Has the remote and hybrid working model impacted employee well-being?

Research Dissertation

Author: Grace Hodgins
Student Number: 21143226

Course Title : Masters of Arts in Human Resource Management

Submitted to the National College of Ireland May 2023

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

Research Students Declaration Form

(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Grace Hodgins

Student Number: 21143226

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MA in Human Resource Management

Material submitted for award

(a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.

(b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

(c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository NORMA (thesis reports and projects).

(d) *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

_____

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Signature of research student: _ Grace Hodgins . _____

Date: 7th May 2023

Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: Grace Hodgins   Student number: 21143226

School: School of Business   Course: MA in Human Resource Management

Degree to be awarded:
    MA in Human Resource Management

Title of Thesis:

Has the remote and hybrid working model impacted employee well-being?

An electronic copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. This electronic copy will be accessible in NORMA norma.ncirl.ie the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (NORMA) are made available on open access.

I agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being available for consultation within the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository NORMA.

Signature of Candidate: *Grace Hodgins*

For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by _____

Date: _____

This signed form must be appended to all copies of your thesis submitted to your school.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. April Hargreaves, for her guidance and direction during the course of this dissertation.

I would also like to thank the participants in the research interviews for their time and their willingness to express their views as well as their perspectives on the topic of this dissertation.

I would like to thank my friends and colleagues for their encouragement and especially my sisters for all their support, kindness, and patience!

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for encouraging, supporting, and inspiring me throughout my life and education. I would be truly lost without your help and guidance.

Abstract

Over the past three years, the world of work as we know it has changed dramatically and as a result the way we work is constantly evolving. Since the Covid – 19 pandemic in 2020, more people have been placing a greater importance on their physical, mental and emotional well-being as they have recognised and acknowledged the great effect well-being has had on their personal and also their work life.

This research dissertation explores the impact that remote and hybrid working has on employee's well-being. A detailed literature review and qualitative research is conducted as well as reviewed to analyse this vast topic. This study utilities qualitative research in the form of semi- structured interviews to determine and answer the research and sub-research questions.

The findings of this research can be useful for human resource departments and their organisations when looking at employee well-being, remote and hybrid working. Recommendations have then been made to reflect the issues and themes throughout this research.

Contents

1.   Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) needs to align and adapt its practices and processes with societal and economical changes happening around the world (CIPD, 2021). This has been demonstrated during the Covid -19 Pandemic, when senior management and stakeholders looked upon and relied on guidance from Human Resource Management to continue their line of work with adaptions during an unprecedented time and crisis. Human Resources were the drivers in helping organisations to continue their line of work.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown and restrictions highlighted the importance of well-being amongst organisations and its employees, this issue had been of growing concern prior to 2020 and following the pandemic it has been highlighted as of key importance for Human Resource Management to develop further within the organisation (CIPD, 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic altered and significantly changed the way organisations operate and the way we view work. Many organisations relied on remote working, virtual team working and the flexibility and resilience of their employees to continue their work from a new hybrid working environment at home and the office. The first year of remote working was considered an "emergency" and "unprecedented times," however nearly 3 years later, organisations and Human Resource Managers must now evaluate, adapt, and form a long-term strategy for the success of remote working and employee well-being (wellness) (Johar et al., 2022).

We are currently living in a post Covid age, which has led to the increasing number of employees working from home (working remotely and hybrid) since 2020. Remote working has presented both opportunities and challenges in terms of employee well-being with employers seeking to implement well-being strategies. Identifying the value of well-being is important to organisations as well as evaluating how it has dramatically changed in recent years. This helps to develop and implement a strategy to overcome any challenges to well-being and to adapt to any changes.

The objective of this research dissertation is to answer the research question identified:

Has the remote and hybrid working model impacted employee well-being?

Chapter One gives a brief introduction to the research dissertation and gives context to the topic that is being researched. In Chapter Two, the results of the literature review are presented, and it critically analyses the relevant theory, concepts and information identified in relation to remote and hybrid working and well-being. It begins with reviewing HRM and remote working and filters down to well-being as it is identified as an important element of successful remote and hybrid working.

Chapter Three outlines the research and sub-research question determined for this research dissertation. The objectives are clearly specified and defined. In Chapter Four, the different research methodologies are explored, and the chosen research method is explained and justified in relation to the topic.

Chapter Five demonstrates and discusses the findings and analysis from the research method that was undertaken. The aim of Chapter Six is to link the literature review and research findings together. It is an extensive discussion evaluating the research that has been undertaken. Chapter Seven outlines the conclusion, and recommendations are made to help organisations with this topic. Each recommendations incorporate a brief outline of the measure, a timeline, and an indicative cost (required for CIPD).

Chapter Eight gives an insightful and overall conclusion to the research dissertation. Finally, Chapter Nine is the detailed personal learning statement required for CIPD.

2. Literature Review

The objective of a literature review is to perform a critical exploration of an analytical framework to systematically investigate a set of issues and topics. As an output, it should provide a comprehensive review and synopsis of previous research on a specific topic, issue and or academic field (Baker, 2000).

Therefore, it can be deduced that a literature review is an organised summary and critique of academic researchers and scholars work on a specific field of research. A literature review can give more insight into a particular topic with different assumptions and ideas from well-established and knowledgeable academic authors.

For this literature review in this research dissertation, the research question was divided into components and themes that formulate in order to get a brief synthesis of the current literature available on relevant topics.

2.1   HRM

CIPD (2022) outlines that the Human Resource function should align the strategy of Human Resources (HR) with the overall organisations corporate strategy by effectively managing recruiting, learning and development, resourcing, policies, services, and succession planning of all employees. Similarly, SHRM (2022) states that human resource management encompasses all features of people management and how these are aligned with the organisation's strategy and goals.

In recent years, the term "Strategic Human Resource Management" has been regularly used to describe what was once known as personnel management (commonly known HRM). The SHRM term is considered to be a better reflection of the function of modern HRM in an organization. Strategic Human Resource Management can be summarised as aligning Human Practices with the long-term strategy of the organisation and taking a pro-active approach to HR issues in relation to resourcing, learning and development, employee relations etc (CIPD,

2021). The overall aim of Strategic Human Resource management is to ensure that the function of HRM is aligned with the organisation's long-term strategic vision.

Kowalski and Loretto (2017) identified the strong connection between HRM practices and well-being. They also highlighted the benefits for an organisation when senior management invest in HRM and well-being initiatives. It is evident that there is a correlation between HRM and well-being that needs to be acknowledged and prioritised.

After completing the research of the literature review on HR, we can deduce the strategic importance HRM has on an organisation and its employees. For this dissertation it will be of significant importance to link HRM with well-being and relevant practices. HR departments are the driving force of the people side of an organisation and therefore it is critical that all staff can understand, acknowledge, and prioritise the significance sheer scale of well-being in the current economic and business climate.

2.2   Remote Working

A clear but unanticipated outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic is the now increasingly popular adjustment to the traditional way of working, with staff embracing remote working or hybrid working practices. Since the pandemic, organisations have had to facilitate a new way of working due to the demand for it becoming a priority and a preference for employees to have the flexibility to work remotely or to be offered a hybrid way of work (McKinsey, 2020).

Pre Covid-19 pandemic, remote working or hybrid working was not common and was extensively a used practice amongst the majority of organisations. HR departments were therefore not equipped with formal practices and procedures relating to online working. In 2020, most HR departments had to implement remote working policies on a reactive, crisis management basis. This caused many issues and problems in a number of organisations as there was little clearly outlined practices in relation to remote working.

As remote and hybrid working is a new phenomenon, there is not a substantial amount of past-studied literature on this topic. However, in the last year it can be seen that this is now

an area of Human Resource Management that has been identified of great importance. Therefore there is a need for it to studied carefully in order to evaluate and make recommendations for the future.

It is evident from literature and academic sources that there are several positives and negatives elements to implementing remote working (sometimes known as hybrid working). In order to review these elements, these have been broken down into positives and negatives below.

2.3   Positives of Remote Working

Flexibility for employees is considered to be a positive benefit of remote and hybrid working. Since the 1970s, there are an increasing level of female participation in the workplace due to several factors, for example, the Irish Gender Equality legislation following Irelands membership of the EEC (European Economic Community) allowed women in the public sector to continue working after marriage (European Commission 2023). As females are usually the primary caretaker in a family, in the past it was more common for them to not work once they have children or to reduce their hours. Now, with the introduction of remote working it has given employees the option to expand their working opportunities from home and adapt their home life around their work life.

Remote working reduces the amount of time spent traveling and commuting to and from work, therefore providing more time for leisure pursuits or for spending more time with family etc. CIPD (2022) carried out a report on flexible and hybrid working practices and reported that there is a rise in employers now supporting and promoting flexibility and that it is a crucial element of retaining and attracting staff to their organisation. The report also noted that job satisfaction, productivity and employee morale has increased with the integration of flexibility to there working life.

Forbes (2023) reported that with the introduction of remote working and the flexibility that has come with it, women with childcare responsibilities were 32% less likely to leave their job with the additional flexibility facilitated by working remotely. Remote and hybrid working has

allowed employees to work in a way that can suit their needs without compromising the organisations requirements and their required job tasks.

Chung and Van der Horst (2018) found that mothers in the UK who were allowed to telework (also known as remote working) were significantly less likely to reduce their working hours after having children especially for first time mothers. This reinforces the view that there are positive outcomes for both the employee and organisation from the flexibility in relation to remote and hybrid working.

