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**Leaders' experiences of working from home and its'  
influence on their personal well-being:**

A qualitative study of leaders' well-being

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Master of Science in Leadership and Organizational Psychology

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine what characterizes leaders' experiences regarding working from home, and how they experienced it was influencing their well-being. To examine this, a qualitative approach was applied to portray the leaders' experience and its influence on their well-being. Based on in-dept interviews with 8 informants, we categorized the answers into five mains categories: (1) The use of home office, (2) The informant as a leader, (3) Occupational well-being, (4) Resources and (5) Demands. The findings in this thesis show that the informants have had different experiences, but many factors such as impaired relations with colleagues and employees, stress and higher workload are examples of demands the informants have experienced and that they found to have a negative impact on their well-being. While factors such as flexibility, increased autonomy, trust, and effectivity are examples of resources the informants experienced to have a positive influence on their well-being while working from home.

The results of this thesis show how leaders' experiences of working from home have impacted their well-being. The JD-R model is applied actively in the discussion and used as a theoretical framework in this thesis. In the light of the findings, we discuss theoretical contributions, limitations and directions for future research and implications.

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## Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate leader's experiences of working from home due to the pandemic, and its impact on their well-being. Well-being is the experience of joyful and positive feeling states and personal growth (Montano et al., 2017). Well-being can also be influenced by factors such as job demands, job resources, the interpersonal environment, personal resources, and the work-home interface (Sonntag, 2015). We experience the research on this specific topic to be limited as organizational health psychology research seems to be focusing on employees' well-being. There are a few exceptions (e.g., Barling & Cloutier, 2017) who focus specifically on leaders' well-being. Moreover, research has shown that leaders well-being not only have an impact on themselves but are also critical to employees' well-being (Roche et al., 2014). Leaders' well-being are therefore important for both the occupational health among employees and for the effectivity of the organization (Köppe et al., 2018). Based on this we find leaders' well-being to be an important topic to illuminate, as well as a field where further research is needed.

The Norwegian government reacted quickly to the uncertain situation with the pandemic when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the coronavirus as a global health crisis, and a lockdown became a result of it (Regjeringen, 2020). As a result of the lockdown many were forced to work from home and change the way they normally had been working, due to regulation from the government (Regjeringen, 2020). This implies that the majority have made experiences of working from home, based on the change of work environment. Working from home involves working in different locations, remote from the central office, and communicate by using technology (Wang et al., 2021). It is therefore likely that leaders in most organizations had to change their way of leading and working (Yau et al., 2021).

Leaders play an important role in defining an environment where employees can thrive and experience well-being (Skakon et al., 2010). Dirani et al. (2020) argues that when organizations are in crisis mode, employees tend to turn to their leaders for guidance. Leaders are confronted with heavy job demands as they usually have high workloads, deal with challenging tasks, and must fulfill a variety of different obligations, which could impair their own health and well-

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being (Köppe et al., 2018). This underlines the importance of studying leader's well-being, especially during times of change.

Many business models changed during the pandemic. Digital technologies changed business processes and leaders' relations with employees. Due to this, organizations needed to change and rethink the way they did business in order to survive, which includes change in leadership (Hai et al., 2021). The job demands-resources (JD-R) model is commonly used when looking at the effects job characteristics have on occupational well-being (Taris, 2007). We are using the JD-R model as a principle when looking at factors that may impact one's well-being. The JD-R model assumes that well-being is influenced by the balance between positive and negative job characteristics like resources and demands (Van den Broeck et al., 2013).

Research on leading from home is increasingly targeted due to the pandemic, but research on leader's well-being working from home are experienced to be limited. Research on this field mostly seem to focus on effective ways of leading from home and aims at factors leaders need to be aware of or take into consideration for an optimal way of working from home (Antonopoulos & Georgiadou, 2021). Furthermore, as we apply the JD-R model as a base for the discussion, this thesis also intends to contribute to the research on the relation between the JD-R model and well-being especially aiming at leaders.

To summarize, we intend to investigate the experiences leaders have made while working from home, focusing on available resources and experienced job-demands. Other potential factors and experiences that have had an impact on leader's well-being while working from home will also be investigated. This thesis aims to further investigate the concept of well-being and contribute to the field, by adding on the perspective of leader's well-being while working from home. We found this to be a topic that is beneficial to study by emphasizing words, rather than numbers which is why we found a qualitative study to be best suited for our research question. Therefore, the following research question was addressed:

***What characterizes the experiences of leaders regarding working from home, and how do they experience that it influences their personal well-being?***

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## Theory review

### Well-being

Well-being is a central concept in this thesis and is being increasingly targeted by organizations and is a desired state for many individuals (Sonnentag, 2015). Well-being is defined as “*a person’s hedonic experience of feeling good and to the eudemonic experience of fulfillment and purpose*” (Sonnentag, 2015, p.261). Hedonic well-being is related to the pleasure orientation to happiness, while eudemonic is related to a meaning orientation to happiness (Disabato et al., 2016). Well-being fluctuates within shorter periods of time and can increase or decrease over longer periods of time (Sonnentag, 2015) Well-being goes beyond psychological health, by referring to individual’s evaluations and feeling about their lives (Kaluza et al., 2020). In an occupational setting, well-being is influenced by experiences at work. This could be job-demands, job-resources, and interpersonal factors (Sonnentag, 2015).

### Leaders’ well-being

Research generally defines leadership as a person’s capacity to guide or direct others (Hopen, 2010). A definition provided by Yukl and Gardner (2020) defines leadership as: “*Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives*” (Yukl and Gardner, 2020, p.26). The body of literature linking leaders’ well-being and leadership refers to a variety of theories on how they are associated. Kaluza et al. (2020) argue that these theories suggest either that leaders’ well-being influences their leader behavior, or that their behavior impact their well-being. Leaders are confronted with heavy job demands that may impair their own health and well-being (Köppe et al., 2018). They usually have high workloads, deal with challenging tasks, and must fulfill a variety of different obligations. If leaders’ well-being is impaired, this can possibly have a negative impact on the well-being of their employees (Skakon et al., 2010).

According to the JD-R model, individuals who have very demanding jobs, especially in combination with poor job resources, are prone to experience burnout (Köppe et al, 2018). Researchers found that the negative consequences of

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job demands are increased risk of burnout when job resources are low (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In line with the JD-R model, leaders who feel exhausted and stressed have been found to have trouble performing high-quality leadership (Köppe et al., 2018). Exhaustion is considered the core component of burnout and as leaders are exposed to a wide range of stressors, they are clearly at risk of exhaustion (Köppe et al., 2018). The experience of burnout can diminish positive outcomes such as the ability to engage in high-quality leadership. Leaders may have trouble engaging high-quality leadership if lacking resources. In addition, a lack of resources is associated with withdrawal behavior (Köppe et al., 2018). Thus, leaders who lack resources may be very motivated to protect themselves and their remaining resources (Köppe et al., 2018).

