What is the Impact of Remote Working on Employee Well-Being within a Telecommunications Organisation in Ireland

By

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Abstract

Few studies have been conducted recently on the effects of working from home on one's mental health. It's also debatable whether or if older literature was up-to-date before the current Covid-19 outbreak. The growing trend of people working from home is a golden chance to explore this topic in depth. Crawford et al. (2011) did a study to shed light on the lack of literature connecting remote employment and health. This study's overarching goal is to fill this knowledge vacuum by gathering and analysing information from a variety of sources on remote workers and the effects of this trend on their well-being from three distinct angles: social, economic, and psychological. both the social and physical contexts.

Data was collected using a qualitative methodology, specifically, semi-structured interviews. 12 HR employees participated in this research. They all had worked remotely prior covid part-time and since covid it's been full time The researchers used semi-structured interviews to have a better grasp on how remote workers' experiences affect their well-being because of the delicate nature of the subject matter. Microsoft Office Themes were used to record and transcribe the interviews.

To achieve this study's research objectives, thematic analysis was used to establish five overarching themes. When drawing conclusions, we drew on the good and negative effects of remote work on people's health and happiness. Due to the current Covid 19 pandemic, face-to-face interviews within the same organisation were not possible, which is a limitation of our study. It is doubtful, because of the unknown future, that this study really reflects the current state of affairs.

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Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster to give you a future and a hope"

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research will look at how employees in an organisation have the option of working from home, either when they need to or when their employer does not compel them to do so. Working from home, mobile working, or agile working are all terms for this. Employees who presently have the option of working from home will be the focus of this study, which examines their motivation and performance levels, as well as how their work-life balance may be changed as a result. Companies and workers alike are grappling with the issue of work-life balance. Workers who have a good work-life balance are more likely than those who don't to stay with their employers, according to Devi and Rani (2012). As stated by Johns and Gratton (2013), elite talent is increasingly demanding a work-life balance that is both valued and desired. An unwilling employer might have to consider work-life balance in order to keep and recruit the finest employees. Balance between work and personal life is essential to one's physical and emotional well-being, as well as to the success of the firm, which relies on a happy staff (Cooper, 2005). Working from home has evolved over time into a practise that may be included into an agile working programme. Agile working affords the individual the flexibility to work from home, as well as the choice to work from any place of their choosing (CIPD, 2016). This method of employment permits employees to work outside of the office setting. According to Turcotte (2010), there was a one percent increase in the number of Canadian employees that practise agile working between 2000 and 2008, with the bulk of these employees being college graduates. While there has been a movement towards flexible work schedules, this study will focus specifically on working from home.

By concentrating on telecommuters, we can learn more about the impact of this perk on productivity, morale, and work-life harmony. The goal of this research is to obtain a high-level understanding of what it's like to work from home. The effects of remote work on employees' motivation and productivity are not adequately explored in the existing research.

There is no commonly accepted definition of WFH; nevertheless, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines WFH as the use of information and communications technology (ICTs), such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers, to do work outside the employer's premises (Oakman et al., 2020). The epidemic of Covid-19 has radically altered the way businesses conduct business. A fundamental shift in industries occurred at the organisational level while new sectors arose as a result of the rapid implementation of trends that had been in the works for some time.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, many organisations have made changes to their operations, introduction of WFH arrangements, despite the fact that many of these organisations lack the necessary experience and are opposed to WFH by their respective professional communities (Kramer and Kramer, 2020). Contemplating the potential drawbacks of forcing workers to work from home is essential. It's the balance between work and home life (Grant et al., 2019), lack of interaction from co workers (Collins and Moschler, 2009), distractions with family-life or dependent children and the inability of disengage from work are some of the disadvantages of working from home. Academics are discussing the benefits and drawbacks of WFH despite its rising popularity around the world (Vyas and Butakhieo, 2020). Some of the benefits include fewer hours spent in transit, more energised and committed employees, higher levels of job satisfaction and retention, a more diverse and healthier workforce, and lower rates of absenteeism and employee turnover (Mello, 2007; Robertson et al., 2003). Studies have found that WFH increases productivity, boosts employee engagement, and decreases turnover. Through this study, we may learn if WFH has helped workers achieve a better work-life balance and if businesses plan to keep offering it to their staff in the future.

Organizational WTH was a temporary or permanent necessity for many people before the covid 19 epidemic. Organisational dynamics have shifted as a result of the rapid digitalization

of work processes and the management of virtual teams. The advent of digitalization has expanded traditional office hours, and the rise of virtual teams has influenced both workflow and interpersonal dynamics (Davenport and Harris, 2007, Lorenz et al., 2015; and Vidgen et al., 2017).

Several authors have suggested flexible scheduling as a way to improve the work-life balance of their employees (Briscoe, Wardell & Sawyer, 2011; Marsh & Musson, 2008). A few examples of flexible work arrangements are job-swapping, reduced hours, and remote employment (Tietze and Nadin, 2010). However, Smith and Karavattuveetil (2004) are quick to point out that there are drawbacks to these sorts of agreements for both employers and employees. Although there are difficulties associated with working from home, Wheatley (2012) found that those who do so are more satisfied with their jobs than those who do not. In addition to empowering the human resources department, greater productivity, decreased turnover rates, and reduced absenteeism are all reported benefits of flexible working by Emerald Group publishing (2008). While Wheatley (2012) emphasises the difficulties posed by telecommuting, he also notes that workers who do so report higher levels of satisfaction. According to emerald group publishing (2008), some of the benefits include increased productivity, decreased turnover, and reduced absenteeism, and a strengthened human resources department. Before agreeing to such a work arrangement, Barron (2007) advises that potential participants give serious consideration to the potential drawbacks.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review
2.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to review and present a complete overview of scholarly research on work-life balance and remote working. In addition, this chapter will address the evolution of the nature of work. This chapter will examine the ramifications of remote work and how it affects the well-being of the workforce. It is crucial to review the relevant literature and studies from the past and provide critical analysis of them. Insight into the effects of telecommuting and other trends on employees' well-being will be presented in this chapter.

2.2 Changing nature of work

There was a greater emphasis on physical labour in the industrial sector before the Industrial Revolution. Because of the exponential growth of information technology and the resulting effects of globalisation, the world is undergoing fast transformation at the present time (Parthjeet,2018). Similarly, Stella and Chinedu (2020) emphasise that technological improvements have brought about drastic transformation and encouraged the evolution of twenty-four hour organisations, hence blurring the lines around work and family life. As a direct result, MNCs increasingly employ people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and ethnic workers. The very idea of "going to work" has evolved alongside the new realities of the modern workplace, and a successful human resources strategy in the 21st century must take these factors into account (Parthjeet,2018).

Companies almost never stay the same and must change along with the advances in technology. The millennial generation has led the way in adopting new technologies and making them part of their everyday lives and professional practises (Stella and Chinedu ,2020). Utilizing these skill sets is essential for an organization's financial performance as the number of baby boomers declines, and HR must deal with the difficult pressure to keep them on staff (Johnson,2020). Hermandez (2019), in contrast, emphasises that this generation of workers aspires to and is focused on flexibility and work-life balance, which are emerging as important components of a productive work environment.

According to Melluso et al. (2020), the current Covid 19 pandemic and the state of the economy have presented organisations with previously unheard-of obstacles. Organizations have been compelled by the pandemic to adapt and implement new solutions in order to stay competitive and protect themselves and their employees in a highly uncertain market. Organizations have consequently been forced to improve agility and flexibility skills (CIPD,2021). Human resources had a tough time dealing with the Covid 19 pandemic because they had to quickly plunge into the unknown in order to help their employees adjust to the massive social and professional upheaval that ensued (Carnevale and Hatak,2020).

2.3 Flexible working

To aid workers in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and internal consistency, many businesses have made the adoption of flexible work arrangements a top priority (Avgoustaski and Bessa,2019). The notion of flexible working is considered difficult to describe because of the variety of different definitions in the literature (White and Maniam ,2020). Although there are no commonly accepted definitions, Wiatr,(2019) defines flexible working as "as such working conditions which allow employees vary the amount of time or location of their work". Flexibility in the workplace is a benefit for businesses that want to attract and keep talent. It demonstrates the organization's willingness to change to meet the demands of the workforce by providing flexible working arrangements. In addition, Kotey and Sharma, (2019) note a void in the research, as most studies on the topic of flexible working have focused on large corporations rather than SMEs. Although offering flexible working options benefits well-being and productivity, it is debatable if these correlations hold true for SMEs.