Improvements to time management are apparent from the increase in flexibility of start and finish times which has also led to a decrease in commuting times for employees. This has left them more time to focus on family, health, exercise etc. Remote working has allowed employees and employers to be more flexible and this has affected a number of things such as health and well-being. (GOV, 2022). For example, having more flexible start and finish times can lead to increased productivity as employees can more efficiently use their time and resources. In a report on Digital Worker Experience Survey carried out by Gartner (2021) 43% of the survey participants reported that they were more productive with flexible working hours (Forbes 2022).

Increased acceptance of remote working practices has provided an opportunity for those with a disability to participate in the workforce more than previously. Reasons cited for this include staff with disabilities being more comfortable working from home rather than in an office environment, having their medical equipment at their disposal, when required, and the elimination of the barrier of commuting to work etc (Schur, Ameri & Kruse 2020). This has led to more opportunities for employers to implement recruitment plans to hire individuals with disabilities than previously.

With regard to productivity, some sources claim that employees are either as productive or more productive when working from home or when working with a hybrid model including remote working. A main reason suggested for this is that there are less distractions at home than in the office which leads to more time for employees to focus on the task at hand. One author suggests that Telework (remote working) increases life satisfaction and contentment

which improves employee productivity (Haridas et al, 2021). Similarly, McCarthy and Mansergh (2020) agree that employees can be as productive or more productive when participating in a remote and hybrid working model. A study conducted by Felstead and Reuschke (2020) detailed that 29% of participants claimed that there was an increase in productivity when working remotely during the pandemic.

It can be noted that hybrid and remote working can result in reduced cost for organisation as some have decided to downsize from large headquarters to smaller offices and therefore paying less rent, heating bills etc. (CIPD, 2021). Hybrid and remote working have also left some employees with reduced costs such as money spent on commuting etc.

Overall research suggests that remote working has been positively accepted by employees and that most employees would prefer for this new way of working to continue into the future (Becker et al., 2022).

2.4   Negatives of Remote Working

Forbes (2021) has emphasised that remote working and hybrid working has blurred the lines between home and work life for many employees. Bellmann and Hubler (2020) similarly stated that there needs to be consideration of employees work life balance when working from home (remotely or hybrid work) as it can become difficult to separate both. For some employees, the reduction in a defined separation between home and work life has resulted in a direct impact on their work/life balance as there is no time to switch off etc. This is a concern for both employers and employees alike and needs to be addressed to ensure that there is a smooth transition in hybrid and remote working and that equality and fairness is upheld for all employees. When employees cannot detach from their work at a reasonable time in the day it can cause further problems for themselves and the organisation. Working extra hours results in putting themselves under increased pressure and strain which can lead to potential burn out for an individual (Ferrara et al., 2022).

Remote working is a cause of extra stress and workload for some employees which effect their mental health and well-being. Both physical and mental/emotional well-being have

been affected by remote working. In relation to physical well-being, not having a home-off set up with the correct ergonomic workstation has resulted in some employees' physical well-being and health deteriorating (Xiao, Becerik-Gerber, Gale & Roll 2021). For some employees, remote and hybrid working has resulted in them exercising or moving their body less as they no longer have to commute and are sitting at their desks for most of the day leading to an increase in sedentary behaviour. This can lead to health conditions, mobility problems and overall poor health. (Niebuhr et al., 2022).

In terms of mental and emotional well-being, some employees have expressed there is a greater sense of isolation, and it is more challenging to develop interpersonal relationships when participating in remote and hybrid working (Morrison-Smyth & Ruiz, 2020). Employees have reported feeling alone and detached from their team and organisation. To mitigate against this, an organisation encourages team building, collaboration and a sense of belonging. To do this management, there is a need to implement and encourage organisational culture both in the office and at home. They need to redefine the organisational culture to be adapted to remote and hybrid working so everyone feels included and part of the wider team. Staglin (Forbes, 2020) agrees and highlights that poor mental and emotional well-being and lack of social interaction can lead to a lack of motivation and ambition. The impact on relationships within teams and between colleagues which are no longer being adequately maintained when working remotely it can sometimes lead to burnout amongst employees.

A challenge that has been observed with remote working is the reliance on technology to fulfil the employees job role and tasks when working from home and this can lead to an organisation and an employee vulnerable to cyber-attacks. To ensure this doesn't occur organisations IT (Information Technology) departments need to have the correct and updated systems and procedures in place to mitigate any vulnerability or weakness to a cyber security attack caused by remote and hybrid working (Microsoft Report 2021). The increased number of cyber security attacks on organisations has caused added pressure and stress to some employee's well-being. Employees need to be constantly updated with the knowledge and skills on information technology and cybersecurity.

A challenge observed through this literature review is that some employees who are now more frequently working remotely (from home) are having to pay more for the increased amount of heating and electricity they are using as they are spending more time at home. However, the Government has put in place frameworks and tax relief initiatives to help those individuals with increased costs from working from home (Citizens Information, 2022). This is still an element of concern for some employees with the rising cost of living in the country at the moment.

2.5   Well-being

It can be deduced from the literature review so far, that well-being is one of the main factors that has been affected by the introduction of remote working. In order to gain further insights into this topic, the author has focused on the topic of well-being and then how this links into the workplace.

According to Cambridge Dictionary (2022), the definition of well-being is "the state of feeling happy and health", while the CSO (2017) stated in their Well-being of the Nation, Societal Well-being in Ireland report that Well-being "in its, broadest sense, can be viewed as a measure of all aspects of life", an intricate issue determined by many factors. Grant et al. (2007) describes employee well-being as the "overall quality of an employee's experience and functioning at work".

Hettler (1976) stated that there was six dimensions of well-being. These six pillars or dimensions included emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, physical and occupational. Hettler (1976) recommended that the six dimensions be applied to an individual and they can become aware of the link between each dimension and how wellness and well-being is a changing and developing method of accomplishing full potential.

It is acknowledged that the overall term of well-being is difficult and complicated to define as the term well-being is of particular relevance from one individual perspective from another. Dodge et al. (2012) agree that the definition of well-being can be subjective to an individual's perspective and context. However, we can roughly outline that well-being is the feeling of

content and state of being positive and happy.

The theme and topic of well-being has become increasingly popular owing to the transparency, openness, and willingness to speak about mental health and the significance and priority placed on a work-life balance for employees. Well-being has been highlighted by the United Nations as an essential element of life and has been included as Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) in the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015). The aim of Sustainable Development Goal 3 is to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" (UN, 2015).

Figure 1 : United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Infographic
Source (UN, 2015b)

In relation to well-being at work, Grant, Christianson and Price (2007) take inspiration of the work of Warr (1987) when defining well-being at work as "quality of an employee's experience and functioning at work". While similarly, the International Labour Organisation (2023) states that well-being at work is every physical and emotional element of an employee's working life, ensuring that all employees feel safe and supported in their working life and environment. One can therefore describe well-being at work as an employee feeling

of contentedness within their job and safety within the workplace, their team and environment.

From our brief literature review on well-being, it is clear that the theme of well-being is a prominent feature of the workplace and should not be ignored. When an employee is feeling positive about their well-being at work, it can lead to higher job satisfaction, engagement, motivation and overall higher quality of life.It is crucial that organisations and HR departments have proper and effective processed and practices in place relating to well-being and wellness for all employees.

2.6   Physical and Emotional, Mental Well-being

Physical and Emotional, Mental well-being encompasses the overall term of well-being. To clearly understand both subjects they can be reviewed and analysed separately and then brought together to paint a bigger picture of well-being. According to the HSE (2023), physical well-being can be defined as looking after your physical self, eating nutritionally and well, getting adequate and sufficient sleep and being physically active. While emotional and mental well-being can be interpreted as how we think, act and feel and how we are aware of these things and then act on them (World Health Organisation, 2023). Research studies suggest that small improvements and incorporating healthy habits into your lifestyle can lead to a much more fulfilling life. This is because well-being has an affect on everything we do in our life (Mental Health Ireland, 2023).

2.7   Well-being Practices in Organisations

The implementation of well-being practices and processes is of interest to both current and prospective employees. It is important in the current climate, that an organisations well-being culture is embedded into the organisation's strategy and goals.

In recent years organisations have implemented well-being practices and policies to reflect changes in laws, society and the economic climate. For example, EAP (Employee Assistance Programmes) have been a preferred practice and support system put in place by

organisations for their employees, families and the organisation as a whole (Bouzikos et al., 2022). EAP can consist of face-to-face or online counselling; employee supports and resources and confidential advice services (Peninsula, 2022). Baskar et al. (2021) concur that EAP (Employee Assistance Programmes) are helpful and beneficial for both employees and employers if they are customised and adapted to each individual organisation and their needs. However, with the introduction of remote working and hybrid working a greater importance needs to be placed on prioritising employee's well-being in order to promote and facilitate success in an organisation.

CIPD (2021) indicates that fostering a culture of well-being within HRM practices can be a way of implementing wellness initiatives to an organisation. Organisations need to integrate well-being practices into daily activities in order to nurture and encourage a culture of wellness and well-being. Currently a number of organisations have introduced extensions of existing policies to include well-being practices (Kelliher et al. 2019). This can be a short-term solution to implementing well-being practices. However, it has its limitations, and this would need to be identified and addressed to tackle the evolving subject of well-being.

Absenteeism and employee turnover has been directly linked to employee well-being Employee turnover can be an extremely costly to an organisation and should be mitigated before it occurs. One way an organisation can mitigate this is to invest in their employee's well-being and this can decrease absenteeism relating to stress, tiredness, burnout etc. This can then lead to employee's satisfaction in their job increasing thus reducing the idea of them leaving to find another employment opportunity (Madero-Gómez et al., 2023).