Stress occurs when an individual perceives a threat to something of value to them, and that threat lessens the resources they have available to confront it (Harms et al., 2017). Regardless of the source, most stressors can be said to be stressful because of the potential threat being either unpredictable, uncontrollable or both. In situations where individuals are subjected to prolonged periods of stress, burnout is likely to occur (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In terms of work-related challenges, stress and burnout have been associated with reduced job performance and job satisfaction. It is also associated with increased withdrawal and turnover and higher rates of accidents (Harms et al., 2017).

Based on this, leader's well-being is influenced by the balance between job-demands and job-resources. As this thesis aims to examine leaders' well-being while working from home, the JD-R model is central for the discussion and will be discussed further.

### **The Job Demands- Resource model**

The job demands-resources (JD-R) commonly used when looking at the influence job characteristics have on occupational well-being (Taris, 2007). This model has gained a lot of attention and popularity for the last decades. One likely reason it has gained that much attention and popularity, is probably because the model assumes that employees' health and well-being results from a balance between positive and negative job characteristics, like resources and demands for example (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). At the heart of the JD-R model, lies the assumption that every occupation has job demands and job resources (Bakker &

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Demerouti, 2007). Hence, constituting an overarching model that may be applied to various occupational settings, regardless of the demands and resources involved. The JD-R model is heuristic in nature and represents a way of thinking about how job and personal characteristics may influence employees' health, well-being, and motivation (Van den Broeck et al., 2013).

Job demands are described as things that must be done (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Work pressure, an unfavorable physical environment, and emotionally demanding interactions are all examples of job demands. Job demands are not necessarily negative, but they can turn into job stressors if meeting those demands requires high effort over a long period of time or if they are in hinderance of resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job stressors are described as a condition that affects the emotions and the thinking process (Van den Broeck et al., 2013).

Job demands refer to the aspects of the job that require sustained cognitive and/or emotional effort or skills (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Job demands are therefore associated with certain cognitive or emotional costs (Irawanto et al., 2021). Burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome of exhaustion, feelings of mistrust and detachment from the job, as well as a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment (Jenny et al., 2020). Burnout is a consequence or prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout is when an individual must increasingly divert psychological resources to combat demands until those resources are exhausted. In the case of burnout, the individual feels overwhelmed and no longer able to cope with work (Harms et al., 2017). Work engagement, on the other hand, is a productive and fulfilling state, where the individual has high energy, strong involvement, and a sense of efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Work engagement is often used as a job-specific evaluation of well-being (Kaluza et al., 2020).

Moreover, a gap between job demands and existing job resources may lead to work stress, which in turn may lead to dissatisfaction related to the job (Irawanto et al., 2021). Job strain is the result of an imbalance between the demands one is exposed to and the resources one has at their disposal (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Job strain could be job-related anxiety, health complaints, exhaustion, and dissatisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job-specific well-

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being could involve job strain, which also has a negative impact on general well-being (Kaluza et al., 2020).

Conversely, job resources contribute to achieving work goals, as well as they stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Job resources are also important for reducing demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Resources could be both at task level (autonomy, feedback, and task significance, skill variety), organizational level (pay, career opportunities, job security), interpersonal level (supervisor and co-worker support, team climate) and the organization of work (role clarity, participation in decision making (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

A basic premise for the JD-R model is that high job demands lead to job strain, such as burnout, while a high level of resources is associated with high performance and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Based on how the balance between job-demands and resources are when leading remotely, it is thus relevant to examine when studying leaders' well-being in relation to working from home. Before examine that, we will look at remote working.

### **Remote working**

Prior to the pandemic, most workers had little experience regarding working remotely and companies used this business model to a small degree (Weigelt et al., 2021). That is why the concept of work design encompasses the notion of remote working, as working virtually represents a different organizing of the employee's task compared to working in the office (Wang et al., 2021). Work design refers mainly to the content and organization of work tasks, activities, relationships, and responsibilities that comes with the work context (Wang et al., 2021).

Working remotely is defined as flexible work arrangement whereby the employees work in different locations, remote from their central office, and communicate by using technology (Wang et al., 2021). Recent studies use another term distributed as a work arrangement that allows employees and their tasks to be shared across settings away from a central place of business or physical organizational location (Felstead, 2022). Other research has been using the phrase "telecommuting" as another way of explaining the definition of working remotely (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Telecommuting is an alternative work arrangement

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where employees perform their regular everyday tasks elsewhere, that are normally done in a primary or central workplace, at least for some portion of their work schedule, using telecommuting to interact with others inside and outside the organization (Felstead, 2022). There is a substitution of the place involved in telecommuting, and a restriction of interactions usually occurs because of the physical and psychological distance involved (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

### **Disadvantages and advantages of working remotely**

Looking at the concept of working remotely, there are some benefits that comes with which is beneficial both for the employees as well as the organizations. Telecommuters in general are more likely to experience an increased feeling of freedom and discretion since they are spatially and psychologically removed from direct, face-to-face supervision (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Research conducted by Ipsen et al. (2021) focused on the disadvantages and advantages of working from home. Most of the participants answered that they felt higher control over their work, time management, being more productive without being disturbed, better work-life balance as well as greater flexibility (Ipsen et al., 2021). Regarding benefits of working from home in the organizational context, telecommuting provides employees with the opportunity to work away from central location. This leads to reduced costs of working, related to transport hassles and time. It also results in increased feeling of autonomy and productivity, improved work-life balance, and heightened morale at work (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Autonomy refers to having the ability to function independently (Keenan, 1999).

There are also some disadvantages of working from home. There are for instance a reduction in face-to-face interaction, where the communication lowers in frequency and richness which results in a weakening in the interpersonal relationship between colleagues within or with supervisors (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). In the same research provided by Ipsen et al. (2021), the participants answered that they found it difficult to focus on work at home, as well as getting disturbed. Some answered that their productivity and effectivity was impacted, and they felt like they couldn't balance the role between work and home (Ipsen et al., 2021). Working from home could have some negative consequences for the individuals, for instance, the feeling of social isolation,

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career stagnation and higher family conflict. This could ultimately result in higher level of stress, burnout, and health problems (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). According to Wang et al. (2021), social support can help to reduce these negative consequences. Social support is defined as the perception or experience that one is loved, cared and valued for by others, and a part of a social network (Taylor, 2011). Individuals who receive considerable social support at work will less likely suffer from loneliness and burnout. Social support can provide employees with necessary emotional and instrumental resources to handle the challenges they experience (Schwarzer et al., 2010). Previous research has also shown that social support can lead to more commitment to the organizations, as well as experience of less work-home conflict (Wang et al., 2021).

