboration and creativity (Tønnessen et al., 2023); difficulties in onboarding and mentoring new employees (Esha et al., 2023); misalignment between telework and certain departments or roles (Heiden et al., 2023); the nature of specific jobs, such as those in healthcare, manufacturing, and logistics (Al-Kassawneh, 2022), and the persistence of the digital divide (Leonardi, 2020), as reasons why teleworking has not been fully institutionalized in many countries, the core challenges appear to center around two fundamental elements: trust and control. Traditional Western management has historically emphasized formal management styles that rely on direct observation and supervision of employees, aiming to ensure efficiency and prevent the opportunistic misuse of work time (Sitkin et al., 2020). Remote work arrangements (RWA) can create physical barriers that make it more challenging for executives and managers to directly control and provide feedback on employee work compared to traditional in-office settings (Pianese et al., 2023). On the other hand, successful telework, often characterized by the absence of face-to-face interactions and physical presence, requires a strong foundation of trust (Ficapal-Cusí et al., 2024) between employees and managers. Without the ability to observe employees' daily activities, managers may struggle to trust that work is being completed, which can lead to micromanagement and reduced employee engagement. Conversely, employees may feel pressured to constantly demonstrate their productivity, which can lead to overwork and burnout.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as telework became a necessity to avoid operational shutdowns, organizations were compelled to temporarily set aside traditional concerns about control and trust in remote work arrangements (Lumineau et al., 2023). It is known that when control and trust are effectively balanced within organizational systems, individuals tend to exhibit higher levels of commitment, motivation, collaboration, and performance (Bachmann et al., 2001). This is because they have a clear understanding of expectations and confidence that their efforts will be recognized and rewarded. On the other hand, efforts to establish control and build trust often rely on distinct, and sometimes opposing, social and psychological mechanisms (Castelfranchi et al., 2000). Certain forms of control, for example, can undermine trust and, in turn, organizational performance by signaling distrust or ill intent, thereby weakening employees' intrinsic motivation to cooperate (Ghoshal & Moran, 1996). Because individuals differ significantly in their perceptions, motivations, capabilities, and goals (Christ, 2013), the ways in which trust and control interact, and their resulting impact on organizational outcomes, are often unpredictable.

These dilemmas raise several questions about the roles of trust and control, as well as their interaction, in teleworking arrangements, which this study aims to investigate. Questions such as: Why are managers in some countries less inclined to adopt telework? Is the acceptance of remote work arrangements influenced by cultural dimensions of trust and control? This research aims to address these questions by investigating the relationship between trust and control within the framework arrangements and their influence on managerial decision-making. It is also expected that prior positive experience with telework,

whether as an employee or a manager, will enhance perceptions of its practicality, productivity, and usefulness, helping to overcome doubts and foster the pro-remote mindset necessary for its adoption. A manager, for example, who led a successful remote team during the COVID-19 pandemic, or even before, may be more open to continuing with remote or hybrid models (Larsen, 2023). Accordingly, this study also examines the extent to which prior experiences influence managerial decisions regarding telework adoption. These questions are explored through a comparative study based on data collected from executives in three countries: Canada, France, and Switzerland.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND HYPOTHESES' DEVELOPMENT

Control and Executives' Telework Decisions

Teleworking has become a familiar term in today's professional landscape. It refers to a flexible work arrangement that allows employees to perform their duties from a location other than the traditional office. Crucially, this arrangement is designed to maintain work quality and ensure that employees remain fully committed and productive in fulfilling their responsibilities (Vartiainen, 2021). This often involves working from home, the most common scenario, but can also include locations such as coffee shops, coworking spaces, or any other remote setting (Tremblay et al., 2025). Advances in communication technologies such as video conferencing, instant messaging, and cloud computing enable telework. It can be implemented on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the needs and agreements of both the employee and the employer (Bonifacio, 2023). Thus, some companies offer telework as a flexible option, allowing employees to work from home one or more days per week and even covering related expenses, while others have fully embraced it as a permanent work arrangement.

In recent years, numerous studies (Tremblay, 2003, 2023; Tremblay et al., 2006) have examined telework and its effects on employees and executives. These studies underscore the importance of considering both the benefits and drawbacks of telework to fully comprehend its implications. Among the most frequently cited benefits for employers is cost reduction—not in terms of employee wages, but in operational expenses (Harpaz, 2002; Kłopotek, 2017; Simenenko & Lentjushenkova, 2021). It significantly lowers the costs associated with physical office spaces, including electricity, water, equipment, rent, transportation, parking, workspace, and furniture (Di Martino & Wirth, 1990; Zhou & Hagen, 2006). As a result, organizations can better manage their expenditures while retaining a higher proportion of their productive employees. On the other hand, teleworking is highly valued by employees, as it helps reduce various personal expenses, such as commuting costs, work attire, and daily transportation (Lari, 2012; Ravalet & Rérat, 2019). More importantly, remote work allows employees to save the time typically spent commuting, giving them more opportunity to focus on personal activities, rest, or family responsibilities. Other positive aspects of telework include greater job autonomy for employees (Davali et al., 2022), reduced psychological stress in the workplace (Raišienė et al., 2021), increased opportunities for family time (Tremblay, et al., 2006), and more flexible daily schedules resulting from increased free time.

However, telework also faces significant challenges. Beyond common issues such as feelings of social isolation (Kamerade & Burchell, 2004), difficulty separating work from personal and family life (Kylin, 2007), self-discipline struggles (Haddon & Lewis, 1994), lack of professional support (Bentley et al., 2016), challenges in managing remote employees, equipment costs, and security concerns (Ozcelik, 2010; Pyöriä, 2011), researchers have identified several additional obstacles. In this regard, Nash et al. (2020) highlighted two primary challenges of remote work: the transparency gap and trust issues. The authors' insight into the transparency gap uncovers a deeper challenge inherent in remote work. Leadership teams, accustomed to traditional office settings, often equate visibility with productivity (Tanskala, 2025). This perspective overlooks the fact that many tasks can be effectively performed outside the confines of a physical office, thereby reinforcing a reliance on direct managerial control.