An employer needs to create a safe, open and comfortable working environment where well-being is places as a priority amongst the organisation's goals and strategy. When it is obvious that an employer and senior management care and take well-being seriously it will filter down amongst the employees and teams. Employers and the senior management team need to take a top-down approach showing first hand that they abide and utilise the well-being practices that they have implemented and put in place. It is important that managers and the senior management team set a good example to their employees that they prioritise their own well-being and aim to change any unhealthy habits they have impacting their well-being.

Thus, creating a positive and safe working environment with well-being in mind. Investing in employee well-being is a huge asset for an organisation (Adams 2019). Kowalski and Loretto (2017) noted that poor employee well-being can lead to reduced productivity and efficiency in an organisation.

It can therefore be concluded that well-being practices need to be identified and reviewed in most organisations especially in the ever-changing current economic, societal climate. Well-being practices need to be accessible to every employee and provide a benefit to both the employee and the organisation.

Well-being is made up of a number of different fundamentals and components, one aspect of well-being that is of great importance and perhaps has suffered due to hybrid working is work-life balance and the ability to disconnect from work.

2.8   Gap in Literature

There is a lack of literature on well-being in the context of the post Covid-19 working environment of remote working and hybrid working. This can be due to a number of reasons, but the most pertinent is that, it is such a recent and current issue and topic. This gap in the literature can be supplemented for updated findings and conclusion in relation to well-being and remote and hybrid working. The aim of this dissertation is to present updated findings, synopsis, and comments on the importance of well-being in HRM practices while also showcasing the challenges that may now occur due to remote working and hybrid working.

However, the change to remote and hybrid working for most organisations in 2020 happened as a result of reactive management. Therefore organisations, employers and employees were doing their best to manage this change that occurred during unprecedented and abnormal times. This then resulted in the introduction of remote and hybrid working without proper practices in place leaving processes and procedures open to uncertainties and ambiguities (Stoker, Garretsen and Lammers, 2022).

Madero-Gómez et al. (2023) agrees that there is a "knowledge gap" concerning work and

employee well-being and that it can differ from every individual to each organisation. Every organisation needs to have structured guidelines and a framework in place to support employees with well-being within the workplace especially now that remote and hybrid working is the preferred method and way of work.

3.   Research Question Chapter

From the literature review, the prevailing theme is the effect remote and hybrid working has on employee well-being. The overall objective of this dissertation and research is to identify if the hybrid model of remote working created more challenges or opportunities for employee well-being and if so what recommendations, guidelines, and framework can be put in place to support employee's well-being when they are participating in remote and hybrid working. The following is the Research Question and Sub Research Questions that have been established and determined from the literature review.

3.1   Research Question

Has the remote and hybrid working model impacted employee well-being?

3.2   Sub Research Questions

1. Is it possible to define well-being and thus implement a well-being framework from this derivation?
2. Has remote working impacted employee's physical and emotional well-being?
3. Do employees feel well-being can be managed with remote working?
4. Has remote and hybrid working provided challenges and/or opportunities for employee well-being?
5. What strategies do employees feel would be beneficial for their well-being when participating in remote and hybrid working?

The research question and further sub questions were identified to form the research methodology section of this dissertation/ thesis. These research and sub research questions will form the underlying structure for the research methodology that is chosen. From the research methodology we hope to address our research questions and determine conclusions to them.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the design, theory, and method of the Research Methodology is further discussed in detail. In order to answer the research and sub research questions outlined in chapter three, it is imperative to identify and select the correct procedures and techniques that will successfully aid the methodology. The objective of the research methodology is to solve the research problems previously identified and to critique and synthesis the findings. In this Research Methodology chapter, the rationale behind deciding the most suitable research methodology is discussed in detail.

4.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative

In order to effectively carry out valuable research on this topic, the appropriate methodology needs to be utilised. Researchers must decide whether qualitative or quantitative is the most fitting type of research methodology for their type of research. On the one hand, qualitative research relates to data collected that cannot be grouped into numbers or figures. On the other hand, the objective of qualitative research is to conduct interviews, focus groups etc which can detail human experience and issues can be investigated in significant detail and depth (Bryman, 2021).

Qualitative research can help capture participants viewpoint, ideas and opinions. (Sutton and Austin, 2015). While quantitative research is based on analytical research and investigation that utilises methods such as surveys, questionnaires, graphs etc. (Armstrong 2009). The outcome of quantitative methods results in statistics and figures which allows a researcher to deduce 'facts' from their analysis (Barnham, 2015).

Understanding the difference between qualitative and quantitative is an important element of the research methodology but identifying and choosing the most appropriate method for a specific research dissertation can result in either a successful research dissertation or not.

The most suited methodology chosen for this research dissertation is qualitative research (qualitative interviews). Saunders et al. (2019) highlight that qualitative research involves an interpretative approach. This will help provide the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and clarity on the research topic while exploring perspectives, opinions, and theory on well-being practices in the new world of remote and hybrid working.

The benefits of a qualitative interview (qualitative research) can consist of a better understanding of the research question and topic through personal interaction and understanding behaviours. Topics and issues can be discussed and investigated in great detail which can lead to valuable findings. Nevertheless, some limitations can include potential bias, subjectivity and the process can be time consuming.

Qualitative research such as qualitative interviews would be the most valued and suitable method for this dissertation as it would give the opportunity for an in-depth discussion within a semi structured interview (Bryman & Bell, 2007). These qualitative interviews can provide a valuable opportunity for better understanding on the specific topic and issue from highly knowledgeable, skilled, and qualified interviewees. The semi structured interview will involve a prearranged set of interview questions that can be open to interpretation and further discussion. Semi-structured interviews allow for a researcher to combine the positives of a structured and an unstructured interview into one.

For these qualitative interviews to be successful, and for considerable knowledge and discussion to be gained for the dissertation, the interviews should be conducted with a set of semi- structured questions that can also allow for further discussion and interpretation if it emerges or arises. The questions for the interview should be discussing the challenges and opportunities of remote working and hybrid working and how it has affected the well-being of employees, how well-being practices have had to adapt and change to the new of work and if this affected the organisations productivity, goals, and strategy as a whole.

4.4 Interview Methodology and Data Collection Method

Each participant was sent a personalised invitation by email, which set out the background to the interviews, the data protection considerations, and a consent form request to record the interaction if the interview took place over Microsoft Teams.

For the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked a total of ten questions, these ten questions were open-ended questions which allowed the participants to engage further and develop their answers and points that they wanted to discuss. The questions asked in the interview were all derived from the sub-questions established in chapter three.

4.5 Research Sample

In order to acquire data on the research question on employee well-being and remote and hybrid working, one needs to avail of a suitable research sample and population.

For the purpose of this research dissertation, the author has chosen to use non-probability convenience sampling. This practice of non-probability sampling is a common technique that can result in the data collection being readily available, at a low cost and can be easier collection of data method. Participants are readily available, and the interviewer can reduce and limit the amount of time needed to seek out participants for the interview (Stratton, 2021).

For this research dissertation, the population sample chosen were HR professionals. Included in this population sample were both senior and junior staff members who now partake in hybrid working but have previously participated in remote working(during 2020 and 2021). These interviewee participants were chosen as they fit the criteria needed for the research proposal.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine HR professionals each working in a sub-section of HR departments. In the group of nine HR professionals interviewed, four of the individuals can be classed as senior employees (are in a supervisory or management position)

and five of the individuals interviewed can be classed as junior employees (a subordinate). Four out of the nine participants have child-caring responsibilities. Two males and seven females were interviews, the ages ranging from twenty-five to sixty. It can be noted that Human Resources can be known to be a female dominated industry (People Matters, 2022) hence the ratio of women to men who participated in the research interviews. In the end nine participants were interviewed for this qualitative research, this was the ideal amount of candidates as the researcher acknowledged at nine participants they had reached saturation in terms of information and findings (Saunders 2017).

4.6   Consideration and Limitations

There are some limitations to non-probability convenience sampling. These include bias in relation to selection and sampling. As the sample chosen was HR professionals it is important to note, that they may be influenced either consciously or unconsciously on certain topics and issues. This should all be taken into consideration when analysing the qualitative research.

Qualitative research (semi–structured interviews) can be identified as a labour-intensive and time-consuming technique due to categorisation, recording of information, transcription etc. An important limitation of qualitative analysis and research is that it is difficult to determine the findings of qualitative analysis as factual or the sense of 'certainty'. With quantitative data it is easier to determine factual, statistical information and findings. Therefore, the findings and analysis of qualitative data (interviews) can sometimes be unsuitable and can be difficult to generalise and fit into standard categories and may not be statistically representative (Mwita, 2022).

These qualitative research interviews were conducted in person. The option of undertaking the interviews online was offered, but in person was the preference for participants and it was considered more convenient for them as they were in the office. Interviews were recorded by note taking and the limitations and constraints of this method was noted. When conducting semi- structured interviews, note taking can result in the missing of data or the risk of leaving out important information (Muswazi and Nhamo, 2013).

4.7   Ethical Considerations

It is of great importance that researchers and academics are fully aware of ethical considerations when conducting a research dissertation (Bryman and Bell, 2007). For this research dissertation, no vulnerable members of society were involved with the qualitative study.

In order to participate in this research, participants were sent an email outlining the nature of the research study and its objectives and aims. They were then asked if they would like to volunteer and participate in the qualitative research (semi – structured interview). Interviews were arranged for a suitable time that was convenient for both the interviewer (researcher) and interviewee (participant). Most interviews were conducted in person; however, some interviews were completed on Microsoft Teams to facilitate employees who were participating in remote working on that specific day. Prior to the day of the interview, participants were asked to read the consent form and interview questions and to sign and send back the consent form to the researcher (interviewer).

