EXPLORING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF HYBRID WORKING AS A

WORKFORCE MODEL

by

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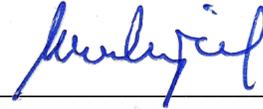<MONTH OF GRADUATION, 2024>

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife and family who accepted the time lost

together as part of this journey.

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ABSTRACT

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2024

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This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the implementation and sustainability of hybrid working models in workplaces, examining both pre- and post-Covid contexts. Prior to the pandemic, hybrid working was largely overlooked, with only a minority of organisations offering it and often with inadequate support for employees. However, the Covid-19 crisis precipitated a significant shift, leading to widespread adoption of hybrid working arrangements.

The transition to hybrid working was accompanied by challenges, including a lack of pre-pandemic support for remote work. Nonetheless, the success of remote working during the crisis demonstrated its value, with participants reporting increased productivity and cost savings. The study identifies various hybrid working models, such as fixed hybrid, workplace-first, flexible, and remote-first, but reveals a lack of clarity on their implementation within organisations.

Key findings highlight concerns and benefits from the perspective of employees. While flexibility was appreciated, concerns regarding motivation, workspace availability, and maintaining professional connections emerged. The blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, coupled with potential disparities in opportunities for promotion, underscores the need for clear boundaries and trust between employers and employees.

From managerial perspectives, challenges in maintaining work-life balance, managing remote teams, and redefining the function of physical workplaces were evident. Despite concerns, managers expressed confidence in their ability to adapt with the right strategies in place.

Participants generally expressed attachment to hybrid working due to its flexibility and work-life balance benefits. However, concerns regarding organisational culture, collaboration, and communication underscored the need for ongoing adaptation and support.

Overall, while hybrid working is seen as promising, its long-term success requires addressing challenges related to remote collaboration effectively. By acknowledging these complexities and implementing appropriate strategies, organisations can cultivate sustainable hybrid work environments that benefit both employees and the organisation. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers, employers, and employees navigating the evolving landscape of hybrid work.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Hybrid working is not a new phenomenon that only emerged from the emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is a workplace arrangement that allows employees to work remotely, usually from their homes or any location outside of the traditional office for a particular period and usually for a portion of a working week. Remote working was introduced to the world decades ago, but it was not until recetnly in the 21st century that it became popular due to the advances in technology and the need to accommodate employees' changing work-life balance needs. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, remote working was already on the rise and had become a viable option for many employees and organisations.

In March 2020, the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced that the global Covid-19 epidemics had become so widespread that they constituted a pandemic (Cucinotta and Vanelli, 2020). As a result, many organisations globally were required to adapt their workplace to ensure the safety of their staff and patrons while they remained open to the public as a result of providing a form of an essential service. The majority however were required to migrate their operations into a virtual workplace, with very little time to prepare their workforce for such an eventuality. Where remote working was becoming a viable option prior to the pandemic, it then became a one of the main workforce models organisations has available to them to continue their operations.

As the world reset from the Covid-19 pandemic, much of the discussions that took place pertained to what the future workplace and workforce will look like but again, this is not something new. The discussion on the future of the workplace has been happening

as far back as late 1900's. According to Brigss-Harris (2015), in 1975, the head of research at Xerox George Pake, predicted to the then New York Business Week Magazine that there is absolutely no question that there will be a revolution in the office over the next 20 years. More recently, the report on Disruptive technologies: Advances that will transform life, business, and the global economy stated that some technologies do in fact have the potential to disrupt the status quo, alter the way people live and work, rearrange value pools, and lead to entirely new products and services (McKinsey Global Institute, 2013).

This study will examine the literature from other research and reports on the pre-pandemic experiences of hybrid an remote working in conjuction with the data emerging after the pandemic to map the experiences of remote and hybrid working. Through surveying the experiences and opinions of managers and employees on their cocnerns attacched to the model of hybrid working, this study will draw conclusion to make obervations on whether hybrid working is sustainable as a workforce model.

1.2   Research Problem

Amidst the rapidly changing landscape of work environments, the concept of hybrid working, combining remote and in-office work, has gained prominence. However, the effective implementation and impact of hybrid working on employee performance, organisational culture, and work-life balance remain areas of uncertainty. This is largely due to the fact that organisations have taken varying approaches to implemting hybrd working as there is no one singular model that can be applied to all. In 2021, KPMG published The Future of Work: A Playbook for the People, Technology and Legal Considerations for a Successful Hybrid Workforce which effectively summarised the changing landscape as an evolving landscape of work from home (WFH) teams, in-office

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professionals, digital nomads, and flexible preferences (KPMG, 2021). They also acknowleged that that there are no one-size-fits-all hybrid model and that each organisation must define its own unique vision for successful enactment of hybrid working.

Despite there being a great deal of pre-pandemic research conducted in the area of remote working, there is still a lack of understanding of how organisations and their employees can make the most of these flexible working practices (Hill et al., 2010; Kattenbach, Demerouti and Nachreiner, 2010; Peters, den Dulk, and van der Lippe, 2009; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012). As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for a better understanding of how remote working can support a hybrid working model has grown exponentially. The pandemic has challenged organisations to develop new operating practices that ensured business continuity while their staff worked from their homes. Where many organisations have overcome this challenge, they are now facing with a new dilemma. How do they balance what once was a physical space centric workplace with the experiences of remote working during the Covid-19 pandemic in the form of a hybrid workplace model?

Where the potential of hybrid working is not limited to anyone sector or organisation type, there are considerations that need to be explored to ascertain if it is sustainable as a long-term model. As organisations across the globe tries to demystify the hybrid working model, there is the general acceptance that there cannot be a 'one size fits all' solution. This study is being conducted at an appropriate stage of the post-pandemic era as it looks to address the knowledge gap of understanding the factors that are needing to be considered whether hybrid working is sustainable as a long-term workforce model.

1.3   Purpose of Research

Oyemomi et al. (2016) defines knowledge sharing as the process of transference of experience and organisational knowledge to business processes. Hendriks (2004) found that knowledge sharing was critical to both the creation and application of organisational knowledge and innovation. As a result of the global wide effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, almost all organisations and professionals were affected in terms of their workplaces. The review of literature and data indicates that there is an appetite by workers to retain elements of the remote working they endure during the pandemic. This study intends to investigate what has been achieved across a diverse range of organisations and professions and if we can say that a successful reform of the workplace has been achieved.

Research on the experiences and the approaches taken by organisations towards the post pandemic workplace is a relatively new filed of study. Frontiersin fix (2022) goes as far as noting that research on this topic is conceptually and methodologically immature. This study will investigate through the views of those living the expereivce of hybrid working, what has been achieved and is it sustainable. As this field of research is specific to the post pandemic era, the data gathered from this study will create new knowledge that will all and support knowledge sharing for other organisations. This study will help others develop a line of questionng for themselves that will help assertain if hybrid working is sustainable as a workforce model for them.

1.4   Significance of the Study

Before Covid-19, the largest disruptions to work mainly involved new technologies. Covid-19 has for the first time elevated the conversation of the role of the physical dimension of work. McKinsey and Company, a global management consulting

firm that serves businesses, governments, non-governmental organisations, and not-for-profits analysed the potential for continued remote working across more than 2,000 tasks used in some 800 occupations in the eight focus countries. McKinsey and Company (2021) found that remote work and virtual meetings are likely to continue, albeit less intensely than at the pandemic's peak. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated existing trends in remote working, e-commerce, and automation at an unprecedented level. As such, organisations across the world are still coming to grips to what the post pandemic workforce will look like based on these advancements.

The review of literature as part of this study has identified that there is a gap in the research in terms of post pandemic derived workforce models and in particular, its sustainability. Much research exists in terms of remote working before and during the pandemic, yet there there is very little research conducted that explores what impact the pandemic has had on workforce models. Organisations had no choice but to introduce remote working as an emergency measure without knowing its true duration. The findings of this study will be timely and valuable to organisations who are currently reviewing their post pandemic workplace and to those who have yet made a decision on their approach to the future of their workplace. Where studies are emerging on the expereinces of remote and hybrid working, no study yet has emerged looking at the sustainability of this way of working. This study will be the first at this time that will use quantatitve data to draw concludions and make assertions on the sustainability of of hybrid working model is sutainable beyond the pandemic.

In addition to the above, from a theoretical perspective, by studying a subject that is as topical as hybrid working, it carries great theoretical significance since the post-pandemic situation is unprecedented to our time. This shift to remote work for so many employees and organisation provides ample opportunity to investigate the sustainability

of hybrid working as a workforce model. Where remote working is not a new practice, the sudden and unplanned shift to remote work in response to the pandemic will truly test the trade-offs of remote work when it comes to the long-term objectives of organisations, especially due to the involuntary nature of the situation. Looking at the practical significance of this study, the implications are clear in that surveying both organisational leaders and employees should yield the sufficient data along with the secondary sources to draw conclusions on the sustainability of hybrid working as a long-term workforce model. By using a cross sectional study, it should give a more accurate representative compared to focusing on a single organisation or sector.

1.5   Research Hypothesis and Questions

The purpose of this study is to quantitatively investigate the degree to which remote working has influenced organisations' workforce models. The entire study is derived from the central question of Whether hybrid working is now sustainable as a workforce model as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. More specifically, the following sub-research questions will support in answering the central question:

- **Research question 1:** How is hybrid working being implemented in workplaces?
- **Research question 2:** Are there specific factors concerning employees that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?
- **Research question 3:** Are there specific factors concerning those with responsibility for managing people that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?
- **Research question 4:** How are people envisioning the future of hybrid working?

1.6　Summary

Remote working, also known as teleworking, has become increasingly popular in the 21st century due to advancements in technology and the growing need to accommodate employees' changing work-life balance needs. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, remote working was a feasible option for many employees and organisations. Now, as the world transitions from the pandemic, discussions about the future of the workplace is a much debated topic.

This study investigates the evolution of remote and hybrid working, focusing on the perspectives of organisational leaders and employees regarding the workplace in a post-pandemic era. Hybrid working, which combines remote and in-office work, has gained traction, but questions remain about its effective implementation and impact on employee performance, organisational culture, and work-life balance.

Despite extensive research on remote working before the pandemic, and the fact that the pandemic forced organisations to adapt their operating practices to ensure business continuity while employees worked from home, there is still a lack of understanding about how organisations and employees can optimise these flexible working practices. As organisations worldwide seek to understand the hybrid working model, there are various considerations that must be explored to assess its sustainability as a workforce model.

The study aims to examine how organisations successfully adapted their workplaces due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with a focus on their experiences and approaches to hybrid working. It is specific to the post-pandemic era and aims to assist organisations in evaluating the sustainability of hybrid working as a workforce model. By filling this research gap on post-pandemic workforce models and their sustainability, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the sustainabiltiy of hybrid working.

The pandemic accelerated existing trends in remote working, e-commerce, and automation to an unprecedented level, leaving organisations worldwide grappling with the implications for their post-pandemic workforce. The findings of this study will be timely and beneficial for organisations reassessing their post-pandemic workplace strategies and making decisions about the future of work. Given the unprecedented nature of the post-pandemic situation, this study holds significant theoretical importance. The sudden shift to remote work in response to the pandemic will test the long-term objectives of organisations and the trade-offs associated with remote work. By surveying both organisational managers and employees, the study aims to gather sufficient data and secondary sources to draw conclusions about the sustainability of hybrid working as a long-term workforce model.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The concept of hybrid working has gained significant attention in recent years, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Hybrid working refers to a work arrangement that combines elements of remote and office-based work, offering employees the flexibility to work from various locations. It has become an attractive option for many organisations as they seek to balance the benefits of remote work, such as increased productivity and work-life balance, with the advantages of office-based work, including social interaction and collaboration.

The emergence of hybrid working can be traced back to several factors. Firstly, technological advancements have made remote work easier and more accessible than ever before, with cloud-based software and video conferencing tools enabling seamless communication and collaboration from anywhere in the world. Secondly, changing attitudes towards work-life balance and employee well-being have made remote work a more attractive option for workers seeking flexibility and autonomy in their work. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work, forcing organisations to rapidly adjust to the new reality of remote work, with many now considering hybrid working as a long-term solution.

Despite the potential benefits of hybrid working, implementing this model comes with its own set of challenges. For example, communication and collaboration may be more difficult in a hybrid work environment, and managers may find it challenging to monitor employee productivity and engagement. Additionally, there may be discrepancies in the quality of workspaces available to remote and office-based workers, leading to potential inequalities.

Given the increasing importance of hybrid working, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of this model and its implications for organisations, employees, and managers. This literature review aims to provide an overview of the concept of hybrid working, drawing on existing research to explore its experiences before and during the pandemic. By synthesising the available literature, this review will offer insights into the key considerations and factors for ascertaining what concerns may be faced by managers and employees that may challenge hybrid working a sustainable workplace model.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Remote Working

One of the main challenges in reviewing the literature relating to remote working is the fact the naming conventions and definitions of remote working within the existing publications varies. Table 1 provides examples of the range of naming conventions and their definitions that have been used within the existing literature. In this summary, where the definitions overlap, it does suggest that that there is no one unifying definition for the practice of remote working and as a result, operationalising the practice can vary across organisations.

Table 1: Definitions of the concepts of remote working

Naming convention	Definition	Accredited to
Distributed work	Employees work over geographical boundaries and to some extent work with computer-mediated communication to achieve a common goal.	(Bosch-Sijtsema and Sivunen, 2013)
Flexible work arrangements	Alternative work options that allow work to be accomplished outside of	(Shockley and Allen, 2007)

	the traditional temporal and/or spatial boundaries of a standard workday.	
Remote work	A work arrangement in which the employee resides and works at a location beyond the local commuting area of the employing organisation's worksite; generally includes full-time telework and may result in a change in duty location to the alternative worksite. A location-independent option where workers travel elsewhere to conduct business, but largely attends to the principles of "teleworking"/remote working, where workers are allowed to perform their duties anytime, and anywhere, using the relevant technologies to facilitate flexible working practices.	(U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2013) (Mears, 2007)
Telecommuting	The use of telecommunications technology to partially or completely replace the commute to and from work. Working some portion of time away from the conventional workplace, often from home, and communicating by way of computer-based technology. Work conducted from home that is often supported by telecommunications technology. Work arrangement in which employees perform their regular work	(Mokhtarian, 1991) (Golden, 2006) (Kossel et al., 2006) (Pinsonneault and Boisvert, 2001)

	at a site other than the ordinary workplace, supported by technological connections.	
	The use of information and communication technologies to replace or substitute for work environments that require individuals to commute to a traditional office.	(Bélanger et al., 2013)
	Systems that enable employees to perform regular, officially assigned duties at home or at alternative work sites geographically convenient to their residences.	(Pearce, 2009)
Telework	Work performed by (a) those whose remote work is from the home or a satellite office, (b) those whose telework is primarily in the field, and (c) those whose work is "networked" in such a way that they regularly work in a combination of home, work, and field contexts.	(Morganson et al., 2010)
	A form of work organisation in which the work is partially or completely done outside the conventional company workplace with the aid of information and telecommunication services.	(Konradt et al., 2000)
	Work that relies on technology-mediated communication and sophisticated information-processing capabilities instead of colocation for the production and delivery of work outputs.	(Garrett and Danziger, 2007)

	A work arrangement in which employees perform their regular work at a site other than the ordinary workplace, supported by technological connections.	(Fonner and Roloff, 2010)
Virtual teams	Spatially or geographically dispersed work arrangements that are generally characterised by a relatively short life span, technology-enhanced communications, and a dearth of face-to-face interaction.	(Tworoger et al., 2013)

2.2.2 Hybrid Working

In recent years, hybrid working has become an increasingly popular term, particularly in the context of the changing work environment in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Hybrid working refers to a work arrangement where employees have the option to work both remotely and from a physical workplace. It is an approach that combines the benefits of traditional office-based work with the flexibility and convenience of remote work.

There are several definitions of hybrid working, and they all have a common thread of flexibility and a blended approach to work. Some define it as a work arrangement where employees have the freedom to work from home or from a physical office space as they see fit. Others define it as a system where employees work part of their time from home and part of their time in the office, which could be on a rotating schedule or based on individual preference. Table 2 offers some of the definitions more commonly used when speaking to hybrid working.

Table 2: Definitions of the concepts of hybrid working

Naming convention	Definition	Accredited to
Hybrid working	Hybrid working is a flexible work arrangement that allows employees to split their time between working remotely and working in the office, with the aim of creating a more productive and balanced work-life experience.	(Society for Human Resource Management, 2021)
	Hybrid working is a model of work that combines working from home and working in the office, enabling employees to have greater flexibility and autonomy in how they manage their work-life balance.	(Deloitte, 2020)
	Hybrid working is a new way of working that blends the best of remote and in-office work, allowing employees to choose where and when they work, while maintaining productivity and collaboration.	(Microsoft, 2021)
	Hybrid working is an arrangement that offers employees the flexibility to work from both the office and their preferred location, based on their job role, personal preferences, and business requirements.	(PwC, 2021)
	Hybrid working is a flexible work model that combines the benefits of remote work and in-office work, offering employees the freedom to work from anywhere while staying	(McKendrick, 2021)

	connected to their colleagues and the company culture.	

For the purpose of this study, the term remote working will be used as a general term but as part of reviewing the literature, remote and teleworing are used interchangeably.

2.3 Models of Hybrid Working

Allthough there has been a significant growth in the reseatch into hybrod working, there are very little studies or research around the models associated with hybid working. The following is an attempt to summarise four main models that have emerge through the literature review process of this study.

2.3.1 Flexible Hybrid Work Model

The traditional 9-to-5 office setup has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, accelerated by technological advancements and shifting attitudes towards work-life balance. The emergence of the flexible hybrid work model represents a significant paradigm shift in how organisations structure their operations and accommodate the needs of their workforce.

The flexible hybrid work model blends elements of remote work and in-office work, allowing employees to divide their time between working from home and the traditional office environment. This approach offers flexibility in terms of when and where work is performed, providing employees with autonomy over their schedules while still maintaining opportunities for collaboration and face-to-face interaction (Bloom, et al., (2015); Global Workplace Analytics, (2021)).

2.3.1.1 Benefits for Employers

Implementing a flexible hybrid work model can yield several benefits for employers:

- Increased Productivity: Research indicates that remote work can lead to higher levels of productivity due to reduced distractions and commuting time. A study by Stanford University found that remote workers experienced a 13% performance increase.

- Cost Savings: By reducing the need for office space and associated overhead costs, organisations can achieve significant cost savings. A report by Global Workplace Analytics estimates that companies can save an average of $11,000 per year for every employee who works remotely half of the time.

- Talent Acquisition and Retention: Offering flexible work arrangements can make a company more attractive to top talent, leading to improved recruitment and retention outcomes. A survey by Owl Labs found that 80% of respondents consider the option to work remotely a significant factor in choosing an employer.

2.3.1.2 Benefits for Employees

The flexible hybrid work model also offers numerous advantages for employees:

- Improved Work-Life Balance: Flexibility in work hours and location allows employees to better balance their professional and personal responsibilities, leading to reduced stress and burnout.

- Increased Autonomy: Employees have greater control over how they manage their time and workflow, empowering them to work in a manner that aligns with their individual preferences and productivity rhythms.
- Reduced Commuting Stress and Expenses: Eliminating or reducing the daily commute can result in savings on transportation costs and alleviate the stress associated with long commutes, leading to improved well-being and job satisfaction.

2.3.1.3 Key Drivers of Adoption

Several factors have contributed to the widespread adoption of the flexible hybrid work model:

- Advancements in Technology: The proliferation of digital communication tools, cloud computing, and collaboration platforms has made it easier for employees to work remotely without sacrificing connectivity or productivity.
- Changing Workforce Expectations: Millennial and Gen Z employees, who make up a significant portion of the workforce, prioritise flexibility and work-life balance when considering job opportunities. Employers must adapt to these evolving preferences to attract and retain top talent.
- Pandemic-Induced Shifts: The Covid-19 pandemic forced organisations to rapidly transition to remote work to ensure business continuity. This experience demonstrated the feasibility and benefits of flexible work arrangements, prompting many companies to adopt hybrid models permanently.

2.3.1.4 Challenges and Considerations

While the flexible hybrid work model offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges and considerations that organisations must address:

- Maintaining Company Culture: Remote work can make it challenging to foster a strong sense of belonging and connection among employees. Employers must implement strategies to nurture company culture and facilitate meaningful interactions among remote and in-office workers.

- Equitable Access to Opportunities: Organisations must ensure that remote employees have equal access to career advancement opportunities, professional development resources, and networking events to prevent feelings of isolation or exclusion.

- Technology and Infrastructure: Reliable internet connectivity and access to necessary technology tools are essential for successful remote work. Employers may need to invest in upgrading infrastructure and providing support for remote employees to overcome potential barriers.

The flexible hybrid work model represents a fundamental shift in how work is structured and performed, offering benefits for both employers and employees. By embracing flexibility and leveraging technology, organisations can enhance productivity, attract top talent, and adapt to the evolving expectations of the modern workforce. However, addressing challenges such as maintaining company culture and ensuring equitable access to opportunities is crucial for the successful implementation of hybrid work arrangements. As the workplace continues to evolve, the flexible hybrid work model is poised to play a central role in shaping the future of work (Bloom, et al., (2015); Global Workplace Analytics, (2021)).

2.3.2 Fixed Hybrid Work Model

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, workplaces worldwide have experienced a profound shift towards flexible work arrangements. Among these, the fixed hybrid work model has emerged as a compelling option, offering a balanced approach that combines the benefits of in-office collaboration with the flexibility of remote work.

The fixed hybrid work model blends elements of remote work and in-office work, but with a predetermined schedule for each. Unlike the fully flexible hybrid model, where employees have complete autonomy over their work location and hours, the fixed hybrid model assigns specific days for in-office work and remote work, providing a structured framework for collaboration and autonomy (Golden, Veiga and Dino, (2008); Goudreau, (2021)).

2.3.2.1 Benefits for Employers

Implementing a fixed hybrid work model can offer several advantages for employers:

- Improved Collaboration: By designating specific days for in-office work, the fixed hybrid model facilitates face-to-face collaboration and spontaneous interactions among team members, fostering creativity and innovation.
- Enhanced Oversight and Management: Having employees on-site for a portion of the week allows managers to maintain closer oversight of projects and workflows, ensuring accountability and productivity.
- Optimised Space Utilisation: With a predetermined schedule for in-office presence, organisations can optimise their office space utilisation, reducing costs associated with maintaining large office footprints.

2.3.2.2 Benefits for Employees

The fixed hybrid work model also provides numerous benefits for employees:

- Predictable Schedule: Knowing in advance which days are designated for remote work and in-office attendance provides employees with a predictable schedule, helping them better plan their work and personal lives.

- Balanced Work-Life Integration: By alternating between remote work and in-office days, employees can achieve a better balance between their professional responsibilities and personal commitments, reducing stress and burnout.

- Maintained Connection with Colleagues: Regular in-office days allow employees to maintain connections with colleagues, build relationships, and benefit from in-person mentorship and collaboration opportunities.

2.3.2.3 Key Drivers of Adoption

Several factors have contributed to the increasing adoption of the fixed hybrid work model:

- Desire for Stability and Routine: While flexibility is essential, many employees value stability and routine in their work schedules. The fixed hybrid model offers a middle ground, providing a predictable framework for work while still accommodating remote work preferences.

- Organisational Needs for Collaboration: Certain tasks and projects require face-to-face collaboration and teamwork. The fixed hybrid model ensures that employees are present in the office when such collaboration is necessary, enhancing efficiency and productivity.

- Employee Preferences and Satisfaction: Surveys indicate that many employees prefer a mix of remote and in-office work, with a significant portion valuing the social aspects of the workplace. The fixed hybrid model aligns with these preferences, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention rates.

2.3.2.4 Challenges and Considerations

Despite its benefits, the fixed hybrid work model presents challenges that organisations must address:

- Managing Expectations: Clear communication and alignment of expectations are crucial for the successful implementation of the fixed hybrid model. Organisations must establish guidelines regarding in-office attendance, remote work protocols, and communication channels to ensure consistency and fairness.
- Addressing Equity and Inclusion: Organisations must ensure that remote employees have equal access to opportunities for advancement, professional development, and inclusion in decision-making processes. Proactive measures may be needed to mitigate potential disparities between remote and in-office workers.
- Technology Infrastructure and Support: Reliable technology infrastructure and support systems are essential for enabling seamless collaboration between remote and in-office employees. Employers must invest in tools, training, and IT support to facilitate effective communication and productivity.

The fixed hybrid work model offers a balanced approach that combines the stability of in-office work with the flexibility of remote work, catering to the diverse needs and preferences of employees and employers. By fostering collaboration, providing predictability, and promoting work-life balance, this model has the potential to enhance organisational productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall well-being. However, addressing challenges such as managing expectations, promoting equity, and ensuring technological readiness is crucial for its successful implementation. As workplaces continue to evolve, the fixed hybrid work model stands as a promising solution for navigating the complexities of the modern work environment (Golden, Veiga and Dino, (2008); Goudreau, (2021)).

2.3.3 Workplace-First Work Hybrid Model

In the wake of evolving work dynamics, organisations are exploring innovative approaches to optimise productivity and enhance employee satisfaction. One such approach gaining traction is the Workplace-First Work Model, which prioritises the physical workplace as the central hub for collaboration, innovation, and culture-building activities.

The Workplace-First Work Model emphasises the significance of the physical workplace as the primary locus for conducting business activities and fostering organisational culture. Unlike traditional office setups or remote-centric models, this approach places a premium on the office environment while allowing for flexibility in remote work arrangements when necessary. The workplace serves as a hub for team collaboration, mentorship, knowledge sharing, and social interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and community among employees (Gallup, (2021); Harvard Business Review, (2021); Microsoft, (2021)).

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2.3.3.1 Key Features and Benefits

- **Collaboration and Innovation:** The physical workplace facilitates spontaneous interactions and serendipitous encounters, fostering creativity, and innovation. Face-to-face collaboration enhances problem-solving, ideation, and decision-making processes, leading to better outcomes and increased organisational agility.

- Culture Cultivation: The office environment plays a pivotal role in shaping organisational culture and fostering a sense of belonging among employees. Shared spaces, rituals, and traditions contribute to a cohesive work culture characterised by shared values, norms, and goals.

- Professional Development and Mentorship: In-person interactions enable mentorship opportunities, knowledge transfer, and skill development. Junior employees can benefit from the guidance and expertise of more experienced colleagues, accelerating their learning curve and career growth.

- Employee Well-being and Social Connection: The workplace serves as a social nexus where employees can forge meaningful connections, alleviate feelings of isolation, and combat burnout. Face-to-face interactions promote camaraderie, friendship, and a sense of community, enhancing overall employee well-being.

2.3.3.2 Implications for Employers

- Investment in Physical Infrastructure: Adopting a Workplace-First Work Model necessitates investment in modern, flexible, and collaborative

office spaces equipped with amenities that support employee productivity and well-being.

- Cultural Reinforcement: Organisations must actively cultivate and reinforce their culture through shared experiences, rituals, and values that resonate with employees and align with business objectives.

- Balanced Approach to Flexibility: While prioritising the workplace, employers should offer flexibility to accommodate remote work when appropriate, striking a balance between in-person collaboration and individual autonomy.

2.3.3.3 Implications for Employees

- Embrace of Hybrid Work: Employees must adapt to a hybrid work model that combines in-office collaboration with remote work flexibility. They should leverage the physical workplace for collaboration and social interaction while capitalising on remote work for focused tasks and work-life balance.

- Commitment to Communication: Clear and effective communication is essential in a Workplace-First environment to ensure alignment, transparency, and cohesion among distributed teams.

The Workplace-First Work Model represents a departure from traditional office-centric or remote-centric approaches, emphasising the importance of the physical workplace as a catalyst for collaboration, culture cultivation, and employee well-being. By leveraging the benefits of in-person interactions while embracing flexibility, organisations can create vibrant, inclusive, and high-performing work environments that

drive innovation and success in the digital age (Gallup, (2021); Harvard Business Review, (2021); Microsoft, (2021)).

2.3.4 Remote-First Hybrid Work Model

The landscape of work has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, with the emergence of remote-first hybrid work models gaining prominence. The remote-first hybrid work model prioritises remote work as the default mode of operation for employees, with occasional in-person interactions as needed. Unlike traditional office-centric models, this approach places a premium on flexibility, autonomy, and leveraging digital tools to facilitate seamless collaboration regardless of physical location (Bloom, et al., (2015); Global Workplace Analytics, (2021)).

2.3.4.1 Benefits for Organisations

Implementing a remote-first hybrid work model offers numerous advantages for organisations:

- Enhanced Productivity: Remote work eliminates many of the distractions inherent in traditional office environments, leading to improved focus and productivity among employees.
- Cost Savings: Reduced reliance on physical office space can result in substantial cost savings for organisations, including decreased overhead expenses associated with utilities, maintenance, and real estate.
- Access to Global Talent: By embracing remote work, organisations can tap into a global talent pool, enabling them to recruit top talent irrespective of geographic location.

2.3.4.2 Benefits for Employees

Employees also stand to benefit from a remote-first hybrid work model:

- Work-Life Balance: Remote work affords employees greater control over their schedules, allowing them to better balance their professional and personal commitments.

- Flexibility and Autonomy: Employees have the freedom to structure their workdays in a manner that suits their individual preferences and productivity rhythms, leading to increased job satisfaction and well-being.

- Reduced Commuting Stress: Eliminating the daily commute can alleviate stress, save time, and reduce transportation-related expenses for employees, contributing to overall job satisfaction.

2.3.4.3 Key Drivers of Adoption

Several factors have contributed to the widespread adoption of remote-first hybrid work models:

- Advancements in Technology: The proliferation of digital collaboration tools, cloud computing, and communication platforms has made remote work more feasible and efficient than ever before.

- Changing Workforce Expectations: Millennial and Gen Z employees, who now constitute a significant portion of the workforce, prioritise flexibility, work-life balance, and remote work options when evaluating job opportunities.

- Pandemic-Driven Shifts: The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote work out of necessity, prompting organisations to reevaluate

traditional work arrangements and embrace remote-first approaches to ensure business continuity.

2.3.4.4 Challenges and Considerations

Despite its benefits, the remote-first hybrid work model presents several challenges that organisations must address:

- Maintaining Collaboration and Communication: Ensuring effective collaboration and communication among remote teams requires investment in technology infrastructure, training, and establishing clear communication protocols.
- Nurturing Company Culture: Remote work can pose challenges to fostering a strong sense of organisational culture and belonging among employees. Organisations must implement strategies to maintain culture and foster connections among remote teams.
- Managing Performance and Accountability: Remote work requires a shift in management practices to ensure accountability, productivity, and performance management in a distributed work environment.

The remote-first hybrid work model represents a transformative approach to work that prioritises flexibility, autonomy, and leveraging technology to enable seamless collaboration across geographically dispersed teams. By embracing remote-first approaches, organisations can enhance productivity, attract top talent, and adapt to the evolving expectations of the modern workforce. However, addressing challenges such as maintaining collaboration, nurturing company culture, and managing performance is crucial for the successful implementation of remote-first hybrid work models. As organisations continue to navigate the evolving landscape of work, embracing remote-

first approaches will play a central role in shaping the future of work culture (Bloom, et al., (2015); Global Workplace Analytics, (2021)).

