

An examination of the effect of remote working on the  
Motivation and Wellbeing of staff from third level institutions  
in Ireland.

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National  
College *of*  
Ireland

MA in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2021

## Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

### National College of Ireland Research Students Declaration Form (Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

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**Title of Thesis:** An examination of the effect of remote working on the Motivation and Wellbeing of staff from third level institutions in Ireland.

**Date:** 11/08/2021

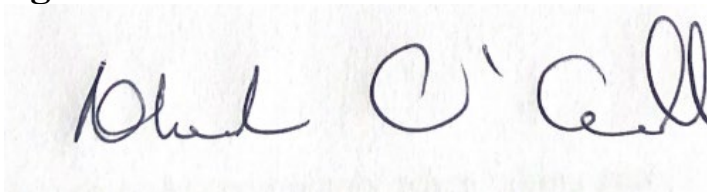
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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my family, especially my mother who proofread every piece of this work, for their continued support and love during this research. I would also like to thank my supervisor Sinead Darcy who was so helpful and supportive, I am very lucky to have had such a wonderful supervisor. And finally for my friends, who have helped me every day by bringing joy into my life.

## **Abstract**

This research will examine the effect of remote working on the Motivation and Well-being of staff from third level institutions in Ireland. The global pandemic forced third level institutions to close and for their staff to work remotely. Taking the suddenness of this move to remote work into account, the effect of remote working on the Motivation and Wellbeing of administration staff and academic staff from third level institutions must be considered. A quantitative method approach was taken for this research. A survey was used as the method of data collection for the primary research. Chi squared tests and independent sample T-tests were the statistical tests used to analyse the data for the three research objectives. The findings in the primary research did not support the previous literature on the topic, which finds remote working to negatively impact the motivation and wellbeing of employees. In contrast to the previous literature, this research finds remote working to positively affect the motivation and wellbeing of academic staff. In addition to this, the research also finds remote working to have a negative effect on the motivation of administration staff and have no effect on the wellbeing of administration staff from third level institutions in Ireland. The implications of these findings are discussed further. Limitations in this study are recognised as a limited time frame for recruitment and a small sample size.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Research Background**

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought much uncertainty to the world. Many businesses and institutions were faced with the struggle of adapting quickly to adhere to government guidelines and restrictions, including the government-imposed lockdowns. There have been nationwide lockdowns in countries to try and halt the pandemic and save lives. This has meant institutions like schools and colleges had to transfer all teaching and education online and adapt to teaching remotely. Third level institutions and their staff had to react quickly to facilitate the remote teaching and learning between staff and students. Not only were staff from these third-level institutions faced with the drastic change of moving to remote working from a professional perspective, but they also had to adapt on a personal level to the many issues of living through the Covid- 19 global pandemic. Taking this into consideration, this research chose to examine the impact of remote working on the motivation and wellbeing of academic and administration staff at third level institutions in Ireland. Secondary research finds remote working to positively affect the motivation of employees by increasing employee's motivation (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017, Fujii, 2020, Virtanen, 2020). However, much of the previous research found remote working to have a negative impact on the motivation of employees (Hertel, Geister and Konradt, 2005, Caillier 2011, Nakhod et al., 2020 and Tovmasyan and Minasyan, 2020). In addition to this, almost all of the previous research consulted on the effect of remote working on specifically academic staff from universities found remote work to have a negative impact on the motivation of these employees (Puwanto, 2020 and Bakhmat, Babakina, and Belmaz, 2021). Regarding wellbeing, there was an abundance of previous research that found remote working to negatively affect the well-being of employees (Grant, Wallace, and Spurgeon, 2013; Alderson, 2020; Carnevale and Hatak, 2020; Gigi and Pavithra, 2020; Prasad, Rao, Vaidya and Muralidhar, 2020 and Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker, 2020). The same negative impact on wellbeing was found in research that focused on academic staff from universities when working remotely (Sieber, Hüppi, and Praetorius, 2020 and Shen and Slater, 2021). From examining the previous research on the impact of remote working on the motivation and wellbeing of employees, the hypotheses for each research aim were stated.



## **1.2 Research Questions and Research Objectives**

From choosing to examine the effect of remote working on the motivation and wellbeing of administration and academic employees at third level institutions in Ireland, the research questions are:

To examine the effect of remote working on the motivation of staff from third-level institutions in Ireland.

To examine the effect of remote working on the wellbeing of employees from third-level institutions in Ireland.

To identify if there are differences in the wellbeing and motivation between administration staff and academic staff from third-level institutions in Ireland when working remotely.

Taking the secondary research conducted on the impact of remote working on the motivation of employees into account, for the first aim in this research, it was hypothesised that remote working would have a negative impact on the motivation of both these groups of employees. Taking into consideration previous literature consulted on the effect of remote working on the wellbeing of employees during the global pandemic, for the second aim in this research, it was hypothesised that remote working would have a negative effect on the wellbeing of employees. For the final aim of this research, the hypothesis stated there would be no differences in motivation and wellbeing found between administration staff and academic staff. This was hypothesised due to both groups working remotely under the same conditions.

## **1.3 Research Approach**

This study uses a quantitative approach to research. For this reason, this study used a Positivism research paradigm. Taking into consideration there was no previous literature on investigating the impact of remote working on staff from third-level institutions in Ireland, the current research designed an online survey containing two questionnaires to collect primary data. The Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS) (Gagne et al., 2010) was used to measure the motivation of participants. The Eudaimonic Workplace Wellbeing Scale (EWWS) (Bartels, Peterson, and Reina, 2019) was used to measure the well-being of participants. Both questionnaires used a Likert scale to measure participants scores and used normal scoring. The online survey was built using Google Documents and was administered through emailing participants the link. The sample for this research was administration staff

and academic staff from third-level institutions in Ireland (N – 101). The sample was recruited using a convenient sampling method. These staff came from a variety of colleges, including Waterford Institute of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology, National College of Ireland, Technological University Dublin, Crumlin College, and Trinity College. The current research used a cross-sectional between-groups design, this facilitated surveys being completed from staff from different third-level institutions around Ireland during one specific time. The data analysis method for this research used chi-squared tests to examine the effect of remote working on the motivation and wellbeing of administration staff and academic staff from third-level institutions in Ireland. In addition to this, the research used independent samples T-tests to identify if there were any differences between these two groups of remote workers in wellbeing and motivation. In terms of ethical considerations taking the privacy of participants into account, participation in this research was anonymous. The survey did not ask any identifiable nor personal demographic questions.

The current research used SPSS to statistically analyse the results in the study. Chi-squared tests were used to answer the first research question, to examine the effect of remote working on the motivation of staff from third-level institutions in Ireland. The limitations in this study are outlined, which included a relatively small sample size, a difference in group sizes between the two groups, and the recruitment time frame. Recommendations are made on implementing motivation training in colleges for staff, virtual coffee mornings for staff while working remotely and giving academic staff the option to work remotely for part of the working week. Finally, this research concludes with a personal learning statement from the researcher about writing the dissertation.

#### **1.4 Research significance**

All the findings in this research were significant for various reasons. The research found remote working to positively affect the motivation of academic staff but negatively affect the motivation of administration staff. This is a significant finding as it finds that motivation in this research to be dependent on occupation. The research found remote working to positively affect the well-being of academic staff and have no effect on the well-being of administration staff. This is significant as in the distressing climate of the global pandemic, it may be assumed that the well-being of employees would be negatively affected when working remotely. Reasons to why employee wellbeing was positively impacted are discussed. The final finding in this research identified a difference in the motivation between administration

staff and academic staff when working remotely. This is a significant finding as it highlights that the motivation of different groups of staff can be impacted differently by remote work.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the previous literature on the effect of remote working on employees. The chapter will first state the prevalence of remote working in Ireland, regarding both the Public and Private sectors. This chapter will then examine the previous literature on remote working and third-level institutions, the implications of remote working on employees, and conclude with examining the previous research on the effect of remote working on employee motivation and well-being.

### **2.2 Remote Working in Ireland**

Working remotely from home is the reality that many employees face in the current climate of the Corona Virus. Recently in January 2021, the Irish government passed legislation to give employees the right to request their employer allow them to work remotely and permanently from home (Wall, 2021). The Republic of Ireland has one of the highest rates of people working from home during the Covid 19 pandemic, at forty per cent of working shifts being completed from home (Burke-Kennedy, 2020). This percentage shows the prevalence of working from home in the Republic of Ireland and how more and more employees in Ireland are working remotely from home during the Corona Virus pandemic.

#### **2.2.1 Private sector and remote working**

While the private sector has been affected by the Pandemic, many of the employees in the private sector were already working remotely or had engaged in remote work before the Covid 19 pandemic. In 2009, IBM had 40% of its employees working from home (Howard-Grenville, 2020). Pre Covid 19 pandemic surveys conducted in 2019 found that remote working was more prevalent in the private sector at 63% compared to the public sector, which found only 28% engage in remote working (Remote Work in Ireland Future Jobs 2019, 2019). This percentage is expected to rise post the Covid 19 pandemic in both the public and private sectors. Considering that many private-sector employees had previously engaged in remote working, it can be suggested that organisations in the private sector were more equipped to deal with the challenges the Covid 19 pandemic presented to organisations than the public sector. The private sector has embraced the challenges that the Covid 19 pandemic has presented by facilitating remote working and flexible working practices (Wright, 2020). Agostoni (2020) outlined a change that Iason Ltd, a financial services organisation, made

when handling employees working remotely during the Covid 19 pandemic. A critical way in which Iason Ltd adapted to remote working was by changing the organisation's mentality. They reorganised the companies' activities which were suited to a traditional business model, and tailored them to suit remote working. The research of Agostoni, (2020) is an example of some of how private sector organisations are effectively facilitating remote working. The private sector is comfortable with remote working; this can be seen through many organisations encouraging remote working after the Covid 19 pandemic. Large corporations like Google have advised their staff they can work at home until September 2021; Facebook states that in the next five to ten years, they expect 50% of their staff to be working remotely, and both Vodafone and Bank of Ireland are working to devise new strategies for their employees in a post-pandemic world by blending remote working with onsite working and introducing flexible hours into their future strategies (Fegan, 2021). This research must consider remote working among private sector employees, as the private sector is a comparison to remote working in the public sector, which is this study's sample.

### **2.2.2 Public sector and remote working**

Like the companies in the private sector, many organisations in the public sector have had to shift to remote working during the Covid 19 pandemic. There has been a significant increase in employees working remotely due to the Covid 19 pandemic; currently, there are 700,000 employees from the public sector working remotely within Ireland (McQuinn, 2020). Taking into consideration that before the Covid 19 pandemic, only 28% of employees working remotely were from the Public sector in Ireland (Remote Work in Ireland Future Jobs 2019, 2019), it raises the issue that the public sector was less familiar with remote working and shifting to remote work. An exciting piece of research (Mazzucato and Kattel, 2020) examined the Covid 19 pandemic and the capacity of the public sector in the United Kingdom. The research finds that the Covid 19 pandemic has revealed deep digital divides among many areas of the public sector, including education. The research states that due to years of government focusing on privatising and outsourcing, this has resulted in a reduction of options, capabilities and resources for the public sector, and the government face a crisis. In addition to this, the research suggests that governments must invest more into core public sector capabilities and capacities to be prepared for any crisis in the future. This research highlights the struggle that the public sector in the United Kingdom is facing due to the Covid 19 pandemic. There is a limited amount of research on the effect of the Covid 19 pandemic on public sector employees within Ireland.