Before each individual interview began, the interviewees (participants) were reminded that the interview was anonymous and that their identity and their organisations would not be revealed in this research dissertation. Additionally, interviewees (participants) were informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any time or ask to omit any questions or details that are discussed in the interview. The interviewees data will be held for the objective of this research study and will be discarded as per NCIs data retention guidelines.

4.8   Conclusion

To conclude, the research methods chapter presents the methodology behind this research dissertation. After considering the research question and sub-questions a suitable and appropriate research strategy was developed. As detailed in this research methods chapter, is the research design, approach and considerations that need to be taken into account before conducting the qualitative research interviews.

5.   Findings and Analysis

5.1   Introduction

The following chapter includes the primary research findings that has been discovered and identified during the qualitative research interviews. This chapter will examine these findings and explore any themes that have been identified during the qualitative research interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine HR professionals each working in a sub-section of a HR department. In the group of nine HR professionals, four of the individuals can be classed as senior employees (are in a supervisory or management position) and five of the individuals interviewed as junior employees (a subordinate). Four out of the nine participants have child-caring responsibilities. This allowed for versatile informed research interviews. The interviews took place in April 2023 and were conducted in person as this was either the preference of certain participants or it was more convenient for them as they were in the office. Note taking was used as the recording method of each interview.

Gender of Participants:	
7 Females (78%)	2 Males (22%)

Ranking of Participants:	
4 Senior Employees (44%)	5 Junior Employees (56%)

Childcare responsibilities amongst participants:	
4 Employees with Childcare responsibilities (44%)	5 Employees with no Childcare responsibilities (56%)

5.2   Themes

During the course of the qualitative research interviews there was specific themes identified and discussed during the duration of the interviews. These themes were acquired from

analysing the data from the interviews (Clarke and Braun, 2013).

The themes that were frequently referenced and spoken about in detail in the semi-structured interviews include:

- Physical Well-Being
- Mental/Emotional Well-Being
- Flexibility
- The subjectiveness of well-being
- Management of Well-being
- Well-being strategies for remote and hybrid working.
- Overall challenges of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being
- Overall opportunities of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being

5.3   Physical Well-being

The recurring theme of physical well-being was identified as a prominent topic throughout the semi – structured interviews. The senior employees (44 % of participants) reported that they were working longer hours continuously siting down in front of their laptop and therefore they found that there was less time for physical exercise. They highlighted that they acknowledge this and therefore try to implement going on walks before or after work etc.

Most all the participants reported that when they are remote working, as they do not have to commute, they therefore have to make an extra effort to increase their step count or exercise routine to an equal amount that they would walk during there commute to the office. They explained this can involve planning and being organised to arrange extra walks during breaks, lunch or before and after work.

Three participants (33% of participants) noted that their physical well-being was negatively affected when they first participated in remote working as they did not have any routine and they were not making an effort to move or exercise as much as they should. However now, they feel they have incorporated a routine into their daily remote working life.

One participant mentioned that they can now participate in more exercise classes after their working day when working remotely as they do not have to spend hours commuting from the office. This has left them, with time in the evening to engage in exercise classes and fitness clubs.

Some of the participants mentioned that they feel physically healthier since partaking in remote and hybrid working, this is due to a number of factors including more time to cook healthy nutritious meals, getting more and better sleep due to increased hours at home due to not commuting.

All participants mentioned that they now have an ergonomic set up at home, which has improved their physical well-being while remote and hybrid working. Each participants noted that having the correct working from home equipment and set up, helped to improve their physical well-being.

Eight participants (89% of participants) revealed that they feel they need to be more organised when participating in remote and hybrid working in relation to their physical well-being. They considered that having a different schedule each day leads to the need for preparation and organisation. Each individual participant agreed that their physical well-being is at its best when they are organised and coordinated in their work when participating in remote and hybrid work.

The participants with childcaring responsibilities (44% of participants) found that their physical well-being has improved with the increased time spent at home allowing them to be more active in partaking in physical exercise and activities with their children. They explained that they have more time to spend with their children doing physical activities outside and can spend more time playing alongside them.

5.4   Mental and Emotional Well-being

The participant's mental and emotional well-being was a prominent theme during the qualitative research interview and discussion. 56% of the participants said that they have

recognised that they feel less stressed when they are working remotely and hybrid. This is down to a number of factors such as:

1. Less time commuting, worrying about traffic, bus or train times and schedule
2. Can collect the children earlier from creche, afterschool etc as they don't have to spend time commuting home after work
3. Can do the housework such as washing, laundry, cleaning the house during their lunchtime leaving them more time to relax after work in the evenings.
4. Reduced feeling of being overwhelmed as working in your own personal, safe and comfortable safe (your home).

However, all participants did acknowledge that there are some negatives that they have observed and experienced in relation to remote and hybrid working and their mental, emotional well-being. The lack of social interaction with colleagues on a daily basis was repeatedly mentioned throughout this part of the semi- structured interviews. Three participants (33 % of participants) outlined how all members of a team needs to make a greater effort to keep in contact with others daily, unlike when they are in the office and they can "chat around the water-cooler".

Those living alone, spoke about the lack of social interaction they have on a daily basis when working remotely from home. They explained how this can sometimes result in them feeling lonely, isolated and a lacking motivation.

Another challenge that some participants recognised as having a negative impact on their mental and emotional well-being was the difficulty of detaching from their "work life" to their "home life" and "switching off" once the working day has ended. Six out of the nine participants (67 % of participants) referred to the fact that they rarely turned off the laptop and finished work at the normal working hour time. This has resulted to them working longer hours at home (remotely) than they probably would have done in the office. They explained that this can cause stress and burnout if they are not managing their workload carefully and correctly.

Another element highlighted in the qualitative research interviews was that participants felt as though they needed to be "chained to the desk" in order to be appear online and available at all times. Otherwise, it may appear that you are not working or online. Some said because of this they feel they are working more hours when participating in remote and hybrid working than in the office.

One participant mentioned that working remotely (hybrid) has allowed them to enrol in an evening course for further development. If they were working in the office fulltime, they would not have the time to do this evening course. Since partaking in the course, it has led to greater motivation and self-fulfilment.

One participant outlined that there has been some uncertainty with partaking in hybrid working as they have a different schedule when working at home and then working in the office. This can sometimes cause some stress, uncertainty and unpredictability affecting their emotional and mental well-being.

5.5   Flexibility

The most popular and key theme mentioned in the qualitative research interviews was the increase in flexibility, balance, and freedom for staff who now partake in remote and hybrid working. All participants expressed their content and happiness with the opportunity of having greater flexibility over their time as a result of remote and hybrid working.

Four participants (44 % of participants) emphasised that the balance between their family life and work life had increased positively due to remote and hybrid working. This has given them a more positive emotional, mental, and physical well-being for both of them as an employee but also to their family members.

One participant noted that they believe the added value to their life as a result of more flexibility with remote and hybrid working should lead to more women remaining in the workforce after their maternity leave. They stated that this could be a great opportunity for organisations to capitalise on and increase the retention of female employees who opt to

start a family.

Having more discretion over starting times for work was outlined as a key driver in the participants positive experience of remote and hybrid working. Increased control over this issue has allowed them to spend more time with family, caring responsibilities and has resulted in a more positive approach to work and their well-being. All the participants who mentioned the flexibility of working hours, expressed a desire that this would continue into the future as it is a valuable and positive experience.

Seven out of the nine participants (78%) spoke about how they have informal flexibility agreements with their line managers on a needs and ad hoc basis and that they find that this is working very well and aligns efficiently with their life, and it doesn't impact on their productivity outcome. A senior employee spoke about this informal flexibility and confirmed that it is working well. They stressed the need to have a periodic review on a regular basis to ensure job roles and tasks are still being carried out efficiently and objectives are being met.

5.6   The subjectiveness of well-being

When asked about the definition of "well-being", all the participants described well-being in a different. Some described it as "having a positive mindset and being happy in yourself", and others stated it was "being generally happy and content in your life while looking after yourself" and "feeling well both physically and mentally".

Participants of the research interview were also asked what well-being at work meant to them, some of the answers included "enjoying your work and having a positive mindset and outlook", "the ability to switch off outside of working hours and being able to manage and balance your personal and work life", and " having a good team and work environment, feeling supported in your work and what you are doing".

It was clear from the semi – structured interviews that well-being and well-being at work meant something different to each of the participants.

5.7   Management of Well-being

Participants were asked about the management of well-being while remote and hybrid working, this allowed for an in-depth discussion that both senior and junior employees had varying thoughts and opinions on. The senior employees highlighted that they felt in order to manage and support their employee's (subordinates) well-being, they needed to make an extra effort to "check-in" with employees through daily or weekly team calls, messages etc.

They explained how sometimes this can take up a large part of their day, but they recognised the great importance to have that personal contact with their employees. One employee spoke about how it can be difficult to support employees when they are working remotely as you are not seeing them every day but that is why it is of great importance to be personable and have some "general chit-chat" at the start of a virtual meeting or call instead of going straight to the point of the call or meeting. It was recognised as being time-consuming, however this employee expressed the importance of it.

One senior employee mentioned that they found it easier to communicate confidential topics and discussions with their employees as they could organise a virtual call with the employee when they are both working remotely rather than trying to organise and book a room in the office when it is busy with everyone is in the office and discretion is difficult to achieve.

Overall, the senior employees, agreed that it takes extra effort and time to support and manage employees, but it can be done. They feel that extra supports need to be put in place by employers to help ensure each individuals well-being is catered for.

Three of the junior employees (33% of participants) spoke about how they think their well-being can be managed by their supervisor or manager to a certain extent. They believed that there needs to be a joint ownership by an individual and their supervisor or manager when it comes to supporting their well-being when working remotely and hybrid.