There are three primary types of flexible working discussed in the literature. These are variations in place, time, and work tasks. Even though each arrangement can be used separately, it is frequently coupled with others to enhance one another (CIPD,2019). Several scholars point out that the environmental, technological, and content demands of

globalisation and competitiveness are increasing the prevalence of flexible employment arrangements (White and Maniam ; Smith, Patmos and Pitts,2015). As was mentioned, the environment has undergone significant change, and improvements in technology and communication systems have made it possible for workers to conduct their work from remote regions (White and Maniam,2020).

There has been an increase in requests for flexible work arrangements that accommodate employees' individual needs and preferences (CIPD, 2021). Additionally, flexible working has been highlighted as a popular academic issue in the current day as one of the essential components to enhancing work life. On the other hand, White and Maniam (2020) claim that the introduction of flexible working dates back to the 1940s in response to women's increased participation in the labour sector. There has been a dramatic growth in the number of women seeking employment in Ireland since the 1940s. In the past, there was a large divide between men and women in the workforce, but it is now at its lowest point. According to CSO data, the gender gap is decreasing and the number of women joining the workforce is rising. In 2019, women comprised 59.3% of the workforce. Comparatively, the most recent CSO numbers for 2019 indicate a rate of 63.7% (CS0,2019).

Work-life harmony, improved productivity, and lower administrative costs are just some of the ways in which the CIPD(2021) claims businesses can gain from allowing flexible working arrangements. Some of the most important personnel tactics, such as attracting and retaining top talent, closing the gender pay gap, and making the organisation more sustainable, can be aided by more adaptable flexible working arrangements. On the other hand, De Mendez and Kelliher, (2017) point out literature have examined the correlation between flexible working and performance at a higher level and a gap exists between individual performance and flexible working.

Literature discusses different types of flexible working arrangements - both informal and formal. Negotiations between an employee and their employer result in the development of informal flexible work arrangements. In contrast, an organization's flexible working policy may allow for formal procedures of remote work.

2.4 Remote Working

Klopotek(2017) states that in1983, M.H. Olson made the first written reference to the concept of remote work. Flexibility in the workplace includes options like working from home, or remotely (Klopotek,2017). Teleworking, remote work, agile work, and working from home are all terms for remote work. These terms appear throughout the literature. It is troublesome that the literature is saturated with and has a clear understanding of what remote work entails. Therefore, this emphasises the fact that it limits both employees' and employers' ability to comprehend what it would take for an employee to request remote employment (Remote working in Ireland ,2019).

In addition, there is no generally agreed-upon definition of remote work throughout the literature (Kloptek,2009), likely because the phrase covers such a broad spectrum of employment arrangements (2017). Remote working is defined by the European Framework as "A form of organising and/or performing work using information technology, in the context of and employment contract/relationship where work which could be performed at the employers premises is carried out away from that premises on a regular basis" (European Framework cited in remote working in Ireland ,2019). While different authors may use slightly different words to describe the same concept, remote work has been defined in a number of ways in published works. To perform one's job duties for an employer via information and communication technologies while located somewhere other than the typical workplace (Wang, Albert and Sun,2019; Kloptek,2018).

The remote workforce is larger in the private sector than in the public sector, according to the Remote Working in Ireland report in Ireland (2019). (Remote working in Ireland,2019). Nonetheless, the introduction of Covid 19 has compelled businesses to reconsider their core strategies and the ways in which they operate (Jacobs,2021). White-collar workers whose jobs require them to devote the majority of their time within their companies' walls have had to make the transition to working from home (Carevale, Hatak and Jacobs,2021). The data from Ireland's national statistics agency back up the idea that the appearance of Covid 19 has had a profound impact on the labour market and daily life in the country. According to a study of 2288 people performed in April2020, 47% of individuals whose jobs have been affected by Covid 19 reported working remotely at least some of the time. As workers are gradually making their way back to the office, and Covid 19 will undoubtedly have lasting effects on the workplace by making remote work the norm for professional positions in the future (Thomas,2020). The government's commitment to continuing the national remote working plan which is when employees after passing probations have the right to request remote working even beyond the epidemic is a strong indication that remote work is here to stay (RTE,2021). In addition, companies that has remote working have shown a differences have emerged between companies that prioritise employee health and happiness and those that don't (Jacobs, 2020).

2.5 Remote working and Well-being

The concept of employee well-being has been explored and recognised in the business world for quite some time. Its precise definition continues to spark heated discussion (Tripathi and Singh,2020 ;Zhang et al,2015 ; Simone,2014). Workers' satisfaction in the workplace is defined as "the quality of employees, experiences, and performance in the workplace" (Simone,2014). Employee well-being issues, such as negative emotions, health difficulties, or loneliness, can be avoided if workers can return to a state of positive social connection,

happiness, and physical fitness, as pointed out by Kolakowski et al. (2020). Working

conditions can have a significant effect on an employee's mental, emotional, and physical

health. (Sheir and Grajam,2010). Working conditions can have a significant effect on an

employee's mental, emotional, and physical health, as emphasised further by Shier and

Graham (2010). (Sheir and Grajam,2010). Well-being at work, according to the Remote

working in Ireland study (Remote working in Ireland, 2020), is achieved through eliminating

stressful systems and environments. In contrast, "E well-being" takes into account the

location of the worker and their methods for maintaining health and happiness while working

from home (Grant et al,2013).

2.6 Working From Home (WFH) and Work-life balance

There's no denying that the pandemic changed the way people work and socialise

dramatically, and that many feared lockdown measures and increased social isolation would

become the new normal (Gallagher, 2020). Kniffin (2020) claims that Covid-19 abruptly

altered conventional work practises while simultaneously speeding up developments like

work-from-home arrangements and virtual leadership. In order to keep providing their

services, businesses acted quickly to adopt technology-driven work practises. These

procedures were introduced rapidly, leaving little time for employers and managers to plan

for and carry out staff training or to establish policies and procedures for remote work

(Carroll and Conboy, 2020).

There is no mention of mandated WFH during the Covid-19 pandemic in the existing

literature on WFH and remote working, and existing research may lack contextual relevance

at this period (Wang et al., 2020). The current body of research on work-family harmony

focuses on employees who choose to engage in WFH on their own time for a variety of

reasons, including the fulfilment of personal responsibilities and the maintenance of a healthy

work-life balance (Versey, 2015). (Kelliher and Anderson, 2009). The key aspect of these

arrangements is that employees, not employers, made the decision to implement them in exchange for flexibility (Alis et al., 2006). Covid-19 compelled workers to carry out their responsibilities, interact with co-workers, and oversee virtual teams in novel ways; this was compounded by the stress of working from home under less-than-ideal conditions (2020). More study is needed to help fill out the requisite literature on remote work. In this study, we analyse how WFH during the pandemic affected the work-life balance.

The introduction of mandatory WFH was the most significant shift for businesses, and it's important to look into the experiences of groups of workers who had previously opposed WFH but are now subject to it (Kramer and Kramer, 2020). Not everyone can benefit equally from working in WFH, and those who can may do so to a greater extent than others. There are health and welfare factors to consider, such as whether or not workers' houses are suitable as places to conduct business (I.e., free from distractions such as children at play). Workers who live together in an office building or who work from home face unique difficulties. Kramer and Kramer (2020) argue that it is crucial for academics to consider the interaction between personal and occupational factors when analysing the consequences. Further study is needed to compare occupational features to workers' preferences, behaviours, and personalities.

Questions have been raised as to whether or not WFH truly benefits both businesses and their employees. Gouldner (1960) and Blau (1964) draw on the social exchange theory (SET) to discuss the factors that influence an individual's choices and actions. According to the SET, compliance with social norms and expectations is a two-way street: (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). According to studies, employees who are granted more freedom at work are willing to make concessions, such as working more hours without pay, putting in more effort to be noticed, or satisfying a sense of obligation to their employer (Golden, 2007; Kelliher and Anderson, 2010; de Menezes and Kelliher, 2011; and Elsbach et al., 2012). But border

theorists, such as (Mirchandani, 2000; Crosbie and Moore, 2004; and Marsh and Musson, 2008), argue that when people work remotely, they are less able to turn off their work brains when they go home (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Several pieces of evidence point to the positive effects of remote work on businesses, including the higher productivity of employees that is predicted by social exchange theory (Felstead and Henseke, 2017).