2.4 Remote Working at a Glance

A new concept that emerged in the 1950s as a result of advancements in communication systems, technology, and inventions was the possibility of doing work outside of the conventional central office through the use of telecommunications and computer technology (Baruch, 2001).

The term telework or telecommuting was initially used by Jack Nilles during the early 1970s, when there was an oil crisis and people were worried about excessive petrol usage, long commutes and heavy traffic in big cities (Bailey and Kurland, 2002). According to Nilles (1975), telecommuting network has computational and telecommunications components which enable employees of large organisations to work in offices close to their homes, rather than commute long distances to a central office. This definition of telework, while not agreed upon by all, does encompass the use of telecommunications technology to replace or supplement traditional work-related travel.

Since telecommunications infrastructure has expanded at an exponential rate, telework has become possible in many previously inaccessible places, including airports, coffee shops, and coworking spaces (Sullivan, 2003). According to researcher studies sucah as Bailey and Kurland, (2002); Baruch (2001), and Feldman and Gainey (1997), telework is a kind of flexible work arrangement that enables employees to do their job duties remotely, at least part of the time, while still interacting with coworkers and external parties through technology. According to Duxbury et al. (1998) and Shockley and Allen (2010), telework has long been seen as a flexible and alternative work arrangement that can help people achieve a better work-life balance. This, in turn, can

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lead to a greater integration of work and family responsibilities. Further to this, Gajendran and Harrison (2007) noted that the definition of teleworking acknowledges can be done either part-time, which is more conventional and flexible, or full-time, which is more exceptional.

As noted by Bayley and Kurland (2002), many earlier studies have incorrectly classified telework as full-time, always-at-home employmen. Previous research has found that 10% of teleworkers are involved in full-time arrangements, with part-time arrangements achieving remarkable success (Standen et al., 1999). The success of hybrid working may differ depending on whether the employee was compelled to participate or if they freely choose it. People tend to be less enthusiastic about forced choices (Hammock and Brehm, 1996; Hallin, 2020). Workers who were given the option to telework by their employers were twice as productive as those who were not. This finding is based on a more recent study by Bloom et al. (2015).

Hybrid working has been a tactic for organisations to boost morale and output while cutting down on expenses like utilities and rent (Hill et al., 1998; Kurland and Bailey, 1999). However, research has shown that hyrid working has furhter environmental benefits by cutting down on work-related travel and can help alleviate traffic congestion and air pollution (Mokhtarian et al., 1995).

2.5 Examining Pre-Pandemic Hybrid Work Dynamics: Understanding the Impact Prior to Covid-19 Pandemic

Since Jack Nilles presented the findings of the first major study on the advantages of telecommuting in 1975, the concept of remote work as a kind of employment has garnered an increasing amount of interest in the field of research over the course of the

previous few years and decades. Despite its growth in interest, there was still resistance from managers and executives who resisted the digital revolution that makes it possible for flexible working practices to become more widespread. In 2020, Colley and Williamson found that due to the fact that the global pandemic has caused a disruption in the world of work, businesses and organisations have been forced to reevaluate their perspectives on the many forms of remote employment presently available regardless of their previous levels of resistance. According to Gajendran and Harrison 2007 study, the implications of telecommuting are not clear-cut and vary depending on the aspect or factor of it that is being considered or explored. The following presents an analysis of the dominant aspects or factors that the various studies have presented.

2.5.1 Personal Well-Being

Fatigue and tiredness are common symptoms of stress, which occurs when a worker's capacity to cope with job expectations is inadequate (Toscano and Zappalà, 2020). Similarly, according to Janse (2019), it occurs when there is a mismatch between what a person needs to do their work and what they really have on hand. Therefore, it is common for stress to be associated with worse performance and productivity (Toscano and Zappalà, 2020).

Technostress is a subtype of stress that can result from technological overload, invasion, complexity, insecurity, or uncertainty (Tacy, 2020). The pressure to be available at all times and information overload are the most obvious symptoms of this. The impact of technostress on one's mental, emotional, and physical well-being can be devastating. Stress, worry, or a lack of sleep are common signs of burnout. (Molino et al.,

2020; EapAssisst, 2019). Working remotely, whether from home or any other location, is a big transition that brings both opportunities and obstacles. Employees may experience changes in their work habits, increased fatigue, and stress as a result of the accompanying cognitive and physiological changes. When we're emotionally and mentally drained, we're considered exhausted (Sardeshmukh et al., 2012).

Workers who do most of their job from home may experience elevated levels of stress for a number of reasons. These include the inherent difficulties of remote work, such as difficulties in communicating and reading nonverbal cues, as well as technological limitations. (Molino et al. 2020). According to Bentley et al. (2016), the psychological strain can be exacerbated by the potential social isolation that comes with telecommuting. However, research by Gajendran and Harrison indicates that employees experience less role stress when they operate remotely. For those who telecommute intensely, the effect is even more pronounced. Employees report lower levels of role stress when they work remotely more frequently. One aspect of this is that work schedules are more adaptable, as having set work hours can lead to stress as a result of impunctuality's negative effects (Harrison and Gajendran, 2007).

The job demands-resources model (JDR model) is one paradigm that describes stress in relation to the workplace. The JDR approach classifies working conditions as either job demands or job resources, with an emphasis on the employees' well-being. Job resources include things like opportunities for professional growth, independence, and positive interactions, whereas job demands include things like time constraints, relationships, or unpleasant work settings. An employee's happiness is determined by how successfully they manage both. Increased engagement and productivity, together with a more positive work environment, can result from a substantial surplus of job resources. Negative effects on health and productivity might result from stress, increased

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likelihood of burnout, and inadequate job resources (Janse, 2019), Autonomy was found to be positively related to telecommuting, as working away from the office and being more flexible in time and location of work increases employees' ability to adjust their way of working to their own preferences and needs (Sardeshmukh et al. 2012).

Feedback and social support were found to be negatively related to telecommuting due to challenges in communication that can slow down or hinder feedback processes (Sardeshmukh et al. 2012). A lack of feedback can lead to decreased job engagement, while a lack of social support can lead to depersonalisation, reduced trust, and greater conflict, all of which create additional stressors. The negative emotional consequences of reduced feedback and social support on remote workers were indicated by a negative relationship between telecommuting and job engagement (Sardeshmukh et al. 2012). Additionally, stressors such as role ambiguity can lead to job dissatisfaction, decreased performance, and higher turnover intentions if not properly addressed. Therefore, managers should introduce measures to cope with such challenges and prevent them, emphasising rich communication and socialisation actions for employees while accentuating the benefits of remote work (Sardeshmukh et al. 2012).

2.5.2 Work Efficiency And Effectiveness

A common concern among executives and managers is the potential impact of remote work on team performance and productivity. This concern has been found a driver that prevents executives and managers from implementing procedures that allow employees to work remotely (Colley and Williamson 2020). One possible explanation is that teams operating remotely face challenges in effective communication, which can lead to issues like diluted knowledge, a lack of staff moral, and missed deadlines.

Failing to adjust to the kinds of communication that would be most effective for the team and the tasks at hand has a major influence on performance. Savu (2019) noted that effectiveness of teams that use remote work styles has been the subject of conflicting research. For example, Gajendran and Harrison (2007) discovered that team members' supervisors' judgements of their performance were positively correlated with hybrid working in a meta-analysis of 46 studies. However, they were unable to determine if self-rated performance was affected by hybrid working. Employees who were able to work remotely shown a 13% improvement in performance, according to a second study that was carried out over two years in China with randomly assigned groups (Bloom et al. 2015, according to Sander 2019).

In 2019, Golden and Gajendran conducted a comprehensive study on telecommuter's performance with 273 remote workers and managers from different work fields while analysing it by several job characteristics. They categorised knowledge characteristics such as job complexity and problem-solving and social characteristics such as interdependence and social support. Furthermore, they argued that telecommuting intensity has an important impact on how remote work is experienced, so they took into account to what extent remote work is practised. This finer breakdown helps to better understand the complex nature of telecommuting. Overall, they found that the extent of telecommuting is positively related to job performance. Possible reasons for this are that there are fewer interruptions than in the office (Gajendran and Harrison 2007) and individualised work routines (Allen et al. 2003)

Employee engagement refers to how much someone enjoys their job and feels passionate, dedicated, and energetic about their work and the organisation they work for (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Erickson, 2005, as cited in Pattnaik and Jena, 2020). This positive attitude influences their psychological and emotional well-being and motivates

them to contribute more effectively. It often leads to a sense of fulfillment. Remote engagement is similar but occurs when employees work from a location outside the traditional office setting. It involves being flexible, feeling connected, and receiving encouragement while working remotely (Pattnaik and Jena, 2020).

Research by Sardeshmukh et al. (2012) found a negative relationship between telecommuting and job engagement due to reduced feedback and social support. Similarly, a study by Virgin Pulse revealed that two-thirds of remote workers felt disengaged primarily due to the lack of face-to-face interaction with colleagues (Schwabel, 2018). However, Gallup's State of the American Workplace report in 2017 argued for an increase in job engagement among part-time remote workers, particularly those spending 60-80% of their time working remotely, likely due to the added flexibility of remote work (Gallup, 2017). Regular feedback is crucial for employee engagement, with studies showing that individuals are three times more likely to be engaged when they receive feedback (Gallup, 2017; Hickman and Robinson, 2020; Hickman and Robinson, 2020).

Palumbo's research in 2020 also found positive effects of working from home on employee engagement, which can mitigate the perception of work fatigue often associated with telecommuting due to increased workload intensity and duration (Palumbo, 2020). While engaging employees may be easier in an office setting due to closer proximity, prolonged remote work can lead to feelings of estrangement and isolation, negatively affecting employee engagement and, consequently, performance and workplace relationships (Sonnentag et al., 2010, as cited in Pattnaik and Jena, 2020). The fear of job loss, insecurity, and reduced visibility exacerbate these effects.

Despite its challenges, remote engagement has the potential to enhance work-life balance and productivity, crucial for organisational performance. Transparent and

consistent communication, along with emotional support, play vital roles in maintaining trust and enhancing team member engagement (Pattnaik and Jena, 2020). Intensified autonomy and flexibility that hybrid working has the ability to afford, further strengthen employees' connection to their employer and their commitment to their work (Pattnaik and Jena, 2020).

2.5.3 Engagement with the Work

Employee engagement, also referred to as work engagement, is when someone feels really excited and positive about their job and the company they work for. This positive mindset affects how they feel mentally and emotionally, which makes them want to work harder and do more. Usually, it also makes them feel satisfied. (Pattnaik and Jena, 2020; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Erickson, 2005). Remote engagement means that people who work away from the office are still enthusiastic, connected, and positive about their work. (Pattnaik and Jena, 2020).

Some research by Sardeshmukh et al. (2012) found that working from home can make people less engaged because they don't get as much feedback or social support. Schwabel (2018) also found that many remote workers feel disconnected from their job because they miss talking to their coworkers in person. However, Gallup (2017) says that part-time remote workers, especially those who work 60-80% of their time remotely, are often more engaged because they have more freedom. However, many studies have found that it is also important to give feedback often, as it can make employees three times more engaged (Gallup, 2017; Hickman and Robinson, 2020; Hickman and Robinson, 2020). According to Palumbo (2020), working from home can actually increase employee engagement by reducing feelings of exhaustion caused by working remotely. Working in an office might make it easier to keep employees engaged because they're

close to their coworkers. However, if employees spend a long time away from the office, they might feel disconnected and isolated, which can affect how they work and interact with others (Sonnentag et al., 2010; Pattnaik and Jena, 2020).

Even though remote work can be challenging, studies have shown tha it has benefits for organisational success because it can improve work-life balance and productivity. To keep employees engaged, it's crucial to communicate openly and regularly and to provide emotional support in the workplace. Giving employees more autonomy and flexibility in their work can also help them feel more connected and committed (Pattnaik and Jena, 2020).

2.5.4. Work Life Balance

When a person is able to successfully juggle their professional and personal lives, they are said to have achieved work life balance (Parkes and Langford 2008). Furthermore, it implies being able to intentionally balance one's life's obligations while supporting one's own welfare (Cook et al., 2021). The work life balance or its conflict addressed in literature often pertains to family responsibilities as well as married or parental status and extracurricular activities (Parkes and Langford 2008). As noted by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), an imbalance develops when the responsibilities and expectations of work and personal life clash, and when the demands placed on them are incompatible. Since a healthy work life balance is associated with lower stress levels and higher levels of life satisfaction, its importance has been emphasised in a great deal of the research reviewed as part of this study.

As a general rule, people tend to report higher quality of life outcomes when they prioritise their personal and familial lives over their professional and academic pursuits. A 2008 publication by Parkes and Langford shows there has not been a clear consensus in the research on hybrid working and wonk life balance despite extensive discussion (Gajendran and Harrison 2007). One positive aspect of remote work is that it gives employees more leeway to juggle multiple expectations at once, which means they can meet more of them. You can alleviate some of the stress by coordinating your work and family routines. (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007). Additionally, one can spend less time commuting and more time with loved ones or other activities thanks to remote work (Sull et al., 2020). Employees greatly appreciate the ability to work remotely since it allows them to strike a better balance between their work and personal lives, according to Allen et al. (2015).

However, the lines between one's private life and one's professional life are becoming increasingly porous and difficult to discern. People may notice this more when they work from the comfort of their own home. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is difficult since both can intrude on and impact one another. Problems include not being able to escape work entirely owing to constant location changes, the allure of working late into the night, and the overwhelming sense of needing to be reachable at all times (Wheatley 2012).

Remote working had a detrimental impact on participants' life-to-work and work-to-life conflicts, according to Palumbo's (2020) in their study of almost 9,900 public sector workers. Positive benefits of job engagement on work-life balance included an easier time managing the interaction between one's professional and personal lives. However, negative side effects were magnified due to work-related weariness, which

mediated the effects on work-life balance Palumbo's (2020). On the other hand, research by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) indicates that telecommuting actually reduces work-family conflicts by giving people more time to focus on their families.

2.5.5 Job Satisfaction

The word "satisfaction" appears in several contexts throughout a person's life and it can be defined as the good feeling you get when you acquire what you sought or when you accomplish something you set out to do, according to the Cambridge Dictionary. Nevertheless, when considering pleasure in a more nuanced, intricate, and specialised setting, like job satisfaction, this does not constitute an adequate and accurate description. Knowing what fulfilment entails is, then, of the utmost importance. However, as it is an internal behaviour, measuring it is challenging (Hecht, 1978). staisfaction in one's work life is a hotly debated subject. As a result, there are various interpretations that share commonalities.

The MBA Skool Team (2020) further defines it as the degree to which an employee feels self-motivated, pleased, and satisfied with his or her employment, in contrast to De Silva (2019), who only defines it as the feeling of wellbeing of employees about the job. According to Schall (2019), one popular literary description is that provided by Locke (1976) as an enjoyable or happy emotional state that arises from reflecting on one's employment or job experiences. A well-known theory on satisfaction in the workplace is Locke's Range of Affect theory. If one's expectations from their employment aren't met, then their level of job satisfaction will be low. Therefore, the degree to which an employee is content with their job is influenced by their values, which vary from person to person, and pertain to different aspects of the workplace, such as autonomy and teamwork. But there's an argument that says being overly saturated with

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any one aspect might make you unhappy. (Page, 2020) There are a number of reasons why satisfaction in one's work is vital. To start with, when workers are happy in their jobs, they give their all and get more done. Additionally, a high employee retention rate is likely to occur if workers are happier in their jobs and exhibit more dedication to the company. A company's bottom line should benefit from all of this in the end. Job satisfaction can be influenced by a number of factors. These include pay rate, working conditions, work-life balance, recognition, job security, challenges, and opportunities for advancement. Since job satisfaction has a significant impact on the employee's attitude towards their job and well-being, as well as other work-related outcomes, it has been the most discussed topic in the context of telecommuting (MBA Skool Team, 2020).

Researchers discover that remote work can boost job satisfaction to a certain level, albeit the results are not conclusive. Having said that, it is a complicated issue that depends on the degree of telecommuting and the involvement of several moderators or mediators. (Schall 2019; Allen et al. 2015; Golden and Veiga 2005; Gajendran and Harrison 2007). According to research, there is a relationship between the intensity of telecommuting and job satisfaction. At low levels, job satisfaction increases as the intensity of telecommuting expands, but at higher levels, this effect stagnates or even decreases. Therefore, there must be a sweet spot to ensure maximum satisfaction in one's work life. One possible explanation is the increased likelihood of experiencing social and professional isolation associated with more extensive telecommuting (Allen et al. 2015). Just depending on technology to replace face-to-face interaction is insufficient, since Golden and Veiga (2005) discovered a plateau at a level of 15.1 hours per week. However, it should be noted that this is limited to their sample of 321 tech-workers and

may differ in numbers when re-examined or evaluated in a broader context. (Schall, 2019: Golden and Veiga 2005; Golden 2006)

According to Golden and Veiga (2005), there is a relationship between the intensity of telecommuting and job satisfaction, although this association is moderated by task interdependence and job discretion. Task interdependence refers to the degree to which coworkers rely on each other to complete a given task (Morgeson and Humphrey 2006), whereas job discretion is a measure of how much autonomy employees have in deciding how a task is carried out (Langfred 2000). Higher levels of job satisfaction were reported by distant workers who exhibited low levels of interdependence and high levels of discretion, as compared to their counterparts. Low interdependence could be more satisfying due to the frustration for high interdependent task that can arise when it comes to misunderstandings or inadequate communication. Higher discretion on the other hand might be more beneficial to job satisfaction in remote work because those employees know how to communicate effectively for their instances while those with lower discretion are more likely exposed to frustration of having to clarify something or getting approval. (Veiga and Golden, 2005.)

Similarly, in their analysis Gajendran and Harrison (2007) have found that autonomy fully mediates positive impacts on job satisfaction due to the value of control at the workplace. What Golden and Veiga (2005), nonetheless, did not find was a significant moderation of work-schedule latitude on the relationship between telecommuting intensity and job satisfaction. It can be that this aspect is already seen as an integral part of professional work regardless of office work or telecommuting and therefore not influential on that relationship. (Golden and Veiga 2005.) Job satisfaction is further mediated by a decreased work-family conflict, lower information exchange and less stress from interruptions (Fonner and Roloff 2010). In a curvilinear relationship, the

extent of telecommuting and job satisfaction are influenced by factors such as work-family conflict and co-worker relationships, which Gajendran and Harrison (2007) identify as partial mediators. Golden (2006) has also identified leader-member exchange, team-member exchange, and work-family conflict as partial mediators. Moreover, Allen et al. (2015) highlight the following factors to also be related to job satisfaction:

- Feedback
- High-quality relationships with co-workers and supervisors
- Amount of technical and human resource support provided by the organisation
- Manager's trust
- Amount of telework training others in the workplace have received
- Minimal distractions from family members during work time.

It was found that organisational social support had the greatest positive impact on job satisfaction when telecommuting intensity was low. Insufficient provision thereof, however, has negative consequences on job satisfaction in all intensity levels along 20 with increased psychological strain due to for instance the social isolation. (Bentley et al. 2016.) Gajendran and Harrison (2007) additionally stress the voluntariness, job type, technology used and previous experience with telecommuting as decisive factors and moderators for job satisfaction that need to be taken into account. In fact, it is also crucial to consider how pronounced the job satisfaction of an individual was before starting to work remotely since it can have quite an influential role (Golden and Veiga 2005). Therefore, in order to maximise the promotion of job satisfaction among employees, it is crucial for managers to establish regulations for remote work that take into account not only the extent of telecommuting but also the many conditional factors that exist (Golden and Veiga 2005).

2.5.6 Collaboration

Interpersonal relationships on the job, including those with superiors and coworkers, are a source of anxiety for those who work remotely. Reduced in-person connections are associated with a decline in interpersonal capital, despite the fact that these encounters really offer the greatest levels of social presence and media richness (Gajendran and Harrison 2007). Therefore, neither the good nor the negative effects of remote work on the employee-coworker relationship have been discovered by Gajendran and Harrison (2007). This remained relevant regardless of the level of remote work. Surprisingly, though, at all degrees of telecommuting intensity, there was a positive correlation between remote work and the employee-supervisor connection. The only difference that Golden (2006b) found was a decline in the quality of relationships with coworkers, as reported by Allen et al. (2015). However, it should be mentioned that the impact of the previous relationship on the enhanced supervisorial relationship remains unclear. Supervisors may have given remote work opportunities to staff with whom they already had a solid rapport, according to Allen et al. (2015). Having said that, it must not be disregarded that remote work impacts not just individuals who conduct their jobs outside of the office, but also those who stay put, and that it changes the way they do things (Allen et al. 2015). Another issue that is closely related is the possibility of social and professional isolation. There is a real risk of becoming isolated if one works alone, for instance, from home and has far less in-person encounters than one would have if in a physical workspace. When it comes to everyday office chatter and the interpretation of nonverbal clues, employees may feel left out or even excluded (Gallatin 2018). Subsequent research found that employees' levels of job satisfaction, psychological strain, performance, and connection were all negatively impacted by this isolation

(Golden et al., 2008). Surprisingly, 62% of remote workers reported feeling socially isolated in a 2012 online poll that included almost 11,000 people from 24 different countries (Reaney 2012). Forms of, primarily informal, staff development are also absent as a result of isolation. In the workplace, this takes the shape of mentoring, informal learning, and interpersonal networking, all of which are critical for gaining exposure and, more importantly, for getting information that is helpful for their professional work and, perhaps, for their growth and promotion. As previously stated by Cooper and Kurland in 2002.

2.6 Navigating the Impact of Hybrid Work Arrangements during the Pandemic

Both the disruption and improvement of telecommuting and remote work have been brought forth by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. Not only has technology changed politics, society, and individual lives, but it has also changed the way businesses function almost instantly. Companies shifted to remote work, particularly for knowledge-intensive jobs, due to regulations, social distance rules, and health concerns among employees (Leonardi 2021). The unexpected and rapid situation was the problem. Because most businesses weren't ready, they could not have had sufficient software or hardware to support the sudden change in work habits, or they might not have had clear policies about telecommuting. Aside from that, there were legal concerns, network security, and data protection. Most workers are unprepared for remote work and associated processes because they are afraid of the unknown.

Before the pandemic, telecommuting was a choice; now, it's almost always a full-time requirement. The advantages of telecommuting are often associated with the fact that it is voluntary, however this is no longer guaranteed (Bilotta et al. 2021). There are unique challenges associated with remote work during a pandemic, such as health, social,

and job security issues, as well as personal irreversibility and a lack of ergonomic preparation (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés 2020). After such a sudden shift, not everyone is a fan of working remotely. A person's character, their job, their company's culture and strategy, their personal life, their home life, and the technology they use all have an impact on the final result, whether good or bad. Therefore, it may not be beneficial to transfer tasks from a centralised to a decentralised system without also modifying current methods of operation (Kaczmarek 2020). Isolation, problematic communication or collaboration, lack of feedback, interruptions, diminished work ethic, and muddled personal-professional boundaries are all possible outcomes of ineffective remote work. Nevertheless, the pandemic has shed light on the benefits and potential of remote work (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés 2020). In response to the new form of work, various sectors and companies have developed unique strategies.

Nevertheless, according to Buffer (2021), out of 2,300 employees surveyed, 97% would suggest working remotely. This includes 98.3% of those who have worked remotely before and 95.3% of those who were forced to do so due to Covid-19. Additionally, 82% of those surveyed said the shift was straightforward.

2.6.1 Personal Well-Being

It has been mentioned earlier that managing stresses and stress relievers actively might be difficult in telecommuting scenarios. It is unclear, however, how the Covid-19 pandemic will affect the stress levels of remote workers, some of whom may now be experiencing it involuntarily in addition to the voluntarily experienced stress that many others are already feeling. 43% of workers encounter everyday stress in 2020, a new high and a 5% increase from the prior year, as reported in the Gallup State of the Global Workplace study 2021 (Gallup, 2021). In addition, out of almost 1,200 American workers

polled, 69% said current crisis has been more stressful than previous crises like the Great Recession of 2008, and 43% said they have suffered from physical problems as a result (Ginger, 2020). One may argue that stress levels spiked when the pandemic hit, but they seem to be gradually returning to their levels before the outbreak.

There are a lot of chances for remote work made possible by online communication tools. Because of them, the option to work remotely full-time became a reality. Yet, the transition to remote work brings with it yet another onslaught of digital information, which in turn increases digital overload owing to the abundance of digital resources, data, and time spent in online meetings (Kokshagina, 2021). On a daily basis, the managers surveyed by Olga Kokshagina (2021) utilised nine different tools for collaboration and communication. Personio and Opinium (2021) found that 37% of workers think there are too many digital tools, and 36% of those workers feel that going back and forth between 25 different tools interrupts their productive workflow. Worker health and happiness are both impacted by the subsequent weariness. An example of this being a condition known as zoom fatigue which can develop after participating in several online meetings, which can be very draining. In 2021, Kokshagina Being online all the time and feeling like you need to be available at all times is another side effect of ICTs and remote work. In this way, the line between work and personal life becomes more porous, and business-related ICTs permeate private life. There is a positive association between techno-invasion and an increase in work-family conflict, leading to higher stress levels. This is in addition to techno-overload and techno-complexity, all of which are correlated with behavioural stress. Workload also affects the stressors brought on by ICTs, therefore it stands to reason that more work means greater stress. Having said that, there is a positive correlation between workload, tech invasion, and distant employment. In 2020, Mollo et al. found that it is clear that both individuals with and without prior

experience with telecommuting face additional pressures. Issues of job stability, role ambiguity, and Covid-19 health concerns are among these. Additional sources of stress include task interdependence, which occurs when online cooperation is ineffective or when professionals are isolated from one another, and workload pressure, which occurs when workloads are both increased and prolonged. As the lines between work and personal life continue to blur, an increase in workload can have a multiplicative effect, adding stress to an already difficult situation.

On a more personal note, there are emotional demands to do things like pretend to be happy all the time or act a certain way, so it's important to check in with yourself on a frequent basis and support genuine emotions. Additional physical demands include, but are not limited to, less natural mobility and fewer natural breaks, like coffee breaks, throughout the day. This highlights the need of minimising over-time and allowing staff to take shorter breaks or avoid consecutive meetings. The employee's health suffers as a result of the added stress and weariness caused by all of these variables. (Jamal et al. 2021; Bilotta et al. 2021.) In light of the fact that many workers may feel helpless in the face of the pandemic, it is important to promote the availability of resources that can alleviate some of the stress associated with working long hours and irregular schedules. In these pandemic times, when social isolation is a real concern, social support becomes even more important. For the sake of their employees' health and happiness, it is critical for employers to demonstrate compassion and understanding. Additionally, employees with the right technical training and experience, as well as the necessary technological resources, can be a valuable asset to any company. When processes run smoothly, they don't need this resource, but when problems and friction are constant, they quickly become a demand. Finally, serious thought should be given to the feedback resource. Since it does not occur easily or naturally, it is vital to maintain it since it presents as a

fundamental source of motivation and engagement in conventional work environments. On less formal occasions, like the way back to the office after a meeting or during a coffee break, there is less feedback in remote work settings. However, during the pandemic, it is more important to react to cognitive job demands, like role ambiguity, because feedback also helps to clarify. Also, workers feel more heard when they provide feedback to their employers, which boosts their engagement, commitment, and productivity on the job. (Jamal et al. 2021; Bilotta et al. 2021; Toscano and Zappalà 2020).

Because of the positive correlation between job resources and performance and job happiness, it is important to take each employee's unique needs into consideration while developing ways to boost these resources. One size does not fit all when it comes to general solutions. The beneficial impacts of a work-life balance on stress and fatigue can mediate this link even further. However, if those job resources are unavailable during the pandemic, it could have a negative impact on employees' social isolation and overall health as a result of the heightened stress they are forced to endure. (Jamal et al. 2021; Bilotta et al. 2021; Toscano and Zappalà 2020).

2.6.2 Work Efficiency and Effectiveness

Prior to the pandemic, studies demonstrated that worries about lower productivity or performance are generally unfounded, and that distant work actually has a positive correlation, particularly for tasks that are difficult, less dependent on others, and/or have little social support. Since individuals are increasingly compelled to work remotely, regardless of their comfort level, these worries may soon become considerable during the pandemic. The fact that more people were staying at home owing to social distancing meant that there were more potential distractions than there would be with individual

remote work agreements. Despite this, a a number of recent surveys and research have shown that staying home during a pandemic has had no effect on performance or output. Among 6,000 Australian government employees surveyed, 57% felt their productivity was the same as when they were in the office, 34.6% felt it was higher, and 8.4% felt it was lower (Colley and Williamson 2020). Another poll of European workers found that 39% were just as productive as when they were in the office, 32% were more productive, and 29% were less productive. Just over half of the employees (55%) indicated an increase in productivity, whereas 15% reported the same level and 30% reported a loss. This suggests that HR managers' view of productivity differs significantly from employees' own perceptions. According to Personio (2021), of almost 300 diverse employees surveyed, Folkman (2020) discovered that 66% were more productive overall.

A similar phenomena of improved performance has been discovered by Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi (2020), who attribute it to less distractions, a more pleasant setting, and enhanced attention. The workers' productivity seems unaffected by interruptions, even when they do occur (Mani and Siju 2021). Concurrently, one manager in the Colley and Williamson (2020) poll made the observation that it is important to remember that people can be productive or unproductive, and that their physical location does not play as big of a role as often thought. However, as pointed out by Sull et al. (2020), productivity rose for individuals working alone, like patent examiners or call centre personnel, but fell for those working in teams. The fact that workers are lucky to have jobs at all during the crisis, when they may otherwise face layoffs or unpaid leave, is one possible explanation for improved performance alongside more freedom and independence. Additionally, the barrier to entry into the workforce is significantly lower because the work-life divide is somewhat blurred. All of this has the potential to increase

productivity, particularly if employees perceive that their supervisor is monitoring them through digital means. In this approach, the need of maintaining a healthy work-life balance is diminished, and the prospect of overwork or overtime becomes a real possibility. Citations: (Bulut and Maimaiti 2021; Cook et al. 2021; Jamal et al. 2021.) For example, the risk of burnout, which contributed to lower productivity, is related to it. Employees cited a lack of internal motivation and morale, as well as poor mental and physical health and excessive tiredness, as other causes of their decreased performance; however, HR managers attributed these issues to external reasons, such as home childcare or diversions. (Opinium and Personio 2021; Personio 2021). In addition, as previously mentioned, social isolation has a detrimental impact on how productivity is perceived (Toscano and Zappalà 2020).

2.6.3 Engagement with Work

According on the target group and technique, the results on job engagement during the pandemic tend to be very subjective and, as a result, vary. Although Gallup (2021) and Folkman (2020) observed a 2% decline from 22% to 20% and 79% to 77% respectively, PRNewswire (2021) and Emmet et al. (2020) discovered a 1% increase from pre-lockdown levels of employee engagement. The result was an impression of a closer bond between worker and employer (PRNewswire 2021). In contrast, Quantum Workplace (2020) saw a drop when the pandemic struck in early 2020, followed by a quick upturn. Engaged workers were more likely to feel grateful to have their jobs when economic and labour conditions worsened, which is an interesting correlation. The end result was the lowest rate of voluntary resignations in the US in a decade. (Workplace of the Future, 2020). Involvement from workers is crucial for leaders and organisations to reach their maximum potential. And while it may be more convenient to meet with them

in person, it is essential to discover ways to accomplish it electronically. Crucial to that is open and honest communication as well as effective teamwork. Research by Emmet et al. (2020) and Pattnaik and Jena (2020) supports this. It is essential to acknowledge and address the fundamental requirements of workers for safety, stability, and security. There was a fourfold increase in engagement among workers who were happy with their companies' response to the crisis compared to those who were unhappy. The 2020 study by Emmet et al. it was found that mployee engagement is strongly correlated with their needs. According to Emmet et al. (2020), the top three demands are financial stability, employment security, and work-life balance.