5.8   Well-being strategies for remote and hybrid working.

Participants discussed with the interviewer (researcher) the certain strategies or measures that are currently in place for their well-being that they found helpful, and they also described methods they would find beneficial if their employer offered them to the workforce.

All individual employees appreciated the flexibility that their employer offers them when working remotely and hybrid for example "early and late starts and early and late finishes". They all felt as though this measure had hugely impacted both their physical and emotional and mental well-being in a positive and constructive way.

Two out of nine participants (22% of participants) mentioned how they appreciated the frequent informative updates from the senior management team that they receive on a weekly or monthly basis. These updates give an insight into the projects and tasks the wider team is working on, and any successful targets and objectives achieved. This employee explained how these updates keep everyone feeling included within the wider team and was a positive contribution to promoting teamwork.

Eight of the nine participants (89% of participants) spoke of the importance of regular onsite full team meetings that occur. These monthly or bi-monthly meetings allow the team to gather in-person for social interaction and team building rather than always having meetings online.

All participants mentioned how they think and believe introducing and implementing well-being strategies and measures within organisations can be difficult for organisations to achieve. However, they did emphasise the need for and importance of having established, clear, concise, and helpful well-being strategies and measures in place within an organisation. Two of the nine participants (22% of participants) mentioned that if they are looking at prospective organisations to work for in the future, they would now seek out their well-being policy or strategy to see what measures they have in place around remote and hybrid working and it would be a consideration in their career progression.

Throughout the semi-structured interview, a constant theme and subject was the overall challenges and opportunities that remote and hybrid working has had on employee well-being.

5.9   Overall challenges of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being

With regards to the challenges that remote and hybrid working has on employee well-being, participants expressed concerns in a number of areas. Five of the nine participants (56 % of participants) spoke about how that if you were sick or unwell, it was "widely expected" that you could work from home (remotely) while being sick. This has then caused extra pressure and stress to an individual's well-being when they have been unwell. These participants expressed their concern about this "unofficial norm" .

Four of the nine participants (44 % of participants) mentioned that they feel an additional pressure to work longer hours as other people are doing it. This can then impact their well-being negatively.

Three out of the nine participants (33% of participants) report there can be sometimes a lack of motivation when working remotely and hybrid. They said this could be due to solitary working all day, with little to no social interaction if living alone. This then leads them to feeling unmotivated and lacking interest and drive in their work.

One participant recognised that there is an increased cost of living in the current economic climate and although they have saved money on commuting to work five days a week, they are paying more for electricity, heating and internet which can cause a burden, stress, and worry which all effects their emotional and mental well-being. They explained that they feel that this could be a concern for others as well.

Two out of the nine participants (22 % of participants) stated that some parents can find remote and hybrid working challenging for their well-being. This is because when they are working from home they have distractions from children, noise and constant childcaring,

housework responsibilities.

5.10 Overall opportunities of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being.

Similarly, there has been a significant number of positives gained as a result of remote and hybrid working which have affected employee well-being that were identified by participants of these semi-structured interviews. Eight of the nine participants (89 % of participants) say that they have a significantly better work life balance which has positively impacted their well-being and they feel happier and more content in their work and personal life.

Participants also noted that less time commuting has positively impacted their well-being allowing them more personal free time in the mornings and evenings. They no longer spend their mornings worrying about the weather, traffic or bus and train timetable, instead they can relax and focus on their personal and home life.

One senior employee explained how they have found that their team only has good and positive feedback on their well-being since participating in remote and hybrid working. It has led to a happier and healthier team which has therefore increased the team moral, productivity and efficiency.

Two of the nine participants (22 % of participants) employees highlighted that they would like if their employer allowed for remote working abroad in order for them to see their family who live abroad. Due to the pandemic and Covid-19 they haven't been able to see their family for a number of months and or years and feel as though if they had the ability to work from abroad for a certain number of weeks in the year it would benefit their overall well-being as they would be surrounded by their family.

Two of the nine participants (22 % of participants) feel as though there is an opportunity to only have to go into the office on days when they are actually needed to go in for in person or on site events or meetings. Instead of having two or three set days or mandatory days per week. They believe set and mandatory days limit them and their productivity and sometimes

feel like a "tick in the box" exercise to have "people on seats".

However, one participant mentioned that they think that the cost benefit would be greater if employees were encouraged to come into the office when they can and then also for mandatory in person meetings rather than set or mandatory days a week. However, unlike the previous participant, one participant has said they would prefer to have two set days that are mandatory and set out by management to go into the office. They explained that the feel that this would mitigate any uncertainty about expectations of amount of time to be in the office etc.

Eight out of the nine participants (89 % of participants) think that there is an opportunity to organise more social events both in person and online to support employee's well-being. They explained how they would enjoy if more events were organised to encourage more social interaction and to get to know colleagues better that you normally wouldn't be in frequent contact with. They felt as this would be very beneficial to their well-being.

5.11   Conclusion

The results of the qualitative research interviews show that most participants who were interviewed are happy with the setup of remote and hybrid working and feel this is the new way of work and should continue. While they are content with remote and hybrid working, they feel when it comes to their well-being, that more should be implemented by senior managers and their employers.

The themes explored in the findings chapter can be clearly linked to the research and sub – questions identified in Chapter Three. The following table seen below is constructed to display the connection and links between the research, sub research questions, questions asked in the semi-structured interviews and then the themes identified.

Sub-Questions	Questions asked in semi – structured interviews	Themes identified during semi – structured interviews
Is it possible to define well-being and thus implement a well-being framework from this derivation?	Can you define the word well-being and what it means to you? What is well-being at work?	The subjectiveness of well-being
How has remote working affected an employee's well-being? - physical and emotional/mental well-being?	Has remote and hybrid working affected your physical well-being? Has remote and hybrid working affected your mental or emotional well-being?	Physical Well-Being Mental/Emotional Well-Being
Do employees feel well-being can be managed with remote working?	Do you feel that well-being can be managed and supported when employees are participating in remote working? Are there certain steps your employer has taken that you feel has benefited your well-being while participating in remote working?	Management of Well-being
Has remote and hybrid working provided challenges and/or opportunities for employee well-being?	Do you think that remote and hybrid working has provided challenges for employee well-being? Do you think that remote and hybrid working has provided opportunities for employee well-being?	Overall challenges of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being Overall opportunities of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being Flexibility

What strategies do employees feel would be beneficial for their well-being when participating in remote and hybrid working?	What strategies do you feel would be beneficial for your well-being when participating in remote and hybrid working? Is there anything we haven't covered during this interview that you would like to mention about this topic?	Well-being strategies for remote and hybrid working. Flexibility

6.   Discussion

The objective of this chapter is the bridge between the literature review and the findings by bringing together both subjects and to discuss their similarities, their differences and then comparing and contrasting the themes, findings and evidence. The aim of this discussion chapter is to link the research questions with the literature review and overall findings explored in the previous chapter.

6.1   Physical Well-being

The research findings show the impact that physical well-being has on an individual's quality of personal and work life. The majority of interview participants spoke about the increased time and flexibility they now have from remote and hybrid working which has resulted in a more sustained and positive impact on their physical well-being. This has allowed them to prioritise exercise and cooking nutritious healthy meals.

However, 89% of participants did highlight that if they do not organise their work schedule well, they find they are spending more time sitting at the desk in front of a screen working and therefore have no time or energy to prioritise their physical well-being. This aligns with the academic literature sources we reviewed in chapter two, that remote and hybrid working has resulted in employee's sedentary behaviour increasing, which is causing health conditions, mobility issues, trouble sleep and eating healthy (Niebuhr et al., 2022).

It is clear from both the literature review and research findings that a structured routine and organisational planning can lead to a positive impact on an employee's physical well-being when working remotely.

6.2   Mental and Emotional Well-being

The qualitative research showed that the participants mental and emotional well-being was more difficult to document and examine with a view to determining any patterns of commonality. This is due to participants acknowledging that every day is different and their

mental and emotional well-being is changeable from day to day. This flux means that it is challenging to capture an overall synopsis. However, the most frequent themes discussed in relation to mental and emotional well-being were the lack of social interaction, balance between work and personal life, flexibility and motivation.

From our previous review and critique of literature, Morrison-Smyth & Ruiz (2020) and Staglin (Forbes, 2020) concur that there is number of challenges that can be observed regarding mental and emotional well-being. This was reflected in the qualitative research interviews that were undertaken. Participants highlighted the lack of social interaction, stress from longer hours and being in front of a screen all day and the burnout from not being able to manage a work life balance when working hybrid or remote.

56% participants of the semi–structured interviews did note that they feel a lot less stressed when working remotely. This correlates with research observed in the literature review, a lot of employees enjoy the comfort of their own home and a safe space that they are comfortable and familiar in. This leaves them in a more relaxed emotionally and mentally (Adams, 2019).

It is evident from the qualitative research interviews, and the review of academic sources that mental and emotional well-being is often overlooked on the importance it brings to an employee's working life. Therefore, it should be prioritised for employers to take action in supporting employees mental and emotional well-being in remote and hybrid working. When employees feel better and more positive about their menta and emotional well-being they have a higher job satisfaction and engagement in their work, they also create more meaningful connections and relationships with colleagues.

6.3   Flexibility

By far the most recurring topic and theme mentioned throughout both the qualitative research interviews and literature review was flexibility. The introduction of remote and hybrid working has allowed for new - found flexibility. Ultimately flexibility seems to be the biggest impact and advantage of remote and hybrid working.