Control, in its simplest form, refers to the power or ability to influence, direct, or manage individuals or processes through the establishment of rules, norms, procedures, incentives, and enforcement mechanisms (Daft, 2001). This concept is not limited to a single form of control; it encompasses direct mechanisms (e.g., output control), indirect top-down influences from managers (e.g., leadership style) and

organizations (e.g., organizational identity), as well as bottom-up forms of control initiated by remote employees. Although certain management practices and organizational structures may not be explicitly designed to exert control, they often influence employees' willingness to align with the company's vision, values, and goals (Pianese et al., 2023). Hence, organizational control is not merely a coercive mechanism to improve efficiency, but also a product of human sense-making and the processes through which meaning is constructed (Sitkin et al., 2010). According to the literature review, while managers recognize organizational control as a significant challenge (Travaillé et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2015), the relationship between control and remote work arrangements (RWAs) remains insufficiently understood. However, this study hypothesizes that control—regardless of its form—shapes the implementation of remote work. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: *Control has a significant effect on executives' decisions to implement remote work.*

Experience and Telework Decision

The influence of experience on the performance of organizational systems has long been a subject of scholarly interest. Experience, in general, refers to the knowledge and skills gained through direct involvement or observation. It encompasses the totality of a person's interactions, feelings, and perceptions throughout their life (Klofutar et al., 2022). Dewey (1958) described experience as a double-barreled concept, encompassing both the event being experienced and the individual's active engagement in the experiencing process. According to the literature, employee experience can be defined as the sum of interactions influenced by employees' perceptions of both individual and organizational factors within the workplace (Grover et al., 2022). This definition implies that employees' perceptions of individual factors, such as career decisions and goals, and organizational factors, like recruitment, job skill development, compensation, and benefits, collectively shape their overall experience.

Several studies have also explored the impact of prior experience on both individual outcomes and organizational performance. In this regard, Ghosh and Itam (2020) suggest that human resources strategies play a key role in facilitating sustainable employee experiences, ultimately fostering an emotional bond between employees and the organization. According to them, this emotional bond contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, performance, and employee retention. Additionally, Chen and Fulmer (2018) examined the influence of employee experience on flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction. Their study revealed that when employees perceive their workplace environment as supportive and engaging, they are more likely to adopt flexible work options, which in turn enhances both job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Some research (McCurdy et al., 2004; Reis, 2016) suggests that, alongside physical, digital, and technical experience, cultural experience —shaping the organizational climate —is essential for successfully adapting to remote work. Studies show that experience and culture have reciprocal effects. First, a culture that positively influences employee experience increases their willingness to work (Morgan, 2017) and enables them to thrive in a remote work environment (Adamovich, 2022). Additionally, a positive organizational culture supports employee development by encouraging risk-taking, fostering creativity, and promoting effective collaboration, all of which build upon employees' previous experiences (Zhang, 2024; Ahmed et al., 2016). In such an environment, employees are more likely to be in a positive mental state, enabling them to accept new systems and programs and adapt more quickly.

On the other hand, experience can play a crucial role in shaping a remote work culture within organizations. Positive prior experiences contribute to higher morale and increased motivation among employees (Tanskala, 2025; Kato, 2025). Organizations that prioritize employee experience tend to cultivate a culture of adaptability and resilience. They also promote continuous learning, growth, and skill development, key components of the employee experience (Kayyali, 2025; Sharma, 2024), which ultimately support more effective adaptation to change, including remote work environments. Considering all these discussions, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: *Experience plays a significant role in shaping executives' decisions to adapt remote work.*

Trust and Its Direct and Mediating Roles

As noted, discussions of control naturally give rise to considerations of trust. Trust, as a cultural element, is a fundamental aspect of how individuals interact, collaborate, and form relationships within and across cultural contexts (Klein et al., 2019. Due to their close interrelation, some scholars regard trust and culture as interchangeable concepts (Searle et al., 2025). Although empirical evidence remains limited, existing research on the relationship between control and trust in organizational settings presents different findings. Findings from some studies (Weibel et al., 2016) suggest that control can facilitate organizational trust by ensuring consistent handling of recurring issues and by reinforcing the legitimacy of decisions through the application of standardized criteria. The research conducted by Weibel et al. (2016) across several European countries, including France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, demonstrates a positive relationship between control and employees' organizational trust. Conversely, some scholars (Searle et al., 2025) question the positive link between control and trust, suggesting that the presence of control may reduce or even eliminate the necessity for trust, and the opposite can also be true. This group of authors argues, when used excessively in place of trust-based practices, controls can undermine or even crowd out trust and are thus unnecessary. Accordingly, the third hypothesis proposed is the following:

H3: *There is a significant relationship between organizational control and executives' trust in their employees.*

Additionally, knowledge from past experiences plays a crucial role in assessing the trustworthiness of entities, such as individuals, organizations, or agents (Ying-Hueih et al., 2010). Indeed, experience is a key factor in shaping human behavior. In other words, past experiences shape multiple facets of our lives, such as expertise, attitudes, expectations, and emotions, and significantly influence trust in interpersonal relationships (Hafizoğlu et al., 2019). In this context, Dietrich et al., (2012) found that the impact of past experience on human trust in systems and technology varies depending on the context. They indicate that negative past experiences reduce individuals' trust in the related phenomena, while Dutton et al. (2006) show that positive past experiences increase trust; however, this effect diminishes over time. While there is limited direct evidence on how remote work experience impacts executives' trust, it can be reasonably expected, based on existing discussions, that such experience plays a significant role in shaping executives' trust in employees. This influence varies depending on whether the manager's telework experience has been positive, negative, or limited. As a result, the next hypothesis can be stated as:

H4: *Prior experience in telework positively influences executives' trust in their employees.*

The relationship between trust and executives' decisions to adapt telework appears to be evident, although the nature and strength of this relationship may vary. Researchers (Peters et al., 2010, Kaplan et al., 2018) have consistently identified trust issues at both the organizational and managerial levels as significant barriers to the broader adoption of telework in many organizations. At the organizational level, the extent to which management trusts employees plays a critical role in shaping decisions about implementing telework policies (Jentjens et al., 2023). On an individual level, trust between managers and subordinates can influence which employees are deemed suitable for remote work (Jentjens, 2023).