Academic is divided on whether or not WFH has any inherently negative connotations. One's physical and mental health can suffer if there is no clear separation between job and personal life (Oakman, 2021). Possible causes include insufficient company support and a blurred barrier between personal and professional life, as discussed by Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015). Grant et al. (2019) found that remote workers struggle to maintain healthy work-life boundaries, leading to increased hours spent on the job and less time spent with family and friends.

As things stand now with mandated WFH, we need more studies to determine how organisational, physical, and environmental elements, as well as psychosocial aspects, affect people's health and wellbeing (Oakman, 2021). Since people's job and personal priorities tend to shift over time (Brower, 2014), experts agree that striking a healthy balance between the two is impossible (Carpenter, 2017; Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2017). The term "work-life wellbeing" is used to describe the ideal state in which an individual is healthy in both their professional and personal lives, as reported by Como et al. (2021).

According to Como et al. (2021), organisations can improve workers' work-life balance by providing resources and training while they adjust to WFH, and after the implementation of Covid, workers will need flexible remote work arrangements that meet their specific requirements. Balance, segmentation, and integration, among others, are advocated as means by which employees might achieve their ideal state of wellness. Because working from home

(WFH) presents its own unique challenges, such as the presence of a family, the need to provide care for a loved one, or the absence of a designated work area. The WFH policies should allow for some leeway in order to achieve a good work-life balance. Workers at WFH should be given the freedom to get their work done whenever they like, outside of normal business hours (Grant et al., 2019; and Purwanto et al., 2020).

2.7 Work environment

Rogers (2011) highlighted that it may be simpler to find tranquilly to conduct good work at home than in the office, however it still has its obstacles. There is some debate as to whether or not working from home is more productive than being in an office setting. The nature of the work, as well as the stressors and potential diversions of the available locations, can both play a role in this trade-off. Another possible downside to working from home is the disruption it might cause to family life. The workplace has evolved significantly during the past few decades. Employees' need for a change of scenery was a common reason given for choosing remote work (Tietze et al., 2006; Crosbie & Moore, 2004; Tietze & Nadin, 2010). Despite the fact that Tietze et al. (2006) found that this arrangement did not alleviate the worker's difficulties, it did lessen their stress levels, and thus they were generally pleased with it.

However, Watson (2001) presented a counterargument, arguing that some workers like the office because it provides an opportunity to get away from the distractions of home. When working from home, the lines between work and housework can easily become blurred, as noted by Tietze and Musson (2004). This is especially true when other household members are present. According to the research of Tietze and Musson (2010), the introduction of regular financial employment can disrupt the harmony of the household. Brocklehurst (2001) contends that a person's sense of self might get muddled when their professional and personal lives begin to blend. In support of this view, Pyoria (2003) argued that bringing office culture

home could lead to identity confusion and undermine any gains made toward a better work-life balance.

People who like to work from home are more likely to have a dedicated work space set up in their homes, leading to greater productivity (Eng, Moore,2010) People who have to bring work home owing to a heavy workload are in a very different position and are working from home not because they want to, but because they have to. The home office is uniquely tailored to the needs of the person being interviewed. Each person's living circumstance is unique, and that plays a role in determining whether or not working from home is a viable option.

2.8 Work schedule
Data about working from home on a part-time basis, is scarce in the published literature. The majority of resources are geared for teleworkers, or people who regularly perform their jobs from home.

 It's important to differentiate between scheduled work from home and unscheduled home work (Eng et al., 2010). According to the findings of Eng et al. (2010), workplace location is not a significant factor in the occurrence of work-family conflicts; rather, it is the number of hours spent at the office that causes tensions. Therefore, the authors concluded that working from home was not correlated with either increased or decreased work-life balance satisfaction.

Working part-time outside of the office can help you "develop relationships with your co-workers and superiors that can be sustained even if you are not visible," as stated by Rogers (2011, p.164). It might be difficult to develop meaningful connections with others when you're separated by distance. This shows how crucial it is to spend some of each week at the office. A case study conducted at Toshiba UK found that the organisation benefited from

allowing employees to work remotely (Pollitt, 2006). Since allowing workers the flexibility to do some of their work from home, management has seen a rise in productivity, an uptick in employee morale, and a decrease in absenteeism.

However, Marissa Meyer, the CEO of Yahoo, claims that she saw a decline in invention and originality at the company before she made the decision to terminate remote work. She attributes this to a lack of face-to-face interaction amongst workers (Emerald Group Publishing, 2013). She also found that working remotely hinders teamwork because fewer in-person meetings are held, which is especially troublesome when team members have been chosen to complement one another. Johns and Gratton (2013, p. 69) backed up this argument by saying that people who worked from home "lost the kind of inspiration that arises from unexpected encounters and hallway talks." According to Barron (2007), those who work from home may feel disconnected from the world because they aren't updated on the latest news by their co-workers first thing in the morning.

2.9 Conclusion

There are many facets to the Covid-19 epidemic. Many areas underwent significant change or growth, such as the medical and health care sectors; however, restriction measures had an effect on civilization, which afterwards had to adapt to new norms. Work-from-home (WFH) practises are being adopted by workers all over the world, and this has an effect on the way we think about and plan for the future of work. So, leaders adapted their methods for leading remote teams. Being socially inherent, humans were compelled to join together through isolation. Governments all across the world are constantly changing and adapting in response to the ongoing pandemic. The obligatory transition to WFH was one major change. Although WFH has been going on for some time, it gained momentum after Covid-19. Extreme limited time meant that there was little room for thoughtful planning, employee training, (Carroll and

Conboy, 2020) or collaboration between employer and manager as they adopted these policies and procedures (Agerfalk et al., 2020).

Several findings may be taken from the analysed literature, the first of which addresses the shortage of studies examining mandated WFH arrangements during a pandemic. More study is needed to learn how it affects workers and to make sure the literature on remote work is relevant in the midst of a pandemic.

Benefits include a more flexible schedule and some argue a better work-life balance (Kelliher and Anderson, 2009). After COVID, employees will need blended working policies that are tailored to their specific needs, and the level of organisational assistance they receive during the transition to WFH can have a significant impact on their work-life balance (Como, 2021).

The following are some of the detrimental effects of WFH that need to be investigated:

- Due to factors such as inadequate home offices, the increased difficulty in balancing work and personal life, and the introduction of novel approaches to old tasks (Waizeneggar et al., 2020).

- Some "border theorists" believe that the increased use of technology and workers' inability to "turn off" makes the line between work and personal life more porous and makes remote employment more common.

- Withdrawal from the workplace, which can lead to a rise in turnover rates and a decrease in productivity, and a decline in informal social interactions with co-workers and the organisation as a whole (Larson et al., 2020; Carmeli, 2009; and Ozcelik and Barsade, 2011)

This research will examine the pros and cons of telecommuting from the standpoint of the worker. It will also investigate how people feel about their careers, their relationships with their supervisors, and their personal lives while they work remotely.

3.1 Research Question

"What was the impact of remote working on remote workers"

3.2 Research Objectives

From the literature reviewed, the central questions to determine the impact Covid-19 had on employees WFH are as follows:

- **To gain an understanding of the physical effects of working remotely from employees**

This goal was created to evaluate and analyse how remote work has affected the stress levels and general physical health of remote workers.

- **For a Phycologically sound comprehension of the effects of telecommuting on the workforce.**

The study's overarching goal is to learn how aspects like remote workers' work-life balance and mental health are affected by working from home.

- **For a socially informed appreciation of the effects of telecommuting.**

The purpose of this endeavour is to draw attention to the voids in the existing literature. It also emphasises the need for additional studies to investigate the topic and the profound effect remote work has had on shaping societal concerns, interpersonal dynamics, and the ways in which businesses may assist their employees.

- **To empathise with telecommuters and learn from their perspectives, we must first consider their situation.**

The goal of this study was to learn about the pros and cons of remote work from the perspective of those who have actually done it.

Chapter 4. Methodology

The methodology is the set of methods employed to collect, organise, and evaluate data for a study. Answers to the questions raised in this portion of the report can be uncovered with the help of the research methodologies described here. Literature, academic research, and studies like the Global Work-from-Home Experiences survey 2020 were used to inform the technique. It explains how the research was conducted and why specific techniques and sources of information were prioritised.