### **2.2.3 Third level institutions and remote working**

The Covid 19 pandemic has resulted in most colleges in Ireland moving their classes online, thus having academic staff working from home and teaching online. This sudden transition to remote working for academic staff as brought entirely novel implications to both third level institutions and academic staff due to the Covid 19 pandemic being unforeseen. Purwanto (2020) examined the effect of the Covid 19 pandemic on teachers' performance when working remotely. This research found that the negative impact on teachers' performance when working from home was the loss of motivation. The reasons behind the loss of motivation for teachers include high bills due to electricity and internet costs associated with working from home, the atmosphere at home is unlike that of a school, and distractions from home like social media and family. This study outlines how teachers can lose motivation for work when working remotely through the Pandemic and the reasons behind the lack of motivation. Sieber, Hüppi, and Praetorius (2020) examined the well-being of students and academic staff in universities working remotely or attending college during the Covid 19 pandemic. This research found that all participants in the study (academic staff and students) reported less satisfaction with life/ work and attending college during the pandemic and more stress in their everyday lives. This study highlights the negative impact that the Covid 19 pandemic has on the well-being of both academic staff and students. Ali (2020) examined how online and remote learning was being conducted in higher education institutions during the Covid 19 pandemic. This research finds some of the challenges third level institutions face when transitioning to remote learning and teaching online or blended learning, lack of infrastructure support, staff readiness, lack of student accessibility, and the organisation of online learning. In addition to this, the research also finds that the motivation and readiness of staff in higher education institutions must be considered important factors to conduct online learning effectively in these institutions. This research is an example of some of the challenges both third level institutions and their staff face when working remotely and teaching online. An extremely relevant study (Shen and Slater, 2021) investigated the effect of the Covid 19 pandemic on university staff's mental health and well-being in Northern Ireland. This research found that due to the pandemic, university staff experienced higher levels of occupational stress, which had a significantly negative effect on their mental health and well-being. This study's findings are like the findings of (Sieber, Hüppi, and Praetorius, 2020), which highlight the negative impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the well-being of academic staff working remotely. Bakhmat, Babakina, and Belmaz (2021) examined

Ukrainian academic staff working remotely and teaching online classes throughout the Covid 19 pandemic.

The research found that the most significant disadvantages to teaching online for academic staff were: technical problems, lack of face-to-face interaction, motivation, lack of support from the university, internet connection, and workload and stress. It is relevant to this current study that the research found that a lack of motivation was a disadvantage for academic staff and education staff when working remotely. This research also identified the advantages of online teaching and remote working from these academic staff : flexible hours, mobility, time efficiency, clear control, learning tools and self-development. This research highlights the advantages and disadvantages of working remotely for academic staff . Contrasting to Bakhmat, Babakina, and Belmaz (2021) findings, Sirait and Murdianingrum (2020) investigated the effect of working from home on the productivity and behaviour of academic staff and education staff during the Covid 19 pandemic. This research found that working from home had no effect on motivation and did not change the behaviour of academic staff or education staff. In addition to this, the research found that working from home partially affected the productivity of academic staff and education staff because of technology. This research must take the advantages, disadvantages, and challenges that academic staff and education staff face when working remotely into consideration, as this study's sample is going to be on academic staff and education staff in third level institutions within Ireland.

### **2.3 Implications of Remote Working for employees**

Working at home has grown in recent years. However, due to the suddenness of the global pandemic of Corona virus, there has been a significant increase in remote working for employees across the world. Remote working can have positive and negative implications for employees. A study that focuses on remote working specifically during the Covid 19 pandemic is Prasad, Rao, Vaidya, and Muralidhar (2020), which investigates the opportunities, challenges, and psychological well-being of employees working during the pandemic. This research found that the challenges employees face were communication, workplace isolation, interruptions from home, and the fear of burnout from employees who felt they were working too much. These challenges negatively impact the psychological well-being of employees working remotely. However, this research did outline many of the benefits of remote working; these benefits include flexible working hours and saving commuting to work time. Felstead and Henseke (2017) examined the consequences of remote

working on employees' well-being, effort, and work-life balance. The research found that while there were benefits of remote working, like employees having a more positive attitude toward their employers and finding their jobs more pleasurable, employees also faced some challenges when working from home. These challenges included employees often working beyond formal working hours and being unable to "switch off" and stop worrying about work problems. While there is research that finds the negative implications of remote working on employees, contrasting research finds the positive implications of employees working remotely. Working from home ensures the protection of employees from Covid 19, shields employees from short-time work, and decreases the number of cases of Covid 19 (Alipour, Fadinger and Schymik, 2021). Remote working enables employees to engage in flexible working arrangements, allowing them to continue their careers while beginning a family (Hunter, 2018). Remote working can result in positive effects on employees; such effects include job happiness, increased job performance (Elshaiekh, Hassan and Abdallah, 2018). This research must consider both the positive and negative implications of remote working on employees, as these implications may affect the motivation and well-being of employees working remotely within Ireland.

## **2.4 Employee Motivation**

Motivation is a subject that has been thoroughly researched, with motivational theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959) and Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) being studied throughout the 19th century (Obiekwe, 2016). Employee motivation can be defined as "performing a work-related action because you want to" (Herzberg, 1959). Employee motivation is essential for organisations; motivated employees result in a reduction in turnover and an increase in productivity which stems from the enthusiasm of employees (Honore, 2009).

### **2.4.1 Remote working and motivation**

Pokorny (2013) found that employee engagement was the value that motivates employees the most. Considering this, employee engagement may not be such an effective motivator due to working remotely from home. This could potentially cause a decrease in motivation in employees when working from home as employee engagement would not be in a physical work environment. A relevant study (Bucurean, 2020) investigated working at home during the Covid 19 pandemic on employee productivity. This study included advantages and disadvantages to working at home during the pandemic. Some of the advantages included the



lack of commuting to work and lack of face-to-face meetings. A disadvantage that was established was that working at home may cause mental health issues. The results of this study indicated a negative effect of working from home on productivity levels in employees. This is relevant to the current study due to much previous literature finding that increased motivation leads to increased productivity (Martin, 2005). There is previous research done on the topic of employee motivation when working remotely at home. In contrast to the findings of Bucurean, 2020, a recent review (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017) found that working from home significantly increased intrinsic motivation with employees. Their findings concluded that due to increased intrinsic motivation, working at home had a statistically significant positive effect on employees. These findings support employees working from home as levels of motivation are seen to increase in this review. Similarly, the research of Rupietta and Beckmann (2017), Virtanen (2020) investigated the impact of working at home on employees work motivation and their ability to work at home. Interestingly, this study found that working at home positively impacted employee's well-being and work motivation, with some participants reporting a higher level of work motivation. Some factors that were suggested to positively impact work motivation when working at home were: better working conditions and an improved work-life balance when working at home. Other participants in the study mentioned that getting the opportunity to work remotely was their source of motivation. These findings suggest that employees appreciate the chance to work remotely as now they can see how effective it can be. Fujii (2020) examined workplace motivation and teleworking during the Covid 19 pandemic. This study found that offering teleworking to millennial and gen-z employees increases their motivation and productivity levels. This is because millennials and gen-z employees are motivated by organisations offering them flexibility and autonomy in their jobs. This research is conclusive to that of (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017 and Virtanen 2020), which finds that working remotely positively impacts and increases employees work motivation. In contrast to the findings of (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017; Fujii, 2020; and Virtanen 2020) Nakhod et al., (2020), found that employees were facing problems regarding motivation when working remotely. Nakhod et al. (2020), suggest that some of the reasons behind the lack of motivation in employees include: a poor correlation between performance and rewards, a low morale among employees and a low rate of self-realisation of staff. This research reveals some of the reasons behind employees feeling less motivated when working from home. In addition to this, the research suggests that the Corona virus has brought the need for new ways in which companies can manage and motivate employees working remotely. Hertel, Geister and Konradt (2005), reviewed previous

research on effectively managing employees working remotely in virtual teams. This research found that due to the physical disconnectedness of virtual teams, employees often face challenges in work motivation, for example, trust is more difficult to build virtually, it is more difficult to implement common goals, feelings of anonymity and low social control, and self-efficacy is more difficult to maintain due to reduced feedback. This research is conclusive with Nakhod et al., (2020), which finds other challenges employees face regarding motivation when working remotely. While the previous research outlines the challenges to employee's motivation when working remotely, Caillier (2011) investigated the effect of teleworking on the motivation of employees. The sample was employees engaged in teleworking and employees who worked in a US federal government agency office. This research found that teleworkers reported lower levels of work motivation than employees working in the office. In addition to this, the research found that the lack of motivation from teleworkers stemmed from social isolation, which employees felt due to the lack of face-to-face communication with other employees and their superiors. Social isolation decreased the motivation of teleworkers in this study. Caillier's study findings are contrasting with (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017; Fujii, 2020; and Virtanen 2020) as Caillier's found that the motivation of teleworking employees was lower than that of employees working in the office and that an effect of remote working that is social isolation can decrease employees work motivation when working remotely. A relevant study by Tovmasyan and Minasyan (2020) investigated the impact of motivation on employees' work efficiency during the Covid 19 pandemic in Armenia. This study found that 52% of participants were more motivated when working in the workplace compared to just 12% who reported they were more motivated when working remotely. This research is conclusive with Caillier (2011) as it finds employees less motivated when working remotely than working in the workplace.

## **2.5 Employee Well-being**

Well-being can be defined as the state of feeling happy and healthy (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). Employee well-being can be defined as "... an employee's overall well-being that they perceive to be determined primarily by work and can be influenced by workplace interventions" (Juniper, 2011). Employee well-being has been the focus of many organisations due to the positive effects of employee well-being. Encouraging employee well-being can create a positive work environment; good health and well-being can be the primary enabler of organisational performance and employee engagement (Suff, 2020).

### **2.5.1 Remote working and Well-being**

A plethora of research finds employee well-being to have positive effects on organisations and their employees. Baptiste (2008) examined the link between employee well-being and performance at work. The study's sample was employees from the public sector in the United Kingdom. This research found that trust in management and support promoted employees' well-being at work and found that employee well-being led to improved productivity and reduced sick absences. This research demonstrates some of the positive effects that can result in organisations promoting employee well-being. Krekel, Ward and De Neve (2019) investigated employee well-being, productivity, and firm performance. This research found that employee well-being is positively correlated with productivity. In addition to this, the research also found that organisations with higher levels of employee well-being have overall better firm performance than organisations with lower levels of employee well-being. These findings are like the results of Baptiste (2008), as it outlines the benefits of employee well-being for companies. While the previous research outlines the benefits of employee well-being for organisations, it must be considered if remote working influences employee well-being. Grant, Wallace, and Spurgeon (2013) investigated the psychological factors affecting employees working remotely. This research found that aspects that can stem from remote working, like overworking and lack time for recuperation, negatively impacted employees' well-being. This research suggests ways in which organisations can address the problems that can arise from remote working and the well-being of employees. This study suggests that employers should clearly outline goals and effectively manage employees' workload to combat overworking when working remotely. This research outlines the problems remote workers may face and how these problems can negatively impact the well-being of employees. The global pandemic of Covid 19 has led to an increase of employees working remotely; the impact of remote working during the Covid 19 pandemic and its effect on employee well-being must be considered. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) examined employee well-being during the Covid 19 pandemic. This research outlines some of the implications to employee well-being when employees are adjusting to remote work. The research states that effects from remote working like increased loneliness and social exclusion that employees may experience, pose considerable risks to employees' well-being and mental health. In addition to this, the study suggests that these risks to employees' well-being and mental health can negatively affect organisations overall performance during the Covid 19 pandemic. This research highlights the negative implications the Covid 19 pandemic can pose to employee's

well-being when working remotely. Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker (2020) investigated the challenges employees face when working remotely during the Covid 19 pandemic. This research found that when working remotely, employees faced the challenges of procrastination, home interference, loneliness, and ineffective communication. In addition to this, the research states that each of these challenges undermined employee's well-being when working remotely. This research outlines how these challenges that employees face would negatively impact employee well-being when working remotely. Another relevant study focusing on employee well-being during the Covid 19 pandemic is Gigi and Pavithra (2020). This research also found that due to employees shifting to remote working, employees were more stressed from lack of communication, workload, and work-life balance, which negatively impacted employee's well-being. This research found that organisations support is the most influential factor on employee's well-being and suggests that companies should implement new policies which are helpful to employees working remotely and introduce well-being training and programmes to improve the well-being of employees throughout the Covid 19 pandemic. This study's findings were like that of (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020 & Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker, 2020) in that they highlighted some effects of remote working during the Covid 19 pandemic, which negatively impacted employee's well-being. An informative survey on the effect of the Covid 19 pandemic on the well-being of employees was conducted by Alderson (2020). This research found that more than half of the survey's respondents stated that their well-being has suffered due to the lack of face-to-face interaction with colleagues and increased workload from remote working during the Covid 19 pandemic. However, this research also found that 43% of respondents reported that working from home had improved their mental health, and they hoped to continue to work remotely after the Covid 19 pandemic. This research shows that while the majority of the survey's respondents found their well-being had suffered due to remote working, it also shows that some employees prefer remote working and that it has positive implications on employees' mental health. Prasad, Rao, Vaidya and Muralidhar (2020), identified the challenges that employee's well-being face while working remotely during the Covid 19 pandemic. These challenges include communication problems, workplace isolation, fear of burnout, overworking, prioritising work, bad health habits, loneliness, different working time zones and interruptions from home. These challenges negatively impact the well-being of employees when working remotely. This research is again similar to that of (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020 & Gigi and Pavithra 2020), highlighting the challenges employees face when working

remotely during the Covid 19 pandemic and how these challenges negatively impact employee's well-being.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Taking into consideration the rapid growth of remote working for employees, this topic is highly relevant. Research must be conducted to enable third level institutions to effectively motivate and positively impact the well-being of their employees working remotely. There is a clear gap in the research regarding the effect of remote working on employee motivation and well-being in third level institutions in Ireland. This current study will be attempting to fill this gap in the research. This study aims to contribute to the research on remote working while filling a gap in the literature regarding employee motivation and well-being while working remotely in an Irish setting.

## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will outline and discuss the specific approach to the research conducted to address the research question posed. Outlined in the following sections are an overview of the research paradigm, strategy, and method. This section will also provide details on the study's sample and the rationale for this sample strategy, the method of data collection used and how this data will be analysed. Ethical considerations will be provided that had to be considered when conducting the research, and the limitations the current research faced outlined.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

Two approaches can be taken to conduct research; these two approaches are Positivism and Interpretivism (Thompson, 2015). Positivism can be defined as a philosophical system that holds every rationally possibility that can be mathematically proved or scientifically verified, which rejects theism (Positivism, 2021). Positivism is intricately linked with the idea of fact-based investigation (Salkind, 2010). Positivists believe that data can be observed and discovered through applying the scientific method (Houghton, 2011). Positivism is based upon quantifiable observations that lead to statistical analyses, and in positivism studies, there are no provisions for human interests, and the researcher is independent of the study (Dudovskiy, 2018). Positivism needs research that is representative, valid, and scientific. For these reasons, Positivism prefers a quantitative approach to research. Contrasting to Positivism, Interpretivism takes a qualitative approach to research. Interpretivism can be defined as theories concerned with how people can gain knowledge of the world which vaguely rely on interpreting the meanings that humans attach to their actions (O'Reilly, 2009). Interpretivism believes that understanding why humans feel and behave cannot be achieved through the analysis of numbers; instead, it needs a thorough assessment of actions, words, and behaviours (Stainton, 2020). This is in great contrast to Positivism which is based upon the analysis of numbers and statistical analysis. Interpretivist researchers pose as social actors to gain knowledge on people and to appreciate the differences between people (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Interpretivist researchers are very much involved with the study to understand the behaviour and actions of the participants first-hand; therefore, the preferred method of collecting data is through qualitative research.

The research paradigm chosen for this research project was Positivism. This was chosen due to its link to the quantitative approach to research. Positivism enabled the independence of

the study as the researcher, which was an essential factor in light of the global pandemic. Positivism enabled the investigation of the relationship between remote working and employee motivation and well-being from a public sector perspective in third level institutions in Ireland.

### **3.3 Research Strategy**

Quantitative research is an approach for examining theories by investigating relationships among variables; these variables can be measured on instruments such as questionnaires so numerical data can be statistically analysed (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). When taking a quantitative approach to research, there are many options available to collect data. Options include polls and using pre-existing statistical data. Considering there was no previous research on the relationship between remote working and the motivation and well-being of employees from third-level institutions in Ireland, using pre-existent statistical data was not an option for this study. The research strategy adopted for this research was a survey. In terms of the data collection method, this was an online questionnaire created through google documents.

### **3.4 Research Methods**

When conducting research, there are various methods researchers can take to analyse their data. Qualitative data refers to categorised data based on labels and other identifiers; it is non-statistical and is not measured using complex numbers; it is often unstructured or semi-structured data and is often used to ask 'why' questions (Pickell, 2021). Methods of collecting qualitative data are interviews, focus groups, video or textual analysis, and observations. For the current research, it was not necessary to observe any behaviour, nor would taking a quantitative approach have answered the research questions in this study. In the current climate with Corona virus, qualitative research was not an accurate way of collecting data, as interviews could not be conducted face to face but must be over zoom or Microsoft teams.

Mixed methods design refers to using a blend of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a study to understand the research. A mixed-methods design is used when a quantitative or qualitative design does not answer the research questions itself in the study and can also be used in cases where the study is building onto another phase within the study (Creswell, 2008). Examples of collection methods in a mixed-methods design include interviews, questionnaires, and follow-up focus groups. Again, with the current research, there was no need to use a mixed-methods design. There was no behaviour that needed to be observed nor

any elements of taking a qualitative approach that would have answered any of the research questions in the current study.

The quantitative method is focused on gathering numerical data and generalising it across groups of people to explain the research questions (Babbie, Cenage & Daniel, 2010). Quantitative methods are concerned with analysing the data collected numerically and formulating statistical analyses to answer the research. Types of quantitative methods include Polls, surveys and questionnaires and using pre-existing statistical data. Using quantitative methods enabled examination of the effect of remote working and the well-being and motivation of employees. The quantitative method supported addressing the research question posed and enabled ease of administration of the chosen data collection method of an online questionnaire to participants. The following section will discuss data collection methods in more detail.

### **3. 5 Data Collection Methods**

The previous literature of Sirait and Murianingrum, (2020) investigated the effect of working remotely on the productivity of education staff using questionnaires. Considering the previous literature used questionnaires as the method of data collection on remote working and education staff, a questionnaire was the chosen data collection method for the current research. Two questionnaires were used in this research. The motivation at work scale (MAWS) and the Eudaimonic Workplace Well-Being Scale (EWWS) were designed to be answered using a Likert scale. Therefore, using polls to answer these questionnaires was not an option either. Using a survey to administer both these questionnaires to participants was the best possible method to collect the current research data. The most efficient way to collect data from these two questionnaires was using an online survey. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, staff from third level institutions were working remotely, and thus physical surveys was not an option to administer the questionnaires. Online surveys enabled the recruitment of staff from third level institutions while they were working remotely. The online survey was sent through email and contained the link which led to the questionnaires. The online survey was created through google forms which contained a short introduction, consent form, two questionnaires, and a debrief section.

### **3.6 Sampling Strategy**

The research question concerned with the effect of remote working on the motivation and well-being of staff in third level institutions in Ireland. The research sample was staff from



third-level institutions in Ireland. This sample included academic staff and administration staff. The requirements for participants in this study was that they were staff from third level institutions within Ireland. The colleges that the staff were recruited from included: Waterford Institute of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology, National College of Ireland, Technological University Dublin, Crumlin College, and Trinity College. It was essential to recruit from various colleges as the results could then be more representative of staff from third level institutions across Ireland. The study's sample included (N – 101). This included academic staff (N – 75) and administration staff (N – 26). From the sample, 75% were lecturers in third level institutions, and 25% were office staff in the colleges. See table 1 for frequencies. After receiving the appropriate ethics from the NCI ethics board, recruitment for the participants for the study began. The sampling technique used for this research was convenient sampling. Connection within NCI and with lecturers or administration staff were leveraged. Participants were recruited via email. This email contained information regarding the study and a link to the online questionnaire. See appendix A. This study was entirely voluntary, and there was no gratification provided to any participant.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Method**

When measuring quantitative variables, questionnaires are commonly used, statistical methods for data from scales are often used to analyse this data (Svensson, 2001). SPSS will be used to analyse the data collected from the surveys of participants statistically. This research method is quantitative. This study will use a cross-sectional design which allows the survey to be completed by staff from different third-level institutions around Ireland during one specific time. The dependent variables in this study are motivation and well-being, and the independent variables in this study are if the participant is administration staff or academic staff. This study will use a between-group design. This study will first run frequencies to provide information regarding the number of academic staff and administration in this study. For research objective 1, this study will run Pearson Chi-squared tests to investigate the impact of remote working on the motivation of administration staff and academic staff. For research objective 2, the research will run other Pearson Chi-squared tests to examine the impact of remote working on the well-being of academic staff and administration staff. For the final research objective, this study will use two Independent T-Tests to compare the motivation and well-being scores between administration staff and academic staff in third level institutions in Ireland when working remotely.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability relates to how a specific procedure or tool like a questionnaire will produce similar results in different circumstances; validity relates to what is intended to measure to what is being measured (Roberts and Priest, 2006). Both questionnaires used in the research were tested on reliability; both questionnaires' MAWS and EWWS measured employee Motivation and Well-being, which was what this research intended to examine on participants. This study first provides an information sheet to participants. See appendix B. This study uses a short demographics questionnaire at the beginning of the survey, asking participants to state if they are academic staff or administration staff in third-level institutions and are currently working remotely. This study will measure motivation using the Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS) (Gagne et al., 2010). See appendix C. This questionnaire is a 12-item scale regarding motivation at work and uses regular scoring. Participants are asked to answer each item on the questionnaire using a 1-7 Likert scale. This scale ranges from 1 (Not at all), 2 (very little), 3 (A little), 4 (Moderately), 5 (strongly), 6 (Very strongly), to 7 (Exactly). This research also uses another scale to measure well-being. The Eudaimonic Workplace Well-Being Scale (EWWS) (Bartels, Peterson, and Reina, 2019), see Appendix D. This questionnaire measures well-being at work in two parts. The first part is the Interpersonal Dimension, this is a 4-item scale, and participants are asked to answer using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The second part of the EWWS measures well-being on the Intrapersonal Dimension; this is a 4-item scale, and participants are again asked to answer using a 5-point Likert scale. The MAWS (Gagne et al., 2010), has been used and validated in previous research and is predictably associated with work behaviour constructs (Gagné, 2012). The EWWS has also been found to be a valid and valuable measure of well-being at work (Bartels, Peterson, and Reina, 2019). The area of research this project was on was novel in Ireland, and therefore the data needed to be reliable, valid, and representative of public sector employees in Ireland. Using quantitative methods ensured that the data collected was reliable, valid, and representative.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Although this research sample did not target any vulnerable groups of participants, it was essential to ensure the anonymity of participants. Anonymity for participants is an integral feature of ethical research; since the introduction of the Data Protection Act (1998), the

consideration of anonymity is no longer a matter of ethics but can also have legal implications (Grinyer, 2002). The sample was recruited through convenient sampling, and consideration had to be taken that the researcher may know some of the participants. In addition to this, although motivation and well-being are not extremely sensitive topics, it is essential to consider the privacy of participants. The survey did not ask any identifiable nor personal demographic questions like age, gender, or even what college the participant worked at. This was to ensure the anonymity of participants and offer complete confidentiality to participants in the study. This research took into consideration all ethical provisions when collecting data, a statement of intent was provided at the beginning of the survey, which outlined the purpose and nature of the research to participants.

### **3.10 Limitations**

A limitation of the research is the systematic bias that the researcher could not or did not control, which could affect the results; research should include the limitations faced by the researcher (Price and Murnan, 2004). The first limitation in this research is that the research sample size is small (N- 101). Therefore, the results from this research are not representative of third-level institutions in Ireland. A second limitation is that there is a noticeable difference in the number of participants between administration staff and academic staff, which may not allow for a fair comparison on the effect of remote working on the motivation and well-being between groups in the analysis. A final limitation in this research is the lack of previous research regarding the effect of remote working on specifically administration staff.

## Chapter 4 Data Presentation and Analysis of Findings

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the findings and statistical analysis of the primary research conducted in this study. Firstly, this chapter will present the descriptive statistics for the sample of academic staff and administration staff working remotely from across Waterford institute of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology, National College of Ireland, Technological University Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, and Crumlin College who have been predominantly working remotely since March 2020. Secondly, this chapter will outline the findings from the use of the MAWS and EDWS online questionnaires, with the MAWS measuring motivation among both sample groups and the EDWS measuring wellbeing of the participants. This chapter is structured around presenting the findings according to the three research objectives using statistical analysis. This research used chi squared tests and independent sample T– tests to analyse. This chapter is statistically orientated as it discusses the findings of the research.

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

#### 4.1.1 Frequencies for the current sample

Table 1 represents the frequencies for the current sample. In total sample was (N = 101). There were (N = 76) academic staff and (N = 25) administrative staff in the sample, from six third level institutions across Ireland. Regarding remote working, the entire sample (N = 101) were working remotely while participating in the current research. This table shows the size of the two groups in this study sample and how all participants in the sample were remote workers.