Additionally, differences in social or public trust across nations may influence the level of trust within organizations (Hu & Wang, 2014). For example, France is often characterized as a low-trust society, based on individuals' general reluctance to trust others (Fukuyama et al, 1997). For this reason, even in the recent time, there has been significant distrust toward teleworking in this country (Ruiller et al., 2019), which has led to its limited implementation nationwide (Eurostat, 2021). The trust issue is exacerbated when companies, uncertain about the efficacy of remote work, mandate a return to the office (Mohamed et al., 2024). Such decisions can signal a fundamental lack of trust in employees' ability to work autonomously. This not only demotivates employees who have adapted to and perhaps thrived in a remote setting (Chit, 2024), but it also undermines the potential benefits of remote work, such as improved work-life balance

(Yan, 2022), reduced commute times (Caulfield & Charly, 2022), and increased focus and productivity. In line with this discussion, our next hypothesis is developed as:

H5: *Trust plays a crucial role in shaping executives' telework-related decisions.*

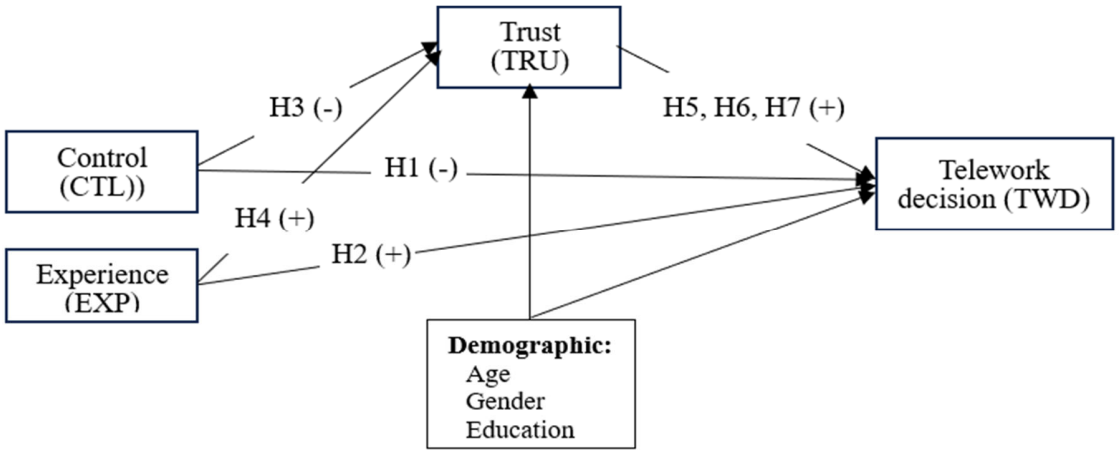
Executives and managers with a high need for control may be reluctant to embrace telework due to perceived risks such as reduced supervision and potential declines in productivity. However, when trust in employees is high, executives may feel more comfortable relinquishing some control, believing that employees will remain accountable and perform effectively. In this way, we believe trust can mediate the relationship between control and telework decisions by mitigating concerns associated with reduced oversight and increasing the likelihood of telework adoption. Similarly, prior experience with telework—whether positive or negative—shapes executives' attitudes and levels of trust in remote work arrangements. Positive past experiences often enhance trust in employees' ability to work independently, which, in turn, makes managers more inclined to support or implement telework policies. Conversely, negative experiences may erode trust, making managers more resistant to allowing remote work. Thus, trust serves as a key mediating factor that links both control and prior experience to executives' telework decisions. Accordingly, the two last hypotheses are proposed as the following:

H6: *Trust mediates the link between managerial control and their decisions for implementation of telework.*

H7: *Trust mediates the link between managerial experience and their decisions for implementation of telework.*

Based on the preceding discussion, including the theoretical foundations, formulated hypotheses, and the main objective of the study, the proposed research framework is presented in Figure 1. Since participant demographics (i.e., executives in this study) are also expected to influence the variables under investigation, their effects are accounted for in the proposed research model.

FIGURE 1
THE RESEARCH PROPOSED MODEL



METHODOLOGY

Design and Type of Study

This study is an empirical- comparative investigation that employs a quantitative design grounded in the descriptive-analytical method. It is a descriptive correlational research study, as it aims to identify

cultural elements—specifically, trust and control—and prior experience that help explain managers' telework decisions in three countries, and to examine the correlations among these variables. Primary data were collected through a survey administered to executives across three countries.

Participants

The survey targeted executives from various organizations and companies in France, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, and Italy. More specifically, the statistical population of this study consists of executives from the aforementioned countries whose organizations are currently implementing telework, have prior experience with it, or have not adopted teleworking at all. Belgium and Italy were excluded from the analysis due to the smaller number of responses compared to the other three countries, which could have introduced bias into the comparative analysis results. Given the broad scope of this population considering the research conditions, a sampling approach was employed to represent the target group. The sample size was determined using a large-population sampling method, with a sampling error of ±0.5 and a 95% confidence interval. Using this method, the minimum required sample size was determined to be 340 executives. However, the researchers opted to collect the maximum number of responses possible. Finally, data analysis was conducted on a total of 359 completed questionnaires. The sample was stratified based on variables such as age group, gender, education level, seniority, and type of organization, as detailed in Table 1.

Measures and Instruments

In this study, data were collected through an online questionnaire that included numerous questions covering control variables, trust, experience, teleworking decisions, and other factors. However, for the purposes of this paper, only 20 questions—measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree)—were selected for analysis. These questions were adapted from the qualitative phase of this study and various prior research.

Control and Experience: Independent Variables

To develop the criteria for control, the models proposed by Weibel et al. (2016) were initially used as primary references to identify key factors, while the measures were developed based on Verburg et al. (2018). Accordingly, we consider three items of control to assess their relative strength as predictors of trust and telework decisions. The respondents rated each item on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The mean score was calculated, with higher values indicating greater control of employees. To assess telework experience, five items were developed based on the qualitative study section of this research, drawing on Svensson et al. (2023) and Knoesen et al. (2020) as primary sources in this regard. For this case, we also asked the respondents to rate each item on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score indicates that the higher telework experience.

Telework Decision: Dependent Variable

Telework decision was measured by 6 items on a 5-point scale. These items were derived from criteria in authoritative sources on telework, particularly Tremblay (2003, 2023) and Clark (1998). As before, respondents rated each item on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The mean score of the 6 items was calculated, with a higher score indicating a higher level of executives' decisions to adopt telework.