4.1 Research Philosophy

According to (Saunders, Lewis, and Thorntill, 2016), a researcher's "research philosophy" is their "set of assumptions and ideas about the production of knowledge that dictate how the study should be carried out. According to Saunders's research onion model, there are several things that need to be thought about before taking part in a study.

There are two main research philosophies that have been identified in the literature. Epistemology and ontology are the two main types. The field of study known as epistemology examines how and why new information is acquired. Ontology, in contrast, is concerned with the investigation of being, being's nature, and our own existence in the world (Quinlan, et al,2016). The two primary schools of thought within epistemology are the interpretivist and positivist schools of thought. According to positivists (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight, 2010), quantitative research has a place in the social sciences and that they should strive to mimic the natural sciences as closely as feasible. Interpretivism, on the other hand, is

a philosophical perspective that helps researchers see the distinctions between people and things (Saunders et al., 2016). Ontology is the study of the fundamental characteristics of social things (Bryman and Bell,2011). Furthermore, ontology de-pins the notion that social reality is external to and unrelated to the presence of social actors by focusing on the nature of existence (Saunders et al,2016).

The researcher, by virtue of the study's overarching purpose, has an interest in learning about people's experiences working remotely in the telecommunications industry. As a result, epistemology was chosen as the guiding theory for this study. To achieve the goals of this study, an epistemological strategy was adopted. As the goal was to get a grasp on how remote workers felt about their situation, an interpretivist perspective was chosen because literature and interpretivism assist the researcher to develop an awareness of the variations among humans.

4.2 Qualitative Vs Quantitative Methods
Qualitative and quantitative approaches are the two main research methodologies that can be used.

Qualitative research, as defined by (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight)(2010), is empirical research that collects data in the form of words and other non-numerical formats, with an apparent emphasis on delving into as much depth as possible. Methods based on the collecting of qualitative data are inherently subjective and inductive, and they are typically embedded in a constructivist or interpretivist theoretical framework. Consequently, the goals of qualitative research are the investigation of a topic and the inductive development of hypotheses and theories. Wherever a thorough comprehension is needed, especially with regards to interpreting human experiences, qualitative research is essential (Quinlan,2015). It is clear from this comparison that qualitative research is useful in situations where the research question cannot be answered using quantitative methods, and that it is used when an in-depth

understanding of a complex phenomenon is required. Interviews, field notes, and focus groups are the mainstays of qualitative data collecting.

Quantitative studies, on the other hand, are preoccupied with collecting data that can be represented numerically. Within the positivist paradigm, it is rational and unbiased (Quinlan et al,2015). In quantitative studies, researchers use statistical methods or questionnaires to compile numerical data to examine the connections between different factors. Quantitative research methods are used when cold, concrete data are needed, while qualitative methods are used when a more in-depth understanding of the topic under study is required (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill,2016). In addition, quantitative research is frequently used to evaluate hypotheses since it takes a deductive approach and makes use of statistical analysis to quantify variables (Collis and Hussey, 2014). In addition, while quantitative techniques are highly structured and utilise a sizable sample, qualitative studies tend to be either extremely unstructured or just partially structured and involve a limited number of participants (Rugg and Petre,2007).

Saunders concludes by stating that research can integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods. This is referred to as a mixed research technique, and the combination of the two research approaches is known as triangulation (Saunders et al,2014).

4.3 Research Design

Despite the importance of research to both academia and business, there is no consensus on how it should be described in the literature, as stated by Collis and Hussey, 2014. Research is "defined as process the people undertake in a systematic way in order to find out new things, thereby increasing their knowledge" (Saunders, 2016). Research design, as defined by Bryman & Bell (2011), entails the creation of an appropriate structure within which data may be collected and analysed. In order to promote necessary and effective organisational change, the discipline of organisational development necessitates interventions grounded in research

(Shufutinsky,2020). In addition, Bussetto and Gumbinger, 2020 note that while picking a research method, it should connect with the emphasised research topic to be answered. This study aims to examine the social, physical, and psychological contexts of the effects of remote work on employee well-being.

In qualitative studies, the emphasis is on "understandings, human experiences, and interpretations," as stated by Babin et al. (2015). Collis and Hussey, 2014 believe that qualitative research is better suited to investigating opinions and features of persons, and they point out that this is precisely why it is so useful. As a result, a qualitative method of data collection was used for this study to acquire the necessary information about the effects of remote work on the lives of its participants. Whereas, quantitative research concentrates more on addressing a study topic through the application of measurement validity. (2011) Bryman and Bell.

Choosing a qualitative study design will aid in this endeavour and provide researchers with deeper understanding of how distant employment affects workers' mental health. With the introduction of the new policy in March 2020, all employees within the sample size will be required to work remotely at least once each week. According to Garcia and Gluesing (2013), one of the main advantages of qualitative research is that it can shed light on emerging modes of operation and the ongoing transformation of established norms and procedures.

4.4 Sampling Method
The fundamental purpose of this study is to explain the factors that affect the well-being of remote workers. Different types of sampling methods can be categorised as either probability or nonprobability. The method chosen will depend on the available means and the target population. When conducting many in-depth interviews on their job history, non-probability is the preferred method. The researcher need only conduct the study between themselves, if they so choose (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010).

Purposive samples, the qualities of which are specified in advance, are typically used in research (Andrade,2021). Choosing interesting or representative samples by hand is the definition of a purposeful sample (Blaxter et al,2010). Since the researcher is currently employed by the Telecommunications division of JUST Eat, which has over 7,000 employees, the researcher decided to use purposeful sampling to conduct the study. The researcher had a vested interest in the topic because there was a vast and diverse pool of individuals available across the HR department who had all had experience with remote work either before or after March 2020. To provide a comprehensive picture of the effect of distant work on well-being, we chose participants from a range of teams and grades, as well as those of diverse ages and sexes.

Purposive sampling's main advantage is that it allows researchers to select samples with an eye on their study objectives. In order to address the research question, the units of analysis must be carefully selected (Bryman and Bell,2011). Collis and Hussey, 2014, agrees, stating that researchers choose study participants based on their prior knowledge and familiarity with the phenomenon, as well as their scarcity or unavailability. One major drawback of purposive sampling, however, is that it cannot follow up on any further connections that may come up throughout the study (Collis and Hussey,2014).

Human resources (HR) remote workers in the telecommunications industry were approached to participate in this study because they represent an especially salient subset of the target population and are crucial to the research questions. These people are all part of the HR division in Dublin, Ireland. My goal in selecting HR professionals from the Dublin area was to create a sample that was broadly representative of the HR scene there. The rest of the organization's departments are based in the United Kingdom. The purpose of this study is to determine how remote work affects the mental health of telecom workers in Ireland; if the

researcher instead choose to examine the effects of telecommuting on workers in other industries in the United Kingdom, the findings would be less reliable.

Since the corona virus pandemic began, working from home, has been the most favoured alternative for employers to function throughout the pandemic and even encourage employees to WFH as comfortable as essential. The researcher had no trouble recruiting volunteers because working remotely is common at her place of employment and because jobs in the telecommunications industry are more common. Twelve people were chosen at random, all of whom have jobs in the Irish telecommunications industry. Between the ages of 23 and 38, the sample included 9 girls and 3 males. To ensure a representative and thorough sample, we solicited responses from people across a wide range of HR-related roles and tasks. A email was sent to the participants' places of employment after they were selected; a copy of this email is included in the appendix 1. Only 12 of the 17 recipients of the email invitation to participate in the study actually did so. The email also included a downloadable attachment (appendix 2) that explained why this study was conducted. Everyone who wanted to take part did so by responding to an email invitation at work and including their consent in appendix 3. After everyone agreed, I scheduled a time for us to meet.