Table 1

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
<b>Are you working remotely</b>		
Yes	101	100.0
<b>What is occupation do you hold</b>		
Academic staff	76	75.2
Administration staff	25	24.8

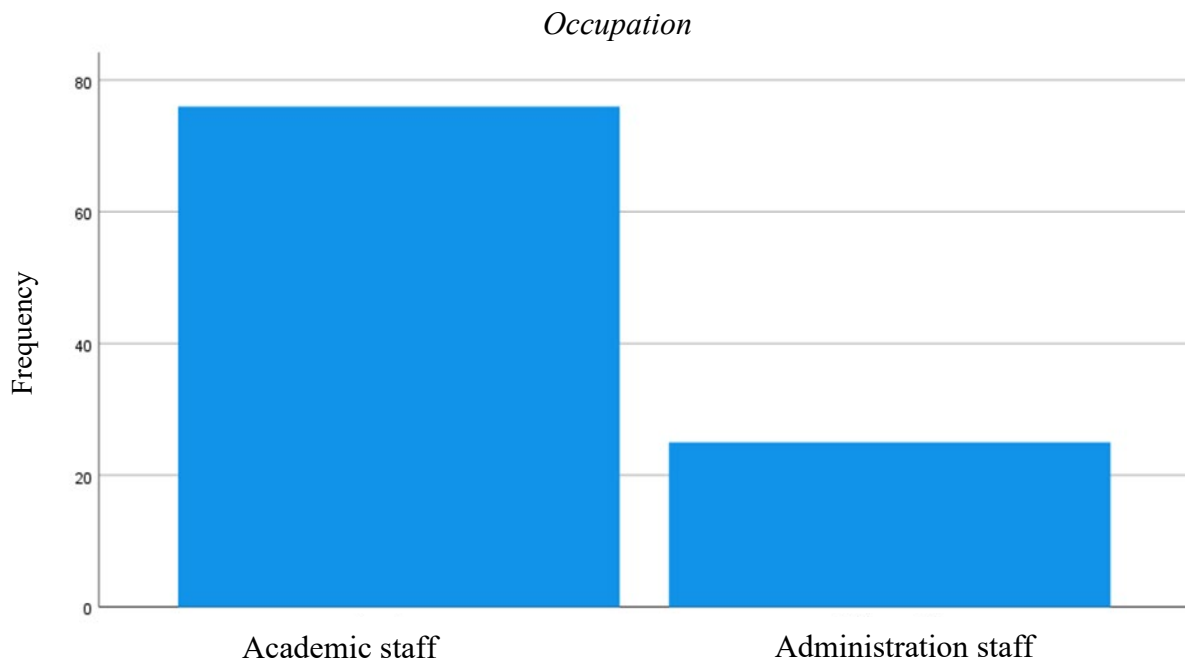


Figure 1 Sample occupation overview

Figure one is a bar graph representing the size of the two groups of remote workers in the sample.

#### 4.1.2 Descriptive statistics for all continuous variables

Table 2 represents the descriptive statistics for the two continuous variables in the study. The two continuous variables in this study were motivation ( $M = 4.3$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) and wellbeing ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = .68$ ). These two variables were what the two groups of remote working participants were tested on.

Table 2

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Motivation	2.00	6.17	4.34	.782
Wellbeing	1.5	5.00	3.59	.677

## 4.2 Findings as related to Research Objectives

There were three specific research objectives for this study as follows:

1. To investigate the effect of remote working on the motivation of employees in third level institutions in Ireland
2. To investigate the effect of remote working on the wellbeing of employees from third level institutions in Ireland.
3. To explore differences in the motivation and wellbeing of academic staff and administrative staff when working remotely in third level institutions.

Each objective was examined and tested using statistical analyses. The results of these statistical tests will now be explained.

### 4.2.1 Research Objective 1 – To investigate the effect of remote working on the motivation of employees in third level institutions in Ireland

Table 3 and table 4 represent the mean, median and modal answers for the two groups of remote working participants on the Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS). As can be seen in Table 4, administration staff scored overall lower means, medians and modal values on the MAWS than academic staff for items on this scale.

Table 3 *Occupation – Academic Staff*

	Maws 1	Maws 2	Maws 3	Maws 4	Maws 5	Maws 6	Maws 7	Maws 8	Maws 9	Maws 10	Maws 11	Maws 12
Mean	4.76	3.70	5.26	6.09	3.28	2.91	4.91	5.50	3.14	3.33	5.30	5.20
Median	5.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	5.00
Mode	5	4	5	7	4	1	5	5	4	2	5	5

Table 4 *Occupation – Administration staff*

	Maws 1	Maws 2	Maws 3	Maws 4	Maws 5	Maws 6	Maws 7	Maws 8	Maws 9	Maws 10	Maws 11	Maws 12
Mean	4.00	2.92	4.36	5.60	2.88	2.36	4.92	5.00	3.64	2.52	5.20	4.96
Median	5.00	2.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	2.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	5.00
Mode	5	1	5	6	1	1	6	5	1	1	6	4

*Occupation = Administration staff*

Items 2, 3 and 6 on the MAWS demonstrated not only a difference between academic staff and administration staff regarding motivation, but also showed specifically administration staff working remotely scoring lower values on the motivation scale.

#### **MAWS ITEM 2**

	<b>Value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Pearson Chi- Squared</b>	13.72	6	.033

A chi – square test of independence was conducted between item two on the MAWS and occupation. The relation between these two variables were significant  $X^2(6, N = 101) = 13.72, p = .033$ . Administration staff were less motivated than academic staff in a working remotely context.

Table 5 Crosstabulation MAWS 2

			Not at all	Very little	A little	Moderately	Strongly	Very strongly	Exactly
Occupation	Academic Staff	Count	10	7	11	24	18	4	2
		Expected count	15.00	7.5	10.5	19.6	15.8	5.3	2.3
	Administration staff	Count	10	3	3	2	3	3	1
		Expected count	5.0	2.5	3.5	6.4	5.2	1.7	0.7

The chi square test also presented the differences between observed and expected values on the MAWS between the groups of remote workers. As seen in table 5, there was an underrepresentation of academic staff at the lower end of the scale. However, for administration staff there was an overrepresentation on the lower end of the scale. Administration staff were less motivated than academic staff, this is demonstrated by more administration staff scoring more negative values than expected on item 2 of the MAWS.



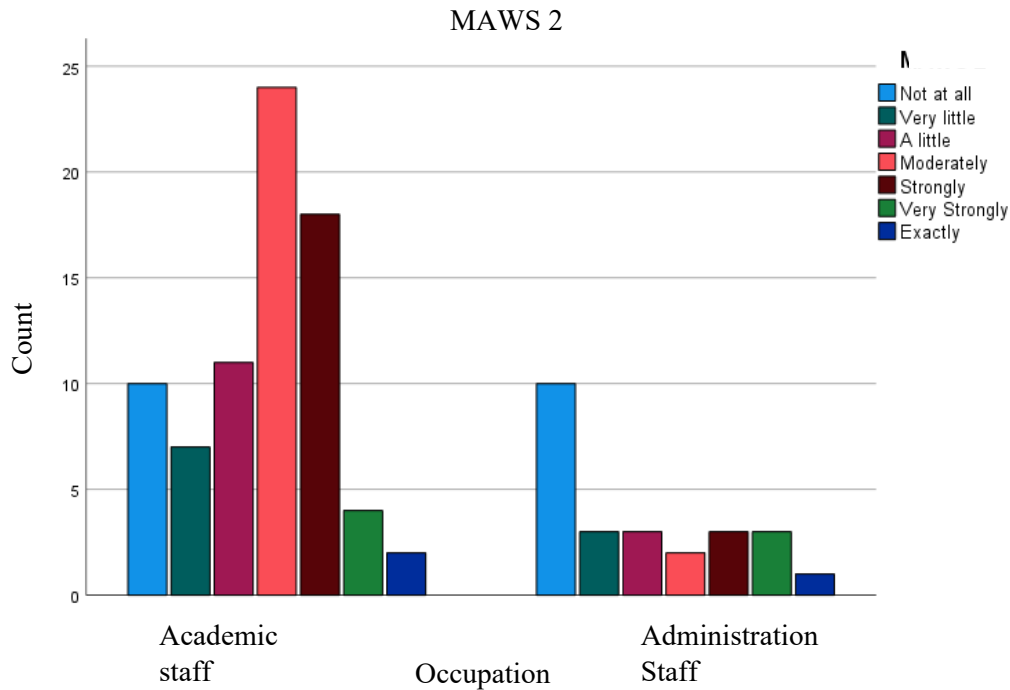


Figure 2

Figure 2 is a bar graph representing the different values each group of remote workers scored on MAWS item 2. As can be seen in figure 2, academic staff scored more positive values than administration staff on item 2 of the MAWS. Regarding academic staff, this research found remote working to positively impact motivation, this finding supports the previous research of (Fujii, 2020). However, administration staff scoring low demonstrates that remote working negatively affected their motivation, this finding supports (Bakhmat, Babakina, and Belmaz, 2021) which found remote working to negatively impact the motivation of staff from universities.

### MAWS ITEM 3

	Value	df	Sig.
<b>Pearson Chi- Squared</b>	13.93	6	.039

A chi – square test of independence was conducted between item three on the MAWS and occupation. The relation between these two variables were significant  $X^2(6, N = 101) = 13.29, p = .039$ . Academic staff were more motivated than administration staff.

Table 6 Crosstabulation MAWS 3

			Not at all	Very little	A little	Moderately	Strongly	Very strongly	Exactly
Occupation	Academic Staff	Count	2	1	2	15	24	14	18
		Expected count	4.5	2.3	3.0	12.8	22.6	15.0	15.8
	Administration staff	Count	4	2	2	2	6	6	3
		Expected count	1.5	.7	1.0	4.2	7.4	5.0	5.2

The chi square test also presented the differences between observed and expected values on item 3 of the MAWS between the groups of remote workers. As seen in table 6, there was an overrepresentation of administration staff at the lower end of scale and an underrepresentation of administration staff at the higher end of the scale. In contrast to this, for academic staff there was an underrepresentation on the lower end of the scale and an overrepresentation on the higher end of the scale. Academic staff were more motivated than administration staff, this is demonstrated by more administration staff scoring more negative values than expected on item 3 of the MAWS.

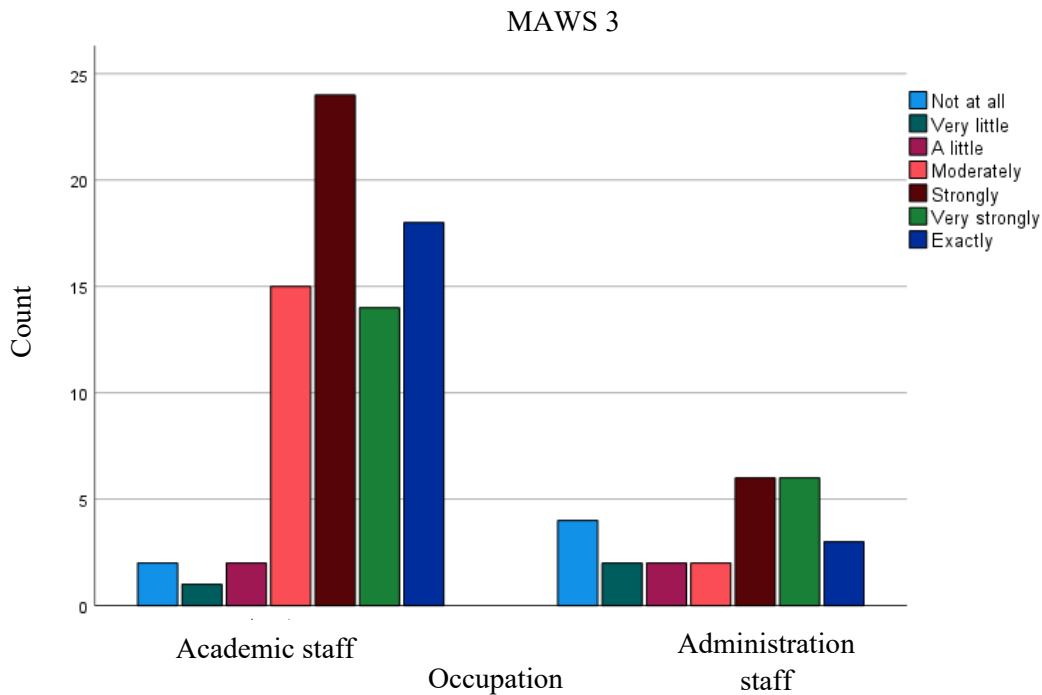


Figure 3

Figure 3 is a bar graph representing the different values each group of remote workers scored on the MAWS item 3. As can be seen in figure 3, academic staff scored more positive values than administration staff on item 3 of the MAWS. For academic staff, these findings do support the previous research of (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017) which found remote working to positively affect the motivation of employees. However, this finding does not support the previous literature of (Purwanto ,2020) which found remote working to negatively impact the motivation of academic staff. For administration staff, this research finding of remote working to negatively impact their motivation supports the previous literature of (Caillier, 2011) which similarly found remote working to negatively affect employees motivation.