Trust: Mediating Variable

We used six measures of trust, with items drawn primarily from Weibel et al. (2016) and Verburg et al. (2018) to identify key factors. These measures were further refined based on findings from the qualitative phase of this research. To assess executives' decision to adopt telework, we also asked the respondents to rate each item on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). As before, a higher score indicates higher agreement of managers to implement telework in organizations.

Data Analysis

SEM is an advanced statistical method for analysis of complex data and multiple relationships among variables (Stein et al., 2012). It is used, especially in social science and management research, to determine relationships between observed and latent variables (Mueller et al., 2018). A leading software package in this regard is Amos, which not only simplifies the model-building process but also enhances the interpretability of results, thus providing immediate visual feedback and making models easier to modify (Collier, 2020). Five indices were used to assess the goodness of fit of the proposed model, including $\chi 2/df$ (Chi-square distributions / degrees of freedom ≤5), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ≤8), NFI (Normed Fit Index ≥ 90), RFI (Relative Fit Index ≥80), and CFI (Relative Fit index ≥ 90) (Lomax, 2013). Moreover, SPSS 27 was used to calculate Cronbach's alpha coefficient, central tendencies, dispersion, and univariate and bivariate analyses to ensure reliability, internal consistency, and discriminant validity. The effect of the mediating variable was calculated by means of the Soble Test. Finally, the correlation matrix was submitted to path analysis, along with the hypothetical relationships depicted in Figure 1.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis of the Measures

As Table 1 demonstrates, a total of 359 executives from France, Canada, and Switzerland completed the online survey questionnaire; of these, 45% were male (n = 161) and 55% female (n= 198). The average age of the sample was 33.5 years (SD=9.01), ranging from <21 years to > 60 years which the age groups of 51 to 60 years being the highest participants at 33.7%. Almost 58.1% of the sample (n=212) reported having more than 10 years of training. Furthermore, 75.6% of the participants (n=260) indicated that they have between zero and 10 years of seniority in their managerial positions. Finally, the respondents included 45.6% from France, 30.1% from Switzerland, 24.4% from Canada, and 1.6% from other countries.

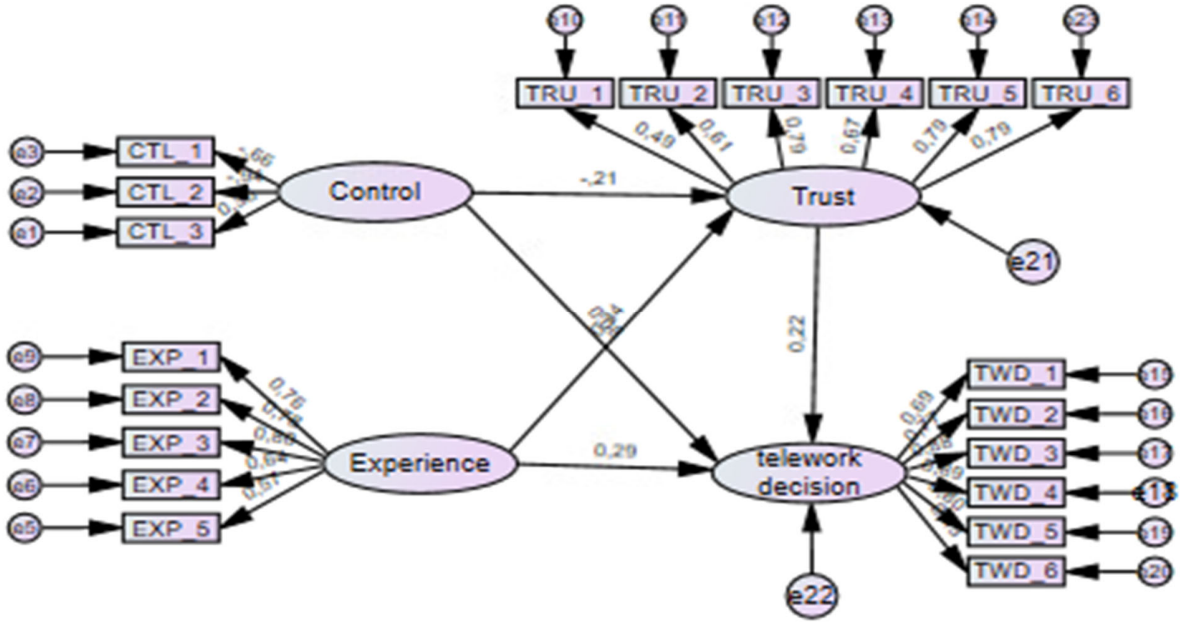
A multifactor model incorporating all constructs was specified using structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS and tested on three datasets collected from three different countries. After calculating the factor loadings and comparing them with the recommended threshold values (>.40) (Debnath & Khatri, 2024), the final model retained 20 items distributed across four constructs (see Figure 2). As shown, all item loadings exceed the recommended values and are statistically significant at α=0.01. Based on the estimated parameters, the fitted multifactor model demonstrates a good fit across total samples: ($\chi 2/df$=3,77, RMSEA=0.07, NFI=0.91, RFI =0.84, CFI =0.94).

TABLE 1
STATUS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHICS (N=359)

Variable		N	%
gender	Male	158	45%
	Female	191	55%
Age	<21	0	0.00%
	21–30	24	7,4%
	31–40	61	18,9%
	41–50	105	32,5%
	51–60	109	33,7%
	>60	24	7,4%
Seniority	0–10	260	75,6%
	11–20	54	15,7%
	21–30	22	6,4%
	>30	8	2,3%

Variable		N	%
Country	France	161	45,6%
	Switzerland	106	30,1%
	Canada	86	24,4%
	Others	6	1.6%
Formation level	1–5	74	21,1%
	6–10	73	20,8%
	>10	204	58,1%

FIGURE 2
FACTORS, ITEMS AND LOADINGS



The outputs indicate, the standardized loadings are between 0.43 and -0.94, and t-values are between -7,067 and 35.518 which indicates they are significant. In addition, 65% of the measures had standardized loadings greater than 0.70. Accordingly, it can be concluded that model fit statistics, as well as the magnitudes of the standardized loadings with their t-values, provide support for convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Wong, 2019). Also, as Table 2 shows, the values of alpha- Cronbach for all measures are greater than 0.7, which indicates the factors' reliability (Ekolu & Quainoo, 2019). Thus, we can ensure the consistency of the measures.