4.5.1 Breakdown of Sample Participants

	TB	AP	NK	AK	LB	IA	CK	MM	OI	TI	LO	TD
GENDER	F	F	M	M	F	F	F	M	F	F	F	F
AGE	26	30	37	30	23	39	27	25	27	29	28	27
DEPENDENTS	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
LENGTH OF TIME REMOTE WORKING	3YRS	3YRS	2YRS	3YRS	4YRS	3YRS	3YRS	2YRS	3YRS	3YRS	3YRS	3YRS
REASON REMOTE WORKING	Benefits& covid	Benefits& covid	Benefits & covid	Benefits& covid	Benefits & covid	Benefits & covid	Benefits & covid	Benefits& covid	Benefits & covid	Benefits& covid	Benefits& covid	Benefits& covid

4.6 Pilot Study

The interview questions for the main study were tested in a pilot study to make sure they were appropriate. The researcher was unfamiliar with Microsoft Teams and needed training before conducting interviews with the team. With the use of a pilot study, the researcher was able to hone in on the most pertinent questions to ask during the main survey and make sure they left room for discussion while keeping the focus narrow.

This helped the researcher ask more in-depth inquiries and check that everything was appropriate. In this case, the use of quantitative research methods would not have yielded useful results. In addition, the pilot study gave the interviewer practise with the technique, which was helpful because conducting interviews isn't something they do on a regular basis. Through this preliminary research, the interviewer gained experience with Microsoft Teams and gained confidence in using the platform for future research tasks like meeting setup, recording, and transcription. The pilot test also made certain that the sound, connectivity, and setting were all adequate for the interviews.

4.7 Data Collection

After office hours, participants will be contacted by Microsoft teams to schedule interviews. It was planned for each interview to last 40 minutes, but if necessary, more time may be allotted in Microsoft Teams. Each participant accepted the invitation just once, confirming that they would mark the interview time and date in their calendars and that they would also receive a reminder text message 30 minutes beforehand. The fact that the participants were the researcher's co-workers was an added bonus, as it allowed the researcher to easily send out a kind reminder. Interviews were conducted for a total of 30 minutes to collect the data. Primary data from an original study on telecommuters was used in this analysis. Appendix 4

displays the interview schedule, which contained a list of open-ended questions with inquiring follow-ups.

4.7.1 Interviews
Semi-structured interviews were used as the research method. Buseto, Wick, and Gumbinger (2020) argue that in-depth interviews provide researchers with a unique opportunity to learn about study participants by hearing directly from them about their experiences and perspectives. Where the research issue is of a particularly delicate nature, interviews are the method of choice. Interviews were chosen as the method of data collection because they are the most conducive to eliciting in-depth discussion of participants' experiences and perspectives on many aspects of employee well-being. Furthermore, by using semi-structured interviews, the interviewee will be encouraged to address the effects of remote work on their well-being and, thanks to the open-ended and adaptable nature of the questions, new areas of inquiry will naturally arise throughout the course of the interview (Collis and Hussey,2014).

The interviews took place on Microsoft teams. As face-to-face interviews were not feasible during the current Corona virus pandemic, the researcher instead performed all interviews outside of regular business hours, when they were less likely to be interrupted. Appendix 5 shows that the interview questions are all related to remote work and collecting information on physical, social, and psychological well-being as a result of distant work.

4.7.2 Interview Schedule
The schedule of the interview was divided into the following six sections.

- Demographics of Participants

- Psychological well-being

- Physical well-being

- Social well-being

- Boundary management

- Thoughts and perspective of remote working on their well-being

To achieve the objectives as per above the following questions where developed:

Objective 1: To understand the impact of remote working from a Physical perspective on remote workers

1. What would typical remote working day look like for you?
2. How have your levels of stress been impacted since remote working?
3. What is your remote working environment like?

Objective 2: To understand the impact of remote working from a Psychological view on remote workers?

1. How do you feel remote working has impacted your work-life balance?
2. What do you feel have been the main challenges of remote working?
3. What do you feel have been the main benefits of remote working?
4. What is your opinion on the continuation of remote working?
5. How do you feel remote working has impacted your ability to switch off ?

Objective 3: To understand the impact of remote working from a Physical point of view on remote workers

1. How do you feel your relationship with your work colleagues has been impacted as a result of remote working?
2. What platforms and techniques has the organisation implemented as a mechanism to improve relationships and social interaction among teams?
3. How do you feel your organisation supports you while remote working?

Objective 4: To understand the experience of remote workers within the Telecommunications sector?

1. Where do you predominantly work from while remote working?

2. What do you see to be the key difference between the office and your remote working environment?

3. Provided the option how may days would you choose to return to office?

4. How do you feel remote working has impacted your ability to switch off from work?

5. How do you manage the boundaries between your home and work life?

6. What advice would you give to someone new or adapting to remote working?

4.7.3 Interview Procedure:

Once participants consented to be interviewed, they were given a time window on Microsoft Teams after work to conduct the interview. After signing up, members received invitations to join Microsoft Teams during off-hours. After settling on a mutually convenient time and day, the researcher and participant each added the relevant information on their respective Microsoft Teams calendars. There was plenty of time for participants to review the email and any accompanying materials before the event, given it was delivered more than two weeks beforehand. Before the interview, the participants were sent a packet with more study material, a consent form, and contact information for when they inevitably had questions.

For privacy reasons, all of the interviews were performed in a private undisturbed setting outside of regular business hours on Microsoft teams. Each interview lasted around 30 minutes and was recorded. In every interview, a series of icebreaker questions were asked to get the participants chatting and put them at ease. After the initial round of scheduled questions has been asked, the interviewer may move on to more in-depth inquiries to clarify certain points.

4.8 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis, as defined by Quinlan (2011), entails dissecting collected information to paint a detailed picture of the phenomenon of interest. Following the semi

structured interviews, Microsoft teams was used to record the conversations for later transcription. The interviews were recorded so that we could play them back and transcribe them in their entirety. After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher began analysing the data included inside them to get a feel for the information available in the study. This research choose to take a grounded theory method. The technique of coding used in a grounded theory approach typically consists of three distinct phases: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the grounded method, you use the information you gathered and analysed to form your theory (Saunders et al,2016).

In this study, the researcher used the classic technique of thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data. Essentially, the researcher's goal in doing a thematic analysis is to discover recurring patterns or themes within the collected data (Saunders et al ,2016). Furthermore, these themes were utilised in the thematic analysis procedure, which entailed a review of the data via their application (Quinlan et al,2015). To analyse the data, the researcher reviewed each interview transcript multiple times and took notes during the interviews to look for recurring themes (Rugg and Petre,2010). The transcripts of the interviews were reviewed at a more abstract level, with the use of a pen, to code and detect recurring themes. When a recurring concept was formed, a number was assigned to it.

4.9 Limitations of Research Design
Unfortunately, qualitative studies have serious limitations. It took a long time to transcribe all of the interviews. The interview was not transcribed in real time since it was determined that recording it and transcribing it later would ensure that no information was lost. The time commitment involved in conducting interviews was another constraint of this study, as all participants and the researcher worked full-time and had other commitments, such as their own families and careers (Bryman and Bell,2011). To paraphrase, qualitative research is criticised by Shufutinsky, 2020 because the author is the primary means of data collection.

Some argue that this method is less methodical and more prone to bias because it relies on the expertise and perspectives of the researchers rather than objective standards. In conducting interviews, the researcher was aware of this and took it into account, making sure to avoid exerting any undue influence over the interviewee's responses. Covid prevented any in-person interviews from being done, which would have added a more human touch, especially given the sensitive nature of the research topic and the sensitive nature of the theme of well-being.

4.10 Ethical Consideration
One of the most important parts of doing good research is making sure it doesn't violate any ethical standards. All researchers should make conducting research with a focus on ethics a top priority. According to Blaxter et al. (2010), the use of qualitative techniques to gather data raises the most ethical concerns in study designs. The researchers' personal ties to their study subjects provide the justification.

First, as this study focused on people's sense of well-being, it was crucial that all participants were given clear and comprehensive information about the research's purpose, methods, and potential risks, as well as their rights to privacy and confidentiality. This was ensured by providing all participants with a consent form and information paper outlining the research's commitment to participant anonymity and confidentiality before any data was collected. It was emphasised once more before the interview began that the Microsoft Teams chat would be treated as a private conversation and that the recording would be used solely for transcription purposes. Participants were made aware it was perfectly ok to stop at anytime if they felt uncomfortable or wanted to jump a question.

The researcher took great care to ensure there was no bias in the data. Because this interview was conducted over the phone, the researcher took extra precautions to ensure it was held in a private, distraction-free setting. The use of the camera was entirely optional for the

participants. Still, the interviewer left the camera running so they could get up close and personal.