### **Communication**

Working virtually largely relies on technology-mediated communication, rather than face-to-face interactions when accomplishing work tasks (Gibson & Cohen, 2003). However, when working physically at the office it is rare in organizations today to communicate purely face-to-face and not use any digital communication channels when communicating (Martins et al., 2004). When leading virtual the perceptions of the leader and actual leader effectiveness can be significantly affected by the virtual environment (Schmidt, 2014). Leadership is socially constructed, and virtuality offer a different environment for processes of leadership to play out (Schmidt, 2014). One could therefore assume that leaders would have to make other considerations when leading virtual. These considerations involve the connection between the leader and subordinates and communication frequency. It is found that a good relationship between leader and follower is lessened by infrequent contact between the leader and the follower (Schmidt, 2014). Hence, when leading virtual, leaders would benefit from frequent contact and follow-up with subordinates.

Further, when working virtually from home, one can choose from a broad variety of technologies to replace face-to-face interaction. The different communication channels differ in their extent of media richness, and in the extent to which they enable synchronous collaboration. Communication such as videoconferencing is relatively high in media richness and in synchronicity, while communication channels such as e-mail is lower on both dimensions (Martins et

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al., 2004). When media richness is low, the leader relies more on rewards and punishments coherent with tasks. Conversely, when media richness is high, transactions such as rewards or punishments are excessive. Thus, the technology and how it facilitates communication at the workplace seems to have an impact on well-being (Schmidt, 2014). Before we take a further look at well-being, we will examine how work-life balance is influenced by working from home.

### **Work-life balance**

For many decades, work-life balance has been a concern of interest in the quality of working life and the relation it has to the broader quality of life (Guest, 2002). The pressure of work has increased and intensified (Shirom, 2003). Many factors impact one's work-life balance, such as advances in information technology and information load, the need for frequent and quick responses and the constant pressure of being available (Guest, 2002). However, when it comes to the definition of work-life balance, one can divide the phenomena into the perspective of an employee and the perspective of an employer (Lockwood, 2003). A newer definition is that work-life balance is described as achieving a balance between employees' family or personal life and work-life (Irawanto et al., 2021). Work-life balance from the employee's point of view is the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities (Lockwood, 2003). Moreover, the concept of work-life balance is built on the idea that work life and personal life complement each other in presenting perfection in one's life (Irawanto et al., 2021). From the employer's viewpoint, work-life balance is the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work (Lockwood, 2003).

Working from home is gradually becoming more and more an everyday life for most occupations and professions in the twenty-first century (Krasulja et al., 2015). There is a correlation between working remotely and work-life balance, both negative and positive (Crosbie & Moore, 2004). On one hand, familiarity and comfort, flexibility, self-management, quiet and working undisturbed, and no travel are some advantages of a good work-life balance (Beño, 2021). Moreover, flexibility has been shown to be a common advantage as one has the possibility to decide how they use their time and allows them to balance their responsibility of work with other everyday-life activities (Crosbie & Moore, 2004).

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There are also some disadvantages regarding working remotely and the balance of work-life. For instance, some employees might use their time at home on other activities like cleaning and other courses rather than work. It could also go the other way around, where employees spend too much time working rather than taking care of their duties in life (Palumbo, 2020). If employees add some new obligations at home to the existing responsibilities, excessive stress is unavoidable (Krasulja et al., 2015). Additionally, if the employees keep themselves occupied with work, they will minimize their contact with the people around them which again will result in social isolation (Palumbo, 2020). Nevertheless, employees working from home attempted to resort to many bad habits. For instance, disturbed sleeping patterns, more frequent and larger quantities of meals, watching television, and trouble focusing (Krasulja et al., 2015).

## **Methodology**

At the beginning of any research project, one must consider what is to be researched and how the data should be collected (Johannessen et al., 2016). In this chapter, the empirical process of this master thesis will be presented.

### **Qualitative research design**

Within social research, quantitative and qualitative are the main paradigms (Tjora, 2017). We chose to conduct a qualitative study, based on its characteristics of emphasizing words, rather than numbers in the collection and analysis of the data (Bell et al., 2019). Qualitative research is also described as analyzing data in the form of natural language and expressions of experiences (Levitt et al., 2018). Qualitative research aims at giving what Geertz (1973) describe as rich or thick descriptions (Geertz & Darnton, 2017), which we found beneficial because the informants gave us a deeper understanding, and better overview and insight of their experiences. Based on that, the thick or rich descriptions contributed to address the research question. Being a good qualitative researcher means, among other things, being able to tell a good story and focus on meaning over measurement (Holloway & Biley, 2011). We wanted to add the human touches that makes the story interesting to others, and the account at the end also fulfills the human desire for storytelling (Holloway & Biley, 2011). Generally, the aim of

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the qualitative method is to reveal and understand phenomena within a particular context, without attempting to infer any type of causation (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017).

We chose to conduct in-depth interviews as interviews are the most common way of collecting data in qualitative research. Our goal with in-depth interviews is that we wanted to create a situation where the informants could have an open and free conversation around the theme (Tjora, 2017). The number of informants in qualitative research is usually few, but includes rich, detailed, and heavily contextualized descriptions from each informant. Hereby, conducting a qualitative study enables open-ended findings, rather than the verification of hypotheses (Levitt et al., 2018).

Qualitative research is great for addressing “how”-questions, rather than “how many”, and is great for understanding the world from the perspective of those who are studied. The qualitative method represents a form of data collection and analysis, with a focus on understanding and an emphasis on meaning (Pratt, 2009). Based on this, qualitative research was the selected research method for our research question. We researched the well-being of the leaders, and well-being is not easy to quantify as it is hedonic and eudemonic and not stable over a long period (Sonntag, 2015). With qualitative research, we were able to look at the whole picture of a leader's well-being, as well as their experience. Nevertheless, qualitative research is largely based on text and words, rather than numbers (Johannesen et al., 2016). Asking the informants about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings around the research question, enabled us to analyze data by identifying patterns tied to instances of the phenomenon and then develop a sense of the whole phenomenon. Seeing the pattern can shift how the whole phenomenon is understood, just like seeing a pattern in the context of the whole phenomenon can shift the way it is understood (Levitt, 2018)

### **3.3 Data collection**

To answer the addressed research question, we collected data and information about the experiences leaders made regarding working from home and how they experienced the influence it had on their well-being. In this subchapter the preparation and conduction of the interviews will be presented.

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### *The structure of the interview*

Qualitative interviews are often described as a conversation that takes place within a certain type of structure (Johannesen et al., 2016). These types of interviews could be structured in a variety of ways, but the three most common qualitative interviews are unstructured-, semi-structured- and structured interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). A semi-structured interview often has an interview guide, where questions on somewhat specific topics are to be covered. However, the questions may not follow exactly the way outlined in the guide (Bell et al., 2019). Semi-structured interviews provide a balance between standardizing and flexibility (Johannesen et al., 2016), which we found beneficial. By conducting a semi-structured interview, we as interviewers got the opportunity to ask questions that were included in the interview guide and follow up on things said by informants. Semi-structured interviews are designed to elicit more elaborate responses from the informants, as well as allowing us as interviewers to modify the style, pace and ordering of questions to evoke the fullest responses from the informants (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Semi-structured interview is therefore believed to contribute to all the important topics being covered in our study. Using semi-structured interviews allowed us to have premade questions that covered our research question, as well as it gave the informants the opportunity to elaborate around the topics themselves using their own terms. As our research had some specific topics to cover, and therefore also some specific questions to ask during the interview, a semi-structured interview was found to be the best option for our study.