TABLE 2
FACTORS, ITEMS, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Factor	Measure	Standardized loading	t-Values	α
Trust	Trusting employees' judgment in everything work-related	,49	25,909	.837
	Trusting employees' professional skills and abilities	,61	35,518	
	Following employees' advice on important matters	,79	27,032	
	Sharing my original ideas with them without fear of them taking credit	,67	34,449	
	Sharing sensitive information with them that I don't want to be circulated	,79	10,489	
	Trusting employees' emotional intelligence	,79	23,730	
Control	Monitoring employees' daily activities	-,66	-7,067	.844
	Controlling employees' pace and work schedules	-,94	-10,496	
	Capable to accomplish employees' tasks as they see fit	,66	14,166	
Experience	Having international professional experience	,76	5,912	.891
	Having experience working in various organizations before current role	,78	4,277	
	Having experience working remotely on a daily and weekly basis.	,80	3,389	
	Having experience working remotely during the Covid-19	,64	10,809	
	Having indirect experience through education and training	,67	3,301	
Telework adaptation decision	Decisions are made through the consensus of all members of the leadership team.	,69	15,651	.835
	All management team members are involved in important company decisions, including those related to remote working.	,77	17,486	
	Within our leadership team, the time spent reaching consensus on strategic decisions is considered valuable.	,88	16,216	
	Decision-making processes often involve at least one member expressing disagreement.	,89	16,296	
	All members of the management team are committed to achieving the established goals.	,80	16,624	
	The management team puts significant effort into reaching effective decisions.	,43	25,590	
Model fit				
	χ^2/df=2,22			
	RMSEA =0,06			
	NFI =0,91			
	RFI =0.84			
	CFI =0.93			

Note: As mentioned, each item is measured on five-point scales, and all loadings are significant at the P<0.05 or lower (p<0.01).
χ2 (Chi-square distributions), df (Degrees of freedom), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), NFI (Normed Fit Index), RFI (Relative fit index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index).

Also, all constructs demonstrate good convergent validity, as the average variance extracted (AVE) values for three countries exceed the critical value (Cheung et al., 2024). As Table 3 indicates, the AVE values (France sample =55.4% to 70.4%, Swiss sample =56.1% to 73.1%, Canada sample =58.8% to 82.3%) are above 0.5, which means that the convergent validity of the constructs is established based on data from the three countries.

TABLE 3
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY (SQUARED CORRELATION FOR SAMPLES OF THREE COUNTIES AND AVE)

	France				Switzerland				Canada			
	CTR	**EXP**	**TRU**	**TWD**	**CTR**	**EXP**	**TRU**	**TWD**	**CTR**	**EXP**	**TRU**	**TWD**
CTR	1				1				1			
EXP	,049	1			,037	1			,063	1		
TRU	-,017	,077	1		-,015	,080	1		-,017	,085	1	
TWD	-,037	,059	,060	1	-,035	,077	,103	1	-,037	,060	,080	1
AVE	,554	,685	,665	,704	,614	,731	,663	,561	,626	,823	,801	,588

Note: CTR =control, EXP =experience, TRU =trust, TWD =telework decision

To assess discriminant validity, the AVE of each construct was compared with the squared correlations between that construct and the others (Voorhees et al., 2016). As Table 3 indicates, the AVE values exceed the corresponding squared inter-construct correlations in each sample, indicating good discriminant validity.

Path Analysis and Hypotheses Tests

To conduct path analysis and test the hypotheses, four distinct models were used: one encompassing the full dataset and three based on data from each respective country. As shown in Table 4, all hypotheses based on Model 1 (full dataset in Figure 3) are supported, except for one.

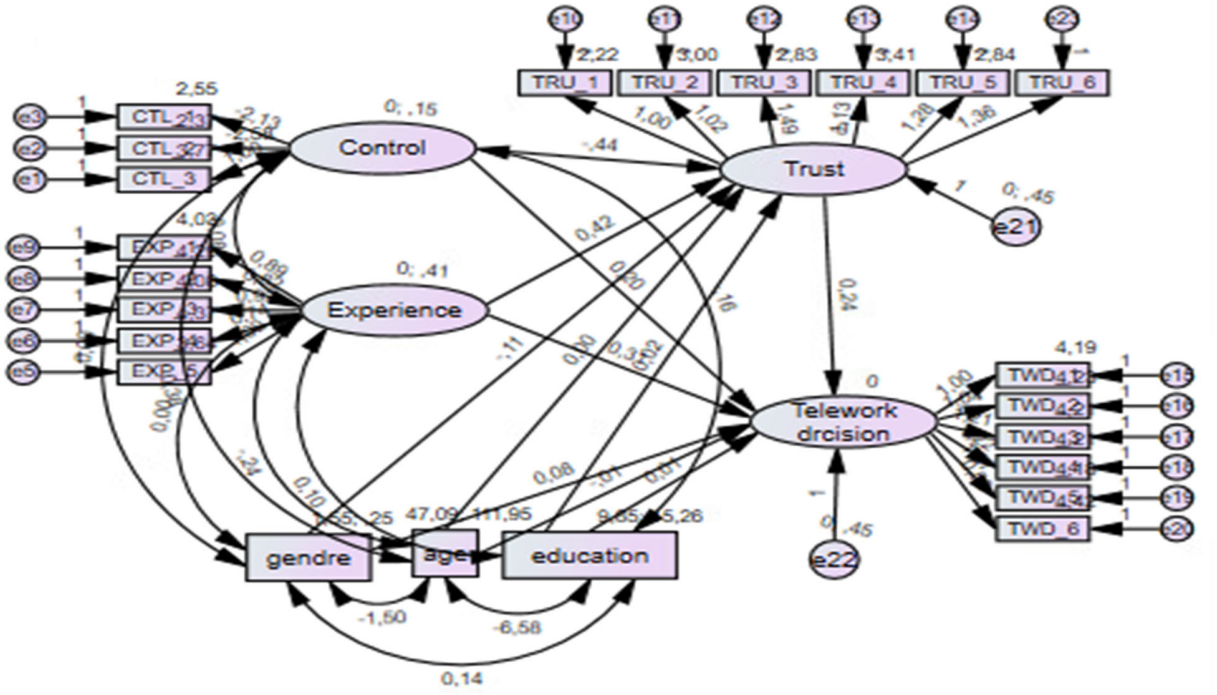
More precisely, while control shows a significant correlation with trust (P<,01, r=-,449), it does not have a significant direct effect on telework decisions (P>,05). Prior experience is significantly correlated with both trust (P<,01, r=,419) and telework decisions (P<,01, r=,313). Trust itself also shows a significant positive correlation with telework decisions (P<,01, r=,236). In this context, a negative correlation indicates that as executives' direct control over employees increases, the level of trust tends to decrease. Conversely, a positive correlation suggests that executives' perceptions of teleworking decisions, for instance, become more favorable as their prior experience increases. As the table indicates, the significance level of the majority of demographic characteristics is greater than .05, indicating weak effects on the variables. However, some items, such as age and education, had greater impacts which we will discuss later.