Lastly, ethical concerns about data storage were considered. Participants were informed verbally and in writing that their personal information would be protected in accordance with the National College of Ireland's Code of Ethics and any applicable Data Protection Acts after it was gathered for the research study.

Chapter 5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

In this section, we shall discuss the findings from the study. Thematic analysis allowed for the identification and examination of overarching concepts. As mentioned in chapter 4, the data was collected through semi-structured interviews with twelve HR professionals working in the telecommunications industry in Ireland. The participants have been working remotely, either full- or part-time, since March 2020, when the arrangement was first established.

5.2 Themes

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews was analysed using the methods of theme analysis. This is why we videotaped and transcribed every interview. The data was thematically analysed by identifying, categorising, and labelling recurrent topics. The transcripts were carefully examined one by one. Once it was evaluated, it was compared to the other transcripts to find patterns in the data. Careful consideration was given to coding, and at first, 14 themes were singled out, and the investigation then broke them down further to find the overlap among them. The study's established commonalities in topics suggest they may grouped together under a single heading

 Here are the five most prominent themes:

1. Communication

2. Flexibility/ Personal factors

3. Boundary Management /Work Environment

4. Work Environment

5. Health and well-being

5.3 1 Theme 1 Communication

Everyone who took part in the survey was asked if they thought remote work has altered their interactions with co-workers. While all participants acknowledged that remote work impacted their connections with co-workers, several noted that it mostly affected their interactions with those who were not a part of their immediate team. TB, AP, and NK, discuss the effects of distant work. The challenges of maintaining a motivated remote crew are highlighted by NK.

Referenced by participant LB *"OfCourse it was difficult as life was never virtually, I was so used to seeing everyone in person – but with time I guess it became the new norm"*

From TB *"I don't think remote working has hindered my connections with co-workers because we're still close. My team and others have worked together for years. 121s are difficult for managers. What may happen is you may be hesitant to turn on your camera to have that talk."*

Similarly, participant AP *"We're talking more. We rely on WhatsApp and team communications more than I thought imaginable. My team is close. Remote working has affected my relationships with teams I don't see every day."*

By participant NK *"I think we still have a good team bond, the manager relationships are still solid, and we all approach teamwork with an all-together mentality. If someone's life is difficult, you don't want to constantly question if they're ok. "*.

The participant AK states *"Because you're not face-to-face, there are fewer social factors. "*.

Similarly, participant IA *"It's ruined because I don't talk to non-team members for long periods of time. "*

CK *"My first team has improved. I communicate with them more. I think the wider team isn't the same "*.

In comparison and also in participants views MM *"I don't believe it has had any effect on my direct team, and I expect we will be able to maintain close ties with them. However, I believe it has been negatively affected with other teams."*

Contrasting with the previous participants OL states *"So far, it hasn't had much of an effect on my original squad. We're close as a couple, but I think working in larger groups has strained our friendship. "*

Participant TI *"It's better now that my immediate team and I are actively trying to keep in touch with each other. It has been more challenging due to the expanded scope of the agency."*

The participant LO states, *"Since we all work remotely now, I don't think we ever have meaningful conversations about anything but work."*

Lastly participant TD *"Since we aren't all physically located in the same location, you'll need to remain on top of keeping the team engaged through emails or a short call to make sure everyone is on the same page. "*

Participants were questioned about the tools their companies provide for fostering connection and camaraderie among employees working remotely.

Participant TI outlines *"We'd had mystery chats once a month. It's great to have the opportunity to chat with members of opposing squads. It's great to put names to faces of people on other teams."*

In comparison Participant LO also highlights the monthly mystery chats *"I find it forced at times"*.

The participant TD in contrast also states *"The monthly random mystery discussions are helpful, but can sometimes feel forced."*

5.4.2 Theme 2: Flexibility /Personal Factors

The interviewees' Flexibility was a recurring theme. In particular, with regards to the importance of striking a balance between work and personal life. All twelve participants have reported improved work-life balance as a result of working remotely.

Participant AP outlined *"It's helped my work-life balance to work remotely. With shorter commutes, I have more time for evening activities and family time."*

Participant NK Highlights *"It's improved. I've small babies. I'm not far from work, yet I'm saving 2 hours a day commuting. Good. I can leave work for workouts. Yes, it's helped me".*

Participant AK states in a similar manner *"When I worked in the office, it took me 30 minutes to walk home. Now I can make dinner or do other things at 5 p.m. So, I have more time and enjoy the work-life balance".*

Emphasised by participant LB **"It's improved. Everyone agrees that not travelling every day saves time, whether by bus, rail, or car. I miss spontaneous nights out after work."**

In contrast Participant IA highlighted *"I have more time to exercise, even if I'm not a gym person, because I have parks nearby. If I went to work, I'd be home at 6pm. Working remotely gives you extra time for hobbies".*

Participant CK similarly *"Since working remotely, I've gained hours. I just told a friend how amazing it is because you log off at 5pm and two minutes past your home, so yes, it provides a better work-life balance."*

Participant MM *"it has definitely contributed positively to my work life balance. Like even going home to Galway I can midweek and have a change of scenery".*

Participant OI *"improved work life balance as I do not have the commute in and out of town to the office everyday "*

Each of the twelve interviewees was asked about their own experiences with the drawbacks and advantages of working from home. In the table below, you'll find the final results.

Challenges	Benefits
Networking more difficult	Saving money
Face to face interaction	No commute to work
Lack of home office	More sleep less tired
Isolation and loneliness	Improved work life balance

Harder to unwind	Less stressed
Wi-Fi is bad at time	More family time

Everyone was polled on how they felt about remote employment continuing. Of the 12 participants, 5 expressed a preference for a hybrid strategy, despite the general agreement that working remotely is beneficial. Only 3 of the 12 people surveyed were eager to get back to work. One of the main reasons is that they feel the conditions for working remotely are not yet optimal.

Participant AK outlines *"I am enjoying remote working and the flexibility it brings "*

Participant LB similarly *"I would be happy enough to continue to work from home"*.

CK *"While the flexibility is excellent, I don't think working remotely constantly is good for anyone trying to network and establish themselves. 2-3 days a week from home would be ideal.".*

In contrast Participant MM *"No I miss the office vibes ".*

Highlighted by participant OI "*I would ideally like a blended approach of a couple of days in office ".*

Participant TI *"Yes! It suits my lifestyle and provides a better work life balance ".*

Similarly, participant LO *"I was already use to it ".*

Participant TD also explains *" I'd have no problem with it and I know my entourage would think the same ".*

### 5.4.3 Theme 3: Managing Boundaries

Participants were questioned about the effects of remote work on their ability to unwind. When asked how much remote work has affected their ability to unplug from their jobs, respondents were split down the middle, with half saying it had a negative influence and the other half saying it hadn't. Those who said they had trouble switching off because of remote work pointed to the lack of separation between their home and professional lives as well as the ease with which they could access their laptop. However, among those who reported no change in their capacity to unwind, it indicates that this is due to the formation of a reliable routine and the provision of appropriate direction from management.

Participant TB highlighted the point ***"There's a narrow line between working from home and relaxing there. Working from home makes time pass more quickly. The ride home from work helped me unwind"***.