2.6.4 Worklife Balance

Due to the pandemic and the necessity of working from home, the lines between one's personal, social, and professional lives have become increasingly blurry. Since this was the case, it was more difficult to draw a clear line between job and family life than it had been before. They no longer offer the same level of confidence and predictability that their balance did. Consequently, work-life balance can be upset when personal life, especially family, interferes with work life and vice versa. (Bulut and Maimaiti, 2021; Bilotta et al., 2021.) For example, being a professional, taking care of one's home, caring for children or the elderly, and other similar roles can all lead to confusion over responsibilities. When you have kids at home, there are extra responsibilities like supervising, teaching, exercising, and playing with them that add up to a lot of stress, on top of all the job you have to perform. Anxieties and dissatisifaction could ensue if family members have different or incorrect expectations of the remote worker. Also, getting away from family members for a while is much more of a challenge, which makes it harder to relax. (Anderson and Kelliher 2020; Bulut and Maimaiti 2021) that additional

difficulties that developed as a result of the abrupt change and the inability to choose one's work location included locating an appropriate home office where the worker could work undisturbed and participate in video conferences. Unless someone in the family had worked remotely before, most houses weren't set up for a home office. They also had to make sure they have the correct tools and technology at their disposal. Some examples of such need are consistent access to the internet (Anderson and Kelliher, 2020.) Despite the fact that some studies have shown a link between stress and the family interface at work, leading to a focus on role segmentation (Jamal et al., 2021), other studies have shown that employees like working remotely because it allows them to spend more time with their families or themselves and reduces their commute time (Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi, 2020). According to a 2020 survey by Colley and Williamson, 40% of workers felt they had more time to spend with their families as a result. When asked about the poor work-life balance, 23% of employees in another poll by Personio and Opinium (2021) said it should be grounds for termination. Slightly fewer human resources managers (20%) shared this view. Despite this, 53% of workers said their company was "good" in encouraging a healthy work-life balance.

2.6.5 Job Satisfaction

Scientists have discovered that being more worried about Covid-19 leads to greater happiness for persons who perceive themselves as being less productive. One possible explanation is that working from home seems like a safer option. When workers are happy with their work and their contributions, they worry less about the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, being alone at work lowers happiness levels. Concern about Covid-19 mediates this association as well; hence, individuals with a higher level of concern

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benefit more from less isolation, whereas those with a lower level of concern benefit more from a more secluded atmosphere (Toscano and Zappalà, 2021).

Consistent with earlier research linking fulfilled job resources to greater job satisfaction, Bhattarai (2020) identifies overwork and unmet social requirements as additional sources of discontent. According to Standish (2021), out of the total number of German employees, 44% are more content with their job than 17% are less satisfied. Contrarily, Boody (2020) discovered that while about 70% of Australian workers were happier and more happy overall, about 75% were annoyed that remote work was only introduced to corporations as a concept due to the pandemic and not earlier. Similarly, job satisfaction was higher than a year ago in a survey of 1,000 American workers. Up from 56.3% in 2019, it reached 56.9% in 2020. Employees over the age of 30 were more likely to report a decline in satisfaction, while those under the age of 30 were more likely to report an increase. There was no discernible difference when compared to office workers.

PRNewswire (2021) observed that companies' efforts to assist their employees and their families are greatly valued by them, which contributes to their overall happiness. Health insurance, performance reviews, flexible scheduling, and family leave policies are all examples of how employers are showing they care about their employees' health and wellbeing, which is especially important in light of the recent pandemic and the effects on retention and productivity. (Jamal et al., 2021; PRNewswire, 2021). While some people thrive in the home office model because of the increased freedom and quality time they have with their families, others find that the lack of personal interaction and the unfamiliar setting negatively impact their job satisfaction. There will be fewer people out of work, less stress, and a clear change in attitude from seeing employees as

shareholders to stakeholders, all of which should lead to higher job satisfaction during the pandemic, according to a Conference Board survey (PRNewswire, 2021)

2.6.6 Collaboration

Without a doubt, Covid-19 also significantly altered team dynamics. Analysing meta-data from more than three million users' meetings and emails during the initial pandemic lockdown revealed noticeable shifts in collaboration. As a result, there has been a 13.5% rise in the number of meetings but the average meeting length has fallen by 20.1%, or about 12 minutes. More meetings were held daily per individual, and meeting attendance increased. The convenience of remote work and the widespread use of online conferences may account for this. Nevertheless, a workday increased in duration by 8.2%, or 48.5 minutes every day. It was clear that email volume increased during the first week of the lockdown, peaked during the second week, and subsequently declined to levels seen before the lockdown. Even emails received outside of business hours had the same impact. Reference: (DeFilppis et al., 2020). The capacity to fulfil deadlines was positively affected by the transition to working from home, thanks to the improved flexibility in working hours. The lack of social connection and the unavailability of decision-makers meant that work sharing remained basically unchanged or even worse. (Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi, 2020.) The elimination of coffee breaks and office socialising, two forms of casual social interaction, is a big worry for remote workers who worry their relationships with coworkers will suffer as a result. Additionally, getting to someone else's office quickly became an impossibility. The severe absence of social connection in the workplace is mostly attributable to the fact that, due to the usage of ICT, the majority of the content delivered is task and job related. While 61% of French workers reported a strong feeling of team togetherness (Standish 2020), 77% of Aussies

revealed a dearth of social engagement with coworkers and the office vibe, compared to 50% worldwide (Boddy, 2020). Once again, 36% of workers in the Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi (2020) survey estimated no change in team cohesion, 32% estimated an increase, and 32% estimated a decrease.

2.7 The Need for Leadership

One of the most important components of effective hybrid work is strong leadership (Offstein et al., 2010; Gross, 2018). Accordingly, organisations should facilitate leaders' ability to lead, as well as their interpretation and response to its outcomes (Thomas and Cheese, 2005), particularly in the face of significant change. Managers may help employees remain engaged and productive by being aware of the issues of hybrid work and how to effectively handle them (Larson and Dechurch, 2020). Managers should bear in mind that when employees work hybrid shifts, the work is characterised by elements other than those of traditional office employment. The amount of structure and communication needed for employees to be effective, as well as the degree of dependence among virtual team members, alter the leader's operating context and, by extension, their responsibilities (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002). Because every team is distinct, and because each leader has their own set of challenges while leading a virtual team, they imply that the significance of leadership styles in hybrid and remote teams varies significantly. A leader with excellent communication and leadership abilities is essential for a highly dependent and communicative team whose members work together to achieve a common objective. Teams that are formed for a specific project or temporary tasks also require a leader with clear expectations and goals, as well as enough support for the duration of the project or the team's existence. Teams that are described as parallel, on the other hand, require feedback and occasional communication but do not

require as much management and coordination. They are characterised by low levels of communication and interdependence in a team setting where the work might be dispersed and individual (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002).

If we want to be effective leaders in the future, we need to combine old and modern techniques, according to Kane et al. (2019). Given the altered circumstances at each end of the leadership spectrum, it is possible to view the leader's shift in leadership as having two dimensions (Erskine, 2012). Leaders should help their staff adjust to the new hybrid work environment by navigating it themselves and adjusting their leadership style accordingly. Because leadership is relationship-based and requires interaction between leaders and followers, there are a number of ways in which being physically absent from an office can hinder leadership (Erskine, 2012). Employees have a harder time reaching out to, supporting, and sharing information with bosses and coworkers due to distance. For both virtual and face-to-face interactions to be successful, communication strategies need to evolve (Wiatr and Showron-Mielnik, 2023). In addition, Reeves (2021) maintains that leaders must be sympathetic and open to new ways of thinking in order to successfully establish hybrid workplaces. The three pillars of effective hybrid leadership—a collaborative culture, trust, and flexibility—form an iterative process. Having open lines of communication, setting clear standards, showing empathy, and accommodating employees' particular needs are all crucial (Reeves, 2021).

Ziek and Smulowitz (2014) investigated successful leadership in virtual teams; they found that leadership style, communication, trust, goal setting, and accountability were crucial for successful remote leadership; these notions put out by Reeves (2021) are in line with this research. This is supported by the findings of a virtual experiment conducted by DeRosa et al. (2004). The researchers changed the leadership and trust variables to see how they affected team performance. They found that teams with high

levels of trust and leadership outperformed their peers with low levels. In addition, trust was discovered to mediate the relationship between team performance and leadership, suggesting that leaders were able to achieve better results and overcome hybrid work's obstacles with the help of higher trust levels. (Rosa et al., 2004)

The three-tiered strategy proposed by Hoch and Kozlowski (2014) for directing remote teams is as follows: "Hierarchical Leadership," "Structural support," and "Shared team leadership." An example of a hierarchical leader in a remote team would be a manager. This leader's responsibilities in a virtual environment include understanding the difficulties of hybrid work, communicating effectively, offering direction, and providing clear feedback. It goes on to stress how crucial the organisation's "Structural support" is. Organisations must offer their employees with structural support in the form of policies, technology, and the adaption of new procedures for hybrid work in order to establish an efficient and successful work environment. And lastly, in their discussion of "shared team leadership," Hoch and Kozlowski (2014) highlight the significance of delegating tasks to team members in order to foster engagement and dedication to shared objectives, in an environment where team culture offers opportunities for teamwork, input, and skill development.

2.8 Summary

The rise of hybrid working has become a significant paradigm shift in the contemporary work landscape, driven by the Covid-19 pandemic. This work arrangement, which combines remote and office-based work, offers employees unprecedented flexibility while maintaining cohesion and productivity. Technological advancements, such as cloud-based software and seamless communication tools, have led to widespread adoption of remote work. However, the pandemic's disruptions have also

highlighted the need for organisations to rethink traditional work models and embrace remote and hybrid arrangements.

Despite the benefits of hybrid working, its implementation presents challenges, such as communication and collaboration issues, as well as disparities in workspace quality between remote and office-based workers. This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of hybrid working, shedding light on its evolution and experiences both before and during the pandemic.

Organisations must gain a deeper understanding of hybrid working and its implications for various stakeholders, including employees, managers, and organisational leaders. By embracing a flexible and adaptable approach, organisations can leverage the benefits of hybrid working while addressing its inherent challenges. Moreover, ongoing research and scholarly inquiry are essential for advancing our understanding of hybrid working and informing evidence-based strategies for its successful implementation and management.

The effects of hybrid working before the pandemic have been complex, with concerns about the impact on personal well-being, work efficiency, and employee engagement. Studies have highlighted the complex interplay between remote work arrangements and employees' mental, emotional, and physical health. While remote work offers opportunities for autonomy and flexibility, it also presents challenges such as technostress, role ambiguity, and decreased social support, which can contribute to feelings of isolation and burnout among employees.

Effective communication and social support are crucial in mitigating challenges related to team cohesion and task completion in remote settings. The intensity of remote work, coupled with job characteristics like complexity and interdependence, further influences its impact on performance outcomes.

The effects of hybrid working before the pandemic underscore the nuanced and multifaceted nature of remote work practices. As organisations navigate the evolving landscape of work, it is essential to address these challenges and leverage the benefits of hybrid working to promote employee well-being, productivity, and organisational performance.

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the concept of work-life balance, presenting both challenges and opportunities for individuals and organisations. Remote work can blur the lines between personal and professional lives, making it difficult for many to maintain a sense of fulfillment and fulfillment. Challenges such as limited feedback and social support can lead to feelings of isolation and disengagement for some employees. Work-life balance, essential for overall well-being, can be both facilitated and hindered by remote work, as telecommuting offers flexibility but can also blur the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to increased stress and difficulty in disconnecting from work-related responsibilities.

Job satisfaction, influenced by factors such as autonomy, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and work-life balance, plays a pivotal role in employee retention and productivity. Remote work can impact job satisfaction positively or negatively depending on the degree of telecommuting, individual preferences, and organisational support. Collaboration, vital for effective teamwork and professional development, can be challenging in a remote work setting due to reduced in-person interactions and feelings of isolation.

To address these challenges and maximise the benefits of remote work, organisations must prioritise open communication, provide adequate support and resources, and establish policies that promote work-life balance and job satisfaction. Fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, both in virtual and physical settings,

is essential for maintaining employee engagement and well-being in an increasingly remote work environment. By understanding and addressing the complexities of remote work, organisations can create a supportive and productive work environment that enables employees to thrive professionally and personally.

In conclusion, the Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally reshaped the concept of work-life balance, presenting both challenges and opportunities for individuals and organisations alike. The abrupt transition to remote work blurred the lines between personal and professional lives, making it difficult for many to maintain a sense of balance and fulfillment. Job satisfaction has emerged as a critical factor in navigating the complexities of remote work, with some employees reporting higher levels of satisfaction due to increased autonomy and flexibility, while others have expressed concerns about social isolation and decreased connection with colleagues. Effective leadership is crucial in supporting employees through this transition, with clear communication, empathy, and adaptability.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

As workplaces evolve, hybrid models that combine remote and in-office employment have become more prevalent. Nobody knows what happens to company culture, work-life balance, and employee performance when hybrid work arrangements are successfully implemented. This is due to the fact that businesses have taken various approaches to hybrid working since there is no universally accepted model. An evolving landscape of work from home teams, in-office professionals, digital nomads, and flexible preferences was the description of the shifting landscape in KPMG's 2021 book, The Future of Work: A Playbook for the People, Technology, and Legal Considerations for a Successful Hybrid Workforce. Additionally, they recognised that in order to effectively deploy hybrid working, every company must develop its own vision for the hybrid model.

Few details regarding the advantages of remote working for both employers and workers have emerged from the various studies that have been conducted on the topic that existed prior to the pandemic. It is now more important than ever to comprehend how remote work enables hybrid labour in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, organisations had to establish new protocols to keep operations running smoothly even while workers were remotely. After resolving this issue, numerous businesses are now confronted with a new one. In a mixed workplace paradigm, how can they balance the day to day of their business needs with the desire of those wanting to avail of remote working more.

3.2 Research Approach

When answering a research question, it's important to think about the researcher's philosophical position and worldview on information and reality (Crotty, 1998). According to Davis and Fisher (2018), a researcher's study paradigm—their way of thinking and seeing the world—must match their own philosophy. Research paradigms are made up of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). Some of these factors are how data is collected and analysed, the beliefs and theories about reality, and the concepts and ideas about how to learn, understand, and use accurate information (Crotty, 1998; Davies and Fisher, 2018; Wahyuni, 2012). This choice is based on the study's research topic, the researcher's own beliefs and values, and the study's target group (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Tubey et al., 2015). Paradigms affect both the research questions and the methods used in a study (Davies and Fisher, 2018). Due to the changing nature of Covid-19, the topics this study covers are complicated, personal, and hard to fully comprehend using standard, one-on-one research methods.

It was decided that mixed-methods research is the best method for this study as it allows trends found in the data to be combined with what other researchers have already found (McKim, 2017). An mixed methods research strategy uses abductive reasoning, a type of reasoning that combines deductive and inductive reasoning, in its logical inferences and theory construction to get the most accurate results when predicting truth and reality (Mitchell, 2018). Furthermore, Sanscartier (2020) says that to deal with the practical difficulties of studying social phenomena, one needs to adopt a craft mindset. This can be hard to do when trying to find important, recurring themes in mixed methods research. There are three steps:

1. Accepting the unknown in emergent research design

2. Using results to guide analysis instead of getting in the way of it

3. Immersing oneself in the study goals through stories

This craft mentality guides this research so that it can accurately describe how complicated reality is, especially when it comes to the Covid-specific data-related contextual elements. (Sanscartier, 2020).

3.2.1 Pardigm

Paradigms are the various ways in which individuals comprehend and make use of the actual world in their scholarly pursuits (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016; Morgan, 2014). Greene and Caracelli (2003) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) are two of the many competing paradigmatic views that have been advanced in an effort to determine which one is most compatible with mixed methods research. According to Greene and Caracelli (2003) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), this is mostly due to differing opinions regarding the significance and suitability of ontological and epistemological perspectives in mixed methods research. Positive, postpositivist, interpretivist, or critical inquiry paradigms do not readily accommodate the notion of mixed methods research integrating two distinct research methodologies, as elucidated by Feilzer (2010).

Pragmatism, like other paradigms that deny the compatibility of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, does not rely on conventional metaphysical assumptions on the nature of reality and the sources of our knowledge (Morgan, 2014; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003). Pragmatism, on the other hand, is a more radical new paradigm in research that rejects outmoded philosophical reasons (Morgan, 2014; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003). Because it is considered ephemeral, the current truth is subject to change (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Because of this, the paradigm is more flexible and open. Theories, according to this view, can be both true and false, or have varying

degrees of validity and truthfulness (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). To this, Greene and Caracelli (2003) add that pragmatists do not consider themselves theoretically tied to any one paradigm. This is in keeping with mixed methods research, which encourages multidisciplinary research that delves into larger concepts, sometimes outside the confines of a particular subject. This study's findings may be useful for purposes outside the Covid-19 pandemic. Plus, they could be useful for future worldwide disturbances. According to pragmatism, which shares certain principles with mixed methods research, several perspectives, even those that seem diametrically opposed—can provide valuable insights into the world (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism, as stated by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), prioritises answering the research question and focusing on the question itself over selecting an appropriate research methodology.

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the point of integrating qualitative and quantitative research is to find a more effective approach than only employing one. Nonetheless, there are instances where mixed methods research and practicality are less helpful because to their respective flaws. On their own, these research methodologies have merit due to their versatility, uniqueness, and practicality. The argument that pragmatism is compatible with mixed methods research hinges on this flexibility as well (Morgan, 2014). Researchers can use pragmatism to sidestep some common philosophical issues, according to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). Doing so allows researchers to concentrate on the practical applications of the study's findings rather than clarifying the researchers' meaning of "data usefulness and workability" in mixed methods research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A weaker argument may result from pragmatism's prioritisation on practicality over organised theory.

Despite these issues, the benefits of pragmatism's adaptability as a philosophical framework and its compatibility with mixed methods research considerably exceed the drawbacks (Mitchell, 2018). Using a pragmatic approach allows you to select a method that is appropriate for your research issue, such as combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. According to Fleischzer (2010), Tashakkori and Teddle (1998), and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), this opens up more possibilities for incorporating other ideas and methodologies into your research. As it is based on complex situations and behaviours, a pragmatic paradigm is the appropriate choice for mixed methods research, which is why the study is so complex (Greene and Caracelli, 2003). Although qualitative data and analysis are the main emphasis of this study, numerical objectivity is provided by the quantitative sections that examine elements that interact with the qualitative components.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

The evolution of work practices in response to technological advancements and societal shifts has led to the emergence of hybrid working arrangements, characterised by a combination of remote and on-site work. As organisations navigate towards the normalising of hybrid models, there is a growing need to understand the implications of these arrangements for employee well-being, productivity, and organisational effectiveness. In light of this, the present study seeks to address key research questions aimed at exploring the experiences, challenges, and concerns associated with hybrid working. Specifically, the study will investigate the factors influencing employees' perceptions of work-life balance and collaboration in hybrid work environments, as well as the impact of hybrid working on job performance and organisational dynamics. By examining these research questions through a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative insights with quantitative measurements, we aim to provide a comprehensive

understanding of the complexities of hybrid working and draw conclusions on its sustainability as a workforce model.

3.3.1 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

- **Research question 1:** How is hybrid working being implemented in workplaces?
- **Research question 2:** Are there specific factors concerning employees that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model
- **Research question 3:** Are there specific factors concerning those with responsibility for managing people that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model
- **Research question 4:** How are people envisioning the future of hybrid working?

3.4 Research Design

The design of this study is a mixed method, cross sectoral study. For phase one of the study, evolving from the analysis of published research and literature, a quantitative only questionnaire will be developed and published with set criteria for participation.

Phase two will consist of semi structured interviews. A stratified sample of ten participants will be chosen based on those with managerial experience and those with not. The stratified sample will be determined from the total number of respondents to the questionnaire. The participants of the semi structured interviews will be different to those from the questionnaire.

The set questions will be the same as the questionnaire with time allocated for participants to elaborate on their answers.

3.4.1 Mixed Method Research

Mixed methods research has been referred to the third major research approach because it is being used and liked more and more (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003). Mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative research into one design, generally giving one more weight than the other, either at the same time or one after the other (Creswell et al., 2003; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003). Many academics have tried to explain this mixed research method over the years, but for this study, the official definition of mixed methods researchis using both qualitative and quantitative research strategies, techniques, methods, approaches, ideas, or language in the same study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Feilzer (2010) says that mixed methods researchlets researchers look into things that might need a lot of study and analysis, which is why two research methods are needed. But this research method can be chosen or not depending on the researcher's philosophical views (Migiro and Magangi, 2011) and the research question, goal, and setting (McKenna et al., 2020; Venkatesh et al., 2013). All of these things have been taken into account in the following explanation of why mixed methods researchwas chosen for this study. There are a lot of good things about using mixed methods research compared to only qualitative or quantitative study (Venkatesh et al., 2013). One could even say that mixed methods researchcan find answers to study questions that other research designs and methods can't (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003; Şahin and Oztürk, 2019). Some experts say that while qualitative research questions are called exploratory

and quantitative research questions are called confirmatory, mixed methods researchlets a researcher answer both types of questions at the same time, making it easier to test and create theory in the same study (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003). For example, a study that only uses qualitative or quantitative research will have much fewer research questions.

Mixed methods research, on the other hand, can answer a wider range of research questions because it doesn't have to stick to a single method (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Researchers who use mixed methods researchcan also compare different ways of interpreting data to better understand and analyse a certain phenomenon. This helps them draw stronger conclusions from their study (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2013). This makes it possible to back up and combine a study's results with other data that supports the researcher's ideas, conclusions, and insights (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As the study goes on, the researcher can look back at their qualitative results to get a better sense of what the data mean in a broader sense (Malina et al., 2011). Similarly, statistical studies can be looked at again using the knowledge gained from qualitative data to see if similar evidence that supports the first hypothesis is found (Malina et al., 2011). This benefit also lets researchers look into a wider range of points of view on a phenomenon (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003), which supports the thinking 32 and choice of method for this study. Researchers can use the best parts of both qualitative and quantitative methods when they use mixed methods research, while avoiding the problems that a traditional, one-on-one method might stop them from (Mitchell, 2018). Because mixed methods researchcombines and backs up both qualitative and quantitative findings, it can provide stronger proof for the results it creates (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

3.4.2 Cross Sectional

The data in a cross-sectional study is only collected at one specific moment in time. Research subjects for this type of study are chosen according to certain criteria. Although many fields, such as social science and education, make use of cross-sectional studies, developmental psychology is one among them. You can't utilise cross-sectional studies to find out what causes something, like an illness, because they are observational and descriptive in nature; they aren't causal or relational. Scientists take notes on a population's characteristics without changing any of the underlying factors. Despite its usefulness for describing community features, correlational research cannot establish causation between variables. Inferences on potential relationships or the collection of early data to support additional research and experimentation are common uses for this strategy.

A cross-sectional study is characterised by several important features, such as:

- The study takes place at a single point in time
- It does not involve manipulating variables
- It allows researchers to look at numerous characteristics at once
- It's often used to look at the prevailing characteristics in a given population
- It can provide information about what is happening in a current population

(Cheery, 2022)

A cross-sectional study captures a group of people at a specific moment in time; it's like a picture in time. For the purpose of describing what is happening right now, researchers conduct cross-sectional studies rather than longitudinal ones, which follow a group of people over a lengthy period of time.Finding out what features are most common in a group at a given moment is a common goal of this kind of study. To find

out whether there is a correlation between certain outcomes and exposure to certain risk factors, for instance, one could do a cross-sectional study.

3.5 Sampling and Participating

The study was open to anyone to participate once they met condition 1 and condition 2 or 3 of the study's criteria:

1. Having experience of hybrid working
2. Being an employee of an organisation
3. Being an employee of an organisation with managerial responsibility.

The questionnaire and expression of interest to take part in interviews were distributed using email lists, LinkedIn channels, and other social media channels.

For the questionnaire used in this study, purposive sampling to select participants was used so that the research could reach its goals. According to Mukherji and Albon (2010), one nonprobability sampling method is purposeful sampling. This strategy acknowledges that study participants do not have to be representative of the population at large. It was thought for this study that this was the best approach because, according to Gall et al. (2007), the idea behind purposive sampling is to select research participants based on their potential to provide detailed, high-quality information that supports the study's goals and objectives.

For the semi structured interviews, a stratified presentative sample was used. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population of interest into distinct subgroups or strata based on relevant characteristics, such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, or geographical location (Babbie, 2016). The purpose of stratification is to ensure that each subgroup is adequately represented in the sample, thereby minimising sampling bias and enhancing the accuracy of research findings. By stratifying the population, researchers

can account for variability within different demographic or categorical groups, leading to more precise estimations and robust statistical analyses.

3.6 Instrumentation

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are the most common way of gathering data from a sample of individuals. Questionnaire is a list of questions each with a range of answers. It is also a format that enables standardised, relatively structured, data to be gathered about each of a large number of cases. Questionnaires are now commonly used at all levels of social research, from small scale students and community projects through to large-scale international surveys.

The main commonalities between those surveys is the formulation of a set of questions sometimes and answers which are going to help the researcher to answer his research question or test his hypothesis (Matthews and Ross, 2010). Most questionnaires have already structured answers, but some of them have some open questions which gather semi structured data. Following Matthews and Ross (2010) designing the questionnaire is the most important stage in this type of research because once the questionnaire is designed the researcher has determined the questions and the answers and he will not be able to go back and get further information. The researchers need to be certain that the questions they ask are going to enable gathering of the needed data. Phillips (2008) stated that a questionnaire may contain any or all of these types of questions:

1. Open-ended questions allow unlimited answers. Questions are followed by ample blank space for the responses.

2. Checklists provide a list of items, and the participant is asked to check those that apply in the situation.

3. Two-way questions limit answers to a pair of alternative responses (yes and no).

4. Multiple-choice questions provide several possible answers, and the participant is asked to select the one that is most applicable.

5. Ranking scales require the participant to rank a list of items

From the five types of questions described above, selection what type or types will result in the specific data needed. The planned data analysis and variety of data needed should be considered when deciding which types of questions to use (Phillips, 2008). A questionnaire is usually designed to collect a number of different types of data including: facts- about people or events, descriptions-people's descriptions about something that, for example, has happened to them, knowledge-what people know about something, opinions-what this opinion is about they have experienced or know about, attitudes/values-their attitudes toward other people, institutions, ideas and so on, and background information about the respondent which may be linked to the research topic (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

For this study, the questionnaire will be designed with five sections with section 4 being only applicable to those with managerial responsibilities.

- **Section 1:** Study demographics
- **Section 2:** Investigating hybrid arrangements
- **Section 3:** Employee focused
- **Section 4:** Manager focused
- **Section 5:** Future considerations

For this study the questionnaire will be designed in a way that all questions will utilise a likert-type scale for the responses. Vogt (2009) note that a Likert-type scale involves a series of statements that respondents may choose from in order to rate their responses to evaluative questions.

As mentioned, the semi structured interviews will follow the same questioning with the option to allow participants to elaborate on their responses to all the study to delve deeper into the responses received.

3.6.2 Semi Structured Interview

According to Mason (2002), in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing" are what make up "qualitative interviewing. The goals of the study should inform the interviewers' responses to a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed information from them (Hancock et al., 2007).

Semi structured interviews were utilised in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and to allow them to interpret on significant subjects (Dörnyei, 2007). Despite briefing all participants on the study's purpose and topic, the study refrained from issuing the interview guide to avoid participants providing scripted responses that could compromise the study's validity and reliability (Dörnyei, 2007). Interviews, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), are a versatile method of gathering information since they allow the researcher to pick up on both verbal and non-verbal cues. The researcher has complete command of the interview and can steer the participants towards the desired topic. According to Cannell and Kahn (1968), referenced in Cohen et al. (2007), the interview is a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research

relevant information, and focused on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation.

3.7 Data Collection

By gathering both quantitative and qualitative information, this mixed-methods study was able to address its research questions using a convergent parallel mixed-methods strategy. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a more complete picture of the subject, making it a suitable research design (Mertler, 2017). Without intervening or changing the participants' viewpoints, researchers can describe them in a descriptive study (Mertler, 2017; Patten and Newhart, 2017). The study research questions and the methods of data collection are shown to be aligned in Table 3.

Table 3: Research questions and data collection methods

Research Question	Data Collection Method
Research question 1: How is hybrid working being implemented in workplaces?	- Questionnare - Semi structured interview
Research question 2: Are there specific factors concerning employees that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model	- Questionnare - Semi structured interview
Research question 3: Are there specific factors concerning those with responsibility for managing people that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model	- Questionnare - Semi structured interview

Research question 4: How are people envisioning the future of hybrid working?	• Questionnare • Semi structured interview

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is a fundamental aspect of research, influencing the validity and reliability of study findings. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are widely employed methods for gathering data in both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms.

3.8.1 Data Collection Procedures for Questionnaires

Designing the Questionnaire: The first step in the data collection process for questionnaires involves designing the questionnaire instrument. Researchers must define the research objectives, identify the constructs to be measured, and formulate clear and concise questions that elicit relevant responses from participants (Dillman et al., 2014). Attention should be paid to the wording, structure, and formatting of questions to enhance clarity and minimise response bias (Fowler, 2013).

Administration: Questionnaires can be administered using different methods, including paper-based surveys, online surveys, and telephone interviews (Dillman et al., 2014). Researchers should consider factors such as accessibility, cost, and respondent preferences when selecting the administration mode. Clear instructions should be provided to participants, and efforts should be made to maximise response rates (Fowler, 2013).

Data Analysis: Once the data have been collected, researchers proceed to analyze the responses. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires are often analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and factor

analysis (Bryman, 2016). Researchers should ensure the accuracy and reliability of data analysis procedures to draw valid conclusions from the findings.

3.8.2 Data Collection Procedures for Semi-Structured Interviews

Developing the Interview Protocol: The first step in conducting semi-structured interviews involves developing an interview protocol or guide. Researchers identify the key topics or themes to be explored and formulate open-ended questions that facilitate in-depth discussions (Rubin and Rubin, 2011). The interview protocol provides a flexible framework for guiding the conversation while allowing for spontaneity and exploration of emergent ideas.

Sampling: Sampling in semi-structured interviews follows similar principles as questionnaire-based research. Researchers select participants who possess relevant knowledge or experiences related to the research topic and ensure diversity in perspectives to enrich the data (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and maximum variation sampling are commonly used techniques in qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

Conducting the Interviews: Semi-structured interviews are characterised by a conversational and interactive format. Researchers establish rapport with participants, explain the purpose of the study, and obtain informed consent before commencing the interview (Rubin and Rubin, 2011). During the interview, researchers employ active listening techniques, probe for detailed responses, and allow participants to share their perspectives and experiences freely.

Data Analysis: Qualitative data analysis involves a systematic process of coding, categorising, and interpreting the interview transcripts to identify patterns, themes, and insights (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Researchers may use thematic analysis, content

analysis, or grounded theory approaches to analyze the data and derive meaningful conclusions (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Rigor and reflexivity are essential in qualitative data analysis to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of findings.