As a semi-structured interview often involves having an interview guide, the preparation ahead of the interviews were important. We carefully considered how we should try to collect the best answers possible. We did not assume that we would get direct answers to what we asked about, as well-being could be a sensitive topic. Thus, in the work of designing questions for the interview guide, it was important to create depth in the questions. The preparation of the interview guide involved becoming aware of the topics that were important to ask the informants about, to get answers that contributed to addressing the research question. As well as asking questions directly about well-being, we also chose to include questions about factors such as stress, work-life balance, workload, and support, which according to research are having an impact on well-being

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(Sonntag, 2015). There is a saying that you will get answers to what you ask, meaning that good answers require good questions (Leseth and Tellmann, 2018). Hence, we chose to design a detailed interview guide, with additional questions to follow up if needed, aiming to receive richer answers.

### *Conduction of the interviews*

When scheduling the interviews, we asked the informants whether they preferred to have the interview physically or virtually. Due to practical reasons, all informants preferred to meet virtually. Thus, all the interviews were conducted virtually through video calls. Conducting the interviews virtually was more convenient as it saved both us and the informant's time. Research argues that the convenience of conducting interviews through videocalls tend to encourage some that otherwise would decline to agree on participating (Bell et al., 2019). However, there is a possibility that we would have gotten even richer answers if having the physical interviews, and feelings might become more transparent (Tjora, 2017). Research argues that conducting interviews through phone calls should be avoided if possible as the opportunity to use body language disappears (Tjora, 2017). However, we used videocalls, which enabled the use of body language to some degree (Bell et al., 2019). Interviews should also be conducted somewhere the informant feels comfortable and safe (Tjora, 2017). By having the interviews through video calls the informants themselves could choose their location, and we believe they all chose somewhere they felt comfortable, either at home or at the office.

We did not send the informants the interview guide ahead of the interview, as we wanted spontaneous and unprepared answers. By sending the interview guide ahead of the interview we could risk that the informants wrote prepared notes and answers for each question, giving us prepared answers rather than true answers (Holloway & Biley, 2011).

We started each interview by informing the informants about the research project and the purpose of it. The informants were also informed that we recorded the interview, and that personal information should not be traceable and recognizable in the thesis. This was also written in the consent form we sent to them before the interview, but we chose to repeat this information. We did this to build a relationship with the informants, so they felt it was a safe room to talk in.

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The quality of the interview is largely based on the gained trust between the interviewer and the interviewee, especially when researching sensitive topics (Tjora, 2017).

### ***Transcription***

When working with the transcription, we emphasized that the transcription of the interviews was direct. This is to ensure that the transcript material corresponds to what the informants said during the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). We therefore transcribed the interviews directly, mostly word by word. We recorded all the interviews, which is recommended by Tjora (2017). This allowed us to replay the recordings and ensuring the transcription to be direct. We also transcribed everything we as interviewers said and asked during the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian, thus also the transcript of the interviews is in Norwegian. However, this thesis is written in English, meaning that the quotes used had to be translated into English. Hence, some words or sayings could be “lost in translation”. It is difficult to translate word by word directly, as the structure of sentences are different in Norwegian and English, but we strived to keep the essence in every quote.

### **Sample**

When choosing the sample in qualitative research, the most common method is to recruit informants based on their ability to elaborate on the chosen topic. Thus, the informants are strategically chosen, rather than randomly recruited to represent a population (Tjora, 2017). This is referred to as a non-probability sampling. In this approach, the informants are chosen because they have experience, features, or characteristics which will enable the understanding of the central theme in our research project (Maruster & Gijsenberg, 2013).

When recruiting the informants, we contacted the organizations directly by e-mail, giving them a brief description of the project and asking for the contact information of leaders on any level that had experience working from home. In some cases, we also found informants through media e.g., news articles about working from home, and contacted them directly. We also used our network to recruit some of the informants. By recruiting this way, we got informants that were able to elaborate on the topic, and that gave us relevant answers related to the research question. Table 1 provides an overview of the 8 informants:

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**Table 1***Overview of informants*

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Informant	Company	Position
1 (One)	1 (One)	HR Business Partner
2 (Two)	2 (Two)	Department Manager
3 (Three)	3 (Three)	CEO
4 (Four)	4 (Four)	CEO
5 (Five)	2 (Two)	IT Director
6 (Six)	5 (Five)	Team Leader
7 (Seven)	5 (Five)	Team Leader
8 (Eight)	5 (Five)	Team Leader

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As shown in Table 1, some of the informants are from the same company. However, having informants from the same company is not likely to have affected our research since all the informants had different experience, feelings and thoughts around the research question. Their answers were all personal and they were not affected by each other.

A main rule in qualitative research is that you interview as many as it takes to answer the research question (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Thus, we conducted interviews until the information we received from our informants started repeating itself. According to Saunders et al. (2018), this is referred to as saturation. Saturation means that no additional data are being found, and it is when the researcher sees similar instances repeatedly (Saunders et al., 2018). Data saturation refers to the point in data collection when no additional issues are identified, and data begins to repeat itself where further data collection becomes redundant (Hennink et al., 2017). When the information provided by our informants started repeating itself, we found that the data collected was adequate to answer the research question and found it unnecessary to conduct more interviews.

**Assessment of data**

The two most prominent criteria for the evaluation of business and management research are reliability and validity (Bell et al, 2019). Hence, it is important to consider the validity and the reliability of the research project (Kvale

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& Brinkmann, 2015). Many qualitative researchers avoid the terms validity and reliability in qualitative research, and use terms such as credibility, trustworthiness, truth, value, applicability, consistency and confirmability instead (Brink, 1993). However, we choose to elaborate on whether our study is valid and reliable.

### ***Reliability***

Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study is repeatable (Bell et al., 2019). Other researchers define reliability as the consistency, stability, and repeatability of the informant's accounts as well as the investigator's ability to collect and record information accurately (Brink, 1993). Reliability is a particular concern in quantitative research. The quantitative researcher is likely to be concerned with whether a measure is stable (Bell et al., 2019). The method that we have used is called inter-rater reliability (IRR) which refers to the extent where several researchers do research on the same phenomenon (Johannessen et al., 2016). To test our reliability, we both listened to the same recordings of the interview separately before going through the recordings together. In this way, we ensured that both of us had the same impression and essence of the interview to avoid misunderstandings. This helped us strengthen the reliability of our research project.