Participant AP outlines ***"it was 100% harder to switch off. I did me work in my bedroom so the last thing I saw before going to bed was my laptop and all it reminded me was of my workload "***

Similarly, like Participant TB participant NK referenced the lack of physical boundaries ***"Your office is in the same house 24/7 it is hard to close the office door and not go back into the office because there is no physical break in the building"***

In contrast participant LB rationale for being able to switch off ***"I can probably unplug whenever I want. I routinely force myself to disconnect. Avoid getting into the habit of working on the laptop outside of typical working hours, even though you probably wouldn't."***

Has remote working made it hard to switch off

not negativly impacted   negativly impacted

.
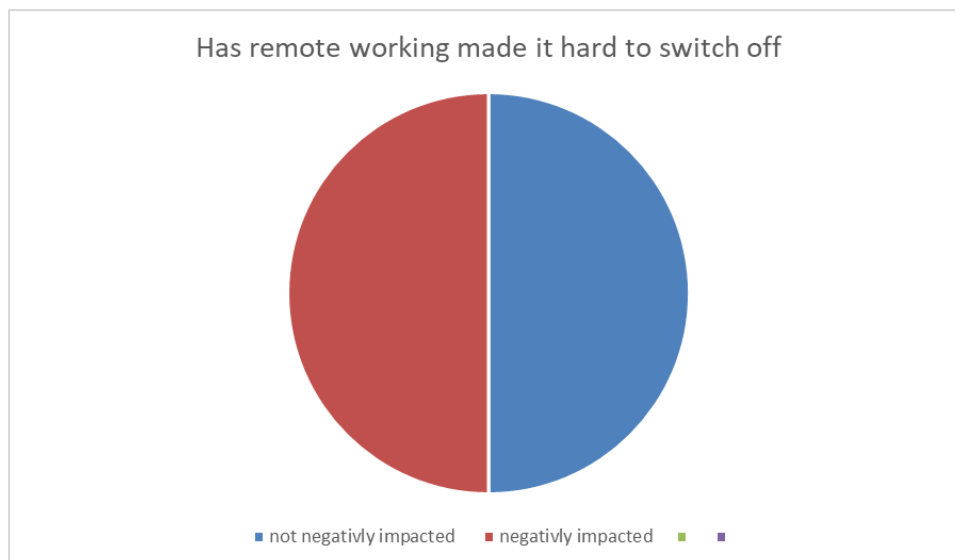
Everyone who took part in the study had their own unique strategy for maintaining a separation between their private and professional lives. Three respondents said they work from home in a separate room with a door that can be closed to keep out distractions, while others said they had to set limits because of their families.

Participant IA outlines *"My child is 4 so he makes it easier for me to put my laptop away because he needs me "*

Participant CK Explains *"Every time I'm done using my laptop, I make sure to power it down and hide the screen."*

Similarly, participant MM outlines *"I can distance myself as the laptop is in the spare room/office and I can close the door and not have it staring at me ".*

Highlighted by Participant OI *"I think the way we work we have very set starting and finishing times, so we don't or are not expected to work overtime".*

5.4.4 Theme 4: Health and Well –Being

Everyone who took part in the study was polled on how working from home has affected their health and happiness. Some have noted an enhancement in their quality of life as a result of the newfound flexibility in their schedules, whereas others noted a loss of the social interactions that come from working in an office. Both the upsides and the drawbacks of mental health were emphasised.

Highlighted by Participant TB *"It took time to adjust, but I've been doing it full-time for almost a year. Having a regimen while working remotely has helped my health."*.

In comparison AP *"It's hard to adjust. It was novel at first, but now I miss my co-workers."*.

Participant MK outlines *"Positively, I think. I'm blessed to still be working at Covid. Working from home has kept me busy and interesting, so that's nice. "*

Participant NK emphasis *" I would love to get back to the office. I just miss talking to people and going for work drinks "*.

Participant AK explains *"Positive impact owing to better work-life balance and not travelling in. Resting is easier. Sleeping in. More time has improved my mental health, I believe."*.

 In comparison participant LB highlights **"I don't think remote working has had a negative impact on my well-being or mental health. What affected it was Covid and combined with the two it has been challenging "**.

Participant IA emphasis "*I think it is enhanced my job and life routine and overall health. "*.

Furthermore, participant CK states *"overall I think it has been positive. "*

However, in contrast participant MM outlines *"It is complicated since there have been both good times and bad. I really miss my daily stroll to and from the office. The psychological*

benefits of socialising are very important to me. However, the odds are evenly split. It is neither bad nor great, in my opinion".

Participant OI outlines "*I started out in shambles. It sucked. I would wait all day for someone to come home. My poor health made socialising difficult. I overthought things.*".

The stress levels of the participants were also questioned once they began working from home. Only 3 of the 12 participants reported a decrease in stress as a result of working remotely, whereas 9 reported no change or an increase.

Participant TI outlines "*At first it was a big change and stress levels were higher than normal*".

In contrast participant LO "*However, the only stressor for me is to ensure my team are not stressed*".

Moreover, participant TD outlines "*I am quite lucky that I have not felt overwhelmed and that is down to our support system and management*".

In contrast participant IA "*Well I think it has become worse. My opinion is that working in an office can be stressful at times, but that talking to your co-workers, even if they cannot help you solve your problem, can help you relax*".

Furthermore, participant AP "*The increased workload is not the only source of stress that people are under right now. Although the stress is considerable, it has helped us appreciate the benefits of working.*".

Participant JM highlights "*I don't feel they have changed since remote working*".

Similarly, participant LB attributes stress levels not remote working but due to the role itself "*my stress levels is not connected to remote working. It is more connected the activities I have in work.*".

Furthermore, participant TB "*Having stress in my life is not something I could ever tolerate. The last time I was at the office, I was not a mother, so comparing my experience with the current one is obviously not fair*".

Participant MM "*, it was rather high, but I've come to realise that it's a bit more stressful because you can't physically bounce ideas off of someone* ".

Furthermore, participant OI "*My stress levels are naturally higher than those of my co-workers because I report directly to no one on the team. However, working from home does not add significantly additional stress.* ".

Finally, participant CK "*I am good at managing stress. It has not really changed to be fair. I would be in the same mindset while in the office* ".

5.4.5 Theme 5 Work Environment

Questions were posed to participants about the ways in which working from home differed from being in an office. Problems in sharing information, working together, and mingling with others have been found. In addition, both the benefits and drawbacks of working from home were cited, such as having more room to spread out in and less background noise.

Participant TB comments "*The office space was bigger, and I feel communication was better*".

Highlighted by participant AP "*no not really* ".

Furthermore, participant NK states "*The noise would be one. There is 4 adults working from home in my house*".

In comparison AK outlines "*It's the lack of socialisation and face-to-face interaction.*".

Participant LB also like other states *"Definitely socialising and eating lunch with co-workers. "*.

Participant IA states *"coffee break gossip sessions taking on without anyone else being present."*.

Also, Participant CK argues *"I miss the social interaction of the office which is very important for us human beings "*.

Moreover, participant MM includes *"When I need to ask a question it be better in the office "*.

Many questions were posed to the group as a whole concerning the remote working conditions they experienced. Approximately fifty percent of the sample reported using a home office. While others preferred to get their job done in the comfort of their own homes by using spaces like the kitchen or living room.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter's goal is to analyse the information in my results and pick out the important particulars. An integration of the results with the existing literature will be presented.

The major goal of this research was to explore the psychological, social, and physiological effects of remote work on those who do it. Personal experiences and boundary management among distant employees will also be explored.

6.2 Discussion Theme 1 – Communication

The results and the literature study agree that effective remote team communication is a significant challenge. In order to gauge the effect of remote work on participants' relationships with co-workers, we inquired as to what measures had been taken by the organisation to facilitate better communication among remote workers.

Among the participants, the following were among the most prominent communication-related challenges:

Similarly, participant AP *"We're talking more. We rely on WhatsApp and team communications more than I thought imaginable. My team is close. Remote working has affected my relationships with teams I do not see every day."*

By participant NK *"we still have a good team bond, the manager relationships are still solid, and we all approach teamwork with an all-together mentality. If someone's life is difficult, you do not want to constantly question if they are ok. ".*

The participant AK states *"Because you are not face-to-face, there are fewer social factors. ".*

Similarly, participant IA *"It is ruined because I do not talk to non-team members for long periods of time. "*

CK *"My first team has improved. I communicate with them more. The wider team is not the same ".*

According to Tiwana and Tahie (2020), working from home might have detrimental effects on health, such as strained relationships. Participant AS's comments, when compared to those of Batel et al. (2012), are consistent with the belief that remote work and time spent away from the office can threaten a sense of community within an organisation.

Some participants highlighted:-

In comparison and also in participants views MM *"I do not believe it has had any effect on my direct team, and I expect we will be able to maintain close ties with them. However, I believe it has been negatively affected with other teams."*

The findings of Thomas (2020) show that distant labour can be productive in tightly knit societies. The difficulty of bonding with new hires without the incidence of social connection and physical communication has been brought to light, however. In addition, we inquired as to the participants' knowledge of the organization's mechanisms. All emphasised, based on the basic information gathered, the importance of virtual communication tools.

6.3 Discussion Theme 2 - Flexibility and Personal Factors

For the vast majority of respondents, working from home has allowed for a better work-life balance.

Several respondents stress how much better their work-life balance is now that they no longer have to commute.