Data collection procedures for questionnaires and semi-structured interviews entail several key steps, including instrument design, sampling, administration, and data analysis. By adhering to methodological principles and best practices, researchers can enhance the validity, reliability, and credibility of their research findings. Considerations such as questionnaire design, sampling techniques, interview protocol development, and data analysis strategies are paramount in ensuring the rigor and integrity of research studies.

3.9 Reliability and Validity of the Study

It is important that research is both valid and reliable. Denscombe (2011) describes validity as referring to the 'accuracy and precision of the data,' as well as whether or not the data answers the research question appropriately. Reliability and validity are not viewed separately in qualitative research as they are in quantitative research. Instead, the terms used encompass credibility, transferability and trustworthiness are used (Golafshani, 2003).

A trustworthiness record is established by drawing on different data sources (Grinnell and Unrau, 2011). Trustworthiness is concerned with the conclusions generated from the research study (Bryman, 2001). An approach which is as unbiased and as fair as possible will be trustworthy if it answers the research question. This study made every effort to ensure the research is trustworthy.

Bryman (2001) describes the generalisability, or external validity, as whether a single case can be representative of yielding findings which may be applied to other cases. In qualitative research this is known as creditability. Denscombe (2011) defines reliability as to 'whether a research instrument is neutral in its effect and consistent across multiple occasions of use.' Bryman (2001) explains that reliability questions if the research projects results are repeatable. While reliability is mainly an issue with quantitative data, the concept of reliability is relevant in case studies as the study could be repeated in similar or different circumstances. In qualitative research reliability is known as transferability. The research methodology in this study is clear to enable replication in another case or set of circumstances. This study may be replicated if its findings do not match the literature (Bryman, 2001). Bryman states that in order for replicability, it is imperative that the researcher details and describes the procedures in great detail. The study is transferable and reliable as the research method has been very clearly described and this would enable other researchers to carry out the study as it was in this instance.

3.10 Conclusion

Recognising the paramount importance of comprehending sustainability of hybrid working, this study aims to fill a critical knowledge gap, elucidating its potential as a viable paradigm for the future workforce across diverse sectors and organisations. Addressing the research question necessitates meticulous consideration of researchers' philosophical orientations and methodologies. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative depth with quantitative breadth, the study endeavors to provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in hybrid working. The adoption of a pragmatic paradigm, rejecting philosophical dogmatism in favor of adaptability and

practicality, aligns with the multifaceted nature of the research topic and facilitates a comprehensive exploration of its dimensions.

The research design encompasses a cross-sectoral, mixed-methods study, employing both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to capture a multifaceted perspective. The uae of purposive and stratified sampling techniques ensures the selection of participants capable of providing rich, insightful data pertinent to the study's objectives.

As the study unfolds, thorough attention is paid to data collection and analysis, underpinned by rigorous adherence to principles of reliability, validity, and replicability. Through systematic data analysis, the study endeavors to unearth patterns, themes, and insights crucial for a comprehensive understanding of hybrid working dynamics.

Ultimately, this research not only contributes to bridging existing knowledge gaps but also offers practical insights and implications for organisations navigating the complexities of hybrid working arrangements. By shedding light on the factors influencing employee perceptions, managerial challenges, and future outlooks, the study seeks to inform strategies for optimising the implementation and management of hybrid work models, thereby facilitating organisational resilience and success in the evolving landscape of work.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire and semi structured interviews conducted as part of this study. Throughout the analysis of the data gathered, the chapter uncovers the factors that create concerns for those who participated in relation to hybrid working. The findings will be used to develop assumptions and options on the sustainability of hybrid working a workforce model.

In advance of participating in the study, the participants were made aware that their response should be made through the lens of looking to the future and not just to the immediate. As part of the research design, the questionnaire and the semi structured interviews asked the participants the same questions with the interviews offering the opportunity to delve further into the responses. In the presentation of the data, the percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
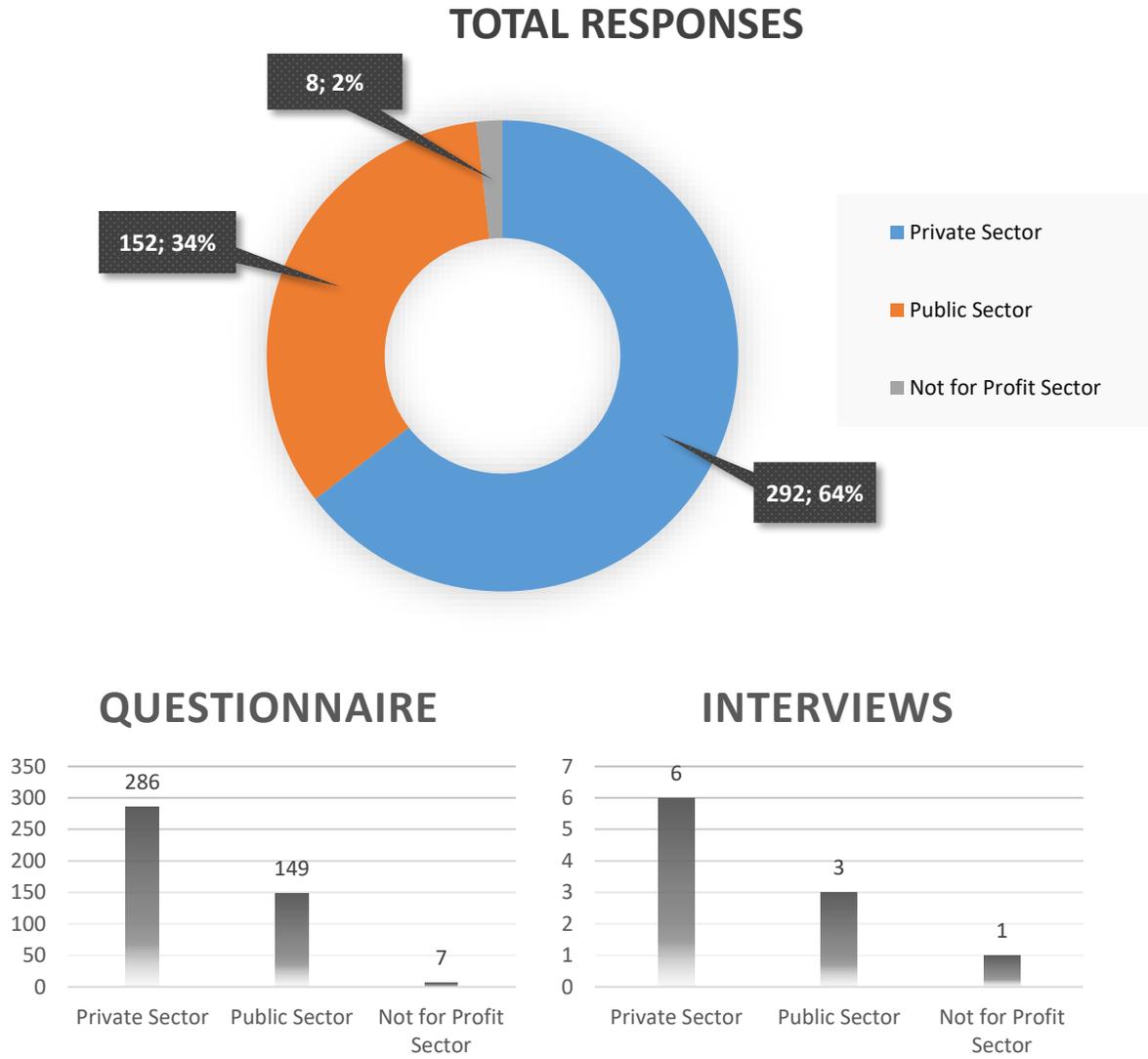
4.2 Demographic Information

Responses were received from 452 employees. Of the 452, 172 participants identified themselves as having managerial responsibilities while still reporting to a manager themselves.
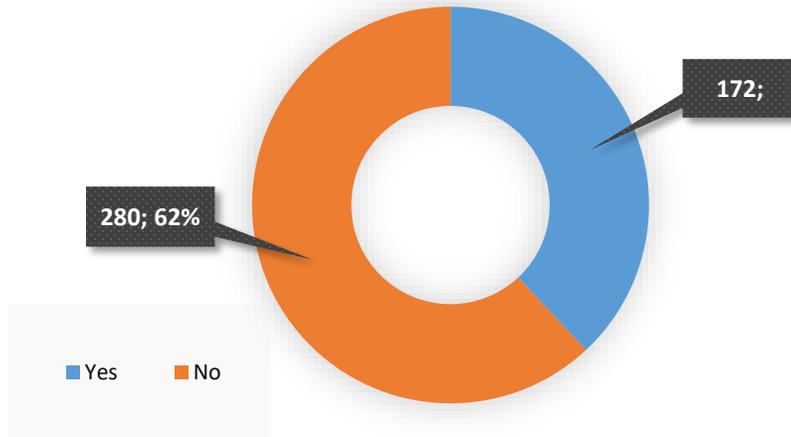
n=442 was the total number that engaged in the questionnaire and n=10 was the total number that engaged in the interviews.

Of the total number of participants that engaged with the study, 68% identified as working in the private sector, with 34% working in the public sector. The remaining 2% identified as working in the not for profit sector.

Figure 1: Overview of study respodents

TOTAL RESPONSES

8; 2%

152; 34%

292; 64%

- Private Sector
- Public Sector
- Not for Profit Sector

QUESTIONNAIRE

286

149

7

Private Sector | Public Sector | Not for Profit Sector

INTERVIEWS

6

3

1

Private Sector | Public Sector | Not for Profit Sector

RESPONSIBILE FOR MANAGINING PEOPLE

172;

280; 62%

Yes   No

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

33; 7%

112; 25%

199;

34; 7%

39; 9%

19; 4%

16;

Administrative and support services

Arts, entertainment and recreation

Education
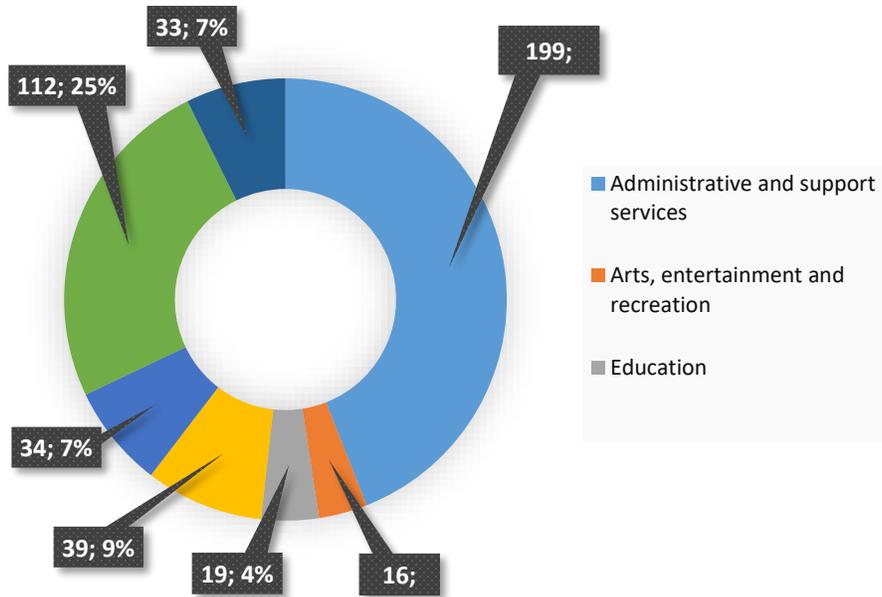
4.3 Research Question 1: How Hybrid Working Is Being Implemented In Workplaces?

In advance of exploring how hybrid working is being implemented, this study wanted to see what levels of hybrid working existing pre-covid and post-covid to get a better sense of the experiences of the participants. Figure 3 shows that pre-covid, 81% of the participants' workplace did not offer hybrid working as an option to their employees. 16% did respond that hybrid working was available either upon request or in exceptional circumstances. During the interviews, it emerged that where organisations may have had a policy on hybrid working, transacting it into practice may not have be straight forward.
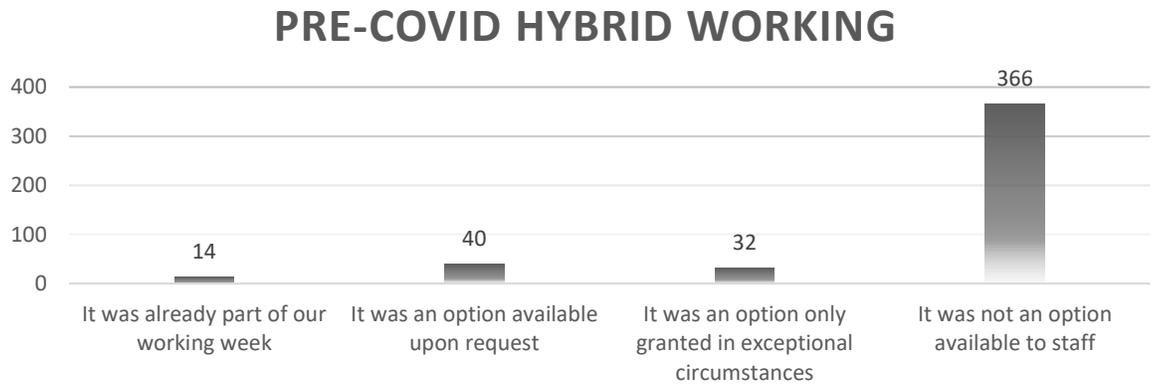
> Hybrid working was always there in paper, but it was not really ever requested. Staff were not setup to work from home and as an employer, we really were not sure on what we were obliged to do to make it happen for them (Interviewee 3, Manager/Employee).

> I think every workplace has it hidden somewhere in there policies that people can request to work from home. I personally never requested [hybrid working] but I would not have been setup at home to fulfil my duties. I operate on a desktop and wouldn't have been able to bring it home (Interviewee 6, Employee).

Across all the interviews conducted with managers as part of this study, these participants signalled that pre-covid, working from home was not really encouraged within their organisations. The overall preference would have been to have the employees on-site and in the physical workplace. This thinking was echoed by the employee interview participants too and a number referenced the fact that the organisation may have down on paper that they have a mechanism for hybrid working, it was not something that was encouraged.

Yes, there was reference to it [hybrid working] in the employee handbook, it was never something that was encouraged or promoted. I have been working here 13 years and never heard of it being used until Covid-19 hit (interviewee 7, Employee).

Figure 2: Pre Covid-19 Hybrid Working Arrangements

PRE-COVID HYBRID WORKING

14	40	32	366
It was already part of our working week	It was an option available upon request	It was an option only granted in exceptional circumstances	It was not an option available to staff

When the study asked all its participants what their working arrangements were now post-covid, nobody responded that they have returned fully to the workplace and that hybrid working remained a strong feature in their organisations. 92% were now working in a hybrid model with 8% remaining to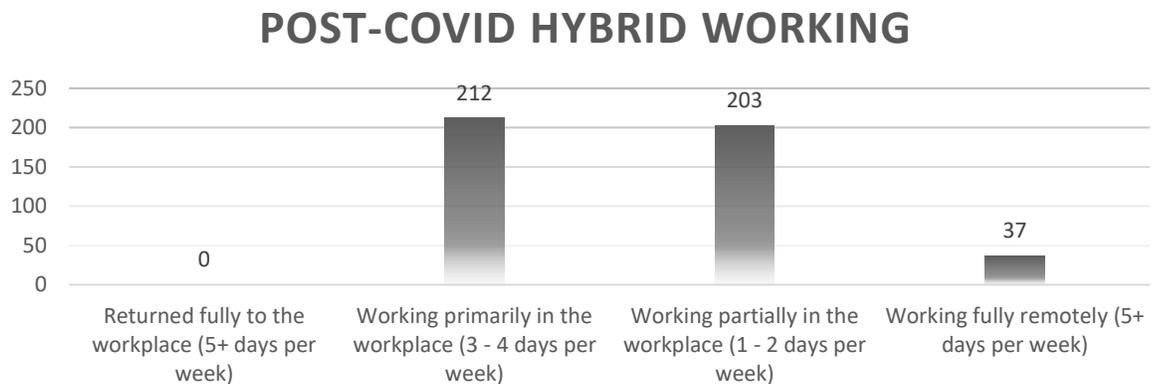 work from home on a full-time basis. Considering hybrid working was not an option to 81% of the participants pre-Covid, this was a substantial change in workplace practices. During the interview phase of the study, the reasoning for this was probed further. Out the ten interviewed, nine responded with similar statements that as a result of organisations managing to achieve business continuity during the pandemic as a result of remote working, it would be a difficult argument to make that staff would need to return to the physical workplace on a fulltime basis.

I cannot imagine the argument any employer could make that would trump the success of remote working during the pandemic. We have shown we can work from home and still

be productive so making us come back into work fulltime wouldn't have made sense (interviewee 9, Employee).

We reviewed the level of outputs achieved during remote working and there were no significant drops that would have made the case for our staff to return to the workplace fully. In fact, we have saved money by releasing rented office space while still having a head office for people to come into (Interviewee 1, Manager/Employee).

Figure 3: Post Covid-19 Hybrid Working Arrangements

POST-COVID HYBRID WORKING

Returned fully to the workplace (5+ days per week): 0	Working primarily in the workplace (3 - 4 days per week): 212	Working partially in the workplace (1 - 2 days per week): 203	Working fully remotely (5+ days per week): 37

The literature review revealed that hybrid working is not just simply a combination of working from a workplace and working from home. The study found that majority (75%) of the participants were working in a fixed hybrid working model. The remaining participants were distributed across workplace first, flexible, and remote first hybrid working models. Where the survey simply asked participants to tick the model they were working in, during the interviews, all participants were not aware of how the model was agreed or a decision reached to implement such model.

Figure 4: Hybrid Working Models

MODELS HYBRID WORKING
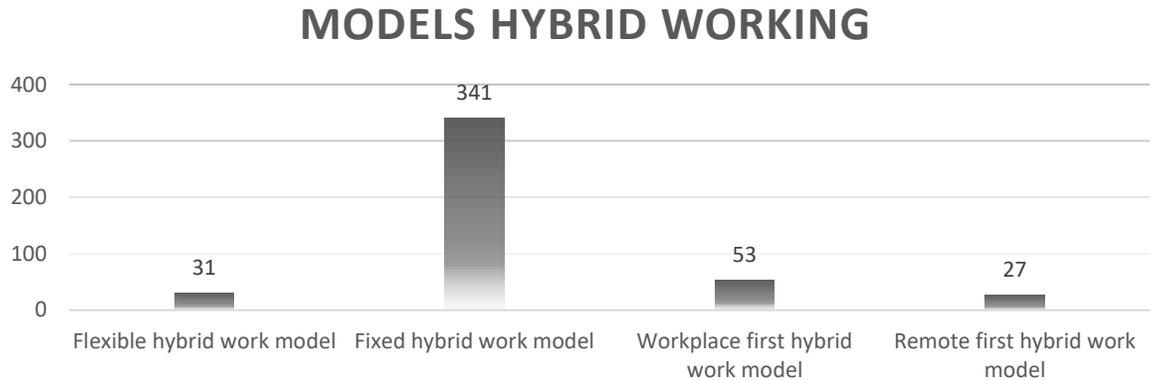
4.4 Research Question 2: Are There Specific Factors Concerning Employees That Could Pose Challenges To The Sustainability Of A Hybrid Work Model?

In an attempt to provide answers for this research question, both the interview participants and the questionnaire participants where posed the following factors in the form of questions as to ascertain what may challenge hybrid working as a sustainable model. Where 38% of the participants had managerial responsibilities, the study criteria required them to be managed themselves to allow them to participate in this section of the study. Participants were given clear instruction that the answers to these questions should be based on their level of concern as an employee of their organisation. For all the figures presented in this section, the response rate is n=452.

4.4.1 Factor: Sustaining Motivation Towards Your Work When Not In The Workplace

When asked if sustaining their motivation towards work when not in the workplace was a concern, there was a strong consensus amongst the participants that it was somewhat to a real concern for them with just 12% feeling with was not a concern. During the interviews, many participants referred to the fact that the longer people

85

experienced hybrid working, and especially for those work in the main remotely, they would be concerned about retaining a high level of motivation for their work.

> I find it [hybrid working] fine now and I am still motivated to do my job. But the longer I work from home and have less trips to the office, I am not sure I will have the same level of motivation towards the work. I would hate to think that I would loss interest in my job but I can see if I do this long term that could happen (Interviewee 8, Employee).

*Figure 5: Sustaining motivation towards your work when not in the workplace*

4.4.2 Factor: Personal Well-Being

87% of the participants who took part in the study believed that this was not something that they were concerned about in the long run when it comes to their own well-being. During the course of the interviews, a number of the participants made reference to the fact that their commute to work was somewhere in the range of forty to sixty minutes for each trip, and that the fact that they were able to work from home on certain days represented an improvement in their quality of life.

> Sitting in a car waiting for traffic to slowly move made me think about my career choices a lot. Not having to drive almost 2 hours in a round trip every day has given me more

86

time at home with family and made me less resentful towards the job (interviewee 10, Employee).

Figure 6: Personal well-being
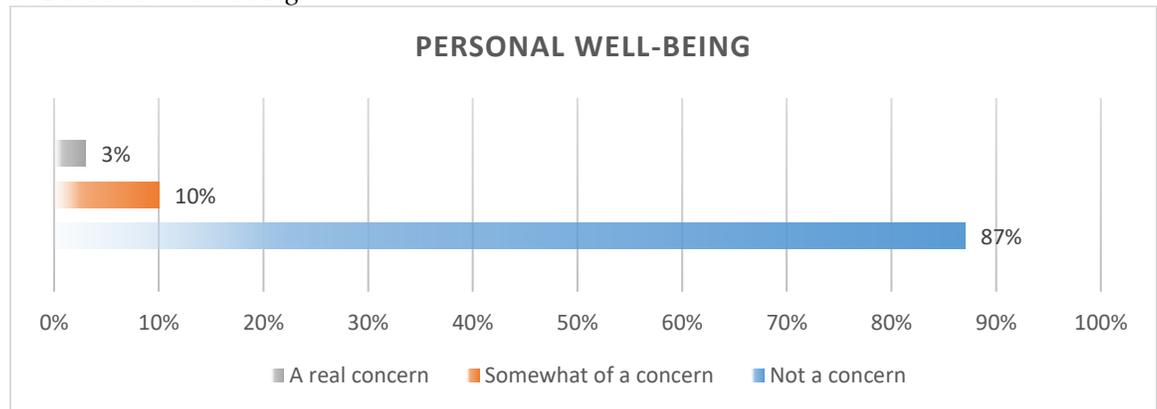
4.4.3 Factor: Home Office/Workstation Arrangements

88 % of the people who took part in the study said that they did not consider their physical home working arrangements to be a cause for concern when presented with this question. On the other hand, throughout the course of the interview, a few of the participants mentioned that they do not have a home office and that their living spaces are composed of a combination of workstations and living spaces. It was brought to the attention of one of the managerial participants that although it was not a worry for him and that his company had provided funding for renovations to the home office, others were unable to take advantage of this opportunity.

> I had a bit of a reality check when I was checking in with the team that I manage. A number of them are young professionals and living in one- or two-bedroom accommodation. They simply did not have the space to take a desk and chair. Many of them are spending more time in the office and I can see this time growing the longing we have a hybrid model in place (Interviewee 1, Manager/Employee).

87

Figure 7: Home office/workstation arrangements
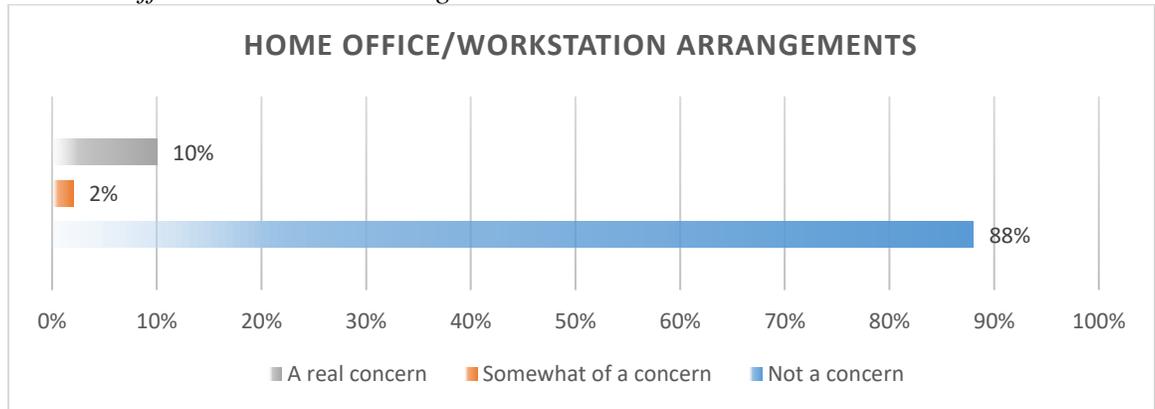
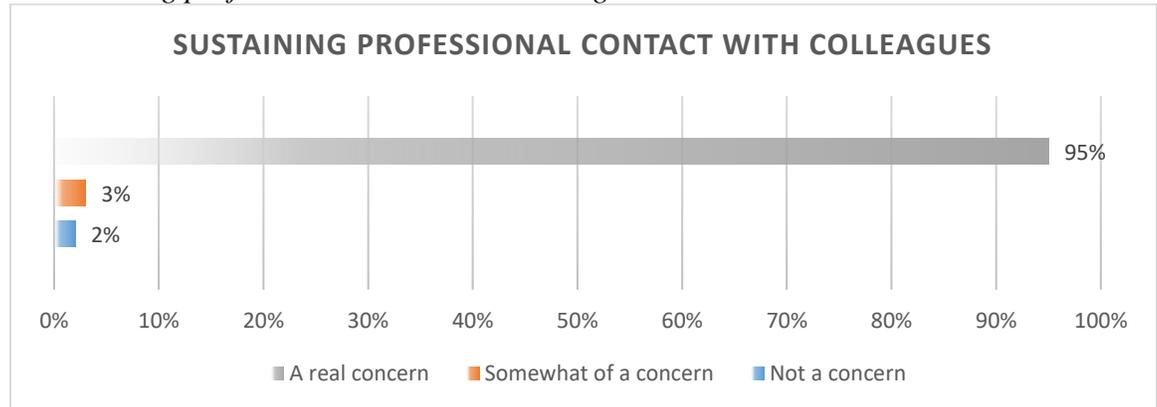**4.4.4 Factor: Sustaining Professional Contact With Colleagues**

Through the use of both the questionnaire and the interviews, it became clear that the concept of maintaining professional contact with colleagues was the most prevalent real worry among the participants. Throughout the course of the interviews, a significant number of participants mentioned that this was something that was already deteriorating in the short term and that it would be a genuine element that would challenge the hybrid model's capacity to meet its sustainability goals. Despite the fact that references were made to the positive benefits of telecom software, it did not go far enough to preserve the professional relationship that people have with one another through their employment.

> I don't see half the people I used to anymore. If we are online, some people have cameras off and just about make contributions. The days we are in the office, some people are away or on the road so the opportunities to have conversation around work and projects are very rare these days (Interviewee 8, Employee).

> I myself spend more days in the office than at home but I would not get to meet the people I want. I fins now that I have a core of people I tend to go to for queries and could

be accused of excluding people by accident. I have tried to reach them on the phone but getting through to them is another problem (Interviewee 4, Manager/Employee).
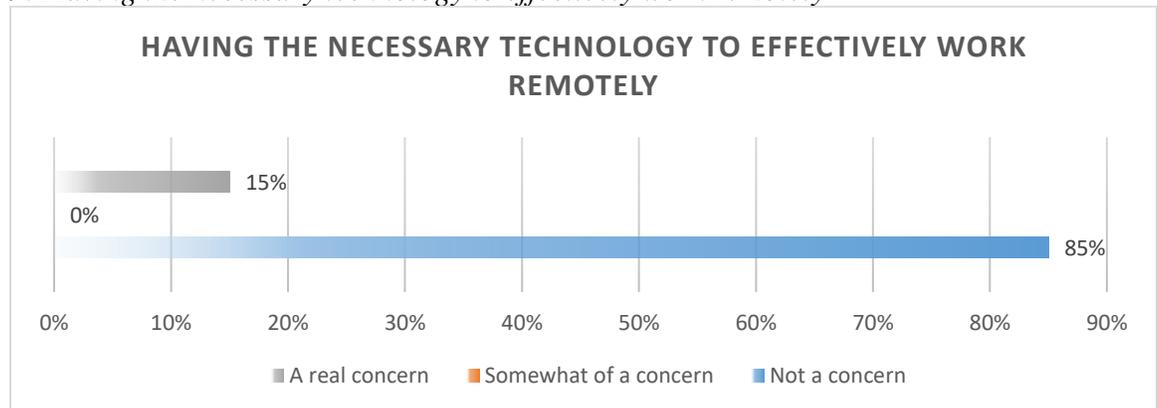
Figure 8: Sustaining professional contact with colleagues

SUSTAINING PROFESSIONAL CONTACT WITH COLLEAGUES

95%
3%
2%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ A real concern ■ Somewhat of a concern ■ Not a concern

4.4.5 Factor: Having The Necessary Technology To Effectively Work Remotely

In response to the issue of whether or not they possessed the technology required to perform their task from a remote location, an overwhelming 85% of respondents stated that this was not a concern for them. In the stages of the interview process where this topic was investigated further, many individuals expressed the belief that as technology advances, companies will also evolve and adapt to new technologies. No one who participated in the interview expressed any issue regarding this question.

*Figure 9: Having the necessary technology to effectively work remotely*

HAVING THE NECESSARY TECHNOLOGY TO EFFECTIVELY WORK REMOTELY

15%
0%
85%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

■ A real concern ■ Somewhat of a concern ■ Not a concern

89

4.4.6 Factor: Impact On Household Running Costs

To answer the question about concerns regarding the impact of home running costs, the data would imply that this issue was not as much of a concern for people because their travel costs have decreased owing to hybrid working. This is because hybrid working has lowered the amount of money that people spend on travelling. A significant number of the individuals who took part in the interview made mention to or made a passing reference to the idea of "balancing out" in terms of decreased travel costs and increased home running costs, and they regarded this as a favourable trade off.

> They [household running costs] is fine for now but who knows what is ahead of us in terms of energy costs. The reduce cost in paying for travel is offsetting my increasing in home running costs (Interviewee 2, Manager/Employee).

> Yes, there is an increased costs to working from home in terms of heating, electricity, etc. but I am not spending the same amount on fuel, so it is much the same really (Interviewee 8, Employee).