Moreover, reliability refers to the ability of a research method to produce or provide consistently the same results over the repeated testing period (Brink, 1993). As addressed previously, we came to a point of saturation. Saturation may imply that by doing more interviews we would get the same information, which also may be applicable if we interviewed more informants in the future (Guest et al., 2006). However, well-being is a hedonic and eudemonic concept, and it fluctuates over time (Sonnetag, 2015). Thus, we could end up getting different answers at different times, even though we reached a point of saturation.

### ***Validity***

Validity is concerned with the integrity of conclusions that are generated from a study (Bell et al., 2019). However, validity has for a long time been an issue in debates over the legitimacy of qualitative research. If qualitative studies cannot consistently produce valid results, then they cannot be relied on (Maxwell, 1992). Some researchers argue that alternative terms and ways of assessing

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qualitative research are required (Bell et al, 2019). Nevertheless, qualitative researchers have argued that qualitative research has its own procedures for attaining validity that are simply different from those of quantitative approaches (Maxwell, 1992). Despite this statement, we have tried to build value to the validity of this research project. In it, we emphasize that the answers received from our informants have similarities with each other and are measured against existing research and empirical data.

External validity is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context. It is in this context that the issue of how individuals are selected to participate in research becomes crucial (Bell et al., 2019). The informants were deliberately selected based on what information they could contribute with as leaders, and the fact that they could share sufficient information to our research project due to their experience with leading from home. In addition, we have used literature to substantiate the empirical data from the interviews to ensure that the thesis is kept within the framework of reality. Our findings tell us something about the informants' views on their well-being related to a home office situation, and we draw on literature and other empirical evidence to justify the statements. For us, it has been important to be consistent that the information presented should be sufficient, to ensure the validity of the thesis. Validity in qualitative research is to the extent the informants reflect on the phenomena or variables we want to know about (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015)

If research findings lack ecological validity, they are of limited value in enabling an understanding of how things work in the real world. This criterion is concerned with the question of whether social scientific findings are applicable in naturally, everyday occurring social settings (Bell et al., 2019). Working is generally a part of a leader's everyday life, and we are researching that specifically in this area. Interpretive validity is when the researcher not only looks at the physical objects, events, and behaviors in the settings they study, but also concerned what this means to the people engaged in and with them (Maxwell, 1992). That is why we have emphasized using Geertz (1973) concept of thick descriptions. According to Geertz (1973), the use of thick descriptions is what gives the greatest validity because one argues for several factors in a case (Geertz & Darnton, 2017). We have chosen to use what Geertz describes as thick

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descriptions in the work with the research project, largely to be able to strengthen the thesis, but also to show understanding and the ability to see the connection.

### ***Ethical considerations***

Consideration of ethical issues begins in the process of reflection and is carried forward into formulating questions, designing a study, and writing it up for publication (Agee, 2009). To ensure that we follow the ethical guidelines and that all our participants adhere to anonymity. The Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) evaluated and approved our study before any data was collected (Appendix 2). All the informants participated voluntarily and received an information letter to inform them about the purpose of the study and how the data was collected, stored, and deleted (Appendix 3). We collected the data through interviews and recorded them. When recording interviews, the storage of the data is an important ethical consideration (Tjora, 2017). The recordings of the interviews are therefore stored at OneDrive with login through BI, according to guidelines from NSD.

Furthermore, the transcribed material of the interviews is anonymized and could not be tracked back to the informants. Hence, we made sure that the collected data is stored securely and will be deleted as soon as it is not needed anymore. Moreover, the informants are informed that they at any time can fully withdraw their participation. To ensure full agreement between us and the participants and to ensure that we could use their response in our study, we sent them a participant agreement and went through this form before starting to collect data. This is in line with the ethical guidelines from The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (Tjora, 2017). Additionally, we ended every interview by asking the informants if they wanted to add, change, or elaborate on anything. This was to ensure that the informants got the opportunity to speak freely and get a feeling that they got to include everything they wanted in the interview.

### **Coding**

When conducting a qualitative study, one must generate themes, categories, and patterns based on the raw data (Lee et al., 1999). We began the thought process of identifying these categories already during the interviews and continued after all data was collected. We reviewed the data and identified

categories individually before we met to discuss which preliminary themes or categories were found. We did it individually first, considering that we found it beneficial to not be influenced by each other in this thought process. Then we met to revisit and discuss the themes and categories found and assessed the relationship between the themes and categories we found individually (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981).

Even though we reviewed the data individually first, we both found similar categories and themes. Through discussion, these themes and categories became the codes we used when sorting the collected data. When coding the collected data, the goal was to extract the essence of the collected data, as well as reducing the volume of the material (Tjora, 2017). Coding also facilitates generation of ideas, based on details in the empirical material (Tjora, 2017). Some of our tables have third-level categories. Third level coding is called selective coding, and it enables the researchers to select and integrate categorization of organized data into the main thematic categories (Williams & Moser, 2019). We sorted the data using NVivo based on the following codes shown in Table 2: (1) The use of home office, (2) The informant as a leader, (3) Occupational well-being, (4) Resources and (5) Demands.

**Table 2**  
*Overview of categories*

<i>Main category</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>
The use of home office:	Prior to the pandemic During the pandemic Current use of home office
The informant as a leader:	Trust Following-up Relation
Occupational well-being	
Resources:	Support arrangements Communication Flexibility & Effectivity
Demands:	

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Stress  
 Work-life balance  
 Workload  
 Relation

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## Results and Discussion

In this chapter the main findings in relation to relevant theory and to our research question, will be presented and discussed. This chapter is structured and organized based on our main categorization of the data namely: (1) The use of home office, (2) The informant as a leader, (3) Occupational well-being, (4) Resources, and (5) Demands. Within each of these categories the findings from each of the sub-categories and third levels categories, as shown in table 2, will also be presented. Furthermore, a discussion for these sub-chapters is provided at the end of each chapter.

### The use of home office

Our research question aims to examine the experiences of leading from home. This part of the discussion seeks to clarify the use of home office among the informants. We asked them about how their organization practiced home office before and after the pandemic, as well as asking the informants about their personal use of home office. The answers are shown in Table 3, with illustrative quotes:

**Table 3**

*The use of home office, illustrative quotes*

Sub- category	Third- level category	Illustrative quote	Informants
Prior to the pandemic	Full flexibility	<i>“We practiced full flexibility already in 2018, before the pandemic. Everyone could work from wherever they preferred. Which means that many were working from home already in 2018”</i>  (Informant 6)	Informant 6, 7 and 8
	Some flexibility	<i>“Some roles, regions and departments have practiced flexibility for a long time. This was due</i>	Informant 1, 2 and 5