Participant AP outlined *"It is helped my work-life balance to work remotely. With shorter commutes, I have more time for evening activities and family time."*

Participant NK Highlights *"It is improved. I've small babies. I am not far from work, yet I am saving 2 hours a day commuting. Good. I can leave work for workouts. Yes, it is helped me".*

Participant AK states in a similar manner *"When I worked in the office, it took me 30 minutes to walk home. Now I can make dinner or do other things at 5 p.m. So, I have more time and enjoy the work-life balance".*

Emphasised by participant LB **"It is improved. Everyone agrees that not travelling every day saves time, whether by bus, rail, or car. I miss spontaneous nights out after work."**

By eliminating or shortening commute hours, remote work allows for a more balanced schedule, as stated by Boland et al. (2020). The findings of the primary research are consistent with those of other academic studies, which have discovered beneficial ways to spend more time with family and friends while also benefiting from remote work's improved work-life balance.

6.4 Discussion Theme 3 Managing Boundaries

Respondents were questioned on the role that remotes play in preventing them from completely unplugging. According to the results, opinions were split. The following, however, was emphasised by respondents whose ability to unwind was negatively affected by remote work:-

Participant TB highlighted the point ***"There's a narrow line between working from home and relaxing there. Working from home makes time pass more quickly. The ride home from work helped me unwind"***.

Participant AP outlines ***"it was 100% harder to switch off. I did me work in my bedroom so the last thing I saw before going to bed was my laptop and all it reminded me was of my workload "***

Similarly, like Participant TB participant NK referenced the lack of physical boundaries ***"Your office is in the same house 24/7 it is hard to close the office door and not go back into the office because there is no physical break in the building"***

Klopoptek (2017) finds that compared to the conventional workplace, remote workers have less opportunity to unwind. Mddditt (2020) The importance of a safe workplace and the challenges faced by businesses in meeting health and safety regulations are emphasised.

6.5 Discussion Theme 4 Health and Well-Being

The key data collected led researchers to conclude that the health and happiness of remote workers had increased when they began using the option. Several respondents emphasised the good effects on mental health, while others emphasised the negative effects on work-life balance.

Participant IA "Well I think it has become worse. ***My opinion is that working in an office can be stressful at times, but that talking to your co-workers, even if they cannot help you solve your problem, can help you relax".***

Furthermore, participant AP ***"The increased workload is not the only source of stress that people are under right now. Although the stress is considerable, it has helped us appreciate the benefits of working.".***

Wang et al. (2020) and others in the field of mental health pointed out that remote work is often connected with greater emotional and social isolation, which can have detrimental effects on well-being.

6.6 Discussion Theme 5 – The Work environment

The results indicated the importance of the remote worker's environment.

The security risk of remote workers being too comfortable with their systems and gadgets, which could lead to their housemates or family members gaining unauthorised access to sensitive company and client information, is highlighted by Muddit (2020). Moreover Many businesses in the European Union (EU) will need to make substantial adjustments to their

data procedures in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as recently emphasised by Lueck,(2020).

6.8 Limitations of Study

There will inevitably limitations on this study.

Three males and nine females made up the study's sample, so it was limited by a lack of diversity in terms of sex. While this disparity was not intentionally sought by the study, the researcher had trouble recruiting men because of the disproportionate number of women in the workplace. Nonetheless, the three men did fight it out.

The second restriction of this investigation was related to time constraints. The researcher has a day job, thus scheduling convenient times for all twelve interviews took place after hours, when it was more challenging to accommodate everyone's schedules. Time constraints were also a problem for the researcher, who had not accounted for how long it would take to transcribe the interviews.

Last but not least, Covid has made it possible for employees to regularly and reliably work remotely from any location. This study has its limitations due to the timing of the global pandemic and the increasing popularity of remote employment. Because of this, it will always be necessary to assess the effects of remote work on health and wellbeing.

Chapter 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The major purpose of this study was to examine the effects of remote work on workers' mental health. This led us to ask, "What effect does remote work have on the well-being?"

To answer this question, we devised a set of objectives to better understand this phenomenon and to investigate the effect that distant work has on people's emotional, social, and physical health. Additionally, the ultimate goal centred on learning about the perspective of telecommuting workers. Due to the preponderance of pre-Covid material, the study revealed a need for fresh investigations.

Specifically, semi-structured interviews were used as a qualitative research strategy to collect primary data for this study. Twelve employees who had been remote since March 2020 were interviewed to see how they felt about the transition from traditional office hours to their newfound flexibility. In addition, everyone who took part in Covid 19 is currently working in the human resources department of a major telecommunications firm owned by a global corporation, and everyone who participated in remote work before Covid 19 did so on a part-time basis.

The first takeaway from this research is that remote workers face difficulties maintaining and fostering social relationships and engaging in meaningful interpersonal exchanges due to the isolation that comes with working from home. Problems were emphasised. Although telework can be efficient for teams whose members are already familiar with one another, new recruits often have difficulty forming meaningful relationships with their colleagues without frequent in-person meetings.

Second, many people and the actual setting did not lend itself to remote work due to issues with noise, technology, and accessibility. more research and/or monitoring is required, Certain parts, such as training, rely on virtual platforms, including teams, which can be slow or have faults. It may also be worthwhile to learn more about the challenges of maintaining employee interest and productivity when working remotely.

7.2 Future Research Recommendations

As a result of the effects of Covid 19, it became clear that this topic could benefit from additional study and should be revisited and monitored. We live in unusual times, and while the research reflects the state of the art at the moment, additional work is required to get a truly representative sample in the future.

The literature on flexible employment is sparse because most studies have focused on major corporations rather than small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and it is unclear whether the associations that have studied the topic have reached the conclusion that the same principles apply to the latter.

Finally, the association between flexible working arrangements and performance according to a particular flexible working arrangement is another topic in need of exploration found from the gap in the research since prior studies assesses these essential factors at a more general level.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Email to Participants

Hi _____,

I hope you are well.

I am currently in the process of completing my dissertation for my Masters in HR in NCI which is an investigation into remote working the influence it has on the well-being on employees.

As part of my study and to gather information I am hoping to carry out interviews with remote workers and how they feel their well-being has been influenced and impacted since remote working.

Remote working is an extremely interesting and relevant topic today even more so with the Corona Virus pandemic and there are many arguments for and against it.

I hope to gain further information into the area and aim to identify how it influences wellbeing in relation to three key areas including , Social physical , Phycological well-being.

I have attached an information sheet setting out all specifications of the study. I hope you can assist me with my study within this area in this and I look forward to hearing from you.

While I have attached a consent form please reply from your work email acknowledging request and consent to participate .

I will add a Teams meeting for a selected time and please let me know if this does not suit and an alternative time can be allocated .

Thank you for your time and willingness to help.

Kindest Regards,

Cecile Kizenga

Appendix 2 – Participant information form

Research Title:

What is the impact of Remote Working on employee Wellbeing within a Telecommunications organisation in Ireland

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to

 understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

The purpose of this study is to investigate experience of remote working within the Telecommunications sector and its influence on well-being.

The objectives of the study bare as followed:

- **To gain an understanding of the physical effects of working remotely from employees**
- **For a Phycologically sound comprehension of the effects of telecommuting on the workforce.**
- **For a socially informed appreciation of the effects of telecommuting.**
- **To empathise with telecommuters and learn from their perspectives, we must first consider their situation.**

Throughout this study there will be confidentiality at all stages and any data obtained while conducting this interview will remain confidential. Any information provided will solely and strictly be confidential and specifically use for the purpose intended.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

If you seek further information, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Cecile Kizenga – X20249811@student.ncirl.ie

Thank you for your time in assisting in this study.

Appendix 3 - Consent Form

What is the he impact of Remote Working on employee WellBeing within a Telecommunications organisation in Ireland Consent to take part in research

• I………………………………………… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

• I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves…[outline briefly in simple terms what participation in your research will involve].

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in…[list all forum in which you plan to use the data from the interview: dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.].

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in [specify location, security arrangements and who has access to data] until [specific relevant period – for students this will be until the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation].

• I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for [specific relevant period – for students this will be two years from the date of the exam board].

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Names, degrees, affiliations and contact details of researchers (and academic supervisors when relevant).

Signature of research participant -- ----------------

<div style="text-align:center">Signature of participant   Date</div>

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

-- ---------------------

Signature of researcher   Date