TABLE 4
PATH ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESES TESTES

Demographic and hypotheses	Model 1=Total			Model 2= France			Model 3= Swiss			Model 4=Canada		
	Est.	Sig.	Res.	Est.	Sig.	Res.	Est.	Sig.	Res.	Est.	Sig.	Res.
Influence on trust												
Gender	-,111	,196	N/A	-,185	,091	N/A	,016	,520	N/A	-,048	,321	N/A
Age	,007	,171	N/A	,013	,023	Supp.	,011	,517	N/A	,008	,304	N/A
Education	,023	,036	Supp.	,011	,772	N/A	,153	,883	N/A	,019	,069	N/A
Control >>> trust	-,449	,002	Supp.	-,288	,034	Supp.	-,305	,031	Supp.	-,426	,002	Supp.
Experience >>> trust	,419	,000	Supp.	,318	,007	Supp.	,321	,005	Supp.	,384	,027	Supp.
Influence on TW decision												
Gender	,012	,280	N/A	,237	,065	N/A	-,063	,692	N/A	-,043	,207	N/A
Age	-,010	,031	Supp.	-,008	,220	N/A	-,008	,452	N/A	-,009	,090	N/A
Education	,086	,237	N/A	,012	,798	N/A	,029	,098	N/A	-,018	,647	N/A
Control >>> TW decision	-181	,149	N/A	-,292	,042	Supp.	-,173	,229	N/A	-,144	,617	N/A
Experience >>> Tw decision	,313	,000	Supp.	,268	,040	Supp.	,323	,041	Supp.	,386	,018	Supp.
Trust >>> Tw decision	,236	,000	Supp.	,337	,020	Supp.	,319	,027	Supp.	,414	,003	Supp.
Model fit												
$\chi 2$ /(df)	3.77			3.12			4.11			4.22		
CFI	0.94			0.93			0.93			0.95		
NFI	0.91			0.90			0.90			0.91		
RFI	0.84			0.80			0.81			0.82		
RMSEA	0.07			0.06			0.06			0.07		

Notes: Supported (Supp.), not accepted (N/A).

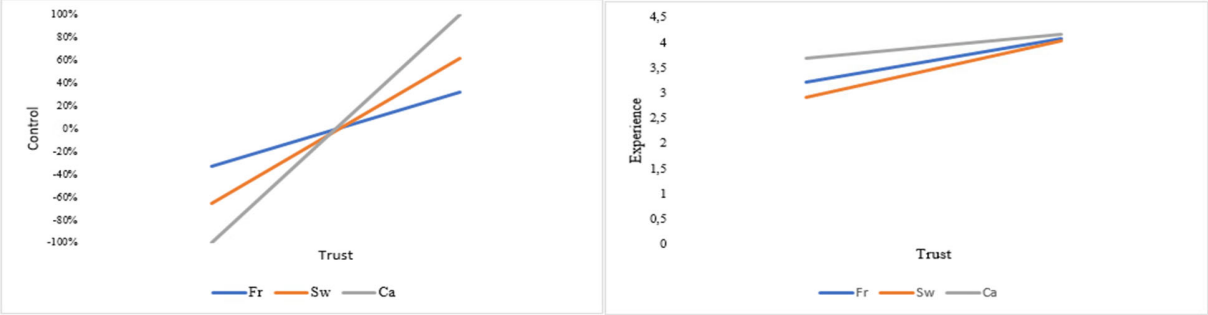
FIGURE 3
THE PATH MODEL



Following a similar procedure, the hypotheses were tested separately using data from each country. Accordingly, the hypothesis tests show that—with the exception of one case—all hypotheses align with those in the original model (Model 1). More specifically, country-level data show that control has a significant negative relationship with trust across France, Switzerland and Canada (P<,01, r=-,288, r=-,305, r=-,426 respectively). However, as shown in Figure 4-left, the slope of the relationship between control and trust is steeper in the Canadian data, indicating a stronger negative correlation between these two variables compared to the other two countries. France exhibits the weakest correlation between these two variables.

Additionally, the direct relationship between prior experience and trust is confirmed across the three countries (P<,01, r=,318, r=,321, r=,384 in turn). That is, the relationship between these two variables is statistically significant across all three countries. As shown in Figure 4-right, the correlation coefficients between the variables in the three countries are quite similar, with no statistically significant differences among them. Also, path analysis revealed that the relationship between control and teleworking decision is significant based on model 2 (France, P<,01, r=-,292), but it is not significant according to model 3 (Switzerland, >.05) and Canadian data (P>.05), consistent with the original model. The steeper slope of the relationship between the variables in France, indicates a significant association between control and telework decision (Figure 5- left).

FIGURE 4
LINEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTROL AND EXPERIENCE WITH TRUST



Ultimately, the path analysis, also, indicates a significant relationship between prior experience and executives' decisions to adopt telework in the three countries. That is, the positive relationship between prior experience and executives' decisions to adopt telework is confirmed across the separate datasets from France (P<,01, r=,268), Switzerland (P<,01, r=,323) and Canada (P<,01, r=,386). As shown in Figure 5-right, the slopes of the relationships between the variables are positive and statistically significant across all three countries.