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	<i>to e.g., long distance to the office for some employees” (Informant 1)</i>	
Fully at the office	<i>“Before the pandemic we worked from the office, period. There should be a reason to work from home.” (Informant 3)</i>	Informant 3 and 4
During the pandemic	<i>“When we had the opportunity, we tried to return to the office but taking safety and infection control into consideration. Those who were concerned for family and health had the opportunity to stay home and work from there. “(Informant 3)”</i>	Informant 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8
Current use of home office	<i>“We wanted to combine what worked well before the pandemic and what worked well under and create a new way of working. There were even things that worked well before the pandemic, that we were not aware of if it wasn’t for the pandemic. Combining the best from both experiences, resulted in a model where we don’t require the employees to come to the office, and rather be proactive and create a sustainable solution with those involved” (Informant 1)</i>	Informant 1, 2, 3 and 5

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***The use of home office- Discussion:***

The findings suggest that the use of home office varied prior to the pandemic, during the pandemic and currently. We found it relevant to examine the variants use of home office to draw lines to their experience of well-being, as well-being is a concept that fluctuates of time (Sonnentag, 2015). The physical work environment can influence well-being (Demerouti et al., 2001) and therefore it is also likely that the informant’s well-being fluctuated in the same way during the variants use of home office. Thus, to what degree the informants have worked from home was found relevant for the research question.

As shown in table 3, there was a variety among the informants regarding the use of home office prior to the pandemic. Some informants practiced full flexibility already in 2018. Conversely, other informants experienced some flexibility prior to the pandemic, while other informants had no flexibility and worked primarily from the office. According to research, the most common work

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design prior to the pandemic was to use home office to a small degree (Weigelt et al., 2021). The informants who had full flexibility already in 2018, all work for the same organization and it can therefore be discussed whether this organization is the exception.

The regulations from the government changed during the pandemic (Regjeringen, 2020). When the regulations were less strict and it was somewhat allowed to be back at the office, the informants seem to have some arrangements and regulations regarding work location. Currently, when the regulations are repealed, the informants appear to experience the opportunity to be flexible. Most of the informants seem to be happy to be back at the office but enjoy the flexibility and balance between being at the office and working from home.

These findings may tell us something about how abrupt the change from leading physically at the office to leading from home was for the informants. As informants 3 and 4 did not have the opportunity at all to work from home prior to the pandemic, it is possible that the change has been experienced as greater by these informants. However, the informants said that the transformation to working for home went smoothly and without any special obstacles. Based on what the informants told, the findings suggest that most leaders have taken the advantages and all the positive sides of working from home and conducted a new work arrangement. This is aligned with research, saying that most organizations have increasingly targeted a new work design involving remote working due to the experience of the pandemic (Nagel, 2020).

### **The informant as a leader**

During the interviews we focused on investigating what the informants found important to function in their position as a leader and to what degree these factors were present while working from home. As shown in table 4, trust, relations with employees, and the ability to follow up on employees were the most common factors the informants found important.

### **Table 4**

*The informant as a leader*

Sub-category	Third-level category	Illustrative quote	Informants
Trust		<i>“That I can trust them that the work is getting done, regardless location, and confidence that good solutions will be found.”</i> (Informant 1)	Informant 1 and 5
Following-up		<i>“As a leader I try to be proactive and reach out to my employees and ask them if we should talk, instead of waiting for them to reach out to me”</i> (Informant 2)	Informant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
	Following-up while working from home	<i>“The most difficult part was maybe to understand who needed more support than others, and who just wanted to do their job. It was a great distinction among my employees on that area, and I found it difficult to be sufficient for all my employees. Subsequently, I have understood that some employees wanted me to be more present for them, but that I did not realize at the time. That has been a bit difficult”</i> (Informant 2)	Informant 2, 3, 4, 7 & 8
Relations		<i>“Proximity to people is a huge part of being a leader. When having established a relation and a connection to employees, I believe that you as a leader also feel more secure about your employees. The employees should feel secure about you as a leader, but it is also important for my own sake to check if the employees are doing fine and if their workload are ok”</i> (Informant 3).	Informant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
	Relations to employees while working from home	<i>“I found the onboarding of new employees difficult because I like to be close to employees that just started. The barrier to ask for help is relatively lower if we are at the office.”</i> (Informant 8)	Informant 2, 3, 5, 7 & 8

### ***The informant as a leader- Discussion***

Leadership is described as a person’s capacity to guide or direct others. A leader often sets direction and gives instructions for the subordinates to carry out work

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(Hopen, 2010). Looking at the description of what leadership is, it can contribute to understanding why the informants found factors such as good relations to subordinates and following- up as important. As leadership is socially constructed, the connection and communication with employees is important (Schmidt, 2014). The informants seemed to feel like they had to follow- up more frequently, both to establish good relations, but also to take care of the relations and trust they already had established. It is found that a good relationship between leader and follower is lessened by infrequent contact (Schmidt, 2014). Further, a leader who is considered as friendly and supportive is more likely to win employees trust (Yukl & Gardener, 2020). From the collected data, it seems like the informants had frequent contact with their employees to establish a good relationship with them, and hence also win their trust.

Assuming that the fundamental trust and relation with employees was important for the informants to achieve their work of guiding and directing others, it could be described as job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources at an interpersonal level could be the relationship between a supervisor and employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). It could be discussed that the informants felt the need to follow-up on their employees more frequently as they felt that working from home was a threat to their interpersonal relationship with their subordinates. Stress could occur when an individual perceives a threat that could lessen the available resources (Harms et al., 2017). If that is the case, it could impair their well-being by increasing their stress level (Harms et al., 2017).

These findings suggest that the informants could experience some of the factors they found important for them as leaders and their well-being, to be less present while working from home. However, most of the informants seem to have found mechanisms to keep these factors. These mechanisms include following- up more frequently to keep and build the resource of the relation with their employees. Further, some of the informants (1, 2, 4) explained that their seniority level could be a reason why they did not experience the lessened factors to impact their well-being: *"I have come so far in life, that this change in way of working did not stress me."* (Informant 2). This is aligned to research in terms of that leaders are often selected for on their ability to handle crises well, and therefore the increased stress associated with leadership roles is often not observable (Harms et al., 2017)

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## Occupational well-being

Well-being is an important aspect in our thesis, therefore we examined what factors the informants find important for their well-being. As shown in table 5, something almost all the informants had in common was the need for building relations with their colleagues and employees and the social aspects that comes with working in an organization. At the same time, factors such as self-development/career development, and safety and trust were also commonly mentioned. Further, we asked the informants if they experienced these factors being present when working from home.