Each participant explained the driving force for them wanting to continue the new way of working under remote and hybrid working was flexibility. This has allowed most employees to work in a specific way that is effective, suitable, and practical for them and their lives. CIPD (2022) confirmed this point that flexibility is a huge demand and request for employees in the current new work environment.

As previously noted, the majority of participants that were interviewed were female and many with children and childcare responsibility. They all expressed their contentment and favoured the increased flexibility they now have when participating in remote and hybrid working. They repeatedly mentioned the advantage of having flexibility when having childcare responsibilities, particularly with flexible start and finish times and the informal agreements that they have with their line managers. They spoke about how this flexibility has and will encourage more women to stay in the workplace once they have children. These findings align with Forbes (2023) report that more women are remaining in the workforce after having children instead of being a full-time stay at home mother.

It is apparent that flexibility plays a big part in employees' attitude to remote and hybrid working. From the above research it can be deduced that flexibility is a positive outcome that has come from remote, and hybrid working and should be continued throughout organisations.

6.4   The subjectiveness of well-being

Of the nine participants interviewed all, participants had a different definition for well-being ranging from "having a positive mindset" to feeling "contentedness and happiness". Similarly, Dodge at al. (2012) concur that the definition of well-being can be influenced by an individual's personal opinions and experiences resulting in it being a term that is difficult to define.

This opinion can then lead to the idea that well-being as a whole and well-being in work is a very personal and distinctive concept and may need to be customised and individualised to suit the needs of employees, team members, organisations etc. When employers take this

view of wellbeing at work, it allows them to understand that well-being and its practices is not a one size fit all for each situation, department, organisation, employee etc.

6.5   Management of Well-being

The management and support of an employee's well-being in relation to remote and hybrid working was repeatedly mentioned in the qualitative research interviews from both senior and junior employees. All participants revealed that extra effort must be carried out by both management and employees in relation to the support and management of employee well-being. In order to successfully manage and support an employee's well-being, certain structures and measures need to be in place in an organisation. Boundaries need to be established to determine the difference between work life at home and personal life at home. Management needs to be the driving force behind the implementation of managing employee's well-being by setting good and healthy habits for all employees in relation to their well-being. When employee's well-being is managed well it can lead to a more motivated team. Investing in employee's well-being can lead to increased resilience and productivity.

From the literature review, it is clear that there is a lack of literature and research on how an employee's well-being can be managed and supported when working remotely and hybrid. This can be because of number of factors but mainly due to the rise in popularity of remote and hybrid working as it is an emerging phenomenon since the Covid - 19 pandemic in 2020. Therefore, it makes sense that there is a gap in literature of this subject. There is an opportunity here for further research to be undertaken in relation to this topic in order to gain a further and deeper insight into the topic (Madero-Gómez et al., 2023).

6.6   Well-being strategies for remote and hybrid working

It is evident from the literature review and the qualitative research interviews conducted that a lot of the well-being strategies implemented for remote and hybrid working were set up as a reactive approach to the Pandemic and may not be as relevant or suitable to the remote and hybrid work life that today many employees are participating in. As explained by CIPD (2021) most organisations have EAP (Employee Assistance Programmes) in place alongside

other well-being policies, however there is now a greater need for these to be updated and adapted for the new world of remote and hybrid working.

Participants of the qualitative interviews expressed that as employees of organisations they would like a clear, coherent, and concise well-being polices (in relation to remote and hybrid working) set out so that they can see that the employer does value and care for their well-being needs. Alongside an informative well-being policy (in relation to remote and hybrid working), participants also mentioned that they would like to see more events both heled onsite and remotely to encourage team bonding and to motive the employees.

These issues have been reflected in the literature review, recent studies, and academic journals. They have demonstrated that lack of social interaction and isolation is affecting and impacting employee's well-being (Morrison-Smyth & Ruiz, 2020). If adapted well-being practices, policies and events were implemented this could help reduce the feelings some employees have reported when working alone during remote and hybrid working.

6.7   Overall challenges of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being

In general, the challenges and obstacles observed from the literature review and qualitative research interviews were self-pressure in relation to workload, long working hours, being sick, and lack of social interaction and the balance of work and personal life. These challenges can all lead to significant and detrimental effects on an individual employee's well-being such as stress, burnout, sickness and health conditions, absenteeism, and lack of motivation (Ferrara et al. 2022).

While carrying out the literature review, a topical theme identified was the increased amount of time spent working on a screen on a laptop etc. Some participants did briefly mention that working longer and extra hours sitting down in front of a laptop screen has caused extra stress, sore eyes, headaches etc. The risk of cyber-attacks and the stress that can cause was recognised in the literature review, however this was not a topic of concern amongst the participants of the semi - structured interviews.

Both the qualitative interviews and literature review stated that employees can feel a lack of motivation when participating in remote and hybrid work. This is something that needs to be addressed and examined in order to help employees with their well-being (Forbes, 2020).

It is clear that there are certain challenges that need to be addressed in relation to employee well-being and remote and hybrid working in order to ensure that it is a continued success for each organisation.

6.8 Overall opportunities of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being

As a whole, the opportunities of remote and hybrid working on employee well-being outweigh the challenges when collecting the data from the participants of the research interview. Every participant spoke mostly positively of the opportunities remote and hybrid working has had on their well-being. Overall, they all agreed they have a more positive outlook on their work life and are stiving to perfect the work and personal life balance and can do this due to the ability of remote and hybrid working. Of course, the participants highlighted that there are still many opportunities that can be explored more in relation to employee well-being and remote and hybrid working such as working remotely broad, more social events etc.

However, although participants did state that there mental and emotional well-being changed more frequently on day-to-day basis compared to their physical well-being, overall, they did all concur that they believe if it is managed well their well-being has improved from participating in remote and hybrid working.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The objective of this research dissertation was to critically review and examine the current literature on employee well-relating to remote and hybrid working and conduct qualitative research to analyse if the academic sources and literature complemented the findings of the qualitative interviews or disagree with them. A literature review was carried out to demonstrate a logical analysis of the current academic literature relevant to employee well-being and remote and hybrid working.

From the literature review, it has been observed that employee well-being in relation to remote and hybrid working is a new area of both academic's study and practical experience. It has highlighted that most employees welcomed the new way of working, post Covid-19, but acknowledged that in order for it to be sustainable in relation to well-being, the policies and framework would need to be evaluated and adapted in accordance with the new demands.

The extensive literature review allowed a research question to be formed as follows: Has the remote and hybrid working model impacted employee well-being? From this, a suitable methodology (qualitative research) was chosen, and the research exercise portion of this dissertation was undertaken. Semi- structured interviews were carried out and an abundant of findings were determined. These results from the research exercise were then discussed and mapped back to the literature review.

This conclusion and recommendation chapters aim is to link and answer the research and sub research questions outlined in chapter three and set out related recommendations and solutions.

Has the remote and hybrid working model impacted employee well-being?

Both the academic literature and qualitative research interviews share the same conclusion

that remote and hybrid working has had a significant impact on employee well-being. It has affected it in both a positive and negative ways and as a result well-being measures and strategies were suggested to be put in place to support and sustain an employee's physical and emotional, mental well-being.

Sub Questions/ Research Questions

1. **Is it possible to define well-being and thus implement a well-being framework from this derivation?**

It is concluded from the literature review and qualitative research that the term wellbeing has a different and personalised meaning to everyone, and it is difficult to agree on a universal explanation of the word well-being. Based on the research undertaken for this dissertation, it is not possible to conclude a well-being framework that can be implemented from this derivation. It would be necessary to further study the variances and nuances to the personalised opinions of well-being before concluding a suitable framework and this is outside the scope of this research exercise.

However, there is ample evidence that organisation need to adapt their well-being policies and measures to be flexible and personalised to their employee's needs and demands.

2. **Has remote and hybrid working impacted employee's physical and emotional well-being?**

Yes, from analysing the literature review and qualitative research, one can deduce that both employees physical and emotional well-being has been impacted by remote and hybrid working. It is abundantly clear that employees and employers have had to adapt their working lives when participating in remote and hybrid working. Thus, this change has influenced their physical and emotional well-being in many positives and negative ways.

3. **Do employees feel well-being can be managed with remote working?**

From the research undertaken, it can be noted that employees consider that their well-being can be managed to an extent when participating in remote and hybrid working. However, they feel that extra supports are required from employers and managers to help care for and safeguard employee's well-being when working remotely and hybrid.

4. **Has remote and hybrid working provided challenges and/or opportunities for employee well-being?**

The research on employee well-being in connection with remote and hybrid work clearly outlines that there are both challenges and opportunities that need to be overcome in order to ensure success. These challenges and obstacles should be addressed and investigated by senior management in order for them to draw conclusions.

The opportunities that have arisen with regard to employee well-being and remote and hybrid working need to be developed and maximised to increase the happiness amongst employees, self-actualisation, intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. These challenges and opportunities allow organisations and employers to create a more dynamic and successful working environment that is inclusive and healthier for all.

5. **What strategies do employees feel would be beneficial for their well-being when participating in remote and hybrid working?**

From the literature review and qualitative research there are several strategies and measures that can be implemented and performed within an organisation to increase employee's well-being when working hybrid or remotely. These include comprehensive and explanatory well-being policies, the maintaining of flexibility and the encouragement and promoting of social interaction amongst teams and colleges to build rapport when working hybrid and remotely. It is evident that employees are looking for clear and coherent strategies to be put in place by organisation's regarding well-being.

7.2   Recommendations

From the research examined and conducted and the conclusions drawn, we can compile several recommendations can be made which should make a positive difference to staff if applied within organisations in relation to employee well-being and remote and hybrid working. Each recommendation incorporates a brief outline of the measure, a timeline (short, medium or long) and an indicative cost (low, medium, high).