FIGURE 5
LINEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTROL AND EXPERIENCE WITH TELEWORK DECISION

As Table 5 indicates, the direct relationship between trust and telework decision is confirmed both in the overall dataset and across the three countries; however, its mediating role also needs to be tested. The results of Sobel test confirm the mediating role of trust in all cases except one.

The p-value for entire dataset, Switzerland and Canada are ($p<0.01$). Thus, they are statistically significant, but trust does not mediate the link between control and telework decision based on the data from France. The same test confirms the mediating role of trust in the relationship between prior experience and teleworking decisions across all cases.

TABLE 5
MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION

Factor		Test statistic	Std. Error	P-value	Result
CTL>>> TRU >>>TWD	Entire dataset	1.73431443	0.01765891	,002	Supp.
	France	1.15340373	0.02123281	,062	N/A
	Switzerland	1.63997357	0.02495162	,006	Supp.
	Canada	1.41426426	0.03752057	,001	Supp.
EXP>>> TRU >>>TWD	Entire dataset	1.28810082	0.03745623	,000	Supp.
	France	1.31004265	0.03314450	,002	Supp.
	Switzerland	1.19082362	0.03447651	.001	Supp.
	Canada	1.36935575	0.03655320	,000	Supp.

DISCUSSION

This study adopts a comparative approach to examine how control and prior experience influence teleworking decisions, using data from three countries, France, Switzerland and Canada. It also explores the mediating role of trust in these relationships. Accordingly, the results were analyzed using four models: one based on the entire dataset and three based on the data from each of the three countries.

Rethinking Control and Trust in Teleworking: Insights From a Cross-National Analysis

Using the model with the entire dataset, our findings indicate that control has a significant negative impact on trust. This suggests that a high level of control as culture element, weakens trust. In other words, when control is intense, employees often feel that they are closely monitored or that their judgment is not trusted. This undermines their trust in management and reduces their sense of accountability. However, we argue that the negative relationship between control and trust doesn't mean control should be completely absent. From our perspective, trust is essential in any organization; however, as the French findings demonstrate, effective control mechanisms are also necessary to maintain stability and accountability. For this reason, some authors (Vedel & Geraldi, 2022) emphasize the importance of maintaining a balance between control and trust to ensure long-term sustainability. On the other hand, to resolve the conflict between control and trust, it is better to view them as complementary rather than alternatives. In this context, Weibel et al. (2016) argue that viewing control and trust as substitutes implies that "having control negates the need for trust", whereas we believe viewing them as complements suggests that having control enhances trust. Overall, control serve as a mechanism to ensure the achievement of organizational goals (Long & Sitkin, 2018); however, when overused at the expense of trust-based practices, they can undermine or even destroy trust.

However, the level of managerial control in France is higher than in both Canada and Switzerland, whereas the average level of trust in Canada surpasses that of the other two countries. An analysis of the mean and variance of the measures indicates that executives in French organizations tend to monitor employee performance more closely, regulate the pace and schedule of their work, and require tasks to be carried out under direct supervision. A review of Hofstede's cultural dimensions supports these findings. France scores high on power distance, indicating a greater acceptance of hierarchy and centralized authority (Mirzayev, 2020; Hofstede, 2011). In this context, executives are typically expected to closely supervise and control their subordinates, reflecting a top-down management style. In contrast, Canada's lower power distance fosters flatter organizational structures and promotes greater employee autonomy. In Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Switzerland falls somewhere between France and Canada in terms of power distance, and its workplace culture reflects a balanced approach between hierarchy and autonomy.

On the other hand, performance monitoring in France serves as a means of ensuring that expected norms and standards are met (Favoreu et al., 2015). In contrast, Canadian organizations, particularly those shaped

by North American business culture tend to prioritize empowerment, collaboration, and flexibility over strict managerial control (Nevitte, 2017). Switzerland, while also valuing employee autonomy, places a strong emphasis on precision, responsibility, and efficiency (Bach et al., 2010; Luzzi et al., 2001). As a result, Swiss executives typically monitor performance within a culture of mutual trust and shared accountability, rather than relying on hierarchical oversight. Additionally, employment laws in France are stricter (Despax et al., 2017), making it more challenging to terminate employees without substantial justification. Consequently, executives often monitor performance more closely to document and support any necessary HR actions. In contrast, Canadian labor laws tend to be more flexible and decentralized (Mak et al., 2018), which reduces the need for intensive documentation and close monitoring. In Switzerland, labor laws offer strong employee protections, and they also provide more flexibility than in France, allowing managers to balance performance oversight with a degree of autonomy and trust. Finally, French executives are often educated in prestigious institutions that emphasize precision, rigor, and structure, fostering a preference for systematic control and detailed performance metrics (Gröschl et al., 2003; Kumar et al.m 2001). Canadian executives, coming from more diverse backgrounds, tend to be influenced by Anglo-American management philosophies (Othman et al., 2006) that prioritize results and innovation over strict process control. In Switzerland executives are typically trained in systems that value both precision and pragmatism, encouraging a balanced approach that combines structure with flexibility and autonomy.

Moreover, the data analysis reveals that control influences executives' decisions regarding telework. This suggests that perceptions of control, as a cultural element, play a significant role in shaping managers' decisions to adopt and implement telework. These perceptions, shaped by organizational culture (Volken, 2009), influence how managers interpret and evaluate the overall suitability of teleworking. Some managers perceive teleworking primarily as a mechanism for enhancing employee freedom and autonomy. This freedom has been associated with a greater sense of autonomy for employees and reduced managerial control over teleworkers compared to traditional on-site work (Metselaar et al., 2023). The spread of this perspective leads executives to conclude that their ability to influence the communication of shared norms, values, and rules is likely to be diminished. That is, executives who believe in maintaining close control over employees and decision-making processes tend to limit employee autonomy and prefer to keep employees under constant direct supervision (Spector, 1986). Conversely, managers who value employee autonomy often delegate decision-making authority, thereby reducing the need for direct supervision. Accordingly, a culture that emphasizes direct control and close managerial oversight, such as in France, may face greater challenges in adapting to remote work, which inherently requires a higher degree of employee autonomy and self-management. Conversely, in organizational cultures like Canada's, where trust in employees and a focus on outcomes are emphasized, managers are more likely to embrace and effectively support remote work arrangements.