#### MAWS ITEM 6

	Value	df	Sig.
<b>Pearson Chi- Squared</b>	13.09	6	.042

A chi – square test of independence was conducted between item six on the MAWS and occupation. The relation between these two variables were significant  $X^2(6, N = 101) = 13.092, p = .042$ . Administration staff were less motivated than academic staff. The difference in motivation between the two groups of remote workers were marginal.

Table 7 Crosstabulation MAWS 6

			Not at all	Very little	A little	Moderately	Strongly	Very strongly	Exactly
Occupation	Academic Staff	Count	21	16	10	14	10	3	2
		Expected count	24.8	16.6	8.3	12.0	7.5	5.3	1.5
	Administration staff	Count	12	6	1	2	0	4	0
		Expected count	8.2	5.4	2.7	4.0	2.5	1.7	.5

The chi square test also presented the differences between observed and expected values on item six of the MAWS between the groups of remote workers. As seen in table 7, there was an underrepresentation of academic staff at the lower end of scale and a slight overrepresentation of academic staff at the higher end of the scale.

Contrastingly, for administration staff there was an overrepresentation at the lower end of the scale and a slight underrepresentation on the higher end of the scale. Administration staff were less motivated than academic staff, this is demonstrated by administration staff scoring more negative values than expected on item 6 of the MAWS.

## MAWS 6

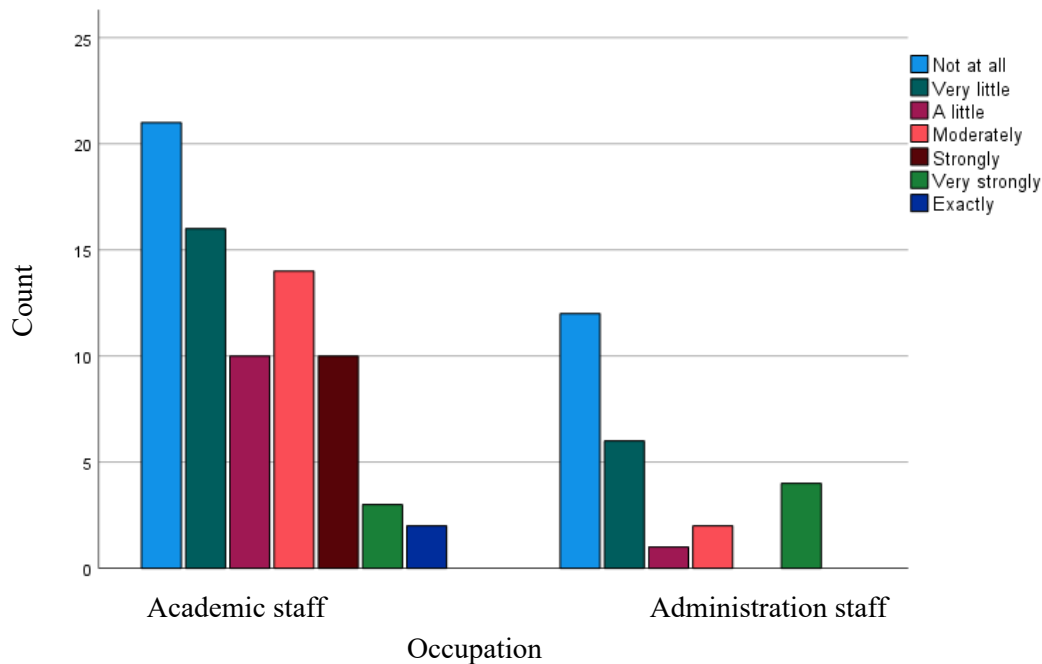


Figure 4

Figure 4 is a bar graph representing the different values each group of remote workers scored on the MAWS item 6. As can be seen in figure 4, both groups of remote workers scored large negative values, however academic staff scored more positive values than administration staff on item 6 of the MAWS. This finding, of administration staff scoring predominantly low scores and few positive scores on the MAWS, demonstrates that remote working negatively impacted their motivation. This finding supports the previous literature of (Hertel, Geister and Konradt, 2005 and Nakhod et al., 2020), which similarly found remote working to negatively affect the motivation of employees.

### 4.2.2 Research Objective 2 – To investigate the effect of remote working on the wellbeing of employees from third level institutions in Ireland.

Table 8 and Table 9 represent the mean, median and modal answers for the two groups of remote working participants on the EDWS which measured the wellbeing of the participants. There were two dimensions on the EDWS, Interpersonal (Inter – p) and Intrapersonal (Intra – p). As can be seen from the two tables, there are very few differences between administration staff and academic staff mean scores for each item on the EDWS. All scores from both groups of remote workers were relatively neutral with a few cases of high scores. There were two sets of questions within the EDWS. The first set is Interpersonal, this refers to questions regarding employees' relations and attitude toward their colleagues and employer. The

second set is Intrapersonal, Intrapersonal refers to questions regarding the person themselves, how they act, feel or behave.

Table 8 *Occupation – Academic staff*

	Inter – p 1	Inter – p 2	Inter – p 3	Inter – P 3	Intra – P 1	Intra – P 2	Intra – P 3	Intra – P 4
Mean	3.33	3.28	3.28	3.17	3.42	4.12	4.22	3.86
Median	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4

Table 9 *Occupation – Administration staff*

	Inter – p 1	Inter – p 2	Inter – p 3	Inter – P 3	Intra – P 1	Intra – P 2	Intra – P 3	Intra – P 4
Mean	3.28	3.44	3.40	3.44	3.72	4.12	4.12	3.64
Median	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4

Interpersonal item 4 on the EDWS that demonstrated a statistically significant association between wellbeing and the two groups of remote workers. Although there was not a statistically significant association between wellbeing and the two groups on intrapersonal item 2 and interpersonal item 3 of the EDWS, the chi squared tests did show variations in scoring values between the two groups of remote workers.

#### **EDWS Interpersonal Item 4**

	<b>Value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Pearson Chi- Squared</b>	10.85	4	.028

A chi – square test of independence was conducted between Interpersonal Item 4 on the EDWS and occupation. The relation between these two variables were significant  $\chi^2(4, N = 101) = 10.85, p = .028$ . Administration staff had better wellbeing than academic staff on the Interpersonal Item 4 of EDWS.

Table 10 Crosstabulation EDWS Interpersonal Item 4

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Occupation	Academic staff	Count	5	11	30	26	4
		Expected Count	3.8	12.8	28.6	23.3	7.5
	Administration staff	Count	0	6	8	5	6
		Expected Count	1.2	4.2	9.4	7.7	2.5

The chi square test also presented the differences between observed and expected values on Interpersonal item 4 of the EDWS between the groups of remote workers. As seen in table 10, there was an overrepresentation of academic staff at the lower end of scale and an underrepresentation of academic staff at the higher end of the scale.

However, for administration staff there was an underrepresentation at the lower end of the scale and an overrepresentation on the higher end of the scale. Administration staff had better wellbeing regarding this interpersonal item compared to academic staff, this is demonstrated by academic staff scoring more negative values than expected on interpersonal item 4 of the EDWS.

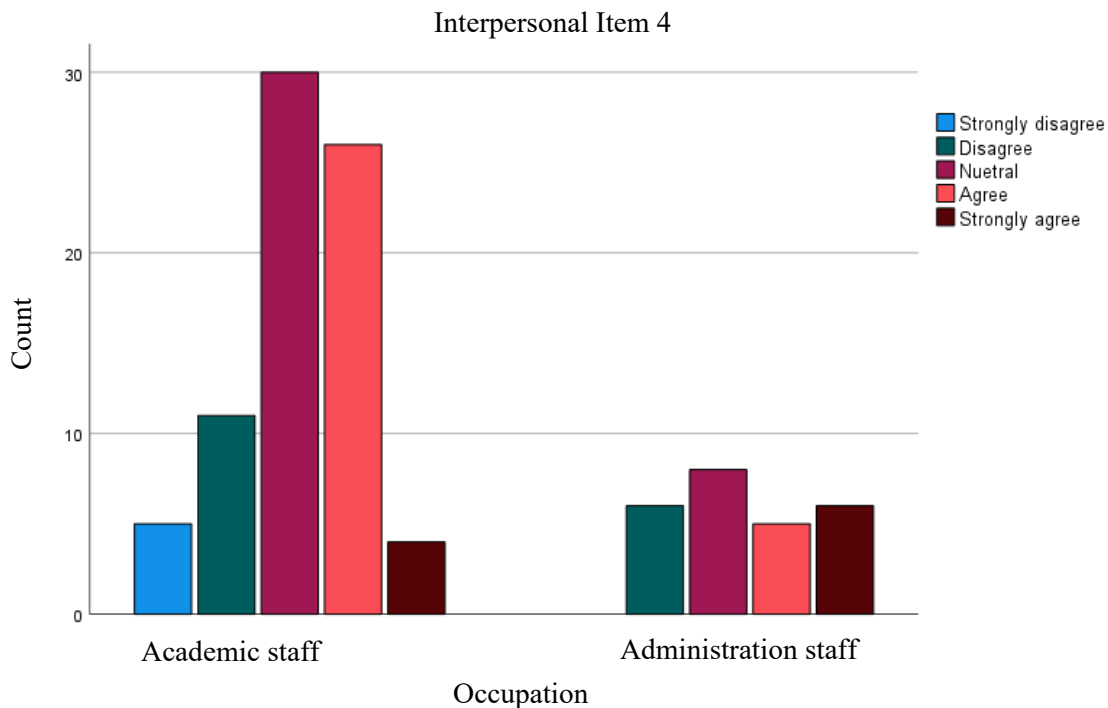


Figure 5

Figure 5 is a bar graph representing the different values each group of remote workers scored on Interpersonal Item 4 of the EDWS. As can be seen in figure 5, academic staff scored more negative values than administration staff on Interpersonal item 4 of the EDWS. This finding demonstrates administration staff to have better wellbeing than academic staff on this Item. Remote working negatively impacted the wellbeing of academic staff more than the wellbeing of administration staff on Interpersonal Item 4, this finding supports the previous research of (Sieber, Hüppi, and Praetorius, 2020) which found remote working to negatively affect the wellbeing of academic staff.

### EDWS Intrapersonal Item 2

	Value	df	Sig.
<b>Pearson Chi- Squared</b>	5.395	4	.249

A chi – square test of independence was conducted between Intrapersonal Item 2 on the EDWS and occupation. The relation between these two variables were not significant  $\chi^2(4, N = 101) = 5.395, p = .249$ . There was not a statistically significant association between wellbeing and the two groups of remote workers on item two of the EDWS.



Table 11 Intrapersonal Item 2

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Occupation	Academic staff	Count	1	1	5	50	19
		Expected Count	.8	.8	7.5	46.7	20.3
	Administration staff	Count	0	0	5	12	8
		Expected Count	.2	.2	2.5	15.3	6.7

The chi square test also presented the scores between observed and expected values on Intrapersonal item two of the EDWS between the groups of remote workers. Although there was no significant difference between the groups regarding wellbeing on this item, there are slight variations regarding expected counts and observed counts in both the groups. As seen in Table 11, there was a minor underrepresentation of administration staff at the lower end of scale and an overrepresentation of administration staff at the higher end of the scale. In contrast, for academic staff there was an underrepresentation at the higher end of the scale and a slight overrepresentation on the lower end of the scale. Although there was no statistically significant association between these two groups of remote workers regarding wellbeing, academic staff scored more negative values on this item than administration staff.