7.3   Recommendation One

Invest and implement an updated well-being support policy.

As outlined from the research conducted, it is imperative that very organisation has an updated well-being support policy specifically for hybrid and remote working. This policy needs to be clear, coherent, and concise. The well-being support policy for remote and hybrid working needs to be customised and unique to each organisation and my need to be altered and adapted further to each department (depending on the size and scale of the organisation). This is because "not one size fits all" when it comes to well-being as it is subjective as demonstrated in the research we discovered.

 Overall, employees need to feel as though employers care about them and their well-being. Including employees in the process would be key to its success and support from employees, who want to be included in giving their input in the decision-making process, will also require a delegation of some autonomy. To do this, surveys and or focus groups could be organised within an organisation to allow employees to express their thoughts, ideas, opinions, and encourages feedback.

Employers should then collect this data and create a personalised well-being support policy for hybrid and remote working for the organisation. It is important that employers realise that well-being can be complex and there is a need for continual improvements, adaptions, and developments to the policy.

As organisations will be looking for employee feedback and opinions the timeline for this recommendation could be medium term. This is because it can take a number of months to arrange focus groups, surveys and feedbacks from all employees. However, it is advised that the policies are reviewed yearly thereafter, as the context within which the world of work exists is constantly changing and evolving especially when it comes to well-being and remote and hybrid working. In terms of costing, this recommendation would be considered low. As it is mostly internal work, costs can be kept low for an organisation.

7.4   Recommendation Two

Create a workshop, strategy to assist managers in supporting and managing employee's well-being.

From the research undertaken, it was concluded that managers play a key and crucial role in ensuring employees are looking after their well-being when participating in remote and hybrid working. Everyone in a work environment and organisation has a responsibility to foster well-being at work, HR (Human Resources) especially need to educate and train line managers on how to be the driving force for people management. Therefore, it is important that managers have the correct skills that they can use when supporting employees and their well-being. Targeted workshops are recommended to be held every six months to ensure updated information is given to the senior management team and individual managers.

These workshops can be interactive and engaging and deliver practical skills for managers. The learning development department in Human Resources can run the workshops ensuring that managers can meet with other managers within the organisation so they can lean on other colleagues for support. The aim and objectives of these workshops should be to assist mangers by giving them the tools to improve their knowledge and skills about physical, emotional, and mental well-being and how they can support and encourage their team.

This workshop should help them identify any early warning signs of poor well-being when an

employee is working hybrid or remotely and how they can address that employee. After these workshops, each manager should be able to create an open dialogue amongst their team about well-being and this should help all team members to be open and honest leading to a better impact on their well-being and their work.

Timeline and Costing

These workshops could be timely to implement at the start, as the learning and development team will need to do research and prepare for them. Once they are set up, it will be a matter of updating the information, findings, and research as applicable. Therefore, this can be done a short period of time with regular reviews to keep it updated.

As this will be an internal project, the costing shouldn't be too expensive as an organisation can use their leaning and development department from HR. However, if it is a smaller organisation with less resources, it may be advisable to source external help from a consultant etc. This would then increase the cost of the delivery of the workshops. Therefore, this initiative would be a low to medium cost.

7.5   Recommendation Three

Weekly updates about well-being, social events, activities to encourage connection and teamwork amongst employees.

The feedback from the research exercise suggested that even if employees are working remotely or hybrid they still want to feel as they are involved with the organisation and a part of the team. Therefore, it is recommended that organisations send out a weekly email or bulletin outlining any company news or updates. Included in this weekly update can be activities, social events and well-being resources for every employee. This recommendation will align with most organisations' digitalisation of work processes and virtual team management with remote and hybrid working. It will allow employees to be informed and feel inclusive of the organisation even if they are participating in remote and hybrid working.

<u>Timeline and Costing</u>

The timeline for this recommendation will be short as it will not take too long to create and implement these weekly notices. The costings will also be low as most organisations should be able to achieve this internally with current available resources.

8.   Overall Conclusion

In concluding this research dissertation, it is evident that remote and hybrid working has had a significant impact on employee well-being. Remote and hybrid work is the new way of working into the future. Although, it is clear that most organisations have changed their work environment, to allow remote and hybrid work to continue, it is timely for organisations to look closely at employee well-being and how they can play a key and more pivotal role in an employee's everyday work life.

The results of this research have provided some insight into this new and ever evolving topic, but it remains one piece of a much larger and complicated "jigsaw" of personal well-being.

9. Personal Learning Statement

At the beginning of my Master in Arts in Human Resource Management, I was unaware of the sheer amount of knowledge that I would learn and the valuable skills I would develop. As a 2020 graduate, my post-university working life commenced at a time of great uncertainty during the pandemic. I began my working career remotely online, which then transitioned to hybrid work over the last two and half years. I believe since then, more and more employees have started to focus on the importance of their well-being.

In particular, the younger generation of employees entering the workforce has noted that they prioritise well-being in their working life. For this reason, my interest in well-being and remote and hybrid working was developed. The subject of remote and hybrid working alongside employee well-being is such a topical and relevant discussion in the world of employment and work-life balance at the moment and this it attracted me to further investigate the topic with this research dissertation.

As I am so early in my career and experience, it was a great opportunity and learning point to be able to conduct qualitative research interviews to gain more knowledge and listen to other individuals experience of remote and hybrid working and well-being. I had never conducted research interviews before, so this was a new experience for me. I had to develop my understanding of research methodology and choose whether qualitative or quantitative was the most suited approach for my this research dissertation. After carrying out the qualitative research interviews, I gained a deeper understanding of how others think abut the topic and subject and also developed my communication skills. I enjoyed being able to bring the literature I learnt from and read about from academic sources lead to practical learnings in my full-time employment in Human Resources.

I found the overall process of doing this research dissertation intriguing and informative. I enjoyed that the topic and subject chosen was relevant and modern leading to new and frequent information being published regularly. When completing this Master in Arts in Human Resource Management and my dissertation I was working fulltime and therefore

developed my time management and organisational skills in order to successfully carry out my work and my research dissertation. I had to work on prioritising the most important tasks at hand I know this will help me further in my work and personal life.

Overall, I really enjoyed the challenge of completing this course. I have improved my knowledge on Human Resource themes and topics such as remote and hybrid working and well-being. I have also developed my practical knowledge. I hope to bring all the knowledge and skills that I learnt with me and demonstrate it in a practical way in the world of work as I further my career in Human Resources.

Appendices

Interview Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to assist in this research study examining if remote and hybrid working has created more challenges or opportunities for employee well-being. This forms part of a part-time MA in Human Resource Management with the National College of Ireland (NCI).

The interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes and you retain the option to withdraw from the process at any time.

Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information.

The aim and purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

1. Is it possible to define well-being and thus implement a well-being framework from this derivation?

2. How has remote working affected an employee's well-being? - physical and emotional/mental well-being?

3. Do employees feel well-being can be managed with remote working?

4. Has remote and hybrid working provided challenges and/or opportunities for employee well-being?

5. What strategies do employees feel would be beneficial for their well-being when participating in remote and hybrid working?

You will be asked a series of questions in relation to remote working and if it may have impacted your well-being. It will include questions like the above paragraph. Please find attached with this consent form a copy of these questions in advance.

Participation in this research study is fully voluntary and you have the right to refuse participation, refuse any question and withdraw at any time without any consequence whatsoever.

If this interview is conducted on Microsoft Teams, it may be recorded for automatic transcript purposes, the text of the recording will be autonomised and retained until after my degree has been conferred. Should you wish to have a copy of this information, it can be provided

- 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 I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded if applicable.

- 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, organisation, or the identity of people I speak about.

- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for retained until after the interviewer's degree has been conferred.

- 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.

Signature of research participant

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

Signature of participant   Date

Signature of researcher

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

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

Signature of researcher   Date

1. Can you define the word well-being and what it means to you?

2. What is well-being at work?

3. Has remote working affected your physical well-being?

4. Has remote working affected your mental or emotional well-being?

5. Do you feel that well-being can be managed and supported when employees are participating in remote working?

6. Are there certain steps your employer has taken that you feel has benefited your well-being while participating in remote working?

7. Do you think that remote and hybrid working has provided challenges for employee well-being?

8. Do you think that remote and hybrid working has provided opportunities for employee well-being?

9. What strategies do you feel would be beneficial for your well-being when participating in remote and hybrid working?

10. Is there anything we haven't covered during this interview that you would like to mention about this topic ?

10. Bibliography

Adams, J.M., (2019) The value of worker well-being. *Public Health Reports*, *134*(6), pp.583-586.

Armstrong, M., (2009) ARMSTRONG'S HANDBOOK OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE. 11th ed. Kogan Page, p.142. Armstrong, M. and Taylor, S., (2017) Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice. 14th ed. Kogan page, p.192.

Baker, M. J. (2000) Writing a Literature Review. *Marketing Review*, *1* (2), 219-247.
Barnham, C., (2015) Quantitative and qualitative research. International Journal of Market Research, 57(6), pp. 837-854.

Baskar, K., Shinde, E.M.B. and Srinivasan, D.A., (2021) Promoting mental well-being through employee assistance programmes. *NHRD Network Journal*, *14*(1), pp.64-82.

Becker, W.J., Belkin, L.Y., Tuskey, S.E. and Conroy, S.A., (2022) Surviving remotely: How job control and loneliness during a forced shift to remote work impacted employee work behaviors and well-being. *Human Resource Management*, *61*(4), pp.449-464.

Bell, E. & Bryman, A. (2007). "The ethics of management research: an exploratory content analysis", British Journal of Management. 18(1) 63-77.