Figure 10: Impact on household running costs
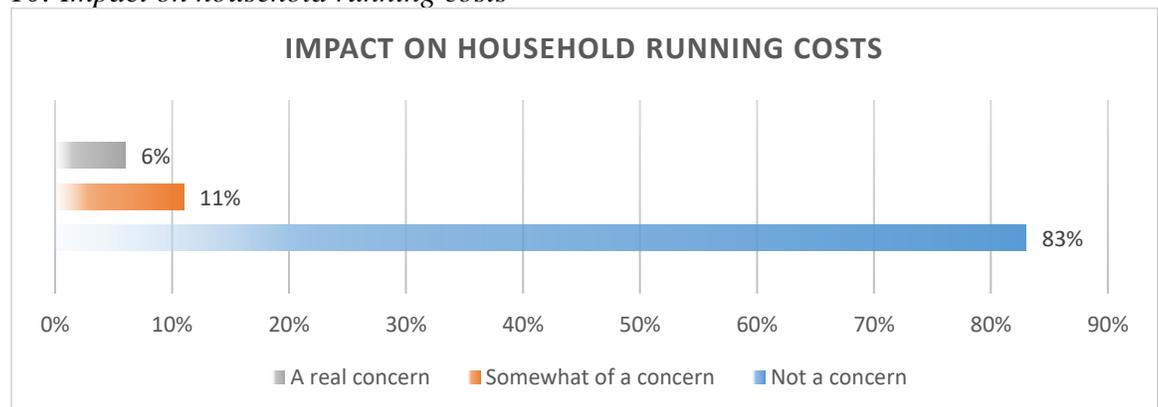
4.4.7 Factors: 'Unplugging' After Work And Maintaining A Healthy Working Day By Following Normal Working Hours

Both of the questions that asked participants about their concerns over "unplugging" after work and keeping a healthy working day by adhering to conventional working hours resulted in the same percentages of concerns being expressed by the participants. The fact that participants saw them as being comparable or the same question is suggested by this. As the employees continue to operate in a hybrid paradigm, the data demonstrates that these elements are becoming increasingly important to them. When compared to the other questions, the interviewee spent an average amount of time on these two topics. Many individuals have mentioned that hybrid working arrangements are making it more difficult for people to "switch off," which could result in an increase in the length of the working day. One of the participants expressed the sentiments of a large number of people by saying that

> Hybrid working is almost like a trojan horse. It feels good that you get to work from home, not have to travel every day, not have to get dressed up every day, but the days are slowly getting longer with people having different work patterns and nobody wants to rock the boat by saying otherwise. Before they [organisation management] were looking at a four day working week, now we just have five longer days (Interviewee 10, Employee).
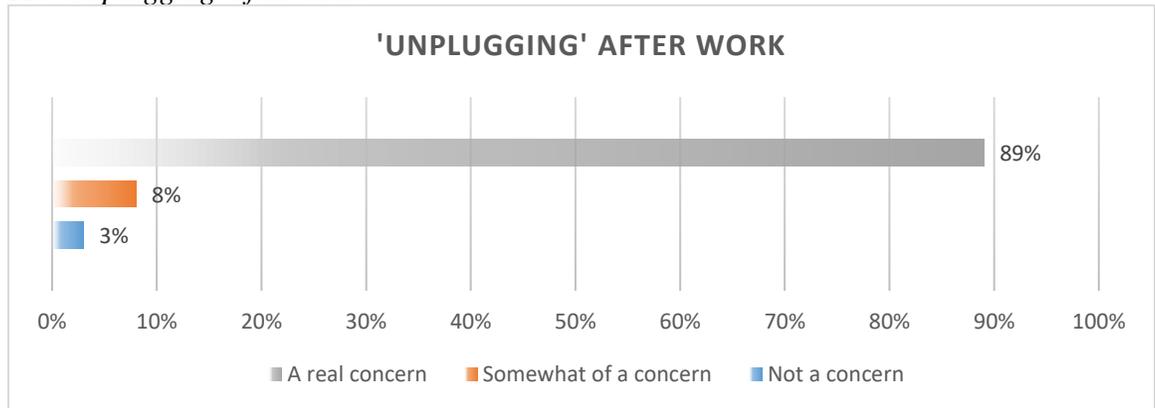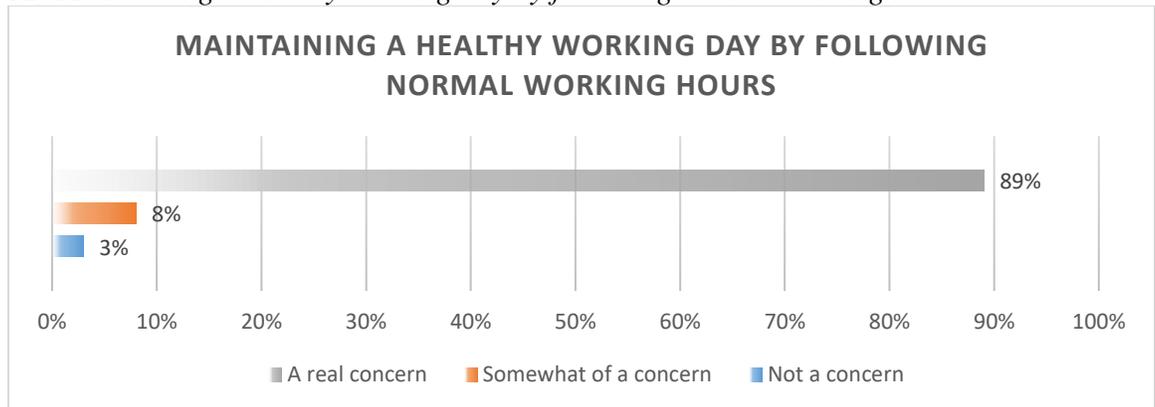
Figure 11: 'Unplugging' after work

'UNPLUGGING' AFTER WORK

- A real concern: 89%
- Somewhat of a concern: 8%
- Not a concern: 3%

Figure 12: Maintaining a healthy working day by following normal working hours

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WORKING DAY BY FOLLOWING NORMAL WORKING HOURS

- A real concern: 89%
- Somewhat of a concern: 8%
- Not a concern: 3%

## 4.4.8 Factor: Having Equal Opportunities For Promotion

When it came to the idea of having equal possibilities for promotion, participants showed a high level of concern. 60% of the participants indicated that it was a high level of concern for them with a further 30% indicated that it was somewhat of a concern. The responses to the interview questions however did refelct this level of concern.

Several of the respondents did make reference to the reality that many organisations have employees who choose not to work under the hybrid model and these people may benenfit from being more available than those hyrid working. However, they went on to suggest that it does not automatically mean they are higher up the list for

promotions as almost all organisations run competitive competition for promotion opportunities re-leveling the playing field.

> The reality is if someone is in the office fulltime and ends up being the go to person by default, they are raising their profile in the organisation and also possibly getting extra responsibility. However, if done fairly, everyone should have equal opportunities regardless (Interviewee 2, Manager/Employee).

Figure 13: Having equal opportunities for promotion
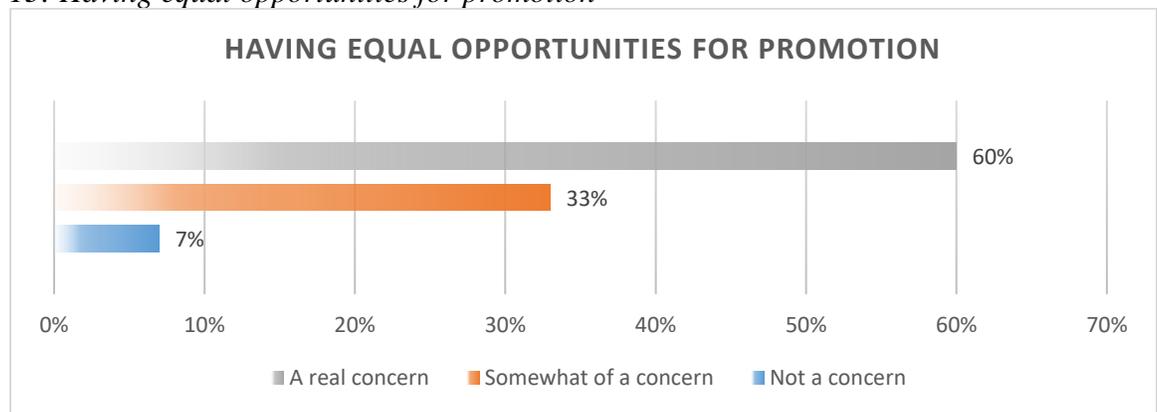
4.4.9 Factor: The Visibility Of Your Work In The Organisation

In terms of the visibility of peoples work, where some participants felt that this was a real concern/somewhat of a concern, the majority (84%) felt that this factor was not a concern to them whilst working in a hybrid model. During the interviews many felt that as the majority of staff in their organisations were hybrid working, this factor was not going to challenge the sustainability of hybrid working and received the lowest level of engagement through the interview questions.

Figure 14: The visibility of your work in the organisation

THE VISIBILITY OF YOUR WORK IN THE ORGANISATION

4%
12%
84%

■ A real concern ■ Somewhat of a concern ■ Not a concern
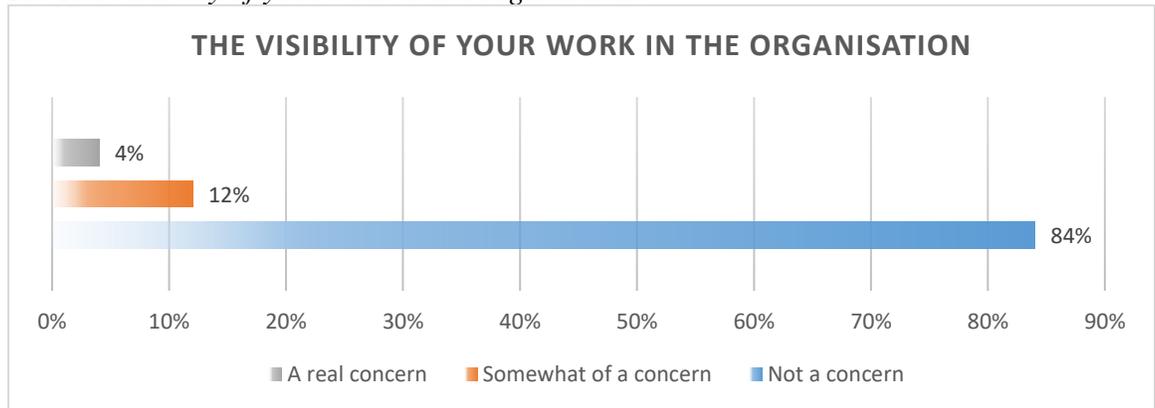
### 4.4.10 Factor: Sustaining Your Current Productivity Levels

The factor of sustaining your current productivity levels was the only factor that almost present an equal split amongst the participants. When presented with this factor, where 51% felt it was not a concern to them, 49% felt that it as a concern or somewhat of a concern to them. The interview phase did give some indicators as to why this may have been the case. Much of the conversations on this factor being a concern linked back to the previous factors of on 'unplugging' after work and maintaining a healthy working day by following normal working hours. Some interview participants felt that their productivity levels were currently high but because of working beyond the working day. This could suggest a similar response/reaction was had by the questionnaire participants.

> This factor is almost a double-edged sword. Were people's productivity is high or if not higher now, I am not sure that is a good thing. I have looked at some of the outputs being achieved now under a hybrid working model and I would question how is this possible based on the number of working hours in a day (Interviewee 9, Employee).

> I personally am concerned. I often find myself logging into work at the time I would usually leave to drive, and I often work through lunch. This level of work is now almost

expected from me, and I am not sure how long more I can sustain it (Interviewee 7, Employee).

Figure 15: Sustaining your current productivity levels
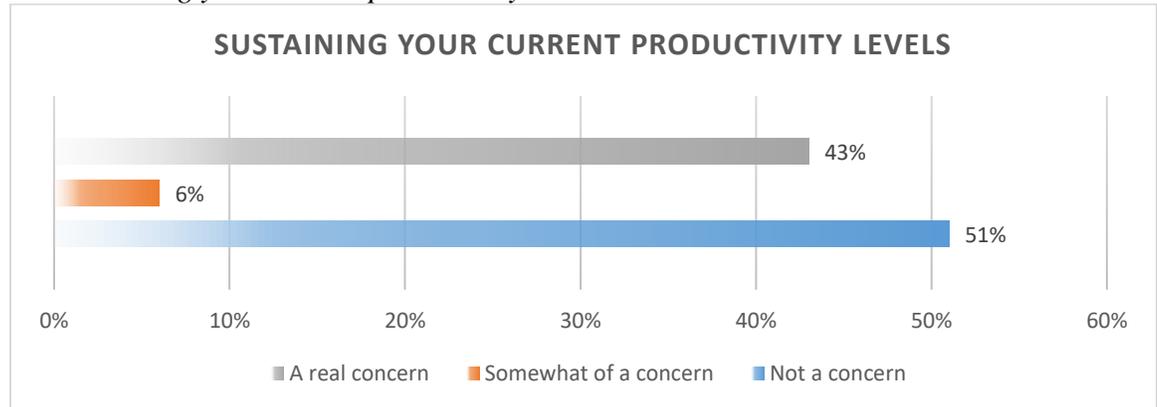
4.4.11 Factor: Household Distractions When Working From Home

The majority of respondents (77%) said that the distractions that were present in the home were not a problem that would be a cause for concern for individuals who were working under a hybrid model over the long run. According to a number of allusions that were made often during the interviews, it appears that the outcomes would have been different if this question had been addressed at the beginning of the pandemic or during the early phases of its progression. People now believe that they have successfully adapted to working from home and have learned how to deal with the distractions that come along with this setup.

Figure 16: Household distractions when working from home
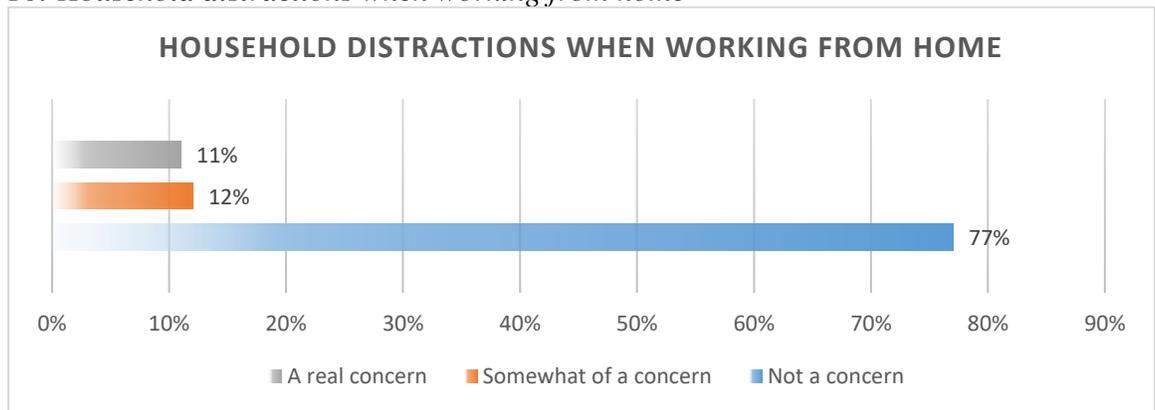
4.4.12 Factor: Difficulties In Communicating With Others

On the factor of difficulties in communicating with others, 61% felt that this was a real concern with a further 25% feeling it was somewhat of a concern to them. Many of the interviewee participates discussed similar issues that would contribute to this concern. The first being that where flexible working arrangements are in place in organisations, there seems to be a challenge with people working different work patterns that they would be available for calls or meetings.

> The standard working day seems to have been re-written and done without much consensus. From speaking with other organisations, people that can avail of flexible working hours are the hardest to reach as their working day is arranged to suit themselves. The day of knocking on an office door is almost gone and I am not sure how this will play out over the next couple of years (Interviewee 7, Employee).

The next factor relating to this concern was related to the increase in online activities such as virtual meetings. Interview participants felt that that hybrid working has been a driving factor in the increase in virtual meetings and as a result, people are engaging in more meetings and are less available.

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There is a significant amount of Microsoft Teams meetings taking place now than there was before we went remote working. I find that when I need to speak with someone urgently or on something time sensitive, I am waiting until they are available. Often then when they are available, I find myself in an online meeting (Interviewee 5, Employee).

The final factor referenced during the interview related to new staff having joined the organisation. Many felt that as new people joined while the organisation is operating a hybrid working model, there is less chance to get to meet them and this reduces the opportunities to communicate with them. With retirements taking place over the years ahead, this issue would grow further.

Last month we had eight new colleagues start. I won't be working with any of them on projects so the chances of me ever speaking to them are small. The age profile of our organisation is stacked in the 45-55 years old range and as more retire and we continue to work remotely for the majority of the week, this problem will only get worse (Interviewee 6, Employee).

*Figure 17: Difficulties in communicating with others*
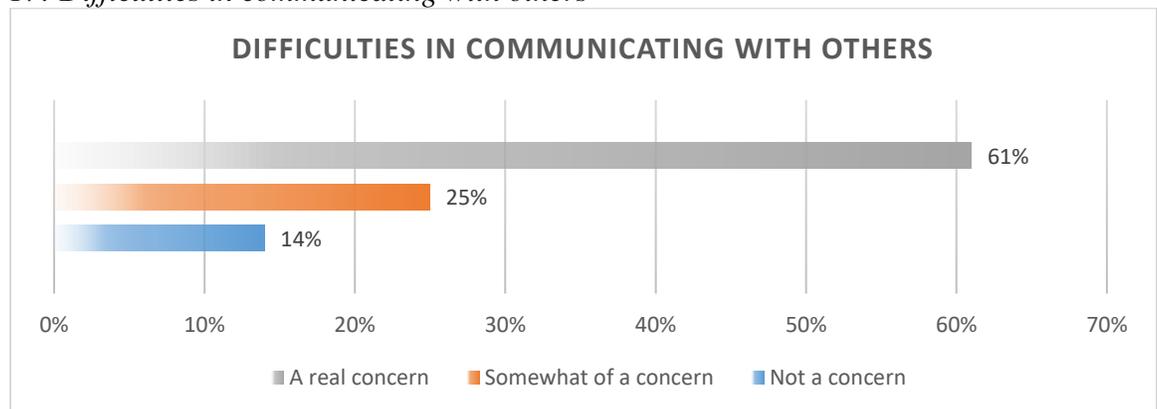
4.4.13 Factor: Being Available To Participate In Team Projects

When participants were asked as to how much of a concern there was to being available to participate in team projects, the was an overwhelming response (79%) that this would not be a concern if hybrid working was sustained for the long term. Interestingly, factors such as virtual meetings that were cited as being barriers to communications in the previous questions were cited here as benefits to being able to participate in team projects. Interview participants made many references to the fact that teams and multidisciplinary teams can be formed easily now through the advancement in the quality of virtual meeting and team planning software.

> I think one of the successes of hybrid working has been the ability to assemble virtual teams. Before it was challenging depending on people's location but now, we assemble teams with people working across different countries. I think this will only get better in the years ahead (Interviewee 9, Employee).

Figure 18: Being available to participate in team projects
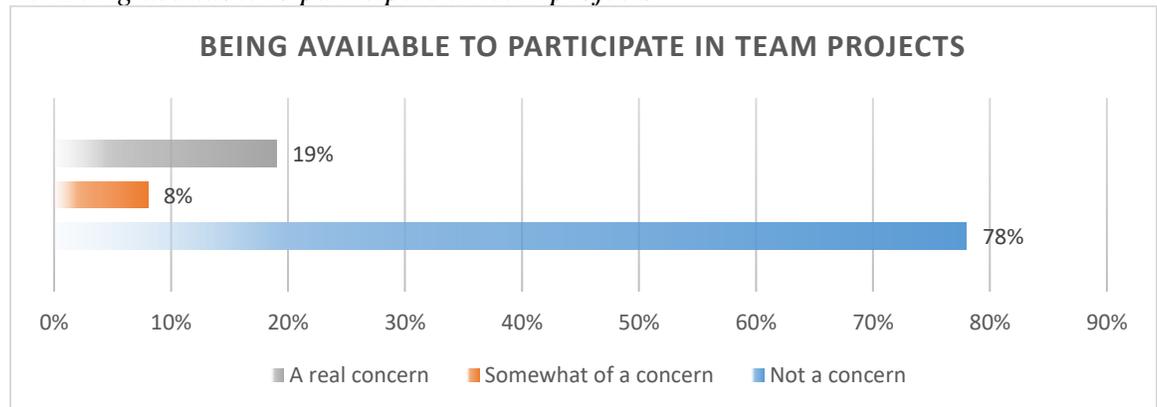
4.4.14 Factor: Employers Trust In My Work

The factor of an employer's trust in the work of employees presented varying conversations amongst the interview participants. Where overall, 47% of the participants

indicated a real concern for this factor, 39% did not. At the interview phase of the study, all participants in some form referred to the concept of trust being essential of hybrid working being sustainable as a long term workforce model. The references to trust were implied that it had to work both ways. Trust from the employer in the employee and their work and trust from the employee that the employer has their best interest in mind.

> I think it is a two-way street. If there isn't trust shown by an employer to an employee and visa-versa, the system will fall down. Hyrid working needs elements such as technology to work, but the trust cannot be underestimated (Interviewee 3, Manager/Employee).

However, of all the interviewees that had no managerial responsibility, they raised concerns that as hybrid working continues into the future, and the level of personal interaction decreases, that there was a risk or danger that trust level could be impacted if work performance or outputs were deemed unsatisfactory.

> I would be very concerned that if I miss a deadline, my manager will refer to the fact that if I was in the office more, this would not have happened or that they might think I am working at home and not spending enough time actually doing my job (Interviewee 9, Employee).

> The real concern I would have is that as we continue with remote working into the future, I will have less of a relationship with my manger and their level of trust in me might not be the same as a result (Interviewee 7, Employee).

Figure 19: Employers trust in my work

EMPLOYERS TRUST IN MY WORK

47%

14%

39%

■ A real concern ■ Somewhat of a concern ■ Not a concern
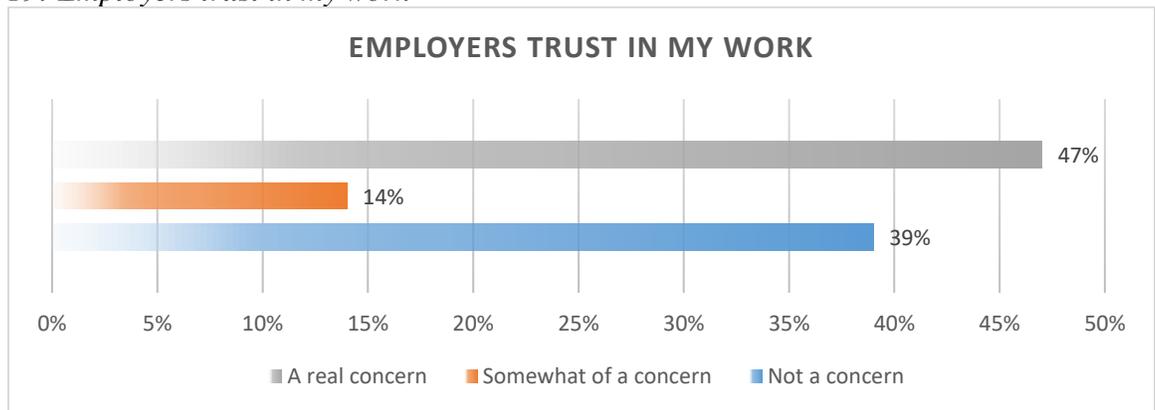
4.4.15 Factor: Staying Up To Date On Matters Relating To Your Organisation

Overall, 86% of the participants expressed a concern with this factor. Much of the discussion with the interviewees of the study resonated with the thinking they had on the factor of having equal opportunity for promotion. Many felt the people not availing of hybrid working and, in the workplace, full time had an added advance in terms of staying up to date on matters relating to the organisation.

> Obviously if you are in [the workplace] everyday, you have a greater advantage of speaking to people in there and getting the information first hand. Work bulletins are fine and give the headlines but working at home can really hinder you in terms of staying up to date (Interviewee 7, Employee).

Where people did express a concern to this, if was often linked back to the efforts made by the organisation to communicate with an organisation rather than their own ability to do stay up to date.

> I have made every effort to keep up to date with work ongoings but it is not easy. I found at the start our CEO was very good in sending out communications to staff on a regular basis. As hybrid working has become the norm, the level of communication is reduce and

its quality too. I think in years to come, it will be non-existent unless there is a value put on it by those at the top (Interviewee 10, Employee).

Figure 20: Staying up to date on matters relating to your organisation
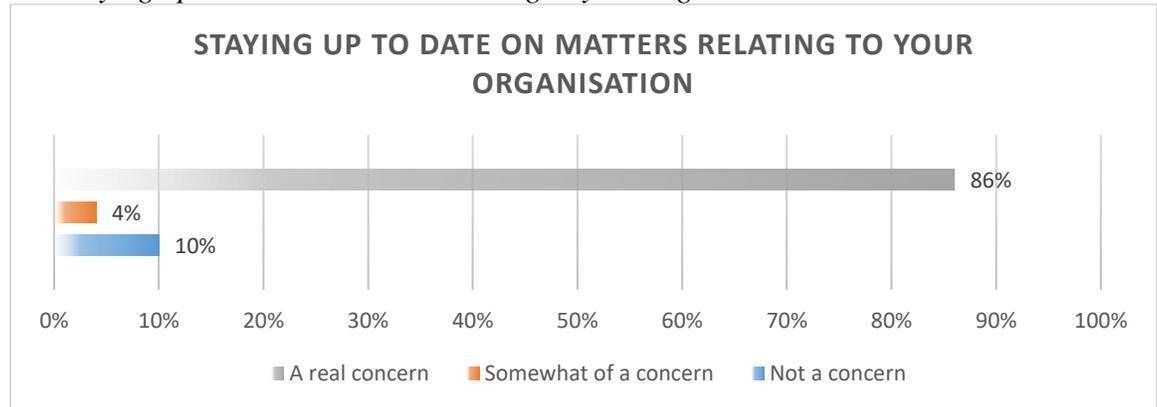
4.5 Research Question 3: Are There Specific Factors Concerning Those With Responsibility For Managing People That Could Pose Challenges To The Sustainability Of A Hybrid Work Model

In an attempt to provide answers for this research question, both the interview participants and the questionnaire participants, there was criteria set that only those with managerial responsibility are to respond. Participants were given clear instruction that the answers to these questions should be based on their level of concern as a manager of staff as opposed to being an employee. For all the figures presented in this section, the response rate is n=172 (interview n=4; questionnaire n=168).

4.5.1 Factor: Staff Maintaining An Appropriate Work/Life Balance

When asked on the level of concerned faced with staff maintaining an appropriate work/life balance, the response resonated with question in the previous section around work/life balance. All of the interview participants felt that hybrid working was challenging them as mangers in ensuring their staff maintained a healthy work/life

balance. Much of the conversations had linked to aspect such as working hours in people's homes being out of their control, staff availing of flexible working hours/patterns, and the difficulty in disconnecting at home as being factors driving their levels of concerns into the a real concern category.

> You can give instructions or advice as much as you want but once people are working in their own homes, we have very little resources to make sure they disconnect from work at the appropriate hour (Interviewee 2, Manager/Employee).

> The reality on the ground is staff are making the most of the advantages of working from home. They can use flexi hours to take a break and go for a walk but then they are staying on much later and longer than is required. It is not balancing itself out and the standard working day no longer exists (Interviewee 1, Manager/Employee).

Three of the four managers interviewed made reference to the legal working time responsibilities organisations had to comply with. It was felt that this resobsility rested on them to manage and that this was not being achieved in the hybrid working place and could worsen into the future.

> We have set a pace and model of work that is slowly become the norm but contradict the law on working. As hybrid working continues, the model is placing organisations in a challenge and dangerous situation in terms of workers rights. We may not be the ones forcing the model but we are the ones having to manage it (Interviewee 4, Manager/Employee).

Figure 21: Staff maintaining an appropriate work/life balance
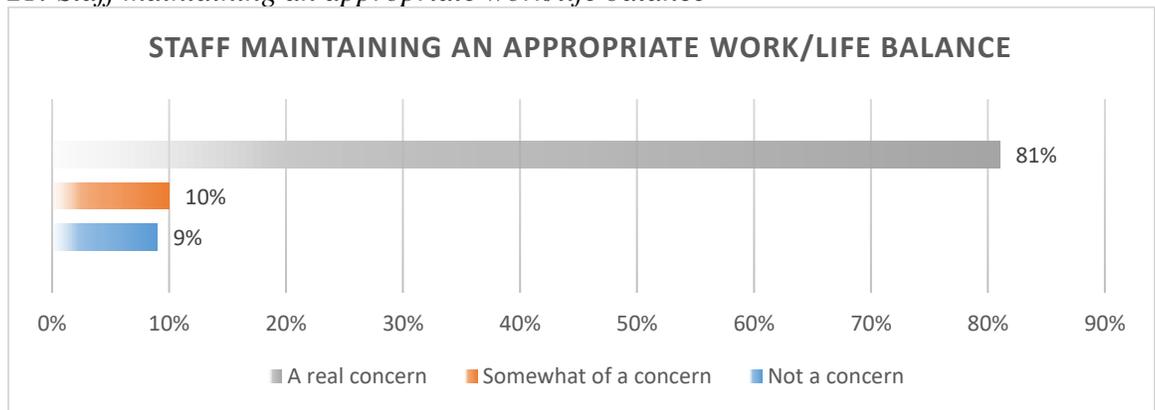
4.5.2 Factor: The Function Of The Physical Workplace Being Eroded

When it came to concerns relating to the function of the workplace being eroded, there was strong consensus that the was a concern for the participants. 75% expressed a real concern with 0% expressing no concern. All the interview participants expressed a real concern and all conversations could be summarised by suggesting the workplace is having an identity crisis. What once was a centre of work and productivity as described by all, the workplace is now being used more so as a social hub.

> In our offices, whenever people are all in on a particular day, the day is very unproductive in my opinion. What once were fifteen minute coffee breaks are now thirty or fourty depending on how long people have seen each other face to face (Interviewee 2, Manager/Employee).

> I have notice more and more that people are only coming to the office on a day that X or Y are in so they can go for lunch or catch up. People are slightly reluctant to come in unless they are seeing a person gain from in (Interviewee 4, Manager/Employee).

During these discussions, it was said multiple times that the monetary asset value of offices and other workplaces are depreciating as a result of hybrid working. Where

there was no direct question to this affect, all interviewed particapnts referenced that this was more of a concern than the acutaul function of the phusocal workplaces.

Figure 22: The function of the physical workplace being eroded
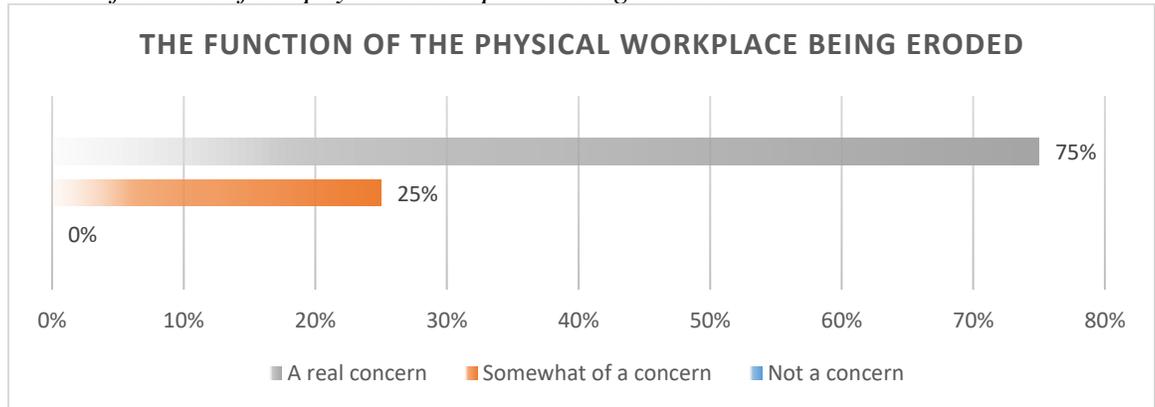
4.5.3 Factor: The Equipment Cost Associated With Long-Term Hybrid Working

The factor of the cost of equipment sssociated with hybrid working did not seem to concern the particpants with 83% claiming it was not a concern to them. Similar to the question on distractions in the hime earlier, if this question had been asked earlier in the pandemic, the responses may have been the reverse. It seems that many experienced this concern in the early stages of hybrid working but now as the practice has normalised, the costs associated have too.