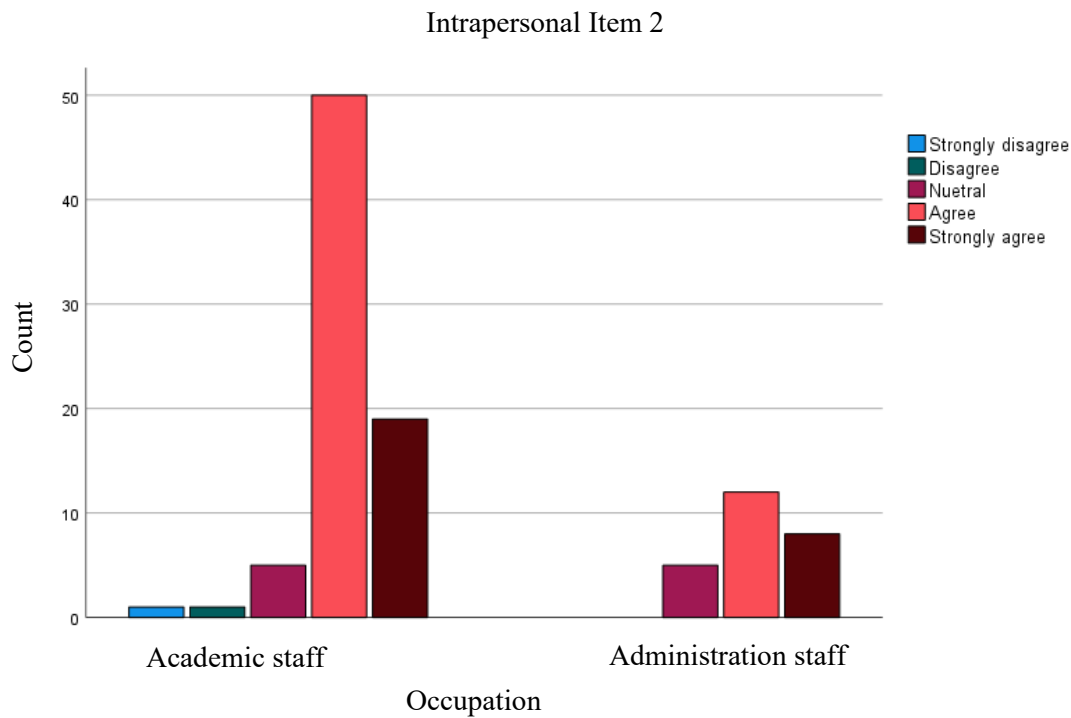


Figure 6

Figure 6 is a bar graph representing the different values each group of remote workers scored on the Intrapersonal item 2 of the EDWS. As can be seen in figure 6, academic staff scored more negative values than administration staff on intrapersonal item 2 of the EDWS.

However, both groups of remote workers scored mostly positive values on the Intrapersonal Item 2, this finding does not support the previous literature of (Gigi and Pavithra, 2020; Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker, 2020 and Carnevale and Hatak, 2020) which found remote working to negatively affect the wellbeing of employees.

### EDWS Interpersonal Item 3

	Value	df	Sig.
<b>Pearson Chi- Squared</b>	3.699	4	.448

A chi – square test of independence was conducted between Interpersonal Item 3 on the EDWS and occupation. The relation between these two variables were not significant  $\chi^2(4, N = 101) = 3.699, p = .448$ . There was not a statistically significant association between wellbeing and the two groups of remote workers on item three of the EDWS.

Table 12 Crosstabulation Interpersonal Item 3

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Occupation	Academic staff	Count	4	12	23	33	4
		Expected Count	3	12.0	24.8	30.9	5.3
	Administration staff	Count	0	4	10	8	3
		Expected Count	1.0	4.0	8.2	10.1	1.7

The chi square test also presented the scores between observed and expected values on Interpersonal item 3 of the EDWS between the groups of remote workers. Although there was no significant difference between the groups regarding wellbeing on this item, there are slight variations regarding expected counts and observed counts in both the groups. As seen in Table 12, there was an overrepresentation of academic staff at the lower end of scale and an underrepresentation of academic staff at the higher end of the scale. In contrast, for administration staff there was an overrepresentation at the higher end of the scale and an underrepresentation on the lower end of the scale. Although there was no statistically significant association between these two groups of remote workers regarding wellbeing, administration staff scored more positive values on this item than academic staff.

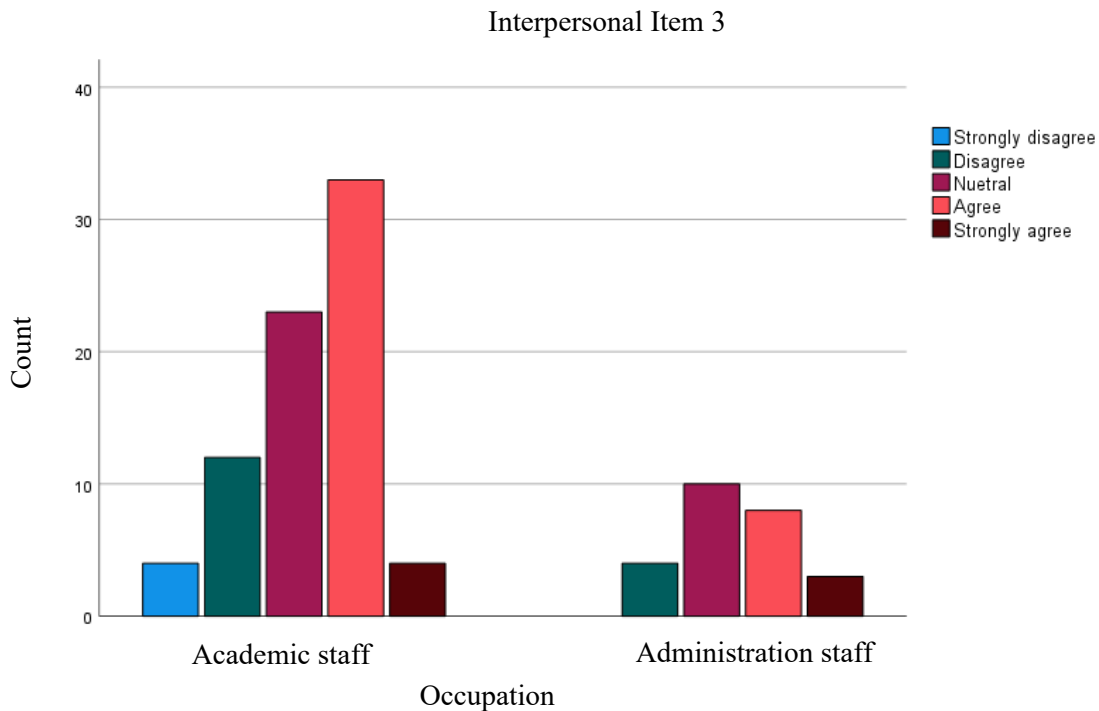


Figure 7

Figure 7 is a bar graph representing the different values each group of remote workers scored on the Interpersonal item 3 on the EDWS. As can be seen in figure 7, academic staff scored more negative values than administration staff on interpersonal item 3 of the EDWS. This finding indicates that remote working negatively impacted the wellbeing of academic staff compared to the wellbeing of administration staff on Interpersonal Item 3. This finding supports the previous literature of (Alderson, 2020 and Prasad, Rao, Vaidya and Muralidhar, 2020) which found remote working to negatively impact the wellbeing of employees.

#### **4.2.3 Research Objective 3 - To explore differences in the motivation and wellbeing of academic staff and administrative staff when working remotely in third level institutions.**

The final objective of this research was to identify if there were differences in the motivation and wellbeing between the two groups of remote workers in this study. Two independent samples T-Tests were used to examine if there were differences between academic staff and administration staff regarding motivation and wellbeing when working remotely.

Firstly, when considering motivation an independent samples T-Test was used to explore the differences in motivation between the two groups of remote workers, administration staff and academic staff.

Table 13

## Independent sample T- test motivation

	Mean	SD	T	P
Academic staff	4.4485	.71154	2.093	.044
Administration Staff	4.03	.91252	2.093	.044

Academic staff ( $M = 4.4485$ ,  $SD = .71154$ ) were more motivated than administration staff ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = .91252$ ), a statistically significant difference of 0.41 (95% *CI*: 0.012 to 0.824),  $t(34.12) = 2.093$ ,  $p = .044$ ,  $d = 0.51$ . This result indicates that academic staff are more motivated than administration staff. With that being said, the difference between these two groups of remote workers regarding motivation is small.

The significant difference in motivation found between the two groups of remote workers means that these findings reject the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis finds that motivation is independent of occupation. However, due to the significant difference in motivation between these two groups, these findings accept the alternative hypothesis and finds motivation to be dependent on occupation.

Secondly, when considering Wellbeing, an independent samples T- test was used to explore the differences in wellbeing between the two groups of remote workers, administration staff and academic staff.

Table 14

## Independent samples T-test wellbeing

	Mean	SD	T	P
Academic staff	3.5839	.69264	0.39	0.698
Administration staff	3.6450	.64113	0.39	0.698

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There was no significant difference in the scores for academic staff ( $M = 3.5839$ ,  $SD = .69264$ ) and administration staff ( $M = 3.6450$ ,  $SD = .64113$ ;  $t(99) = -0.39$ ,  $p = 0.698$ , two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference =  $-.06112$ , 95%  $CI$ :  $-.37244 - .25020$ ) was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.091552$ ). This result indicates that there was no significant difference in wellbeing between the two groups of remote workers.

There was no significant difference in wellbeing found between academic staff and administration staff means that these findings reject the alternative hypothesis. Wellbeing is independent of occupation between these two groups of remote workers.

### **4.3 Summary**

This chapter presented an overview of the findings and statistical analysis of the primary research conducted in this study. The first research objective in this study was to examine the effect of remote working on the motivation of academic staff and administration staff. The research found remote working to positively impact the motivation of academic staff but negatively affect the motivation of administration staff. The second research objective in this study was to examine the effect of remote working on the wellbeing of administration staff and academic staff. Overall, the analysis found remote working to positively impact the wellbeing of academic staff and remote working to have no effect on the wellbeing of administration staff. This is indicated by administration staff scoring overall neutral scores on the EWDS and academic staff scoring mostly positive scores on the EWDS, with minor variances in scoring between the two groups on Interpersonal Item 4, Intrapersonal Item 2 and Interpersonal Item 3. The final research objective of this study was to examine if there were differences in motivation and wellbeing between academic staff and administration staff when working remotely. The analysis found a statistically significant difference between these two groups regarding motivation, with administration staff having lower motivation than academic staff when working remotely. The analysis found no difference between academic staff and administration staff regarding wellbeing when working remotely.

## **Chapter 5 Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the findings of the primary research conducted and examine these in line with the secondary research conducted as outlined in Chapter 2 Literature Review introducing new literature where necessary to support the findings from the primary research. The approach to this chapter is to discuss these primary and secondary findings under each research objective set out in this study which each related hypothesis will also be discussed. As a reminder, two distinct groups of remote working employees were surveyed as part of the primary research conducted. These were administration staff and academic staff from across five third level institutions in Ireland.

### **5.2 Research Objective 1 – To investigate the effect of remote working on the motivation of staff from third-level institutions in Ireland**

The first research objective was to investigate the effect of remote working on staff motivation from third-level institutions in Ireland. This research investigated the motivation of both academic and administrative groups when working remotely. Much of the previous research on the effect of remote working on the motivation of employees found the motivation of employees to be positively affected by remote working (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017; Fujii, 2020; Virtanen, 2020). However, regarding the motivation of academic staff and education staff from universities working remotely, much of the previous research (Purwanto, 2020 & Bakhmat, Babakina, and Belmaz, 2021) found working remotely to negatively affect the motivation of education staff from universities. Findings from the primary research conducted found that overall, remote working had a positive effect on the motivation of the academic staff surveyed, as evidenced by academic staff scoring positive values on the MAWS in relation to working remotely. In contrast, findings from primary research found that remote working negatively affected the motivation of administration staff surveyed. This is evidenced by administration staff scoring a lot of low-value scores on the MAWS. Items 2, 3 and 6 on the MAWS demonstrated a significant difference between the motivation of administration staff and academic staff with administration staff scoring low values on the scale.

MAWS item 2 states, "Because I have to be the best in my job, I have to be a 'winner'". The chi-squared analysis found a significant relationship between these two groups of remote workers and motivation. In addition to this, the chi-squared test found that academic staff

were underrepresented at the lower values of the scale, compared to the administration staff who were overrepresented at the lower value of the scale. This analysis finds academic staff to have a higher motivation than administration staff on the MAWS item 2.