Bellmann, L. and Hübler, O., (2021) Working from home, job satisfaction and work–life balance–robust or heterogeneous links?. *International Journal of Manpower*, *42*(3), pp.424-441.

Bouzikos, S., Afsharian, A., Dollard, M. and Brecht, O., (2022) Contextualising the Effectiveness of an Employee Assistance Program Intervention on Psychological Health: The Role of Corporate Climate. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(9), p.5067.

Bryman, A. (2021). Social Research Methods (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Cambridge Dictionary (2022). Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/well-being [Accessed on 03rd November 2022]

Chung, H., & van der Horst, M. (2018). Women's employment patterns after childbirth and the perceived access to and use of flexitime and teleworking. Human Relations, 71(1), 47–72.

Clarke, V. & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. The Psychologist, 26(2), 120-123

CIPD (2021) *Strategic Human Resource Management* Available at: https://www.cipd.ie/news-resources/practical-guidance/factsheets/strategic-hr-management?pdf=true#gref [Accessed on 15th November 2022]

CIPD (2021) *Wellbeing at work.* Available at: https://www.cipd.ie/news-resources/practical-guidance/guides/well-being-work#gref [Accessed on 30th November 2022]

CIPD (2021) *Planning for Hybrid Work.* Available at: https://www.cipd.ie/news-resources/practical-guidance/guides/planning-hybrid-working#gref [Accessed on 9th March 2023]

CIPD (2022) *The HR Function.* Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/people/hr#gref [Accessed on 30th November 2022]

CIPD (2022) *An update on flexible and hybrid working practices.* Available at: https://www.cipd.org/globalassets/media/knowledge/knowledge-hub/reports/flexible-hybrid-working-practices-report_tcm18-108941.pdf [Accessed on 3rd March 2023]

Citizens Information (2022) Working From Home Available at: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment_rights_and_conditions/health_and_safety/working_at_home.html [Accessed on 1st March 2023]

CSO (2017) *The Wellbeing of the Nation*. Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/health/Wellbeing_of_the_Nation_FINAL_OFT_-_web.pdf [Accessed on 5th November 2022]

Dodge, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J. and Sanders, L., (2012) 'The challenge of defining wellbeing' *International Journal of Wellbeing,*2(3), pp.222-235

European Commission (2022) *Irish women's rights and equality in the EU*. Available at: https://ireland.representation.ec.europa.eu/strategy-and-priorities/key-eu-policies-ireland/eu-and-irish-women_en [Accessed on 28th February 2023]

Felstead, A. and Reuschke, D., (2020) Homeworking in the UK: before and during the 2020 lockdown. *Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research*

Ferrara, B., Pansini, M., De Vincenzi, C., Buonomi, I., and Benevene B. (2022) Int J Environ Res Public Health. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36231675/ [Accessed on 7th March 2023]

Forbes (2020) *When Home Becomes The Workplace: Mental Health And Remote Work*. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/onemind/2020/03/17/when-home-becomes-the-workplace-mental-health-and-remote-work/?sh=573a1bef1760 [Accessed on 15th April 2023]

Forbes (2021) *The Future of Work is Employee Well-being*. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeannemeister/2021/08/04/the-future-of-work-is-worker-well-being/ [Accessed on 5th December 2022]

Forbes (2022) *Why flexible work boosts employee productivity.* Available at:

https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinecastrillon/2022/03/23/why-flexible-work-boosts-employee-productivity/?sh=4f2b16856e4b [Accessed on 12th March 2023]

Forbes (2023) *Remote And Flexible Working Remain The Biggest Opportunities For Inclusive Workplaces.* Available at:
https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/02/22/remote-and-flexible-working-remain-the-biggest-opportunities-for-inclusive-workplaces/?sh=3847b45d3ccd
[Accessed on 10th April 2023]

Gerhart, B., & Fang, M. (2005). National culture and human resource management: assumptions and evidence. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *16* (6), 971-986.

GOV.ie (2022) *An Evaluation of the Impacts of Remote Working.* Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/96175-an-evaluation-of-the-impacts-of-remote-working/ [Accessed on 27th February 2023]

Grant, A., Christianson, M. and Price, R. (2007) 'Happiness, health, or relationships? Managerial practices and employee well-being tradeoffs', Academy of Management Perspectives, 21(3), pp. 51-63.

Haridas, P., Rahul, P.R. and Subha, K., (2021) Impact of work from home model on the productivity of employees in the IT industry. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology*, *8*(2), pp.662-670.

Hettler, B. (1976). The six dimensions of wellness. Available at: https://nationalwellness.org/resources/six-dimensions-of-wellness/ [Accessed on 1st December 2022]

HSE (2023) *Wellbeing at work, a resource for employees to support wellbeing at work.* Available at: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/healthy-ireland/community-healthcare-organisations/wellbeing-booklet-180520-small.pdf [

Accessed on 10th April 2023]

International Labour Organisation (2023) Workplace well-being. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/safework/areasofwork/workplace-health-promotion-and-well-being/WCMS_118396/lang--en/index.htm [Accessed on 1st May 2023]

Johar,E,R., Rosli,N., Khairi, S,M,M,. Shahruddin, S. and Nor, M, N. (2022) COVID-19 outbreak: How do human resource management practices affect employee well-being? *Frontiers in Psychology* (13).

Kelliher, C., Richardson, J. and Boiarintseva, G., (2019) All of work? All of life? Reconceptualising work-life balance for the 21st century. *Human resource management journal*, *29*(2), pp.97-112.

Kowalski, T. & Loretto, W., (2017) 'Well-being and HRM in the changing workplace' *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, pp 2229-2255

Madero-Gómez, S.M., Rubio Leal, Y.L., Olivas-Luján, M. and Yusliza, M.Y., (2023) Companies Could Benefit When They Focus on Employee Wellbeing and the Environment: A Systematic Review of Sustainable Human Resource Management. *Sustainability*, *15*(6), p.5435.

McCarthy, H., & Mansergh D. (2020) Remote working no longer looks so remote. The Virtual Business Guide, Chartered Accountants Ireland. *Available at: https://www.charteredaccountants.ie/docs/default-source/publishing/virtual-business-guide/the-virtual-business-guide-2020.pdf* [Accessed on 27th April 2023]

McKinsey (2020). *What's next for remote work?* Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/whats-next-for-remote-work-an-analysis-of-2000-tasks-800-jobs-and-nine-countries [Accessed on 15th November 2022]

Mc Kinsey and Company (2020) *The Great exhaustion.* Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-

insights/five-fifty-the-great-exhaustion [Accessed on 4th March 2023]

Mental Health Ireland (2023) *Five ways to wellbeing.* Available at: https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/five-ways-to-wellbeing/ [Accessed on 28th March 2023]

Microsoft (2021) *Microsoft Digital Defence Report.* Available at: https://query.prod.cms.rt.microsoft.com/cms/api/am/binary/RWMFIi?id=101738 [Accessed on 28th March 2023]

Morrison-Smith, S. and Ruiz, J., (2020) Challenges and barriers in virtual teams: a literature review. *SN Applied Sciences*, *2*, pp.1-33.

Muswazi, M. & Nhamo, Edmore. (2013). Note taking: a lesson for novice qualitative researchers. J. Res. Method Educ.. 2. 13-17.

Mwita, Kelvin. (2022). Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research in social science studies. International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478).

Niebuhr, F., Borle, P., Börner-Zobel, F., & Voelter-Mahlknecht, S. (2022). Healthy and Happy Working from Home? Effects of Working from Home on Employee Health and Job Satisfaction. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *19*(3)

Peninsula (2022). *Employee Wellbeing Support: Why its fundamental to the modern workplace*. Available at: https://www.peninsulagrouplimited.com/ie/blog/employee-wellbeing-support-why-its-fundamental-to-the-modern-workplace/ [Accessed on 12th November 2022]

People Matters (2022) *Here's why women continue to dominate the HR world.* Available at: https://www.peoplematters.in/article/diversity/heres-why-women-continue-to-dominate-the-hr-world-35119 [Accessed on 12th March 2023]

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) Research Methods for Business Students. 8th

edn. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Schur, L.A., Ameri, M. and Kruse, D., (2020) Telework after COVID: a "silver lining" for workers with disabilities?. *Journal of occupational rehabilitation,* 30, pp.521-536.

SHRM (2022) *Human Resource Management.* Available at: https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/hr-glossary/pages/human-resource-management-hrm.aspx [Accessed on 30th November 2022]

Sorribes et al (2021) *Sustainable human resources management in crisis contexts: Interaction of socially responsible labour practices for the wellbeing of employees*, Corporate Social Responsibility & Environmental Management, Business Source Ultimate.

Stoker, J.I., Garretsen, H. and Lammers, J., (2022) Leading and working from home in times of COVID-19: On the perceived changes in leadership behaviors. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *29*(2), pp.208-218.

Stratton, S. (2021). Population Research: Convenience Sampling Strategies. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, 36*(4), 373-374.

Sutton, J. and Austin, Z., (2015) Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, *68*(3), p.226.

United Nations. (2015). "Sustainable Development Goals kick off with start of new year", Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/12/sustainable-development-goals-kick-off-with-start-of-new-year/ [Accessed on 05th April 2023]

United Nations (2022) *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages* Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3 [Accessed on 15th November 2022]

Warr, P., (1987) *Work, unemployment, and mental health*. Oxford University Press.

World Health Organisation (2023) *Mental Health.* Available at : https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response [Accessed on 2nd April 2023]

Xiao, Y., Becerik-Gerber, B., Lucas, G. and Roll, S.C., (2021) Impacts of working from home during COVID-19 pandemic on physical and mental well-being of office workstation users. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine*, *63*(3), p.181