> The budgets took a hit in 2020 and 2021 naturally as a result of full remote working during the pandemic. No, I think its accepted that there are costs associated with hybrid working but organisations budgets have adjusted and allow for this (Interviewee 2, Manager/Employee).

Figure 23: The equipment cost associated with long-term hybrid working

THE EQUIPMENT COST ASSOCIATED WITH LONG-TERM HYBRID WORKING

6%

11%

83%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%

▪ A real concern   ▪ Somewhat of a concern   ▪ Not a concern
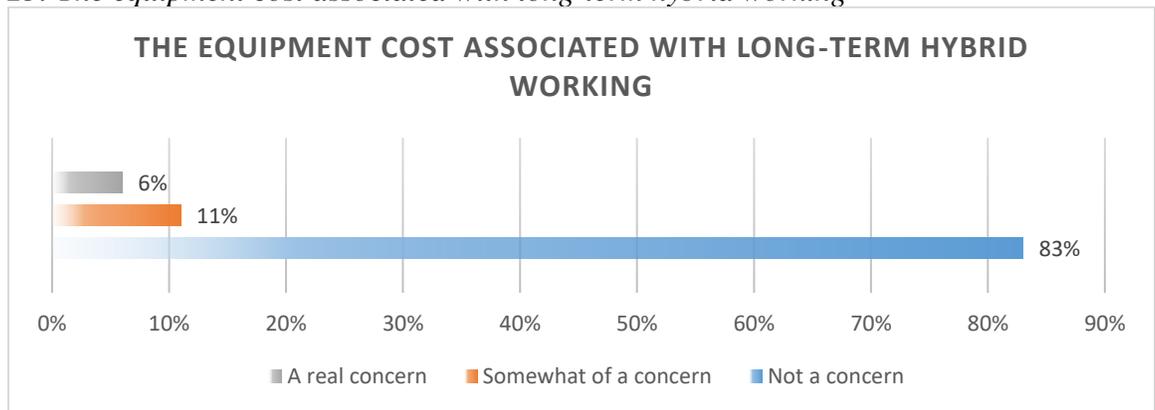
4.5.4 Factor: Dilution Of Organisational Culture

This factor illicit a simar concern response to the function of the physical workplace with 70% expressing a real concern and 30% expressing somewhat of a concern. When asked this question during the interviews all participated responded with a real concern. Much of the conversations referred to the workplace being the driver of culture and that over time, hybrid working will be a cause for this deteriorating.

Before we set the culture by modelling it every day in the workplace. Now the workplace is spread across hundreds of homes. Ok we can still model the culture we want online but it does not have the same effect. As more people leave or retire and new people come in, the strong culture we once had will eventually die out.(Interviewee 3, Manager/Employee).

Figure 24: Dilution of organisational culture
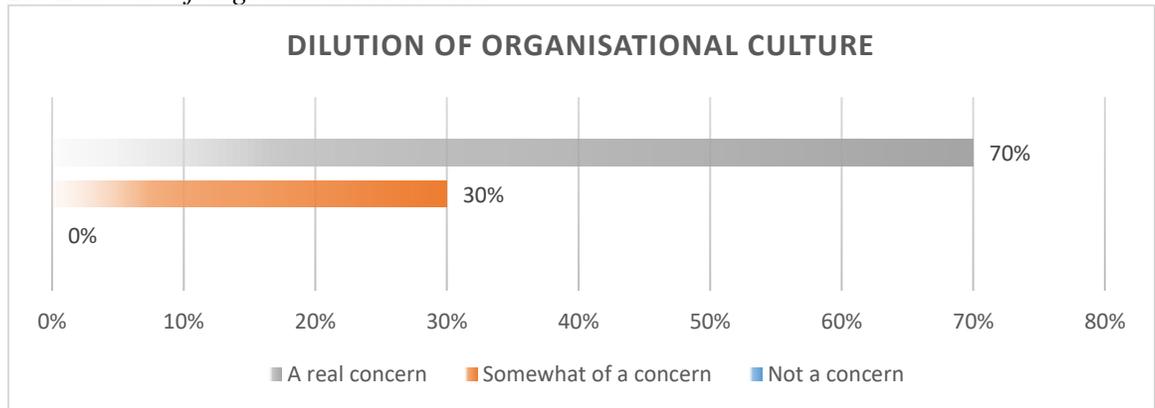
4.5.5 Factors: The Ability To Be Flexible In Terms Of Day-To-Day Work And Ability To React To Unforeseen/Emergency Requests/Tasks/Events

The following two factors were put to the participants; the ability to be flexible in terms of day-to-day work and the ability to react to unforeseen/emergency requests/tasks/events.

We participants seemed not to be concerned about the ability to be flexible in terms of day-to-day work, there were significant concerns relating to the ability to react to unforeseen or emergency situations.

79% of the participants expressed that they would not be concerned about the flexibility in terms of the day-to-day work. It was unanimous across the interview participants that there lack of concern on this factor going forward was based on their varying experiences to date. All participants cited that to date, there staff have proven to be very effective in their flexibility once there was time to adapt and make alternative plans.

> I am basing my experience on the last 12 months more so than the start of the pandemic. Staff are very good to adjust and adapt to changes that need to be made to project plans or daily tasks (Interviewee 3, Manager/Employee).

Staff seem to be able to handle changes to the workplans very well. I wouldn't see too much of a difference if this happens in the office or when at home, its universally done well once there is a bit of time to adapt (Interviewee 4, Manager/Employee).

Figure 25: The ability to be flexible in terms of day-to-day work
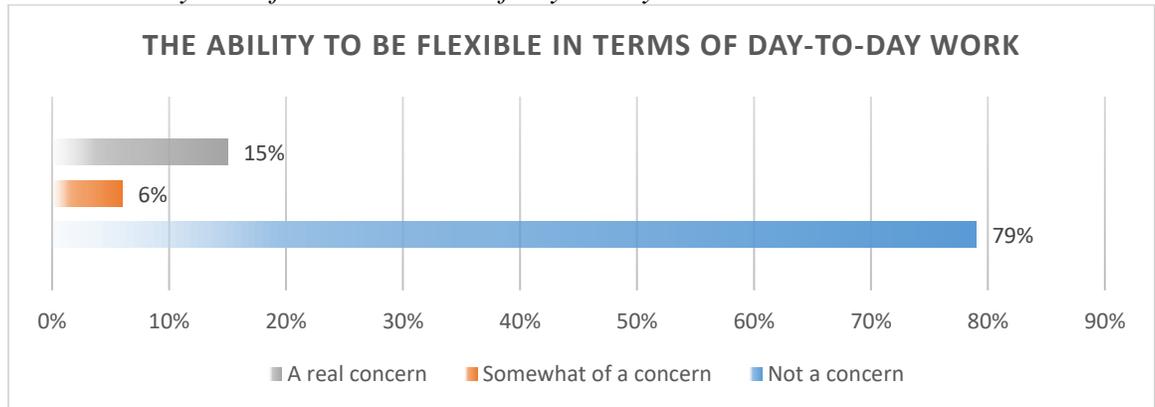
However, when necessary to react to unforeseen circumstances or situations, participants did express a high level of concern with 71% indicating a real concern and a further 11% indicating somewhat of a concern. Similar to the previous factor, interview participants were basing their concerns on lived recent examples.

An emergency situation is different to adapting workplans. We recently had a potential cyber breach which was a challenging situation. It was made worse by the fact it too an extraordinary amount of extra time to contact all staff to start enacting out cyber response plan. It was a experience for me that would make a strong argument against hybrid working (Interviewee 3, Manager/Employee).

Having dealt with trying to assemble an emergency team to respond to tragic incident has put a dark light on hybrid working for me. I tried my best to assemble and manage the team online but after a number of hours I had to mandate everyone back to the office for a few days. We could have done it online, but it would have taken too much time and more than we had to give (Interviewee 4, Manager/Employee).

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Figure 26: Ability to react to unforeseen/emergency requests/tasks/events

ABILITY TO REACT TO UNFORESEEN/EMERGENCY REQUESTS/TASKS/EVENTS

- 71%
- 11%
- 18%

A real concern ▪ Somewhat of a concern ▪ Not a concern
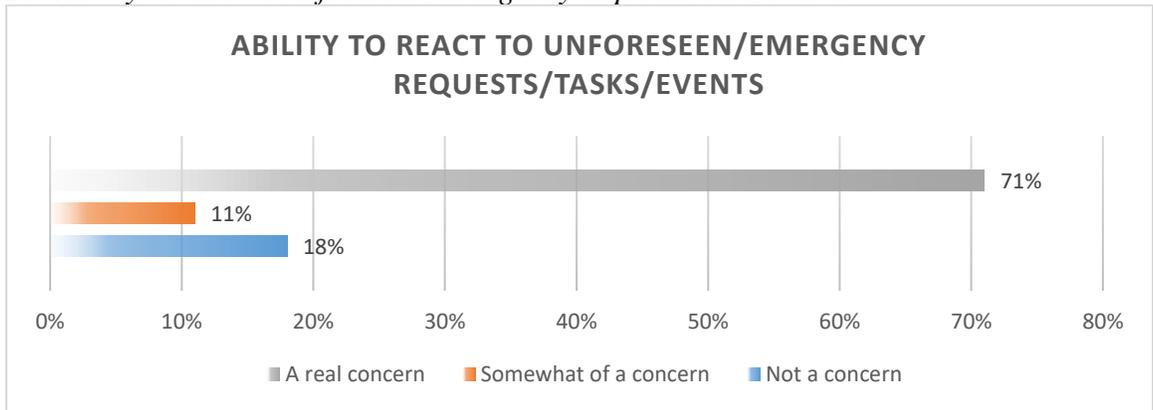
4.5.6 Factor: Confidence In Staff Work/Productivity Level

This factor illicit very little conversation amongst the interviewed participants. All felt that staff and teams have proven themselves to be productive and that they had no concerns going forward on it. The overall response to the factor reflected this sentiment with 88% of participants expressing the factor not to be a concern.

Figure 27: Confidence in staff work/productivity level

CONFIDENCE IN STAFF WORK/PRODUCTIVITY LEVEL

- 3%
- 9%
- 88%

A real concern ▪ Somewhat of a concern ▪ Not a concern
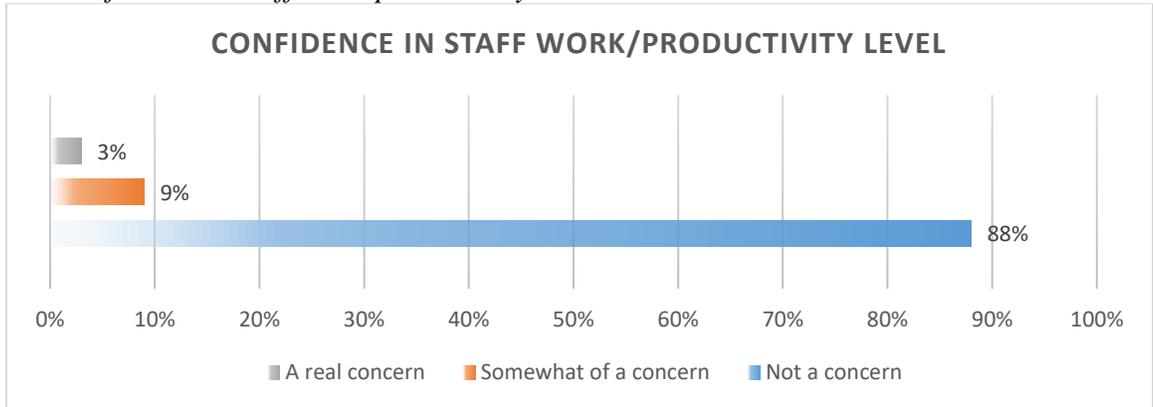
4.5.7 Factor: Your Accountability For The Quality Of Work Being Produced By Staff

When posed the factor on their accountability for the quality of work being produced by staff, there was a strong response of 62% from those with managerial responsibility that this was not a concern to them. Much of the discussion again were based on current experience and that there was no real reason that this would change into the future.

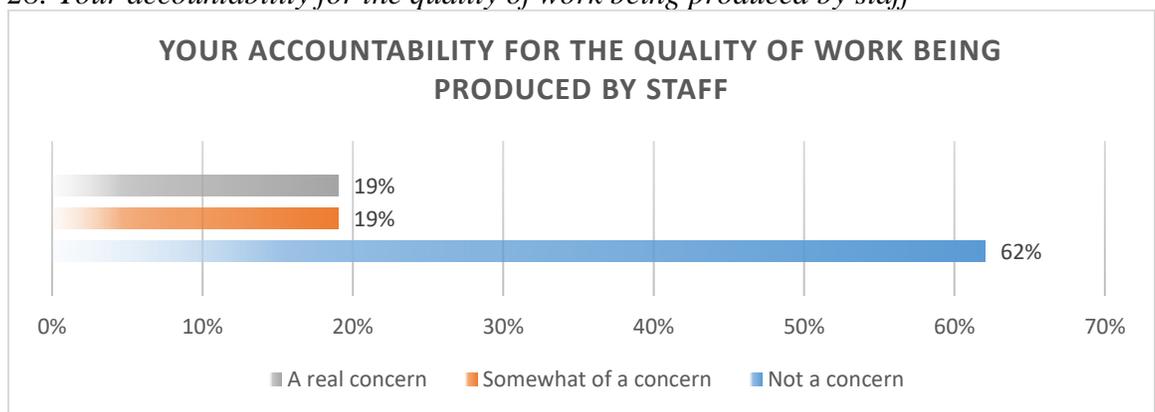*Figure 28: Your accountability for the quality of work being produced by staff*

YOUR ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE QUALITY OF WORK BEING PRODUCED BY STAFF

- A real concern: 19%
- Somewhat of a concern: 19%
- Not a concern: 62%

4.5.8 Factor: Line Managers Being Effective As A First Point Of Contact For Staff

The response from the interviewees was reflective of the overall response pattern to this factor. People seemed to be split when I came to their concerns on being effective as a first point of contact as a line manager. On one hand, half the interviewees felt that managing staff in a hybrid model was very challenging and they felt that they were not suitable trained to manage in the hybrid space. Where they felt they can carry out the role, they do not do it well.

I am a manager with nine years and have not received any training on managing people in the hybrid space. It is a different skillset and if not addressed, I am not sure how suitable I

would be to the role in the future when hybrid [working] is the absolute norm which would be a real concern for me (Interviewee 4, Manager/Employee).

On the other hand, the remaining interviewees felt that they are not concerned about the being the first point of contact for staff they manage. Conversations with them highlighted that the have been trained in managing in the hybrid space and that if the model remains the same for the foreseeable future, that they are confident in being able to support staff.

Having gone through the training, the role as a manager still remains fairly unchanged. Ok there is a challenge in meeting people face to face but once you accept the virtual tools available, you can do your job well (Interviewee 1, Manager/Employee).

Figure 29: Line managers being effective as a first point of contact for staff


4.5.9 Factor: Managing Team Projects

Where earlier the factor of being able to participate in on team projects was received positively and not present much concern, the nuance of this factor with the shift from participating to managing team project has changed the degree to which the participants had concerns. Where 47% expressed that managing team did not concern

them, 32% expressed a real concern to this factor. Much of the conversation with the interview participants was based around the extra workload that came with managing projects in the virtual/hybrid space and trying to build up a working relationship with people they have yet to possible meet. Much of the concerns can be linked back to new people joing the work force but as a result of hybrid working, they do not get to meet and build up a professional relationship.

> Team projects are now so diverse that they involve people that have yet to meet face to face. Much of the success of a team project are linked to the interpersonal skills and relationship of people. This is ver hard to achieve especially if people have never meet each other. Going forward this is going to become fair more common especially if hyrid working remains in place (Interviewee 3, Manager/Employee).

*Figure 30: Managing team projects*
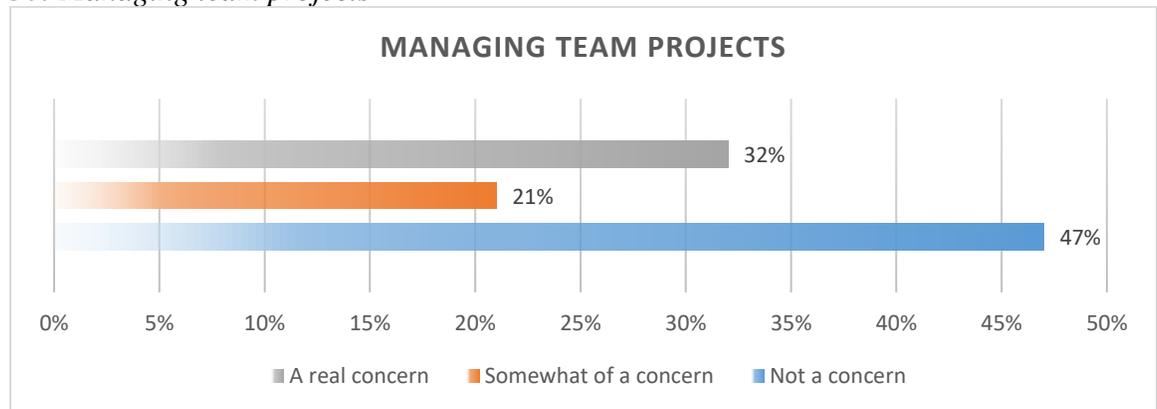
4.5.10 Factor: Unconscious Reliance On Those Staff Attending The Office Over Those Working Remotely

This factor seemed to have caused a spilt amongst the participants thinking with all three categories receiving similar percentage of the responses. The interviews reflected this and there was very little similarities in the thinking of the participants. In

one conversation much of the discussion was that by having people in the office on fixed days, you still have the opportunity to recruit the help of a range of people at different stages. In another conversation one of the participants felt that she would tend to over rely on the "office regulars" over those who mainly worked online or remotely.

Figure 31: Unconscious reliance on those staff attending the office over those working remotely
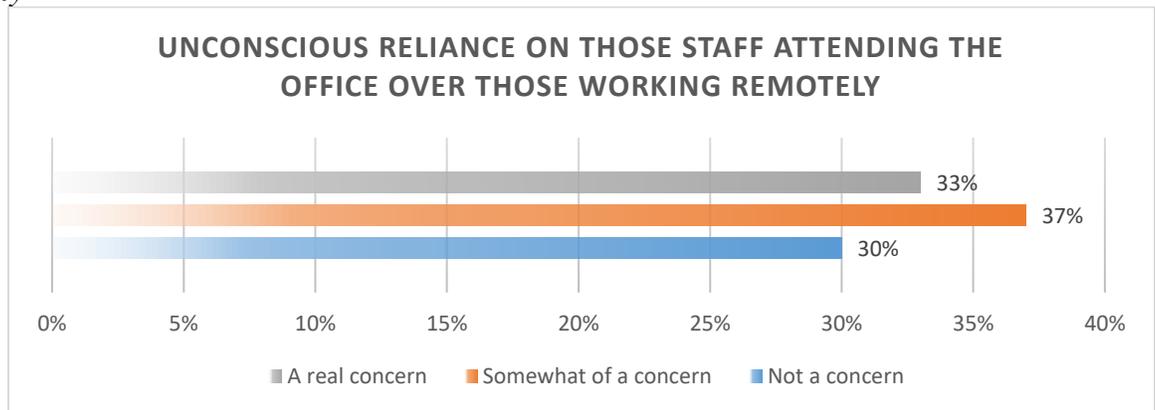
4.5.11 Factor: Employee Isolation And Disconnection

This factor resulted in a significantly high number of the participants responding that employee isolation and disconnection was a real concern for them. From the interview discussion, the participants were already reporting an uncomfortable high level of employees in their organisations showing signs of isolation and disconnection. Where this was noted, it was deemed to be affecting the staff on personal levels more so than work quality or productivity levels.

> You can see a change in certain staff. Before they used to be central in various social circles or considered very popular amongst the staff. Now they show up online often with no camera on. Don't get me wrong, their work outputs are still very good but they are not themselves. As we continue down the path of hyrid working, you would wonder what at what cost to staff moral (Interviewee 4, Manager/Employee).

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All interviewees referenced in some form that organisations need to consider this factor into reviews of their work practices on a regular basis to ensure hybrid working is not having negative effects on their employees.

Figure 32: Employee isolation and disconnection
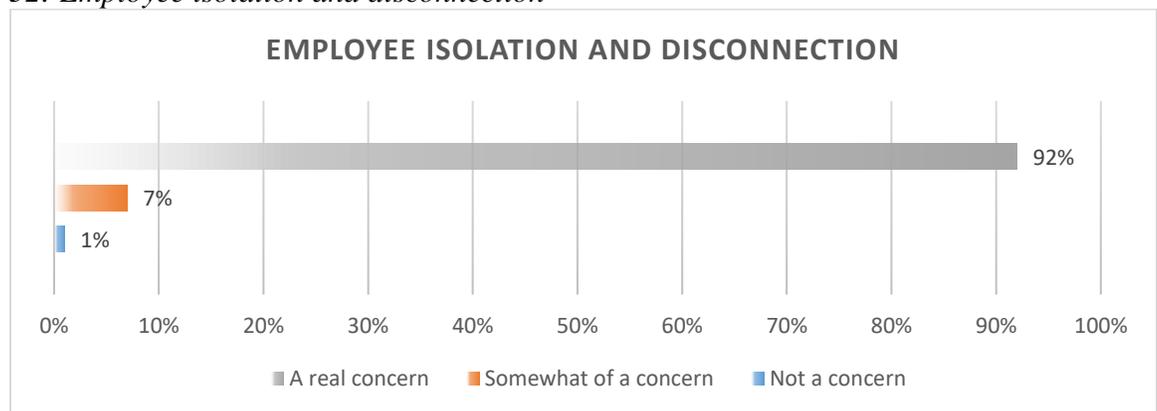
4.5.12 Factor: Lowering Of Standards Of Engagements To Facilitate Hybrid Teams

When it came to having to lower the standard of engagement to facilitate hybrid teams, 58% of the participants felt this was not a concern for them. Having spoken with the interview partipants, all noted in some form that again, if this question was put to them at the early stages of the pandemic it would have been a real concern to them. They felt that having had the experience of the last few years, there standards are at a level hey are happy with and looking to the future, their standards would not need to drop as a result of both experience and evolving technologies.

> Where it has not been easy getting to the point of how we manage and engage with our various teams in the hybrid space, I think the combination of good technology and experience has led us to a place where we can be happy with and sustain gong forward into the future (Interviewee 1, Manager/Employee).

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Figure 33: Lowering of standards of engagements to facilitate hybrid teams
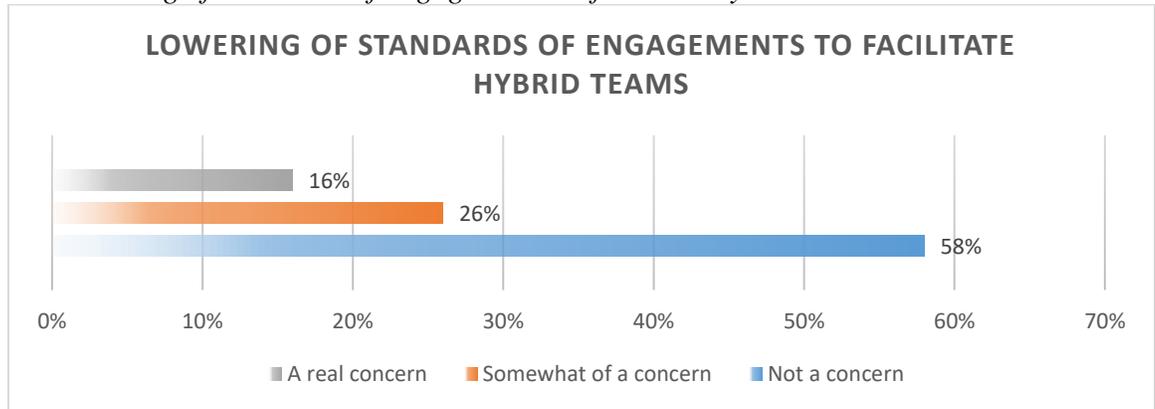
4.5.13 Factor: The Need To Redesign Operational Processes To Accommodate A Hybrid Workforce

Similarly to the previous factor, over half (56) of the participants did not think the need to redesign operational processes to accommodate a hybrid workforce was a concern for them. Again, the interviewees feedback that if this question was posed to them when the pandemic started, there would have been a high level of real concern. The consensus was that many organisations have done this already and can do it again if the ask is put to them.

> We have revamped all our processes to make them work in the hybrid space. They may not be perfect, but they are very good alternatives to what we used to do before the pandemic. If we are required to do this again in the future, we have the experience of the last few years to help us (Interviewee 3, Manager/Employee).

Figure 34: The need to redesign operational processes to accommodate a hybrid workforce

THE NEED TO REDESIGN OPERATIONAL PROCESSES TO ACCOMMODATE A HYBRID WORKFORCE

21%
23%
56%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

■ A real concern   ■ Somewhat of a concern   ■ Not a concern
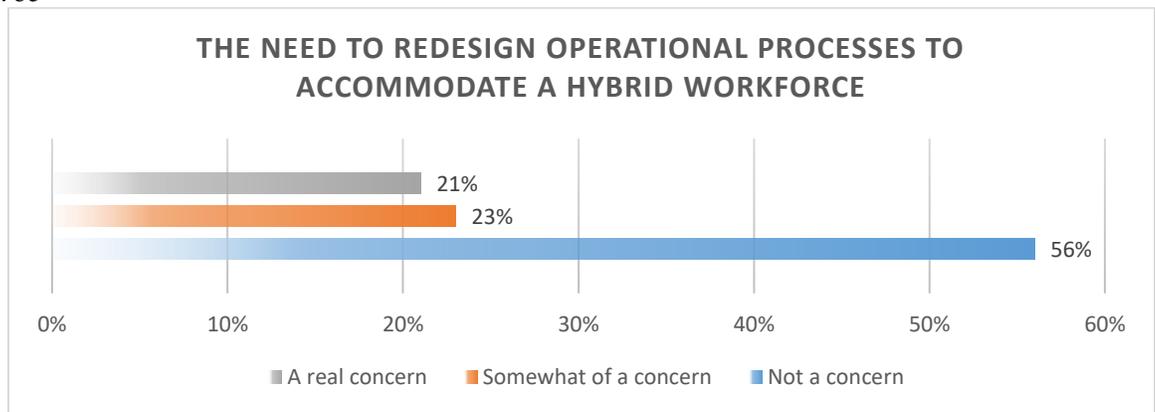
4.6 Research Question 4: How Are People Envisioning The Future Of Hybrid Working?

In an attempt to provide answers for this research question, both the interview participants and the questionnaire participants where posed the following statements to ascertain what scenarios might challenge their engagement in hybrid working. Participants we also asked for their opinion on the best fit balance of days at home versus days in the workplace. For all the figures presented in this section, the response rate is n=452.

4.6.1 Factor: The Longer Hybrid Work Continues, The Harder It Will Be For Me To Leave My Current Role

When presented with the statement that the longer hybrid work continues, the harder it will be for me to leave my current role, 78% of the participants agreed it would. During the interviews, many participants referred to the fact that they have become complacent due to the fact the have achieved hybrid working and not returned to the office fully.

I think the fact I am not back in an office five days a week has made me over appreciate my job. The longer I am allowed to continue hybrid working, the more I am happy to stay where I am. A new role could change this and I am not sure I would be happy with that (Interviewee 6, Employee).

Others interview participants noted that they have had to adapt to challenging circumstances and have done so successfully. Moving to a new role could require them to repeat this experience again.

I found it very challenging to get to grips with our hyrid working model. I am now only really embracing it as an option rather than as an emergency mesure. If I was to leave and move to another organisation, I would be afraid I would have to do this all over again (Interviewee 10, Employee).

Were interview participants disagreed with the statement, they seemed to look beyond the resetting moment or having to start again and focused on their strengths or ability to work in a hybrid environment.

If I have done it [move to a hybrid working model] once, I can do it again. The fear of the unknown isn't a reason for me to stay in this job. I have learned new skills that allows me to be productive when working from home. There is no reason why I couldn't do this with a new organisation (Interviewee 1, Manager/Employee).

Figure 35: The longer hybrid work continues, the harder it will be for me to leave my current role
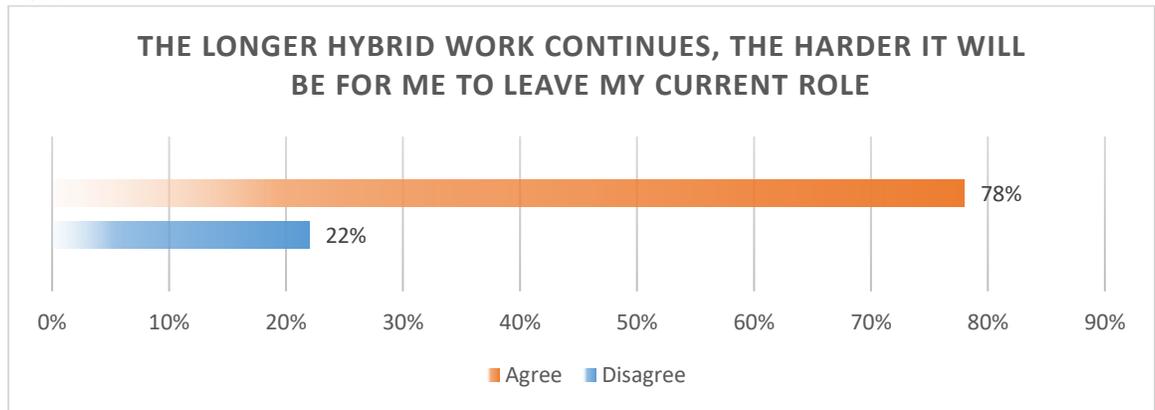
4.6.2 Factor: If Offered A Promotion That Did Not Offer Any Hybrid Working Arrangements Would You Accept Or Decline The Position

As part of this study, participants were presented with a scenario that asked them to accept or decline an offer of a promotion with the caveat that it did not offer any hybrid working arrangements. The scenario offered future context by stating that the promotion would result in a 12% increase their current financial renumeration, travelling/commuting time expected to be 45 - 60 minutes for each leg of the journey, and there would be some increase in operational responsibilities.