MAWS item 3 states, "I chose this job because it allows me to reach my life goals". The chi-squared analysis found a significant relationship between these two groups of remote workers and motivation. In addition to this, the chi-squared test found that academic staff were overrepresented at the higher values of the scale compared to the administration staff who were underrepresented at the higher values of the scale. This analysis finds administration staff to have lower motivation than academic staff on the MAWS item 3.

MAWS item 6 states, "Because my work is my life, and I do not want to fail". The chi-squared analysis found a significant relationship between these two groups of remote workers and motivation. In addition to this, the chi-squared test found that academic staff were underrepresented at the lower values of the scale, compared to the administration staff who were overrepresented at the lower value of the scale. This analysis finds academic staff to have a higher motivation than administration staff on the MAWS item 6.

Overall, the results of this research found administration staff to score more negatively than academic staff and found administration staff to mostly score negative values on all items on the MAWS. This suggests that administration staff had low motivation when working remotely and that working remotely had a negative effect on the motivation of administration staff from the third level institutions in Ireland surveyed. This finding is similar to the findings of Hertel, Geister and Konradt, (2005) and Nakhod et al., (2020), which found that remote working had a negative effect on the motivation of employees. Similarly, Caillier (2011) found that remote working employees reported lower motivation levels than employees working in an office. Interestingly, one of the reasons remote working employees reported low motivation was due to the lack of social interaction when working remotely. This finding is important to consider in the context of this research. Administration staff from third level institutions usually work in a busy social environment, around other colleagues and interacting face to face daily with students and academic staff face. Considering this, perhaps the lack of social interaction when working remotely could be the reason why administration staff scored low on motivation.

In contrast to administration staff, this research found overall that academic staff scored more positive values on the MAWS. This suggests that remote working positively affected the



motivation of academic staff from third-level institutions in Ireland. This finding does not support the previous research of Purwanto (2020) and Bakhmat, Babakina, and Belmaz, (2021), which found academic staff working and teaching remotely during the global pandemic to struggle with motivation due to remote working. However, the current research finding that remote working had a positive effect on academic staff supports previous research of Rupiatta and Beckmann, (2017) and Virtanen, (2020), which also found that employees working remotely reported high levels of motivation. Employees working remotely in this previous research reported high motivation levels due to a better work-life balance at home. This may be important to note, as academic staff may have to commute to their third level institutions which takes up time and without this commute, when remote working, perhaps a better work-life balance presents itself.

The hypothesis for this first aim in the research states that remote working has a negative effect on the motivation of employees from third level institutions. For administration staff, their results support this hypothesis; however, for academic staff, their results do not support the first hypothesis of this research.

### **5.3 Research Objective 2 – To investigate the effect of remote working on the well-being of employees from third-level institutions in Ireland.**

The second research objective of this study was to investigate the effect of remote working on the well-being of employees from third-level institutions in Ireland. There were two sets of questions within the EWWS. The first set is Interpersonal; this refers to questions regarding employees' relations and attitudes toward their colleagues and employer. The second set is Intrapersonal; Intrapersonal refers to questions regarding the person themselves, how they act, feel, or behave (Bartels, Peterson, and Reina, 2019). Intrapersonal item two and interpersonal items 4 and 3 demonstrated some interesting findings in the primary research conducted.

Interpersonal item 4 states, "I consider the people I work with to be my friends". The chi-squared analysis found a significant relationship between these two groups of remote workers and well-being. In addition to this, the chi-squared test found that administration staff were overrepresented at the positive values on the scale, compared to academic staff who were underrepresented at the positive values on the scale. This analysis finds administration staff to have a better well-being than academic staff on the Interpersonal item 4 of the EWWS. This

finding is interesting, as it indicates that administration staff consider their colleagues as friends even when working remotely, more than academic staff from this research sample.

Intrapersonal item 2 states, "I feel I have a purpose at my work". Although the chi-squared test analysis did not find a statistically significant association between the two groups of remote workers and well-being on this item, there were variations between expected counts and observed counts between the two groups of remote workers. Academic staff were overrepresented on the lower values on the scale, compared to the administration staff who were underrepresented on the lower values on the scale. Academic staff scored more negative values on this item than administration staff. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding well-being on this item. The most common value both groups of remote workers scored was "agree", indicating that they felt they had a purpose at their work while working remotely.

Interpersonal item 3 states, "I feel connected to those in my work environment". The chi-squared test analysis did not find a statistically significant association between the two groups of remote workers and well-being on this item. However, there were again variations in expected counts and observed counts between the two groups of remote workers. The administration staff were underrepresented at the lower values of the scale, compared to academic staff who were overrepresented at the lower values of the scale. Academic staff, again, scored more negative values on this item of well-being than administration staff. Overall, there were no differences between these two groups of remote workers regarding well-being scores on this item of the EWWS.

Interpersonal item 4 was the only item on the EWWS that demonstrated a significant difference between these two groups of remote workers and well-being. This finds administration staff to consider their colleagues more like friends than academic staff when working remotely. A reason for this finding may be due to the nature of the job of academic staff. As discussed previously regarding motivation, administration staff are constantly interacting with colleagues and students in their job, compared to academic staff who interact with other staff and students but teach alone in lectures and tend to have their own work office space and work more autonomously when not in lectures. Administration staff may have stronger relationships with their colleagues from constantly working in a closer office environment and having shared goals. This closer relationship between administration staff may explain why they consider their colleagues more like friends than academic staff.

Academic staff may feel socially isolated when working remotely. However, since they would typically be working alone in offices, they may not miss the relationships they have with colleagues as much as administration staff, from the current sample. A relevant piece of literature (Filho et al., 2021) examined the effect of the global pandemic on staff from universities. This research found that 70% of respondents reported that the global pandemic had a negative impact on their well-being. In addition, this research found the staff to report social isolation as one of the negative impacts of working from home due to the global pandemic. While working remotely, academic staff from the current research may feel more socially isolated from their colleagues than administration staff and thus is the reason for scoring lower well-being on Interpersonal item 4 of the EWWS. This finding on Interpersonal Item 4 of the EWWS also supports the previous research of Sieber et al., (2020) and Shen and Slater, (2021), which found working remotely during the global pandemic to have a negative effect on the well-being of academic staff.

However, overall, the results found that academic staff scored mostly positive values on the EWWS while working remotely, indicating that remote working had a positive effect on the well-being of academic staff. This research also found that administration staff scored mostly neutral values on the EWWS while working remotely, indicating that remote working had no effect on the well-being of administration staff from third-level institutions in Ireland. These findings do not support the previous research of Gigi and Pavithra, (2020), Wang et al., (2020), Carnevale and Hatak, (2020), Alderson, (2020) and Prasad et al., (2020), which finds remote working during the global pandemic to have a negative impact on the well-being of employees when working remotely. These findings in the primary research conducted were surprising, considering much of the previous research indicated the opposite. The research of (Prasad et al., 2020) identified advantages of remote working by those remote working employees reported in their study. Remote working employees reported advantages such as reduced commute times and increased decision-making knowledge due to minimal supervision of remote working employees. Perhaps reduced commute times to work is why remote working positively affected the well-being of academic staff. Remote working had no effect on the well-being of administration staff. This could be due to administration staff being comfortable with computers, so the transition to teleworking is minimal in differences.

The second hypothesis states that remote working will have a negative effect on the well-being of employees from third level institutions. The results in this study found the well-being of academic staff to be positively affected by remote working, and remote working had

no effect on the well-being of administration staff. These findings do not support the second hypothesis in this research.

#### **5.4 Research Objective 3 – To discover if there are differences in the motivation and well-being of lecturers and office staff when working remotely in third level institutions**

The final objective of this research was to discover if there are differences in the motivation and well-being of lecturers and office staff when working remotely for third level institutions. Although there was no previous literature comparing the motivation and well-being of administration staff and academic staff from third level institutions while working remotely, the hypothesis of the final research objective of this study is that there will be no difference in the motivation and well-being between the two groups of remote workers.

An independent sample t-test was used to identify differences between the motivation of academic staff and administration staff while working remotely. This research found a statistically significant difference between the motivation of academic staff and administration staff, with academic staff being more motivated than administration staff when working remotely. As a result of this difference, this research finds motivation to be dependent on occupation. These findings are interesting; the question arises why are academic staff more motivated when working remotely than administration staff? A possible reason for this may be that academic staff in Ireland would very rarely (if ever) engage in remote teaching before the global pandemic. Perhaps this novel experience of teaching from home motivated academic staff when working remotely. Relevant research Arooj et al., (2020) found that academic staff from universities in Jordan reported that one of the benefits they found of working remotely was teaching from the comfort of their home. The reduced commute time of academic staff and teaching from the comfort of their home could explain the findings in the current study.

As discussed previously, a possible reason why administration staff were less motivated than academic staff is the lack of social interaction when engaging in remote working. The findings of Cooper and Kurland (2002) found that administration staff motivation and job satisfaction to decrease when teleworking due to the reduced frequency and quality of their interactions when outside of the office. Another possibility for the differences in motivation between the two groups is remuneration. Academic staff's pay is higher compared to administration staff. A plethora of research (Gardner, Pierce and Van Dyne, 2004; Stringer, Didham, and Theivananthampillai, 2011 and Larkin, Pierce, and Gino, 2012) finds pay to

increase the motivation of employees. A final possibility for the differences in motivation between the two groups of remote workers is job satisfaction. It must be taken into consideration the possibility that perhaps administration staff have lower job satisfaction than academic staff, which could be the reason administration staff have lower motivation than academic staff when working remotely. Further research must be conducted to examine the job satisfaction in both administration and academic staff when they are not working remotely.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to identify differences in the well-being of academic staff and administration staff when working remotely. This research found no difference between academic staff and administration staff in well-being. This research found well-being to be independent of occupation. A possible explanation for these findings is that both groups were in the same condition of working remotely, therefore there was no difference between the two groups regarding well-being. Further research must be conducted to examine the well-being of academic staff and administration staff while working in the third level institutions and not working remotely.

The final hypothesis of this research states that there will be no differences between administration staff and academic staff in motivation and well-being when working remotely. This study found a difference in motivation between administration staff and academic staff and no difference in well-being between the two groups of remote workers. This research therefore does not support the final hypothesis.

## **5.5 Limitations**

All research has limitations, and the limitations of this research must be considered. Although the sample were a variety of participants from five third level institutions in Ireland, this is only a representation of the total number of third-level institutions in Ireland. The sample size was relatively small ( $N = 101$ ), and for that reason, the results of this research may not be representative of all staff in third level institutions in Ireland. If conducting a similar study in the future, a broader sample of both groups would need to be conducted to conclusively deduct the position in relation to motivation and well-being in the context of working remotely and ensure a more representative sample.

Another limitation in this research was the significant difference in the number of participants in academic staff compared to administration staff in colleges. The lack of similar numbers in participants between academic and administration staff did not allow for a

fair comparison of the effect of remote working on well-being and motivation between these two groups. If conducting a similar study in future, a recommendation would be to recruit a specific number of both lecturers and office staff to ensure a fair comparison between the two sample groups.

A final limitation was the recruitment time frame. Due to the time of year when participant recruitment began for this study (May) many third-level staff were almost finished for the summer or preparing exams for students in the case of academic staff. This affected the response rate. While the response rate was overall positive, consideration should be given to the cycle of the academic year to ensure a stronger response rate from participants.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of the primary research while referring to the previous literature. It was interesting to see how the primary research compared to the previous literature for the three research objectives. The limitations of the research were stated. While also acknowledging the limitations to this research, the strengths of this research should also be considered. This research was novel in examining the motivation and well-being of third-level institutions in Ireland. The research filled a gap in the literature while also contributing to the limited research on the effect of remote working on the motivation and well-being of staff from, specifically, universities.

## **Chapter 6 Conclusion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This final chapter will draw on conclusions to the current research while outlining recommendations for implementing the findings in the research, including a timeline and cost for these findings. This chapter will conclude with a personal learning statement from the researcher.

### **6.2 Main Conclusions**

This research was novel in examining the effect of remote working on the motivation and well-being of staff from third-level institutions in Ireland.