**Table 5**  
*Occupation well-being*

Sub-category	Illustrative quotes	Informants
Social aspect	<i>“The social aspects are absolutely something important for me. I find it important to enjoy working with the people around me. Forming a social relationship with people and just simply have someone to talk to at work, which usually happens when meeting at the workplace. One does not need to be best friends, but there needs to be a certain social and personal relationship.”</i> (Informant 8)	Informant 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8
Self-development/ career-development	<i>“I feel like the professional development is important when you have tasks and work where you feel challenged and professionally satisfied. Other factors I find important is career progression and clear goals, as well as the desires and personal goals one wants to achieve.”</i> (Informant 6)	Informant 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8
Safety and trust	<i>“It must be some kind of fundamental feeling of safety and trust where you can be sure that people want nothing but good and kindness to each other. In that way, the employees feel safety and trust towards each other. No hidden agendas and an environment where we can be open to each other about improvements and praise each other and make each other feel seen.”</i> (Informant 5)	Informant 3, 5, 7 and 8

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### *Occupational well-being- Discussion*

When the communication lowers in frequency and richness, a consequence is weakening the interpersonal relationship (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). The informants seemed to have the need to build a relationship with their colleagues and employees, and to enjoy working with them. For the informants, work seemed to be an important social arena, where the social relationship with the people around them impact their well-being. It has been shown that work engagement and social support predict an increase in positive work relationships (Sonnetag, 2015). However, some of the informants (2, 4 and 6) experienced building a relation to their colleagues and employees as very difficult while working from home. This may suggest that the informants experience a lower level of well-being.

Some informants said that they find trust and safety as important factors for well-being. An environment where there is no judgment and hidden agendas, but rather praise, support and trust. The informants said that by building an environment based on safety and trust, one will in that way have the possibility to work better together and achieve their goals together which is aligned with social support. The social support received from colleagues and employees has shown to increase work engagement, effectivity, and a decrease in negative outcomes such as burnout, exhaustion, and turnover (Disabato et al., 2016).

Work engagement as positive well-being indicator has been shown to predict increases in autonomy, learning opportunities and other jobs resources (Sonnetag, 2015). It is indicated by the informant that it is important to enjoy what they work with. The tasks need to be interesting and not monotonous for them to thrive at work and feel satisfied with their own development. Furthermore, as seen in table 5, the informants also seem to find it important to set career goals and expectations, and to develop towards them. Sonnetag (2015) emphasizes that career decision, and other specific context variables like tasks and challenges at work, influence how they experience their well-being. Feeling energetic helps the employees to see themselves and their lives in a positive light (Sonnetag, 2015). Research has shown that when an employee thrives at work, it is positively related to factors such as relational characteristics, job performance and job satisfaction (Kleine et al., 2019). This is aligned with the fact that the informants found it important to have tasks that challenges them in a way of

feeling excitement for work, and a learning curve where they feel like they learn new things.

Thus, the factors the informants identified as important for their well-being, are also found in research to have positive well-being outcomes. However, the informants also seem to experience that some of these factors such as the social aspect to be less present while working from home.

## Resources

We have till now looked at the use of home office, the informants as leaders and what factors the informants found important for their well-being. We will in this chapter take a further look at which resources the informants found to be available, and how they experienced them having an impact on their well-being. Thus, are looking at job-resources, as they can have an impact on well-being (Sonnetag, 2015). Job resources can contribute to achieving work goals, as well as stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Table 6 shows an overview of what the informants answered to these questions, and what they found as important resources.

**Table 6**

### *Resources*

Sub-category	Third-level category	Illustrative quote	Informants
Support arrangements	Social support	<i>“Our company were very quick to arrange therapy sessions for those who felt the need for it. (...) all the employees had the opportunity to talk to someone professional during the time working from home”</i> (Informant 6)	Informant 3,6,7 & 8
	Practical facilitations	<i>“Everybody got offered equipment such as screen, comfortable chair, desks, keyboard, cameras, headsets, and computer mouse. In addition, the number of hours covered of health service was increased”</i> (Informant 1)	Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
Communication	Positive	<i>“We have now more frequent general meetings, which are digital. We have</i>	

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		<i>received positive feedback, both on the frequency and that these meetings are digital. Everybody can participate and feel included, regardless of location”.</i> (Informant 1)	Informant 1, 2, 4, 5 & 8
	Negative	<i>“It takes more time to communicate when working from home, because we send e-mails or messages on Slack. Thus, we don’t get the immediate response. Leaders are super busy, and we usually talk in hallway if we meet. But when sending an e-mail, it may take up to two days to get a response. If we needed the immediate response, we had to call each other.”</i> (Informant 7)	Informant 4, 6 & 7
Flexibility and effectivity	Flexibility	<i>“The advantages of working from home is that it is much easier to schedule your days, and you still have your work tasks that needs to be done but sometimes you don’t need to commute. It is more balanced, simply.”</i> Informant 2	Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8
	Effectivity	<i>“We are more effective and maybe more focused, as we get fewer interruptions when working from home. This shows that, perhaps we work better from home, than at the office.”</i> (Informant 3)	Informant 1, 3, 4, 5 & 8

### ***Support arrangements- Discussion***

During the pandemic, the informants appeared to experience the social aspects as non-existent or minimal which could imply social isolation. Social isolation has been tied to unhealthy responses such as stress, burnout, and health problems (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). However, there were some initiatives aiming to make them feel less isolated and more motivated. Such arrangements can help to reduce these negative consequences of social isolation (Wang et al., 2021). Those who are more socially integrated and who experience more supportive and rewarding relationships with others, have better health and higher level of well-being (Feeney & Collins, 2015). Aligned with research (e.g., Taylor,

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2011), the informants all agreed that receiving support from their company had positive influence on their employees' well-being. The goals with the arrangements provided, seem to be to connect, stimulate unity and reach out to the employees that possibly felt lonely as a part of social support arrangements.

Social support is the experience of being cared for and valued (Taylor, 2011), and it seems like the informants focused more on providing social support to their employees rather than receiving support themselves. However, research has shown that if leaders health and well-being is impaired, it could have a negative impact on their employees' health and well-being (Köppe et al, 2018). It is therefore likely that both the organization, employees and leaders could benefit from leaders using these support arrangements. Even though the informants didn't actively take advantages of the social support arrangements provided, they experienced them as sufficient. Research finds that leaders are often selected for their ability to handle stress and crisis (Harms et al., 2017), which could be an explanation to why they did not feel the need for taking use of the social support arrangements provided.

Research implies that it is important to ensure that collaborative technologies meet the employee's needs, and that all technologies supplements are given to the employees in order to accomplish tasks and to do their work (Kozlowski et al, 2021). The informants were provided with practical support as well as social support arrangements. As research shows that job-resources contribute to achieving work goals and development, it is a possibility that social support and practical facilities has positive impacted the leader's well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Moreover, research argues that social support can provide employees with necessary emotional and instrumental resources to handle challenges that could occur (Schwarzer et al., 2010). This thesis could contribute to adding a leader perspective on social support. As the informants did not seem to use of any of the support arrangements provided, the findings imply that leaders could find social support arrangements to be excessive in terms of their well-being. However, they see the importance of these support arrangements for their employees, which is aligned to research (e.g., Schwarzer et al., 2010; Kozlowski et al, 2021)

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### *Communication- Discussion*

Working virtually largely relies on technology-mediated communication, rather than face-to-face interactions (Gibson & Cohen, 2003). We asked the informants about how they experienced the communication within the organization to be while working from home. As shown in table 6, one can see that the informants have experienced changes in communication while working from home, both negatively and positively. Communication in general can be discussed to be a resource as it enables people to work together and get work done. Some of the informants found the new way of communicating to foster innovation, and hence growth and development. Working from home seemed to inspire some of them to, e.g., have digital general meetings, which ensured that everyone got the opportunity to participate, regardless of location. This is aligned with research, saying that telework has positive impact on well-being as it contributes to flexibility regarding working time and place (Raišiene et al., 2020).