Two-thirds of the participants indicated that based the given scenario, they would decline to accept the promotion. During the interview phase of the study, six of the ten participants declined the promotion. From speaking with theses particpants the single driving factor behind them decling was the fact that they would lose their hybrid working option. Of the interview particapants that accepted the promotion, their single driving factor was the increase in financial remuneration. Second to this was that they were at the early stages of their career and they were keen to take the next step in their career progression despite losing the option of hybrid working.
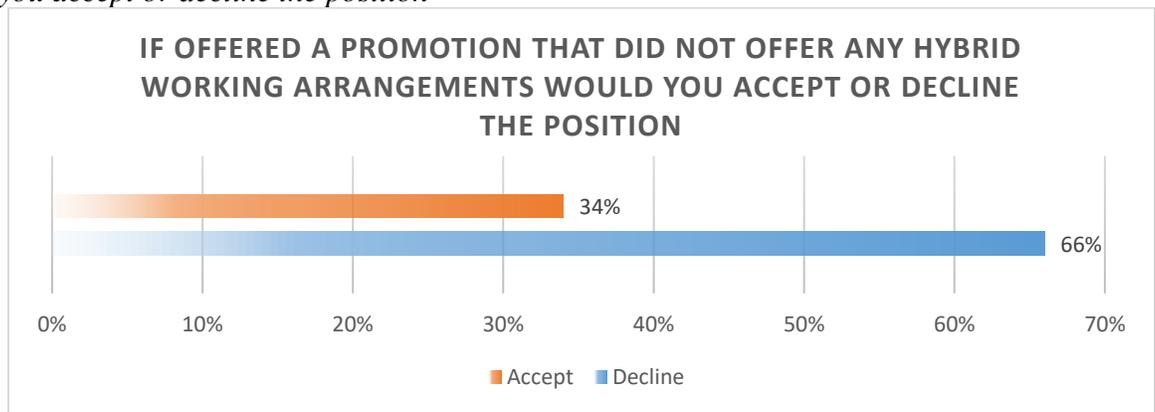
Figure 36: If offered a promotion that did not offer any hybrid working arrangements would you accept or decline the position

4.6.3 Factor: What Do You Feel Is The Most Suitable Option For Working Arrangements In Your Organisation For All Employees?

When posed with the question as to what the participants would see as a suitable option for hybrid working, 0% indicated that they would see being back in the workplace fully as a suitable option. There was a majority of 73% in favour of a only having to working the in the physical workplace for 1-2 days per week. 22% felt that 3-4 days in the workplace would be suitable with 5% wanting to move to a fully remote model.

During the interviews, it seemed that particpants opted to select the option that they are currently working at present but that cannot be assumed for those particapnts of the questionnaire.

Figure 37: What do you feel is the most suitable option for working arrangements in your organisation for all employees?
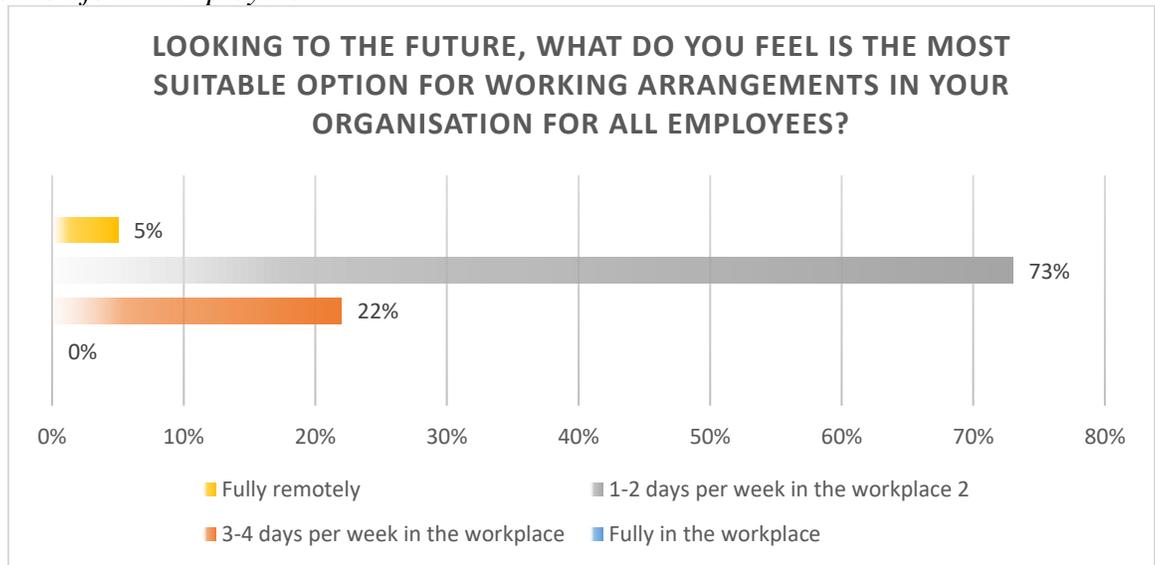
4.6.4 Factor: Looking To The Future, Do You Think Hybrid Working Is A

Sustainable Workforce Model

Finally, as a closing question, all participants were asked do you think hybrid working is a sustainable workforce model in the years to come. None of the participants felt that hybrid working would not be a future suitable workforce model. Where 43% responded yes, 57% responded that it would be but not without its challenges.

Across the study, participants raised a number of significant concerns to working in a hybrid environment. This was echoed by the interview participants as their main reason for opted for yes but not without its challenges. Seven of the ten interviewees felt that the study has made them think of rethink their understanding of hyrid working and having engaged in the previous questions, made them move from just a yes answer.

Figure 38: Looking to the future, do you think hybrid working is a sustainable workforce model
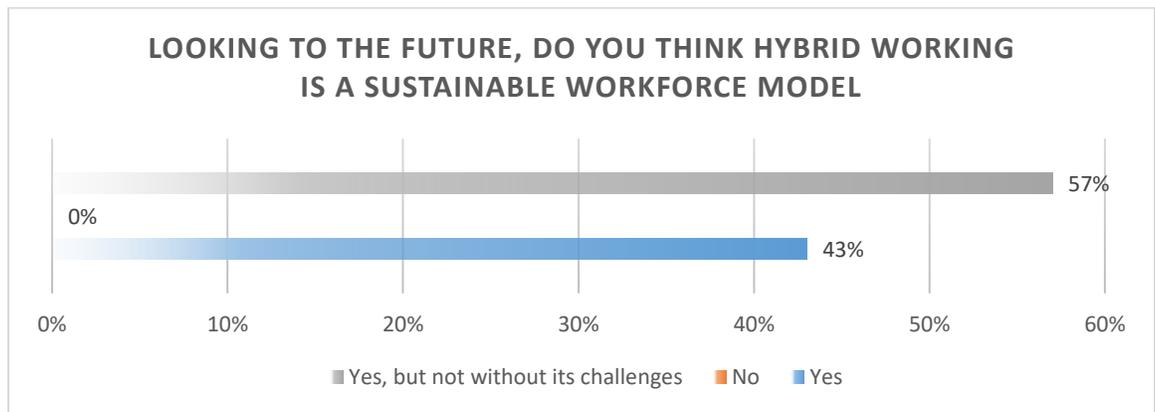
3.7 Summary

This study examines the implementation and impact of hybrid working models in workplaces both before and after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Historically, hybrid working arrangements were not widely adopted, with only a small percentage of organisations offering them, often without clear guidelines or support for employees. However, the pandemic prompted a significant shift in this landscape, with a vast majority of participants now engaged in some form of hybrid work.

Transitioning to hybrid working posed challenges, notably due to the lack of emphasis on remote work before the pandemic. Nevertheless, the success of remote work during the crisis demonstrated its viability, leading to increased productivity and cost savings, thus advocating for its continued adoption.

The study highlights the diverse nature of hybrid working models, such as fixed hybrid, workplace-first, flexible, and remote-first, indicating that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. However, there is a lack of clarity among participants regarding how these models are determined or implemented within their organisations.

Overall, the findings underscore the transformative impact of the pandemic on work practices, emphasising the need for organisations to adapt and formalise hybrid working arrangements to meet the evolving needs of employees in a post-Covid world. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers, employers, and employees navigating the complexities of hybrid work in the modern workplace.

The study delves into various factors surrounding the sustainability of hybrid work models from the perspective of employees. Through a comprehensive examination involving questionnaire responses and in-depth interviews, it reveals nuanced challenges.

Participants expressed concerns about maintaining motivation outside the traditional workplace, particularly as the novelty of hybrid working diminishes. However, the majority found the flexibility offered by hybrid arrangements beneficial for their overall well-being, with reduced commuting time enhancing their quality of life.

Issues related to home working arrangements, such as the availability of suitable workspace and technology, were largely addressed by employer support and technological advancements. Nevertheless, maintaining professional contact with colleagues emerged as a significant challenge, impacting collaboration and communication within teams.

The blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, compounded by difficulties in "switching off" after work hours, emerged as a prevalent concern. Participants highlighted the importance of establishing clear boundaries and maintaining a healthy work-life balance in hybrid work environments.

Concerns regarding equal opportunities for promotion and visibility of one's work highlighted potential disparities between in-office and remote employees. While virtual collaboration tools have facilitated teamwork, some participants expressed apprehension

about the impact of reduced face-to-face interaction on career progression and organisational communication.

Trust emerged as a fundamental component of the hybrid work model, emphasising the importance of mutual trust between employers and employees. As hybrid working evolves, maintaining trust will be essential for fostering a cohesive and productive work environment.

While hybrid working offers flexibility and work-life balance benefits, it also presents unique challenges that must be addressed to ensure its long-term sustainability. By recognising and proactively addressing these factors, organisations can cultivate a resilient hybrid work model that maximises employee satisfaction and organisational success.

Furthermore, the study explores the perspectives of managers regarding hybrid work models. Through a combination of questionnaire responses and in-depth interviews, significant challenges and considerations for sustainability are revealed.

One primary challenge identified is ensuring employees maintain a healthy work-life balance while working remotely. Managers expressed concerns about blurring boundaries between work and personal life, as well as the challenge of monitoring working hours in home environments.

The changing function of physical workplaces emerged as another concern, with many noting a shift towards offices becoming social hubs rather than centers of productivity. This raises questions about the value and purpose of physical office spaces in hybrid work models.

While concerns about the cost of equipment and operational processes were less pronounced, managers expressed apprehension about managing unforeseen circumstances or emergencies in hybrid work settings. Additionally, managing team

projects and fostering collaboration among remote team members posed challenges related to building relationships and ensuring effective communication.

Despite these challenges, managers expressed confidence in their ability to adapt to hybrid work models, citing experience and evolving technologies as enabling factors. However, ongoing training and support in managing remote teams are needed for long-term success.

In conclusion, the sustainability of hybrid work models depends on addressing challenges related to work-life balance, organisational culture, communication, and emergency response. By proactively addressing these concerns, organisations can foster a productive and resilient hybrid work environment that meets the needs of employees and the organisation as a whole.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the emergence of hybrid working, its drivers, challenges, and implications for organisations. The drivers include technological advancements, shifting attitudes towards work-life balance, and the impact of the pandemic. Hybrid working offers benefits such as flexibility, cost savings, and improved work-life balance for both organisations and employees. However, implementing hybrid working can be challenging, particularly in terms of communication, productivity monitoring, and ensuring equality among remote and office-based workers. Clear definitions and best practices are necessary for successful implementation.

This chapter also discusses the perspective of employees and managers in navigating hybrid work environments. It emphasises the need for leaders to adapt their leadership styles, prioritise effective communication and trust-building, provide structural support and embrace shared leadership. The input also highlights the challenges and opportunities of hybrid work, including work-life balance concerns, erosion of workplace functionality, challenges with emergency response, managerial training and effectiveness, employee isolation and disconnection, and the need to redesign operational processes. Additionally, the input explores the future of hybrid working, discussing factors such as attachment to current roles, the impact of hybrid working on promotions, preferred hybrid work models, and the sustainability of hybrid working.

5.2 Navigating the Hybrid Work Landscape: Emergence, Dynamics, and Implications

The concept of hybrid working has gained considerable traction in recent years, especially amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Hybrid working entails a flexible work arrangement that integrates elements of remote and office-based work, offering employees the freedom to work from diverse locations. This paper aims to explore the emergence of hybrid working, its drivers, challenges, and implications for modern organisations.

5.2.1 Drivers of Hybrid Working

Several factors have contributed to the rise of hybrid working. Firstly, technological advancements have democratised remote work, with cloud-based tools facilitating seamless communication and collaboration across geographical boundaries. Secondly, shifting attitudes towards work-life balance and employee well-being have made remote work an attractive proposition for individuals seeking autonomy and flexibility in their work arrangements. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work, prompting organisations to rethink traditional workplace norms and embrace hybrid models as a viable long-term solution.

5.2.2 Benefits of Hybrid Working

Hybrid working offers numerous benefits for both organisations and employees. For organisations, it provides greater flexibility in workforce management, enables cost savings through reduced office space, and enhances resilience by diversifying work locations. For employees, hybrid working fosters improved work-life balance, reduces commuting time and expenses, and increases autonomy and job satisfaction. Moreover, it

enables organisations to tap into a broader talent pool by accommodating remote workers.

5.2.3 Challenges of Implementing Hybrid Working

Despite its advantages, implementing hybrid working poses challenges for organisations. Communication and collaboration may become more complex in a hybrid work environment, requiring innovative solutions to maintain connectivity and cohesion among team members. Additionally, managers may struggle to monitor and evaluate employee productivity and engagement in hybrid settings. Discrepancies in the quality of workspaces available to remote and office-based workers may also exacerbate inequalities and hinder inclusivity.

5.2.4 Defining Remote and Hybrid Working

A significant challenge in understanding hybrid working lies in defining related concepts such as remote work. Existing literature presents a range of naming conventions and definitions for remote work, reflecting the diverse nature of remote work arrangements across organisations. Similarly, definitions of hybrid working emphasise flexibility and a blended approach to work, encompassing options for remote and office-based work. Clarifying these definitions is essential for operationalising hybrid working practices effectively within organisations.

5.2.5 Best Practices and Considerations

Successful implementation of hybrid working requires careful planning and consideration of various factors. Organisations must establish clear communication channels, leverage technology to facilitate collaboration, and implement policies that

promote equitable treatment of remote and office-based workers. Moreover, fostering a culture of trust, autonomy, and accountability is critical for ensuring the success of hybrid working arrangements. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of hybrid working practices based on feedback and evolving organisational needs are also essential.

5.2.6   Pre-Covid Landscape

Before examining the implementation of hybrid working, it's essential to understand the pre-Covid scenario. This study found that a significant majority (81%) of participants' workplaces did not offer hybrid working options before the pandemic. While some organisations had policies in place, translating these policies into practice was often challenging. Interviews revealed a lack of preparedness among employees and uncertainty among employers regarding their obligations to facilitate remote work.

5.2.7 Challenges and Perceptions

Interviewees highlighted several challenges and perceptions regarding hybrid working pre-Covid. Remote work was not actively encouraged, with a prevailing preference for on-site presence. Employees lacked the necessary infrastructure for remote work, such as suitable equipment, and managers expressed concerns about productivity and oversight in remote settings. Despite existing policies, hybrid working was not widely promoted or utilised within organisations.

5.2.8 Transition to Post-Covid

The Covid-19 pandemic catalyzed a significant shift towards hybrid working. Post-pandemic, none of the participants reported a full return to the workplace, with 92% now engaged in hybrid work arrangements. This marked a substantial departure from pre-

pandemic practices. Interviews revealed that the success of remote work during the pandemic, in ensuring business continuity, influenced organisations' decisions to adopt hybrid models on a permanent basis.

5.2.9 Rationale for Hybrid Working

Participants cited various reasons for embracing hybrid working post-Covid, including sustained productivity during remote work periods and cost savings from reduced office space. Moreover, the flexibility afforded by hybrid models resonated with employees seeking improved work-life balance. Managers emphasised the importance of evaluating output metrics, noting that productivity remained consistent or improved during remote work periods.

5.2.10 Understanding Hybrid Working Models

This study revealed a diversity of hybrid working models, with the majority (75%) operating in a fixed hybrid model. However, there was a lack of clarity regarding how these models were agreed upon or implemented. Participants expressed confusion about the decision-making process behind hybrid working arrangements, highlighting a need for clearer communication and transparency from organisations.

5.3 Navigating the Hybrid Work Environments: An employee perspective

The pandemic necessitated a rapid transition to remote work, unveiling myriad challenges stemming from unpreparedness among businesses, including inadequate infrastructure, unclear policies, and concerns regarding legal compliance and data security (Leonardi, 2021). Consequently, the abrupt shift unearthed areas necessitating improvement, particularly in responding adeptly to external stimuli, while concurrently

highlighting the apprehensions of unprepared workers thrust into remote work scenarios (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020; Kaczmarek, 2020).

5.3.1 Prevalence of Hybrid Working

Pre-pandemic, hybrid working was often a discretionary choice, but it swiftly metamorphosed into a mandatory norm (Bilotta et al., 2021). However, remote work during a pandemic poses unique challenges, encompassing health concerns, social isolation, and job security anxieties, thereby underscoring the necessity for holistic support frameworks (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020).

5.3.2 Complexities in Transition

The transition to remote work is fraught with complexities influenced by individual characteristics, job roles, organisational culture, and technological infrastructure, necessitating a nuanced approach to operationalising decentralised work systems (Kaczmarek, 2020). Challenges such as isolation, communication barriers, and blurred work-life boundaries underscore the imperative of holistic strategies to mitigate inherent drawbacks (Jamal et al., 2021).

While the majority of participants reported no concerns regarding access to technology for remote work, ensuring continued technological readiness remains vital. As technology evolves, organisations must adapt to new tools and platforms to support remote collaboration effectively. Additionally, addressing disparities in technological access and proficiency among employees is essential to prevent barriers to productivity and communication.

While distractions at home were not a significant concern for most participants, challenges related to communication and availability emerged as noteworthy issues.

Participants cited difficulties in coordinating schedules and accessing colleagues for timely communication, particularly in asynchronous work environments. Additionally, the influx of virtual meetings and asynchronous communication tools may contribute to information overload and hinder effective collaboration.

5.3.3 Employee Wellbeing/Work-life Balance

Managing stressors and fostering wellbeing amidst remote work scenarios present formidable challenges exacerbated by the pandemic-induced uncertainties. Elevated stress levels, compounded by blurred work-life boundaries and digital overload, underscore the imperative of supportive organisational frameworks (Gallup, 2021; Ginger, 2020; Kokshagina, 2021).

Remote work engenders a reconfiguration of work-life dynamics, blurring traditional boundaries and necessitating recalibration of expectations. Challenges such as familial responsibilities and ergonomic setups underscore the imperative of supportive organisational policies to foster work-life harmony (Anderson and Kelliher, 2020; Bulut and Maimaiti, 2021).

Concerns regarding maintaining a healthy work-life balance and setting boundaries between work and personal life were prevalent among participants. The flexibility offered by hybrid work models may inadvertently blur these boundaries, leading to longer working hours and increased stress. Participants highlighted the challenge of "unplugging" after work and the tendency to work beyond conventional hours, raising questions about the sustainability of current working patterns.

5.3.4 Work Efficiency and Effectiveness

Contrary to apprehensions, empirical evidence suggests that remote work during the pandemic has not significantly compromised productivity. Studies reveal a mixed bag of perceptions, with some employees reporting heightened productivity owing to reduced distractions and enhanced autonomy, while others contend with challenges such as burnout and role ambiguity (Colley and Williamson, 2020; Folkman, 2020; Mani and Siju, 2021).

5.3.5 Engagement with Work

The pandemic precipitated nuanced shifts in employee engagement dynamics, reflecting divergent perceptions and experiences. While some report marginal declines, others highlight increased engagement attributed to organisational responsiveness and supportive measures (Emmet et al., 2020; Quantum Workplace, 2020).

A significant proportion of participants expressed concerns about sustaining motivation while working remotely. The longer duration of hybrid work, especially for those primarily working from home, raised apprehensions about maintaining enthusiasm and engagement with their work. Despite the benefits of flexibility and improved work-life balance, there is a risk of diminishing motivation over time, which could impact productivity and job satisfaction.

5.3.6 Job Satisfaction

Amidst the pandemic-induced upheavals, job satisfaction emerges as a multifaceted construct shaped by individual experiences and organisational support frameworks. While some report heightened satisfaction attributed to newfound flexibility,

others grapple with uncertainties and stressors, underscoring the need for tailored interventions (Toscano and Zappalà, 2020; Standish, 2021).

5.3.7 Collaboration Dynamics

Remote work necessitates a recalibration of collaboration dynamics, with discernible shifts in meeting frequencies and communication modalities. Challenges such as social isolation and communication barriers underscore the importance of fostering cohesive team dynamics through innovative strategies (DeFilppis et al., 2020; Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi, 2020).

Maintaining professional contacts and communication emerged as a prominent concern among participants. The shift to remote and hybrid work settings has led to a decline in spontaneous interactions and informal communication, affecting collaboration and relationship-building within teams. Virtual meetings, while essential for connectivity, may not fully replicate the dynamics of in-person interactions, leading to feelings of isolation and reduced cohesion among colleagues.

5.3.8 Career Progression and Visibility

Participants expressed concerns about equal opportunities for career advancement and visibility within hybrid work environments. The physical absence from the workplace, especially for those working remotely, could impact visibility to management and opportunities for professional growth. Additionally, disparities in access to information and networking opportunities may exacerbate inequalities in career development.

5.3.9 Trust and Performance Management

Establishing and maintaining trust between employers and employees emerged as a critical factor for the sustainability of hybrid work models. Participants highlighted the importance of mutual trust in ensuring accountability, productivity, and performance evaluation in remote and hybrid work settings. Concerns were raised about the potential erosion of trust over time, particularly as personal interactions decrease and reliance on remote performance metrics increases.

5.4 Navigating the Hybrid Work Environments: A Managers Perspective

5.4.1 Adaptation of Leadership Styles

Leaders must adapt their leadership styles to effectively navigate the complexities of hybrid work environments. The shift from traditional office settings to hybrid models necessitates a nuanced approach to leadership, considering factors such as communication dynamics, team structures, and technological dependencies. Leaders must strike a balance between old and modern techniques, recognising the evolving needs of their teams (Kane et al., 2019). Moreover, the variability in team composition and objectives underscores the importance of tailored leadership approaches that cater to the unique requirements of each context (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002).

5.4.2 Communication and Trust

Effective communication and trust-building are paramount in hybrid work environments. Leaders play a pivotal role in fostering open lines of communication, setting clear expectations, and cultivating trust among team members (Reeves, 2021). Research indicates that high levels of trust and leadership correlate with improved team

performance in remote settings, highlighting the significance of these factors in overcoming challenges associated with hybrid work (DeRosa et al., 2004).

5.4.3 Structural Support and Shared Leadership

Organisational support, in terms of policies, technology infrastructure, and procedural adaptations, is essential for creating an enabling environment for hybrid work (Hoch and Kozlowski, 2014). Leaders must advocate for and implement structural support mechanisms that facilitate seamless collaboration and productivity across remote and in-office teams. Additionally, embracing a shared team leadership approach promotes engagement, empowerment, and alignment with shared objectives, contributing to a culture of teamwork and accountability (Hoch and Kozlowski, 2014).

5.4.4 Challenges and Opportunities

While hybrid work presents unique challenges, such as reduced physical presence and potential communication barriers, it also offers opportunities for innovation and flexibility. Leaders must be receptive to new ways of thinking and adept at leveraging technology to enhance virtual collaboration and engagement (Reeves, 2021). By embracing a collaborative culture, fostering trust, and demonstrating flexibility, leaders can navigate the complexities of hybrid work environments and drive organisational success.

5.4.5 Work/Life Balance Concerns

Maintaining an appropriate work/life balance emerges as a significant concern for managers in hybrid work environments. The interviews revealed that managers grapple with issues such as blurred boundaries between work and personal life, prolonged

working hours, and difficulties in disconnecting from work while at home. The challenge of ensuring compliance with legal working time responsibilities adds another layer of complexity for managers, as they navigate the evolving dynamics of hybrid work (Interviewees 1, 2, 4).

5.5.6 Erosion of Workplace

Managers express genuine concerns about the erosion of workplace functionality in hybrid settings. The workplace, once considered a center of productivity, has transformed into more of a social hub, with reduced focus on work-related activities. Participants noted longer social breaks, reduced productivity on days when everyone is in the office, and a shift in the workplace's identity (Interviewees 2, 4). Additionally, the depreciation of the monetary asset value of physical workplaces poses a significant concern for managers.

5.5.7 Challenges with Emergency Response and Unforeseen Situations

Participants highlight challenges in reacting to unforeseen circumstances or emergency situations in hybrid work environments. The need for swift and effective communication becomes paramount in such scenarios, yet managers face obstacles in coordinating and mobilising teams remotely. Instances of cyber breaches or other emergencies underscore the importance of having robust response mechanisms in place, which may be hindered by the distributed nature of hybrid work (Interviewees 3, 4).

5.5.8 Managerial Training and Effectiveness

There is a discernible divide among managers regarding their confidence in managing teams effectively in hybrid settings. While some express concerns about their

suitability and lack of training for managing in hybrid spaces, others feel adequately equipped and confident in their abilities. Training programs tailored to address the unique challenges of hybrid management are essential for equipping managers with the skills and confidence needed to lead effectively in these environments.

5.5.9 Employee Isolation and Disconnection

Managers express apprehension regarding the increasing levels of employee isolation and disconnection observed in hybrid work setups. The absence of face-to-face interactions and social connections within the workplace has led to feelings of isolation among employees, impacting morale and well-being. Organisations must proactively address these challenges by fostering a sense of belonging and community among remote workers (Interviewee 4, Emplyee/manager).

5.5.10 Redesigning Operational Processes

While some managers express confidence in their organisation's ability to redesign operational processes to accommodate hybrid work, others remain cautious. The experience gained during the pandemic has equipped organisations with valuable insights and strategies for adapting to hybrid work arrangements. However, ongoing vigilance and adaptability are crucial to ensuring operational efficiency and effectiveness in the long term (Interviewee 3).

5.6 Exploring the Future of Hybrid Working

As organisations continue to navigate the evolving landscape of work arrangements, the future of hybrid working emerges as a focal point of discussion and debate. This discussion paper synthesises insights gathered from interviews and

questionnaires to explore how individuals envision the future of hybrid working and the factors influencing their perspectives.

5.6.1 Attachment to Current Role

The findings reveal a strong sentiment among participants that prolonged exposure to hybrid working makes it increasingly difficult for them to leave their current roles. Participants express a sense of complacency and attachment to their current positions, driven by the flexibility and autonomy afforded by hybrid work arrangements. Fear of having to adapt to new challenges in a different organisation or role serves as a deterrent to seeking new opportunities (Interviewees 6, 10). However, some participants express confidence in their ability to adapt and embrace new challenges, suggesting that the allure of hybrid working may not be a barrier to exploring new roles (Interviewee 1, Manager/Employee).

5.6.2 Promotion and Hybrid Working

When presented with a scenario offering a promotion without hybrid working arrangements, a significant majority of participants indicated a preference for declining the promotion. The primary reason cited for this decision is the loss of hybrid working options, outweighing the financial benefits and increased responsibilities associated with the promotion. This underscores the importance of flexibility and work-life balance in shaping individuals' career decisions.

5.6.3 Preferred Hybrid Work Models

Participants overwhelmingly express a preference for hybrid work models over full-time office-based or remote-only arrangements. The majority advocate for a hybrid

model that allows them to work in the physical workplace for 1-2 days per week, with a smaller percentage favoring 3-4 days in the office or a fully remote model. This preference reflects a desire for flexibility and autonomy in managing their work schedules while still valuing face-to-face interaction and collaboration.

5.6.4 Sustainability of Hybrid Working

`   Despite acknowledging challenges associated with hybrid working, participants unanimously believe that it is a sustainable workforce model for the years to come. While some express concerns about potential obstacles and hurdles, such as maintaining work-life balance, preserving organisational culture, and managing team dynamics, the overall consensus is optimistic about the future viability of hybrid working. Participants recognise the need for ongoing adaptation and innovation to address challenges and optimise the benefits of hybrid work arrangements.

5.7 Summary

Hybrid working represents a transformative shift in modern work arrangements, offering organisations and employees unprecedented flexibility and autonomy. While the adoption of hybrid working has been accelerated by technological advancements and the Covid-19 pandemic, its implementation presents challenges that require thoughtful consideration and strategic planning. By understanding the drivers, benefits, challenges, and best practices of hybrid working, organisations can navigate the transition successfully and unlock the full potential of this innovative work model.

The implementation of hybrid working represents a significant paradigm shift in modern workplaces. While the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this transition, the challenges and complexities associated with hybrid models remain. Organisations must

navigate issues of communication, collaboration, and equality to ensure the success of hybrid working arrangements. By understanding the drivers, challenges, and implications of hybrid working, organisations can optimise their approach and unlock the potential of this innovative work model.

The Covid-19 pandemic catalyzed a profound transformation in work paradigms, ushering in an era of remote work characterised by unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Navigating the complexities of remote work necessitates a multifaceted approach encompassing organisational support frameworks, technological enhancements, and nuanced policy interventions to foster holistic employee wellbeing and organisational resilience amidst evolving work dynamics.

The findings from this study underscore the multifaceted nature of challenges that could impact the sustainability of hybrid work models. Addressing these concerns requires a holistic approach that encompasses technological readiness, communication strategies, trust-building initiatives, and policies to support work-life balance. Organisations must prioritise the well-being and engagement of employees while fostering a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and trust to ensure the long-term success of hybrid work arrangements. By proactively addressing these challenges, organisations can harness the benefits of hybrid work models while mitigating potential risks to sustainability.

Effective leadership is indispensable for the sustainable implementation and success of hybrid work models. Leaders must adapt their leadership styles, prioritise communication and trust-building, advocate for structural support, and embrace shared team leadership principles. By addressing these key dimensions of leadership, organisations can maximise the potential of hybrid work arrangements, promote

employee engagement and well-being, and achieve their strategic objectives in an evolving business landscape.

The sustainability of hybrid work models hinges on the ability of managers to address and overcome the challenges inherent in these environments. By prioritising work/life balance, fostering workplace functionality, enhancing emergency response capabilities, investing in managerial training, mitigating employee isolation, and redesigning operational processes, organisations can pave the way for a successful transition to hybrid work models. It is imperative for organisations to remain agile, responsive, and proactive in supporting managers and employees as they navigate the complexities of hybrid work arrangements.

The future of hybrid working is shaped by individuals' experiences, preferences, and perceptions of work-life balance, flexibility, and organisational culture. As organisations and individuals continue to navigate the complexities of hybrid work arrangements, it is essential to prioritise flexibility, autonomy, and well-being to ensure the sustainable and successful implementation of hybrid work models in the years to come.

CHAPTER VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work, prompting organisations to rethink traditional workplace norms and embrace hybrid models as a viable long-term solution. Hybrid working offers numerous benefits for both organisations and employees, such as greater flexibility in workforce management, cost savings through reduced office space, and enhanced resilience by diversifying work locations. For employees, hybrid working fosters improved work-life balance, reduces commuting time and expenses, and increases autonomy and job satisfaction.

However, implementing hybrid working poses challenges for organisations, including complex communication and collaboration, difficulty monitoring and evaluating employee productivity and engagement, and discrepancies in workspace quality. Understanding the difference between remote and hybrid working is crucial for operationalising hybrid working practices effectively within organisations.

Successful implementation of hybrid working requires careful planning and consideration of various factors, including clear communication channels, technology for collaboration, and policies that promote equitable treatment of remote and office-based workers. Fostering a culture of trust, autonomy, and accountability is critical for ensuring the success of hybrid working arrangements. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of hybrid working practices based on feedback and evolving organisational needs are also essential.

In the pre-Covid landscape, 81% of participants' workplaces did not offer hybrid working options before the pandemic, with some organisations having policies in place but translating these into practice often challenging. Challenges and perceptions

regarding hybrid working pre-Covid included lack of preparedness among employees and uncertainty among employers regarding their obligations to facilitate remote work.