The first element of the research question regarding motivation examined the effect of remote working on the motivation of education staff and administration staff from third-level institutions in Ireland. Overall, the research found remote working to positively affect academic staff's motivation, while also finding remote working to negatively affect the motivation of administration staff from third level institutions. This is a significant finding in the research. It is a significant finding as not only does it not support much of the previous literature which finds remote working to have a negative impact on the motivation of staff from universities, but it also highlights a contrast in motivation between these two groups of remote workers, regardless of being from the same sector, the education sector.

This finding is interesting; it answers the research question by presenting a difference between education staff and administration staff in the effect of remote working on each group's motivation. As a consequence of the global Covid 19 pandemic, most universities have closed their campus and focused on remote working and delivery of lectures online, which has resulted in all staff working remotely. This finding is therefore, very significant to all universities and their staff. It highlights the importance of considering how to motivate different employee groups within third level institutes in a remote working context. There is no doubt that there will be an uptake in employees from all sectors working remotely post the pandemic. The Irish government have passed the National Remote Work Strategy in January 2021. Under this legislation, employees are provided with the right to request remote work. Passing this legislation increases the prevalence of remote working in Ireland for the future; thus, the findings in the primary research are relevant. Universities and businesses must

ensure that remote working does not negatively impact the motivation of staff. If it does, both universities and businesses must implement ways to combat such negative impact in terms of motivation as this could impact productivity levels. The research of Martin, (2005) found that decreased motivation leads to decreased productivity which is essential for organisations to consider when employees are working remotely.

The second element of the research question examined the effect of remote working on staff well-being from third-level institutions. This research was also novel in examining the effect of remote working on staff well-being from third-level institutions from a sample in Ireland. This research found that remote working had a positive effect on the well-being of academic staff. In addition to this, the research also found that remote working had no effect on the well-being of administration staff. Both these results were again surprising and significant. In the current climate of the global pandemic, with constant distressing news and living in the confinements of lockdown, it may be assumed that working remotely during the pandemic would have a negative impact on the well-being of employees. These results are also surprising as they do not support much of the previous research consulted, specifically the research on the impact of remote working during the global pandemic, which finds the well-being of employees to be negatively affected. These findings from the primary research conducted are significant. Finding that remote working positively impacted the well-being of academic staff is significant as it encourages the exploration of the rationale as to why their well-being is positively impacted. There is a range of possibilities as to why; one possibility is that working at home could provide academic staff with a better work-life balance they would have never had previously. Virtanen (2020) found employees to report a better life balance when working remotely. Another possibility is the novel experience of lecturing remotely, as many academic staff would have never taught remotely before. This finding is significant to universities and businesses in general; it finds that remote working can positively affect staff well-being. Perhaps giving staff the option of a blend of remote working and commuting to work could further increase their well-being. This second element of the research question also found remote working to have no effect on the well-being of administration staff; this contrasted with academic staff, where a positive effect was found. This again is surprising as there was no effect found, which does not support the research consulted.

The final element of the research question in this study was to discover any differences in academic and administration staff's motivation and well-being. The research found a



significant finding in this area. The results identified a difference in motivation between these groups of remote workers. This is a significant finding for various reasons. Firstly, it shows that remote working can have different impacts on different groups of staff from a common organisation. A possibility for this difference in impact may be that administration staff felt more socially isolated when working remotely than academic staff because academic staff are more likely to be in isolated offices when not lecturing and therefore are used to being more isolated than administration staff. Prasad et al., (2020) found participants to report social isolation as a negative impact of remote work. Perhaps academic staff are more used to working independently than administration staff. Secondly, this difference between groups means that in this study, motivation was dependent on occupation. This is again a significant finding. It may be possible that job satisfaction has to do with the difference in motivation between these two groups of remote workers. Administration staff may have lower job satisfaction than academic staff, negatively affecting their motivation when working remotely. Another possibility is that due to the lack of social interaction when working remotely, administration staff had low job satisfaction, which negatively impacted their motivation. Further research must be conducted to examine if administration staff have lower job satisfaction than academic staff when both groups work within the college/university.

Regarding well-being, there was no difference found between the two groups of remote workers. The lack of difference in well-being scores may be because both administration staff and academic staff were working from home in the same conditions. Not identifying a difference between these two groups regarding well-being is still a significant finding. It demonstrates that neither group of remote workers had better or worse well-being than one another in this sample. It could be suggested from this finding, that perhaps regardless of how difficult the global pandemic is to live with, all participants from this sample were content while working remotely. This could be from the decreased sense of worry as they did not have to commute to work or interact with colleagues and students, which may have helped them feel more protected from the Corona Virus.

### **6.3 Recommendations (CIPD Requirements)**

#### **Recommendations**

There are many recommendations to put forward based on the findings of this research. The first recommendation is regarding motivation and well-being. The research found remote working to impact the motivation and well-being of academic staff positively. Traditionally,

lecturing is conducted face to face in colleges. However, given that the current research found the motivation and well-being of academic staff to be positively impacted by remote working, the first recommendation is that academic staff are given the option to work remotely for a set number of days in their working week. The current research found remote working to negatively impact the motivation of administration staff from third level institutions. Considering this finding, the recommendation is to consider that staff are invited to attend a motivation workshop prior to returning to an office-based environment in third level institutions. By inviting all staff to the motivation workshop, it does not isolate any one group of staff and ensures all staff are trying to improve their motivation. The motivation workshop could include how to increase staff motivation at home and how to deal with social isolation when working remotely.

A final recommendation in this research is that while working during the global pandemic, third level institutions hold virtual coffee meetings perhaps once or twice a week for all their staff, like Coffee and Connect, to ensure staff are not socially isolated. This could be facilitated through Microsoft Teams or a Zoom meeting with staff.

### **6.3.1 Timeline and Costing**

*Recommendation 1: Motivation Workshop*

*Approximate cost: €500 - €700 conducted online*

*Timing and Duration: August 1 -day workshop*

The first recommendation in the current research is to invite all education staff to a motivation workshop. Taking into consideration the hardships, distress, and changes that the people have experienced during the global pandemic and before the new academic year is an appropriate time to boost staff morale. The academic year starts in September; it is recommended that third-level institutions hold the motivation workshop at the beginning of August. This way it gives education staff time to practice what they have learnt in the workshop before returning to colleges or returning to remote working. It is recommended that colleges invest in an external person to conduct this motivation workshop, this eliminates bias, and all staff can do the workshop together. To organise attendance and times for the workshop, a member of staff from the college would have to begin organising this workshop at the beginning of July. The motivation workshop should be no longer than one day's training (maximum 8 hours with breaks). As this workshop will be conducted in the summer,

there is no cost to missing work. This training is beneficial as it demonstrates that third-level institutions are actively trying to improve the motivation of their staff post-global pandemic.

*Recommendation 2: Flexible Working for Academic Staff*

*Approximate Cost: N/A*

*Timing and Duration: Number of days per week to be determined by the third level institute*

The second recommendation in this research is offering academic staff the option to work remotely for some days of their working week. There are implications with this recommendation. To lecture effectively from home, academic staff must have a secure internet connection and be confident in using Microsoft Teams and other programmes that facilitate teaching remotely. Third level institutions should conduct training on Microsoft Teams and other learning programmes to ensure that all academic staff are confident and able to use Microsoft Teams sufficiently when working and lecturing remotely. This training can be from someone in a third level institution who is comfortable with teams, so therefore, it can be internal, which will be more cost-effective than getting an external trainer. Again, this training should be completed prior to the academic year, such as the middle of August, and again it should be no longer than one training day.

*Recommendation 3: Staff Coffee Connect Sessions*

*Approximate Cost: Free*

*Timing and Duration: Weekly throughout the academic term*

The final recommendation in this research is to consider the introduction of regular virtual coffee sessions. These could be once a week, for example. This will benefit staff as it connects to staff well-being and may decrease their feelings of social isolation when working remotely while also encouraging connecting with one another virtually, as opposed to just communicating over email. This is cost-effective, as it is free to organise such virtual events. This should be a regular occurrence, perhaps once a week, to ensure staff are socialising even if it is only over in a virtual sense.

## **6.4 Personal learning statement**

Completing this dissertation was a considerable learning experience. One of the most challenging aspects to completing this dissertation was time management. I quickly learnt that to complete this to the best of my ability, I would have to schedule and organise my time

effectively. At the start of every week, I began organising what chapter I would have to do that week, even organising the word count that needed to be done that specific week. Completing this dissertation taught me how to effectively time manage and how useful time management can be.

As previously mentioned in the limitations outlined in the discussion chapter, if doing this research again, I would start recruitment of participants far earlier than was done in the current research. This is due to the cycle of the academic year. Starting earlier for the recruitment of participants for this study would have enabled me to get a larger sample and, therefore a more representative sample.

Finally, considering that this dissertation was completed during the summer while also working full-time, it has taken a lot of hard work and determination to work on the dissertation constantly. I am grateful of what completing the dissertation has taught me and how I have personally developed during the task. It has shown me what commitment, hard work and determination can achieve, and I am sure this will stand to me in future tasks.

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## **Appendix**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Recruitment email for participants**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alannah O'Carroll, and I am a Master's in Human Resource Management student at the National college of Ireland.

I am conducting my thesis on an investigation of the effect of remote working on motivation and wellbeing of public sector employees in third level institutions in Ireland. This research aims to fill a gap in the literature regarding remote working in an Irish setting.

As part of my research, I am reaching out to lecturers and those working in office roles in third level institutions in Ireland. I would be grateful for your participation in this study. This study is anonymous, and it is completely your own decision to take part in this research.

The survey takes 10 minutes to complete. Once you click on to the link below you will see full details of the surveys, and the conditions of the survey will be stated prior to completion of survey.

The link to the survey is below:

Masters questionnaire docs.google.com

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8HaheFzcyja7WK01u9GPVlvjiDP7RpxoAZ7QkR25J2TYM1Q/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8HaheFzcyja7WK01u9GPVlvjiDP7RpxoAZ7QkR25J2TYM1Q/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Thank you in advance for reading this email and if you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Best Regards,

Alannah

## **Appendix B**

### **Information sheet**

Dear Potential participant,

This study is being conducted as a thesis of a master's degree in human resource management. The aim of this study is investigating the effect of remote working on the motivation and wellbeing of public sector employees in third level institutions in Ireland. The only criteria you must meet to be part of the study to be over 18, and to be in Ireland. Please remember that your participation in this study is completely your own decision and should not be decided by anyone else. This survey will take approximately 8-10 minutes to complete.

Terms and Conditions of study:

- Once the participant submits the completed questionnaires they cannot withdraw their survey.
- Participants have complete anonymity when taking part in this study, they are unidentifiable.
- The data collected from the surveys are to be used in a thesis and are to be stored in compliance with NCI ethical guidelines for up to 5 years post study and then will be destroyed.
- The overall findings of the study will be made available on completion of the thesis if the participant wishes.
- Participants will only be part of the study on signature of the consent form.

If you have concerns about the study or have any more questions, please feel free to email me at [x17315013@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x17315013@student.ncirl.ie).

Thank you for reading this, and your participation in the study if you so choose.

## **Appendix C**

### **Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS)**

Items are rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all), 2 (very little), 3 (A little), 4 (Moderately), 5 (strongly), 6 (Very strongly), to 7 (Exactly)

Please indicate for each of the following statements to what degree they presently correspond to one of the reasons for which you are doing this specific job.

1. Because this job affords me a certain standard of living.
2. Because I have to be the best in my job, I have to be a 'winner'.
3. I chose this job because it allows me to reach my life goals.
4. Because I enjoy this work very much.
5. Because it allows me to make a lot of money.
6. Because my work is my life and I don't want to fail.
7. Because this job fulfills my career plans.
8. Because I have fun doing my job.
9. I do this job for the pay-check.
10. Because my reputation depends on it.
11. Because this job fits my personal values.
12. For the moments of pleasure that this job brings me.

## **Appendix D**

### **Eudaimonic Workplace Well- being Scale (EWWS)**

Please indicate your agreements with the following statements, all items are rated using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

#### Interpersonal Dimension

1. Among the people I work with, I feel there is a sense of brotherhood/sisterhood.
2. I feel close to people in my work environment.
3. I feel connected to those in my work environment.
4. I consider the people I work with to be my friends.

#### Intrapersonal Dimension

1. I am emotionally energized at work.
2. I feel that I have purpose at my work.
3. My work is very important to me.
4. I feel I am able to continually develop as a person in my job.