A comparative analysis of data from the three countries, using three sub-models, supports the findings outlined above. The results indicate that French executives' stronger preference for precise and direct control over employees has a more negative impact on their decisions regarding telework arrangements compared to their counterparts in Canada and Switzerland. In other words, according to our findings, the adoption of teleworking has been less widespread in France than in Canada, largely due to executives' stronger preference for systematic control and direct supervision. As a result, it can be concluded that teleworking in France is not fully institutionalized, especially when compared to the other two countries, most notably Canada. In this regard, the findings of Boogaard and Muller (2020) support our research results. According to them, although many employees in France expressed a desire to work from home for one or more days per week post-pandemic, there was a strong push for a return to on-site work across many organizations. This suggests that in France, firms' and executives' trust in telework has not significantly changed post-pandemic. In contrast, since spring 2023, the Canadian government has implemented a standardized hybrid work model for federal employees, requiring them to work in the office at least two days per week (Champagne et al., 2023) and now 3 days since 2025. Meanwhile, private organizations and businesses in Canada continue to adopt flexible work arrangements, with many employees working remotely an average of three days.

This also explains why trust does not mediate the relationship between control and managerial decision-making in France, whereas it does in the other two countries—particularly in Canada. Managers with a high need for control—as the data from France and, to a lesser extent, Switzerland show—may be less inclined to adopt teleworking, largely due to perceived risks such as diminished supervision and potential productivity losses. However, when trust in employees is high, managers appear more willing to relinquish some control, confident that employees will remain accountable and perform effectively. Therefore, we conclude that trust can mediate the relationship between control and teleworking decisions by alleviating concerns about reduced oversight and increasing the likelihood of telework adoption.

The Pivotal Role of Experience in Telework Adaptation: Trust as a Mediating Path

Our findings indicate that prior teleworking experience, including personal experience with teleworking, significantly influences trust and executives' decisions across all three countries. Given the positive relationships observed, it can be concluded that the impacts are favorable. Moreover, trust plays a mediating role between prior experience and the decision to adopt telework. Managers' attitudes and levels of trust toward teleworking are shaped by their prior experiences—whether positive or negative—with telework arrangements (Korkeakunnas et al., 2023). Thus, positive past experiences with teleworking can enhance managers' trust in their employees' ability to work independently, thereby increasing the likelihood of supporting or implementing telework policies. Conversely, negative experiences can undermine trust, leading executives to be more reluctant to permit teleworking. Accordingly, we can conclude that trust serves as a crucial mediating factor connecting both control and prior experience to executives' decisions regarding telework in all the three countries. It is important to recognize that telework can be costly which may cause some managers to be unwilling to adopt it. In such cases, they risk becoming trapped in a closed loop—potentially never experiencing the benefits of teleworking. However, our findings from the three countries demonstrate otherwise.

CONTRIBUTION

This study makes several key theoretical contributions to the literature on telework and managerial decision-making. First, it offers an integrative framework that bridges organizational control theory and trust theory by demonstrating that trust can mediate the relationship between control and telework decisions. Rather than treating control and trust as opposing mechanisms, our findings suggest they can operate in a complementary fashion under certain conditions. Second, the study extends existing models of telework adoption by introducing executives' prior experience with teleworking as a significant antecedent to both trust and decision-making. This highlights the experiential and behavioral dimensions of managerial readiness for remote work. Third, by proposing a mediated model in which trust serves as a key linking mechanism between structural (control) and experiential (prior telework experience) variables, the study contributes a novel decision-making framework for understanding managerial responses to flexible work arrangements. Finally, through cross-national data from France, Switzerland, and Canada, this research provides a comparative perspective, highlighting how cultural and institutional contexts shape the interplay between trust, control, and telework adoption. Collectively, these insights challenge the traditional binary between control and trust and underscore the importance of context and experience in shaping managerial openness to remote work.

Empirically, this study provides new evidence on the determinants of managerial telework decisions, utilizing cross-national data from France, Switzerland, and Canada. It provides robust support for the mediating role of trust in the relationship between executives' need for control and their willingness to adopt telework. Additionally, the findings reveal that prior teleworking experience—both positive and negative—significantly influences managerial attitudes, particularly through its impact on trust. This adds empirical depth to the often theorized but under-tested connection between experience, trust, and decision-making in the context of remote work. The cross-country comparative design further strengthens the study's empirical relevance by showing how national and institutional contexts shape these relationships differently. For example, while trust did not mediate control in the French sample, it played a significant

role in Canada, suggesting that cultural or policy-related factors may moderate these dynamics. By examining these variables in combination across distinct national contexts, the study generates new, data-driven insights into how trust, control, and experience interact to influence telework policy decisions at the managerial level.

LIMITATIONS

Despite the valuable contributions of this research across multiple areas, it has certain limitations that may have influenced the results. First, the study relied on an online questionnaire survey, which carries the typical limitations associated with such methods. These include potential response bias, difficulties in ensuring a representative sample, and challenges in collecting fully accurate data. Moreover, since the data are self-reported, there is a risk of social desirability bias or recall bias—particularly when participants reflect on their past experiences with teleworking. Furthermore, because the data are cross-sectional, this study records perceptions at a single point in time and cannot establish causal relationships between control, trust, prior experience, and teleworking decisions.

Although this study includes data from three countries—France, Switzerland, and Canada—the sample size, while meeting standard requirements, may still limit the precision of the results. This is particularly relevant for comparative analyses, where larger sample sizes could have enhanced the robustness of cross-country comparisons. Additionally, while these three countries provide useful variation in context, the findings may not be generalizable to other cultural or institutional settings that have different work norms, teleworking policies, or management structures. Furthermore, this research focuses solely on managerial perspectives and does not include employee opinions. This may provide a one-sided view of the dynamics of remote work, particularly around trust and mutual performance. It may also overlook differences in management levels, such as those between front-line and senior managers, which can impact how control and trust are perceived in remote work decisions. Ultimately, concepts such as “trust” and “control” are complex and multifaceted. This study employs specific operational definitions that may not fully capture the conceptual richness of these constructs.

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