As part of the transition to post-Covid, 92% of participants now engage in hybrid work arrangements, marking a substantial departure from pre-pandemic practices. Reasons for embracing hybrid working post-Covid include sustained productivity during remote work periods and cost savings from reduced office space. Managers emphasise the importance of evaluating output metrics, noting that productivity remained consistent or improved during remote work periods.

As part of trying to understand the various hybrid working models, the majority (75%) operate in a fixed hybrid model, but there is a lack of clarity regarding how these models were agreed upon or implemented. Participants expressed confusion about the decision-making process behind hybrid working arrangements, highlighting a need for clearer communication and transparency from organisations.

From an employee perspective, the pandemic necessitated a rapid transition to remote work, unveiling challenges stemming from unpreparedness among businesses, including inadequate infrastructure, unclear policies, and concerns regarding legal compliance and data security. This abrupt shift has highlighted areas necessitating improvement, particularly in responding adeptly to external stimuli while simultaneously highlighting the apprehensions of unprepared workers thrust into remote work scenarios.

Hybrid working has become a mandatory norm during the pandemic, but it presents unique challenges such as health concerns, social isolation, and job security anxieties. The transition to remote work is fraught with complexities influenced by individual characteristics, job roles, organisational culture, and technological infrastructure. Challenges such as isolation, communication barriers, and blurred work-

life boundaries underscore the importance of holistic strategies to mitigate inherent drawbacks.

As technology evolves, organisations must adapt to new tools and platforms to support remote collaboration effectively. Addressing disparities in technological access and proficiency among employees is essential to prevent barriers to productivity and communication. Communication and availability issues emerged as noteworthy issues, particularly in asynchronous work environments. The influx of virtual meetings and asynchronous communication tools may contribute to information overload and hinder effective collaboration.

Employee well-being and work-life balance are significant challenges exacerbated by the pandemic-induced uncertainties. Remote work engenders a reconfiguration of work-life dynamics, blurring traditional boundaries and necessitating recalibration of expectations. Concerns regarding maintaining a healthy work-life balance and setting boundaries between work and personal life were prevalent among participants. The flexibility offered by hybrid work models may inadvertently blur these boundaries, leading to longer working hours and increased stress.

Work efficiency and effectiveness have not significantly compromised productivity during the pandemic. Studies reveal mixed perceptions, with some employees reporting heightened productivity owing to reduced distractions and enhanced autonomy, while others contend with challenges such as burnout and role ambiguity.

Job satisfaction emerges as a multifaceted construct shaped by individual experiences and organisational support frameworks. While some report heightened satisfaction attributed to newfound flexibility, others grapple with uncertainties and stressors, underscoring the need for tailored interventions.

Collaboration dynamics require a recalibration, with discernible shifts in meeting frequencies and communication modalities. Challenges such as social isolation and communication barriers underscore the importance of fostering cohesive team dynamics through innovative strategies. Maintaining professional contacts and communication is a prominent concern, as the shift to remote and hybrid work settings has led to a decline in spontaneous interactions and informal communication.

Career progression and visibility are also concerns, with physical absence from the workplace impacting visibility to management and opportunities for professional growth. Trust and performance management are critical factors for the sustainability of hybrid work models.

Hybrid work environments present unique challenges and opportunities for managers. Leaders must adapt their leadership styles to navigate the complexities of these environments, considering factors such as communication dynamics, team structures, and technological dependencies. They must strike a balance between old and modern techniques, recognising the evolving needs of their teams.

Effective communication and trust-building are crucial in hybrid work environments, as leaders play a pivotal role in fostering open lines of communication, setting clear expectations, and cultivating trust among team members. Research indicates that high levels of trust and leadership correlate with improved team performance in remote settings.

Organisational support, including policies, technology infrastructure, and procedural adaptations, is essential for creating an enabling environment for hybrid work. Leaders must advocate for and implement structural support mechanisms that facilitate seamless collaboration and productivity across remote and in-office teams. A shared team

leadership approach promotes engagement, empowerment, and alignment with shared objectives, contributing to a culture of teamwork and accountability.

Challenges and opportunities arise in hybrid work environments, such as reduced physical presence and potential communication barriers. Leaders must be receptive to new ways of thinking and adept at leveraging technology to enhance virtual collaboration and engagement. By embracing a collaborative culture, fostering trust, and demonstrating flexibility, leaders can navigate the complexities of hybrid work environments and drive organisational success.

Work/life balance concerns arise, as managers grapple with issues such as blurred boundaries between work and personal life, prolonged working hours, and difficulties in disconnecting from work while at home. The challenge of ensuring compliance with legal working time responsibilities adds another layer of complexity for managers as they navigate the evolving dynamics of hybrid work.

Emergency response and unexpected situations pose challenges in hybrid work environments, as swift and effective communication becomes paramount. Managerial training and effectiveness are essential for equipping managers with the skills and confidence needed to lead effectively in these environments.

Employee isolation and disconnection are also concerns, as the absence of face-to-face interactions and social connections has led to feelings of isolation among employees. Organisations must proactively address these challenges by fostering a sense of belonging and community among remote workers.

The future of hybrid working is a topic of ongoing debate and discussion among organisations. This paper explores the factors influencing individuals' perspectives on hybrid work arrangements, revealing that prolonged exposure to hybrid working makes it increasingly difficult for individuals to leave their current roles. Participants express a

sense of complacency and attachment to their current positions, driven by the flexibility and autonomy afforded by hybrid work arrangements. Fear of having to adapt to new challenges in a different organisation or role serves as a deterrent to seeking new opportunities. However, some participants express confidence in their ability to adapt and embrace new challenges, suggesting that the allure of hybrid working may not be a barrier to exploring new roles.

When presented with a scenario offering a promotion without hybrid working arrangements, a significant majority of participants indicated a preference for declining the promotion. The primary reason cited for this decision is the loss of hybrid working options, outweighing the financial benefits and increased responsibilities associated with the promotion. This underscores the importance of flexibility and work-life balance in shaping individuals' career decisions.

Preferred hybrid work models are overwhelmingly expressed by participants, with the majority advocating for a hybrid model that allows them to work in the physical workplace for 1-2 days per week, with a smaller percentage favoring 3-4 days in the office or a fully remote model. This preference reflects a desire for flexibility and autonomy in managing work schedules while still valuing face-to-face interaction and collaboration.

Despite acknowledging challenges associated with hybrid working, participants unanimously believe that it is a sustainable workforce model for the years to come. Some express concerns about potential obstacles and hurdles, such as maintaining work-life balance, preserving organisational culture, and managing team dynamics. The overall consensus is optimistic about the future viability of hybrid working, recognising the need for ongoing adaptation and innovation to address challenges and optimise the benefits of hybrid work arrangements.

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In conclusion, hybrid working represents a transformative shift in modern work arrangements, offering unprecedented flexibility and autonomy. Organisations must navigate issues of communication, collaboration, and equality to ensure the success of hybrid work arrangements. Effective leadership is indispensable for the sustainable implementation and success of hybrid work models. By prioritising work/life balance, fostering workplace functionality, enhancing emergency response capabilities, investing in managerial training, mitigating employee isolation, and redesigning operational processes, organisations can pave the way for a successful transition to hybrid work models.

6.2 Implications

The implications stemming from this study encompass a multifaceted landscape of changes and adaptations in the space of work dynamics:

Implication 1: Acceleration of Remote Work Adoption

The Covid-19 pandemic has catalyzed a swift adoption of remote work practices, compelling organisations to reassess conventional workplace norms. This rapid transition towards remote and hybrid work models is not merely a temporary response but signifies a profound transformation in work methodologies that is expected to endure post-pandemic.

Implication 2: Benefits of Hybrid Working

Hybrid working presents a plethora of advantages for both organisations and employees. These benefits include heightened flexibility in work arrangements, significant cost savings through reduced office space requirements, and bolstered resilience by diversifying work locations. Leveraging these benefits enables organisations

to better adapt to fluctuating circumstances and enhance overall productivity and efficiency.

Implication 3: Challenges of Implementing Hybrid Working

Despite the evident advantages, implementing hybrid working poses multifaceted challenges for organisations. These hurdles range from navigating intricate communication and collaboration dynamics to effectively monitoring productivity and grappling with disparities in workspace quality. Addressing these challenges necessitates meticulous planning, transparent communication channels, and a commitment to continuous evaluation and adaptation.

Implication 4: Transition to Post-Covid

The transition to post-Covid work arrangements signifies a marked departure from pre-pandemic practices, with a substantial majority of participants now actively engaged in hybrid work setups. Understanding the underlying motivations driving this shift, such as sustained productivity during remote work phases, is imperative for organisations navigating this transitional phase effectively.

Implication 5: Employee Perspectives

Employees confront a myriad of challenges and uncertainties as they navigate the transition to remote and hybrid work environments. These challenges include grappling with inadequate infrastructure, navigating ambiguous policies, and contending with concerns surrounding work-life balance. Organisations must proactively address these concerns to safeguard the well-being and productivity of their workforce.

Implication 6: Manager Perspectives

Managers assume a pivotal role in facilitating the transition to hybrid work environments. This entails adapting leadership styles to suit the evolving needs of remote and hybrid teams, fostering transparent communication channels, and cultivating a

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culture of trust and accountability. Addressing challenges such as maintaining work-life balance, navigating emergency response protocols, and mitigating employee isolation necessitates effective leadership and comprehensive managerial training.

Implication 7: Future of Hybrid Working

Despite the inherent challenges, the future of hybrid working appears promising, with participants expressing confidence in its sustainability and myriad benefits. Nonetheless, organisations must remain vigilant and proactive, continually adapting and innovating to surmount challenges and optimise the advantages of hybrid work arrangements. This entails a commitment to ongoing evaluation, transparent communication, and the cultivation of a culture conducive to trust, autonomy, and accountability.

In essence, the summary underlines the transformative potential of hybrid working and underscores the paramount importance of meticulous planning, effective leadership, and ongoing adaptation for its successful implementation and enduring sustainability in the contemporary workplace landscape.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

Based on the comprehensive overview provided in the summary, several suggestions have emerged for future research emerge, each contributing to a deeper understanding of hybrid work arrangements and their implications:

Suggestion: Implementation Strategies and Best Practices

Investigate effective strategies for implementing hybrid work models within organisations. Explore how factors such as clear communication channels, technology infrastructure, and equitable policies contribute to successful implementation.

Additionally, identify best practices for fostering a culture of trust, autonomy, and accountability in hybrid work environments.

Suggestion: Employee Experience and Well-being

Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of hybrid work arrangements on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. Examine how hybrid work influences work-life balance, stress levels, and overall job satisfaction over time. Explore interventions and support mechanisms to address challenges such as isolation, blurred boundaries, and communication barriers.

Suggestion: Managerial Leadership and Training

Investigate the role of managerial leadership in facilitating effective hybrid work environments. Explore how leadership styles, communication strategies, and training programs influence team dynamics, productivity, and employee engagement in hybrid work settings. Identify key competencies and training needs for managers leading hybrid teams.

Suggestion: Organisational Policies and Support Mechanisms

Examine the impact of organisational policies and support mechanisms on the success of hybrid work arrangements. Investigate how policies related to flexibility, performance evaluation, and career development influence employee perceptions and organisational outcomes. Explore innovative approaches to supporting remote and hybrid workers, such as virtual team-building activities and mental health resources.

Suggestion: Technology and Collaboration Tools

Evaluate the effectiveness of technology and collaboration tools in supporting remote and hybrid work environments. Assess the usability, accessibility, and impact of various tools on communication, collaboration, and productivity. Identify technological

interventions to address challenges such as information overload, communication barriers, and disparities in technological access.

Suggestion: Long-Term Sustainability and Organisational Culture

Explore the long-term sustainability of hybrid work models and their impact on organisational culture. Investigate how hybrid work influences organisational norms, values, and practices over time. Examine strategies for preserving organisational culture, fostering collaboration, and maintaining employee engagement in hybrid work environments.

Suggestion: Career Progression and Opportunities

Investigate the implications of hybrid work arrangements on career development and opportunities for employees. Explore how remote and hybrid work impact visibility, networking, and advancement prospects within organisations. Identify strategies for promoting career growth, skill development, and professional networking in virtual and hybrid settings.

Suggestion: Comparative Analysis of Hybrid Work Models

Conduct comparative studies to assess the effectiveness of different hybrid work models in meeting organisational objectives and employee needs. Compare outcomes such as productivity, employee satisfaction, and work-life balance across different hybrid work arrangements.

Suggestion: Legal and Ethical Considerations

Explore legal and ethical considerations associated with hybrid work arrangements, such as data privacy, security, and compliance with labour laws. Investigate the implications of remote work on employee rights, employer obligations, and regulatory frameworks. Identify emerging legal and ethical challenges and propose recommendations for addressing them.

Suggestion: Longitudinal Studies on Hybrid Work Adoption

Conduct longitudinal studies to track the adoption and evolution of hybrid work arrangements over time. Explore trends, patterns, and shifts in organisational practices, employee preferences, and industry norms related to hybrid work. Identify factors influencing the trajectory of hybrid work adoption and implications for future workplace dynamics.

By addressing these research areas, researchers can contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on hybrid work arrangements and inform evidence-based practices for organisations, policymakers, and practitioners.

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study presents a comprehensive overview of the transformative impact of hybrid working on modern workplaces, underlining its benefits, challenges, and implications. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work, leading organisations to embrace hybrid models as a long-term solution. While hybrid working offers flexibility and autonomy for both organisations and employees, its successful implementation requires careful planning, effective leadership, and ongoing adaptation.

The transition to post-Covid work arrangements signifies a significant departure from pre-pandemic practices, with the majority of participants now engaged in hybrid work setups. However, challenges such as communication barriers, maintaining work-life balance, and addressing employee isolation persist. Effective leadership plays a pivotal role in navigating these challenges, fostering transparent communication, trust, and accountability among team members.

Looking ahead, the future of hybrid working appears promising, with participants expressing confidence in its sustainability and myriad benefits. Nonetheless, ongoing research is essential to deepen our understanding of hybrid work arrangements and their implications. Areas for future research include implementation strategies, employee well-being, managerial leadership, organisational policies, technology tools, career development, comparative analysis of hybrid work models, and legal and ethical considerations.

By addressing the research areas suggested by this study, researchers can contribute valuable insights to inform evidence-based practices for organisations, policymakers, and practitioners, ultimately shaping the future of work in a hybrid world.

As organisations continue to navigate the complexities of hybrid work environments, a commitment to ongoing evaluation, transparent communication, and the cultivation of a culture conducive to trust, autonomy, and accountability will be essential for driving organisational success.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

EXPLORING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF HYBRID WORKING AS A WORKFORCE MODEL

The
purpose of this study is to quantitatively investigate the degree to which remote working has influenced organisations' workforce models. The entire study
is derived from the central question of Whether hybrid working is now sustainable as a workforce model as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. More
specifically, the following sub-research questions will support in answering the central question:

Research question 1: How is hybrid working being implemented in workplaces?

Research question 2: Are there specific factors concerning employees that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?

Research question 3: Are there specific factors concerning those with responsibility for managing people that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?

Research question 4: How are people envisioning the future of hybrid working?

* Indicates required question

Untitled Section

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Study information and consent

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to engage with this study.

This study is being conducted as part of a Doctorate in Business Administration with the Swiss School of Business and Management. The findings of the study will be included in a written dissertation and research articles for publication. The findings may also be presented at conferences nationally and internationally.

The information gathered as part of this study will be treated with great care and respect. This questionnaire will not gather any personal information that can identify individuals or information that will identify the organisation you are part of. All responses will be treated anonymously and the honesty of the responses will be respected.

This questionnaire has the following sections:
Section 1– Basic Organisational information
Section 2 – Your experiences
Section 3 – Managerial experiences (Only needs to be completed by those with responsibilities for managing others in the workplace).
Section 4 - Your thoughts on the future of hybrid working

If you would like more information, please contact Diarmuid Mooney on diarmuid.SSBM@gmail.com

Important Information:
Your participation is completely voluntary. There is no reimbursement or payment for completion of this questionnaire.

You can withdraw at any time, and for any reason, simply by closing your browser.

All information you provide during this questionnaire will be treated in strict confidence. We will not identify any organisation or individual within the study.

Data Security:
This questionnaire will not be asking for your name or contact details for this study. This means that once your responses have been submitted, it will not be possible to withdraw this data as your individual submission cannot be identified.

All procedures have been be put in place to ensure full confidentiality of the data and that no participant is identifiable in any way in subsequent research findings or any article or report on this research.

Data will be securely stored and will be processed only for the purpose of this study.

Definitions for this study

Workplace:
A location (other than your home) where people perform tasks, jobs and projects for their employer. Types of workplaces vary across industries and can be inside a building or outdoors. Workplaces can be mobile, and some people may work in different locations on various days.

Remote working:
Remote working (also known as work from home or telecommuting) is a type of flexible working arrangement that allows an employee to work from remote location outside of their typical workplace.

Hybrid working:
A flexible work model that supports a blend of in the workplace and remote working.

On balance:
Meaning the typical spread of working arrangements in your organisations based on all employees not just your personal work arrangement

Basic Organisational information

The information gathered in this section relates to your organisation as a whole. Some questions will require answers that relate to the organisation on balance rather than your personal arrangements,

1. **Please select the sector you work in** *

   Mark only one oval.

   ⬭ Public Sector

   ⬭ Private Sector

   ⬭ Not for Profit Sector

2. Please select the best descriptor for your sector *

Mark only one oval.

- ⬭ Administrative and support services
- ⬭ Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- ⬭ Arts, entertainment and recreation
- ⬭ Construction
- ⬭ Education
- ⬭ Financial, banking and insurance activities
- ⬭ Health and social work activities
- ⬭ Hospitality (accommodation, hotels, restaurants and food service)
- ⬭ Information, communication and telecommunications
- ⬭ Manufacturing
- ⬭ Professional, scientific and technical activities
- ⬭ Public and civil service administration and defence
- ⬭ Real estate activities
- ⬭ Retail and wholesale
- ⬭ Transportation, postage, courier and storage
- ⬭ Utilities (electricity, gas, water supply; sewerage, waste management)

3. Number of employees within your organisation *

Mark only one oval.

- ⬭ 1 - 50
- ⬭ 51 - 100
- ⬭ 101 - 200
- ⬭ 201 - 300
- ⬭ 301 - 400
- ⬭ 401 - 500
- ⬭ 500+

Research question 1: How is hybrid working being implemented in workplaces?

4. On balance, to what extent was hybrid working available in your   *
    organisation prior to the Covid-19 pandemic?

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ It was already part of our working week

    ◯ It was an option available upon request

    ◯ It was an option only granted in exceptional/limited circumstances

    ◯ It was not an option available to staff

5. On balance, to what extent is hybrid working available in your   *
    organisation currently?

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Employees are now returned fully to the workplace (5+ days per week)

    ◯ Employees are now working primarily from the workplace (3-4 days
    per week)

    ◯ Employees are now working partially from the workplace (1-2 days per
    week)

    ◯ Employees continue to work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

6. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, what was your working arrangement? *

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ I worked fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

    ◯ I worked primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

    ◯ I worked partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

    ◯ I worked fully remotely (5+ days per week)

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7. Where your organisation is using a hybrid working model, which of   *
    the following best describes the model?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Flexible hybrid work model where employees choose their location and working hours based on their priorities for the day. For example, if they need to spend time focusing on a project, they can choose to work from home or if they want a sense of community, need to meet with their team, attend a training session they can choose to go into the workplace.

◯ Fixed hybrid work model where the organisation sets the days and times employees are allowed to work remotely or go into the office. For example, it could be that certain teams go into the office on Mondays and Wednesdays, while others go in on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Or an organization could allow everyone to work from home on pre-determined days each week.

◯ Workplace first hybrid work model where employees are expected to be mainly on-site but have the flexibility to choose a few days a week to work remotely.

◯ Remote first hybrid work model where employees work remotely most of the time with occasional visits to coworking spaces or the office for team building, collaboration, and training.

◯ Not applicable to me

Research question 2: Are there specific factors concerning employees that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?

The information gathered in this section relates to you personally.

8. During the Covid-19 pandemic, what was your working   *
    arrangement?

Mark only one oval.

◯ I worked fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

◯ I worked primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

◯ I worked partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

◯ I worked fully remotely (5+ days per week)

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9. What is your current working arrangement? *

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ I have returned fully to the workplace (5+ days per week)

    ◯ I am now working primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

    ◯ I am now working partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

    ◯ I continue to work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

10. Looking to the future, what would your preference be for your working arrangement?   *

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

    ◯ Primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

    ◯ Partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

    ◯ To work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

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11. Thinking in terms of hybrid working as a long-term workforce model, how could you see the following factors affecting you personally over time?   *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not a concern for me	Somewhat of a concern for me	A real concern for me
Sustaining motivation towards your work when not in the workplace	◯	◯	◯
Personal well-being	◯	◯	◯
Home office/workstation arrangement	◯	◯	◯
Sustaining professional contact with colleagues	◯	◯	◯
Having the necessary technology to effectively work remotely	◯	◯	◯
Impact on household running costs	◯	◯	◯
'Unplugging' after work	◯	◯	◯
Maintaining a healthy working day by following normal working hours	◯	◯	◯

Having equal

Having equal opportunities for promotion	◯	◯	◯
The visibility of your work in the organisation	◯	◯	◯
Sustaining your current productivity levels	◯	◯	◯
Household distractions when working from home	◯	◯	◯
Difficulties in communicating to others	◯	◯	◯
Being available to participate in team projects	◯	◯	◯
Employers trust in my work	◯	◯	◯
Staying up to date on matters relating to your organisation	◯	◯	◯

Research question 3: Are there specific factors concerning those with responsibility for managing people that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?

This section is to be completed only if you have responsibility for managing people in your organisation

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12.   Have you responsibility for managing people in your organisation? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes   *Skip to question 12*

◯ No   *Skip to section 10 (Thank You!)*

13.   Which statement best describes the people you manage? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ All staff are fully attending the workplace

◯ All staff are fully working remotely

◯ All staff are hybrid working

◯ A combination of fully attending and hybrid

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14. Thinking in terms of hybrid working as a long-term workforce   *
model, and as a person who manages people, how could you see
the following factors affecting your organisation over time?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Would not be a concern for the organisation	Would be a concern for the organisation to some degree	Would be a concern for the organisation to a great deal
Staff maintaining an appropriate work/life balance	⬭	⬭	⬭
The function of the physical workplace being eroded	⬭	⬭	⬭
The equipment cost associated with long-term hybrid working	⬭	⬭	⬭
Dilution of organisational culture	⬭	⬭	⬭
The ability to be flexible in terms of day-today work	⬭	⬭	⬭
Ability to react to unforeseen/emergency requests/tasks/events	⬭	⬭	⬭
Confidence in staff work/productivity level	⬭	⬭	⬭
Your accountability for the quality of work being produced by staff	⬭	⬭	⬭
Line managers being effective as a first point of contact for staff	⬭	⬭	⬭

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Managing team projects	◯	◯	◯
The ability to collaborate on team projects	◯	◯	◯
Expectation of staff to increase level of hybrid activities	◯	◯	◯
Employee isolation and disconnection	◯	◯	◯
Lowering of standards of engagements to facilitate hybrid teams	◯	◯	◯

Research question 4: How are people envisioning the future of hybrid working?

15. The longer hybrid working continues, the harder it will be for for me to leave me current role

Mark only one oval.

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

16. If offered a promotion that did not offer any hybrid working   *
    arrangements would you accept or decline the position?

    Some context to the promotion: 12% increase in your current financial renumeration, travelling/commuting time expected to be 45 - 60 minutes each leg of the journey, increased operational responsibilities.

Mark only one oval.

◯ Accept

◯ Decline

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17. Looking to the future, what do you feel is the most suitable option   *
for working arrangements in your organisation for all employees?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

◯ Primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

◯ Partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

◯ To work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

18. Looking to the future, do you think hybrid working is a sustainable   *
workforce model?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Yes, but not without its challenges

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please do not forget to click the 'Submit' button to register your responses.

DBA Semi Structured Interview Template

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* Indicates required question

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arrangement that allows an employee to work from remote location outside of their typical
workplace.

Hybrid working:
A flexible work model that supports a blend of in the workplace and remote working.

On balance:
Meaning the typical spread of working arrangements in your organisations based on all employees
not just your personal work arrangement

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will require answers that relate to the organisation on balance rather than your personal
arrangements,

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Mark only one oval.

◯ Public Sector

◯ Private Sector

◯ Not for Profit Sector

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2. **Please select the best descriptor for your sector** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Administrative and support services

◯ Agriculture, forestry and fishing

◯ Arts, entertainment and recreation

◯ Construction

◯ Education

◯ Financial, banking and insurance activities

◯ Health and social work activities

◯ Hospitality (accommodation, hotels, restaurants and food service)

◯ Information, communication and telecommunications

◯ Manufacturing

◯ Professional, scientific and technical activities

◯ Public and civil service administration and defence

◯ Real estate activities

◯ Retail and wholesale

◯ Transportation, postage, courier and storage

◯ Utilities (electricity, gas, water supply; sewerage, waste management)

3. **Number of employees within your organisation** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1 - 50

◯ 51 - 100

◯ 101 - 200

◯ 201 - 300

◯ 301 - 400

◯ 401 - 500

◯ 500+

Research question 1: How is hybrid working being implemented in workplaces?

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4. **On balance, to what extent was hybrid working available in your organisation prior** *
    to the Covid-19 pandemic?

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ It was already part of our working week

    ◯ It was an option available upon request

    ◯ It was an option only granted in exceptional/limited circumstances

    ◯ It was not an option available to staff

5. **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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6. **On balance, to what extent is hybrid working available in your organisation**   *
    currently?

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Employees are now returned fully to the workplace (5+ days per week)

    ◯ Employees are now working primarily from the workplace (3-4 days per week)

    ◯ Employees are now working partially from the workplace (1-2 days per week)

    ◯ Employees continue to work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

7. **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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8.   **Before the Covid-19 pandemic, what was your working arrangement?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ I worked fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

◯ I worked primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

◯ I worked partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

◯ I worked fully remotely (5+ days per week)

9.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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10. **Where your organisation is using a hybrid working model, which of the following** *
     best describes the model?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Flexible hybrid work model where employees choose their location and working hours based on their priorities for the day. For example, if they need to spend time focusing on a project, they can choose to work from home or if they want a sense of community, need to meet with their team, attend a training session they can choose to go into the workplace.

◯ Fixed hybrid work model where the organisation sets the days and times employees are allowed to work remotely or go into the office. For example, it could be that certain teams go into the office on Mondays and Wednesdays, while others go in on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Or an organization could allow everyone to work from home on pre-determined days each week.

◯ Workplace first hybrid work model where employees are expected to be mainly on-site but have the flexibility to choose a few days a week to work remotely.

◯ Remote first hybrid work model where employees work remotely most of the time with occasional visits to coworking spaces or the office for team building, collaboration, and training.

◯ Not applicable to me

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11.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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Research question 2: Are there specific factors concerning employees that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?

The information gathered in this section relates to you personally.

12.   **During the Covid-19 pandemic, what was your working arrangement? ***

Mark only one oval.

◯ I worked fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

◯ I worked primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

◯ I worked partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

◯ I worked fully remotely (5+ days per week)

13.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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14.   **What is your current working arrangement?** *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) I have returned fully to the workplace (5+ days per week)

   ( ) I am now working primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

   ( ) I am now working partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

   ( ) I continue to work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

15.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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16.   **Looking to the future, what would your preference be for your working**   *
       arrangement?

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

   ( ) Primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

   ( ) Partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

   ( ) To work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

17.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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18. **Thinking in terms of hybrid working as a long-term workforce model, how could** * **you see the following factors affecting you personally over time?**

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not a concern for me	Somewhat of a concern for me	A real concern for me
Sustaining motivation towards your work when not in the workplace	⬭	⬭	⬭
Personal well-being	⬭	⬭	⬭
Home office/workstation arrangement	⬭	⬭	⬭
Sustaining professional contact with colleagues	⬭	⬭	⬭
Having the necessary technology to effectively work remotely	⬭	⬭	⬭
Impact on household running costs	⬭	⬭	⬭
'Unplugging' after work	⬭	⬭	⬭
Maintaining a healthy working day by following normal working hours	⬭	⬭	⬭
Having equal opportunities for			

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Having equal opportunities for promotion

The visibility of your work in the organisation

Sustaining your current productivity levels

Household distractions when working from home

Difficulties in communicating to others

Being available to participate in projects

Employers trust in my work

Staying up to date on matters relating to your organisation

19. **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had to each of the factors**

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Research question 3: Are there specific factors concerning those with responsibility for managing people that could pose challenges to the sustainability of a hybrid work model?

This section is to be completed only if you have responsibility for managing people in your organisation

20.   **Have you responsibility for managing people in your organisation?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes   *Skip to question 20*

◯ No   *Skip to section 9 (Thank You!)*

21.   **Which statement best describes the people you manage?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ All staff are fully attending the workplace

◯ All staff are fully working remotely

◯ All staff are hybrid working

◯ A combination of fully attending and hybrid

22.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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23. **Thinking in terms of hybrid working as a long-term workforce model, and as a person who manages people, how could you see the following factors affecting your organisation over time?**   *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Would not be a concern for the organisation	Would be a concern for the organisation to some degree	Would be a concern for the organisation to a great deal
Staff maintaining an appropriate work/life balance	◯	◯	◯
The function of the physical workplace being eroded	◯	◯	◯
The equipment cost associated with long-term hybrid working	◯	◯	◯
Dilution of organisational culture	◯	◯	◯
The ability to be flexible in terms of day-today work	◯	◯	◯
Ability to react to unforeseen/emergency requests/tasks/events	◯	◯	◯
Confidence in staff work/productivity level	◯	◯	◯
Your accountability for the quality of work being produced by staff	◯	◯	◯
Line managers being effective as a first point of contact for staff	◯	◯	◯

staff
point of contact for
staff
Managing team
projects
Managing team
projects
The ability to
collaborate on team
The ability to
projects
collaborate on team
projects
Expectation of staff to
increase level of
Expectation of staff to
hybrid activities
increase level of
hybrid activities
Employee isolation
and disconnection
Employee isolation
and disconnection
Lowering of standards
of engagements to
Lowering of standards
facilitate hybrid teams
of engagements to
facilitate hybrid teams

24.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had to each of the factors**

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Research question 4: How are people envisioning the future of hybrid working?

25.   **The longer hybrid working continues, the harder it will be for for me to leave me current role**

Mark only one oval.

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

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26. **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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27. **If offered a promotion that did not offer any hybrid working arrangements would** *
    you accept or decline the position?

    Some context to the promotion: 12% increase in your current financial renumeration,
    travelling/commuting time expected to be 45 - 60 minutes each leg of the journey, increased
    operational responsibilities.

    Mark only one oval.

    ( ) Accept

    ( ) Decline

28. **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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29. **Looking to the future, what do you feel is the most suitable option for working** *
    arrangements in your organisation for all employees?

    Mark only one oval.

    ( ) Fully in the workplace (5+ days per week)

    ( ) Primarily in the workplace (3-4 days per week)

    ( ) Partially in the workplace (1-2 days per week)

    ( ) To work fully remotely (5+ days per week)

30.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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31.   **Looking to the future, do you think hybrid working is a sustainable workforce model?**   *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Yes, but not without its challenges

32.   **Depending on answer, record any follow-up discussion had**

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Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please do not forget to click the 'Submit' button to register your responses.

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