Further, well-functioning communication can have a positive impact on well-being by reducing stress related to uncertainties or conflicts (Montano et al., 2017). In such cases, communication can be described as a resource and has a positive impact on well-being. Some of the informants experienced that communicating virtually saved them time and made them more effective as they could send a written message instead of having a conversation, and research has shown that this has a positive impact on well-being (Raišiene et al., 2020). This indicates well-functioning communication, which research suggests also has a positive impact on well-being (Montano et al., 2017). Research finds that one of the main advantages of working from home is the time saving aspect of decreased irrelevant interactions with colleagues (Baruch, 2001). If they got more work done due to the decreased spontaneous interactions with colleagues, it could be discussed that it increased their available resources as it contributed to achieving work goals. Research also assumes that reduced communication with co-workers offers additional time resources leading to higher productivity (Nakrošienė et al., 2019). Hence, the findings of this study in terms of effectivity are aligned with previous research.

Conversely, as shown in table 6, some of the informants experienced the virtual communication to be less effective, as they did not always get the immediate response that you would normally get. If communication was

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experienced to be a demand, it could negatively impact their well-being. Moreover, some of the informants found that they communicated with their employees more frequently than before. That could be described as a job-resource as it seemed to enable the leaders to do their job and to build a relation with their employees. However, some of the informants said that they could find some of this communication excessive. While working from home, the data collected suggests that most of the communication with the employees seemed to be planned and scheduled meetings. Based on the planned nature of the communication while working from home, some of the communication could be discussed to be experienced as demands by some of the informants as it may become a responsibility (Yukl & Gardener, 2020).

Based on the findings it could seem like the new way of communicating could be a resource in some areas while a demand for others. Based on this, the new way of communicating may have improved some informant's well-being, while impaired others.

### ***Flexibility and Effectivity- Discussion***

Flexibility, within the JD-R model, could be described as a recourse at task level because of the autonomy that comes with it (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The informants have an opportunity to choose themselves where they want to work, which one may argue that it gives them the autonomy to schedule their days optimally. This could be discussed to have a positive impact on well-being in terms of increased autonomy. Flexibility may also give the informants the possibility to have a better work-life balance by e.g., having the opportunity to do some daily chores, make more time for family, or just increased spare time for desired activities or hobbies (Crosbie & Moore, 2004). Because of the autonomy, the informants have the opportunity to decide how they dispose their time and allow to combine work and the everyday life. Research has shown that one experience higher level of well-being when having the opportunity to be flexible (Ipsen et al., 2021). Hence the increased flexibility and the autonomy that comes with it may contribute to increase the informants' well-being (Beño, 2021).

While working from home it seemed like the informants experienced that they got more work done. Therefore, the increased effectivity could be described as a resource in terms of contributing to achieving work goals and getting the

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work done (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). However, if getting more work done also lead to a higher workload or work pressure, it could be discussed to be a job-demand (Demerouti et al., 2001). Moreover, some of the informants said that they found the increased effectivity to be hindering for being present for their employees. Organizations expect the digital transformation to increase productivity and efficiency, which should give them a competitive advantage over other market respondents (Vial, 2019). As the informants mention that productivity and effectivity has increased after the pandemic hit, the findings in this study seem to be aligned with research in terms of productivity and effectivity. Improved efficiency and employee's effectiveness are a well-documented advantage of working from home (Baruch, 2021).

As discussed previously, good relations and established trust with their employees was found to be experienced as important for most of the informants. Job demands can turn into stressors if being hindering to resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Thus, if the increased effectivity was hindering resources such as the interpersonal relationship with their employees, it could have a negative impact on their well-being. However, if they got more work done due the decreased spontaneous interactions with colleagues, it could be discussed that it increased their available resources as it contributed to achieving work goals. Hence, it could be argued that the balance between resources and demands remained the same, in terms of flexibility and effectivity. The resource of the interpersonal relationship with employees could be discussed at risk of being reduced, while the resource of achieving work goals seem to be increased. If there was gap between job demands and existing job resources the consequence could be work stress, which in turn may lead to dissatisfaction related to the job (Irawanto et al., 2021). As a result of the increased autonomy, it could be argued that the informants experience flexibility as a resource in terms of a less stressful workdays and getting more done while working from home.

## **Demands**

According to the JD-R model, demands can have an impact on well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Because of this, we found it important to examine the demands the informants experienced during their time working from home and

how it was experienced to impact their well-being. As shown in table 7, the informants experienced different demands while working from home.

**Table 7**

*Demands*

Sub-category	Illustrative quote	Informants
Stress	<i>“What stresses me is when things happen within my roles. E.g., if one on my team is struggling with something that requires a lot of support. At the same time, it might happen a lot within the organization that I should be involved in. In such cases one can feel that I am not sufficient or do not have control over everything I should”</i> (informant 8)	Informant 1, 3 and 8
Work-life balance	<i>“During the pandemic there was no distinguishment between work and home. My laptop was constantly at the dining table and I started early and logged of late”</i> (Informant 1)	Informant 1, 2, 3 and 4
Social aspects and relationships	<i>“I felt that I had some difficulties with onboarding new employees and being there for them when they need me. It was much easier to build a relationship with new employees when we were at the office. I then needed to book an appointment to check upon them, when I usually just walk right to them at the office”</i> (Informant 3)	Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8
Workload	<i>“The workload has been the same for many, but it is more about the change of the nature of the work tasks, due to the pandemic. We have gotten more to do and more work pressure, especially at the beginning of the pandemic.”</i> (Informant 4)	Informant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8

***Stress- Discussion***

While working from home, there seemed to be a shared experience among the informants that working from home involves more meetings. Informant 1 informed us that while working from home there could be 9-10 meetings every day, while now when being back at de office a normal day includes about 6 meetings. Our findings indicate that the informants experienced stress while working from home differently. Two of the informants (1, 4) experienced the

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increased number of meetings and no time in-between meetings as stressful. In situations where individuals are subjected to prolonged periods of stress, burnout is likely to occur (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). However, they seemed to find mechanisms such as more time in-between meetings to handle this before it impacted their well-being notably.

As shown in table 7, informant 8 seems to experience it stressful to balance all the roles as a leader. The informant told us that (s)he could experience not being sufficient in all the roles. Moreover, stress is likely to occur when a resource or relationship of value is threatened (Harms et al., 2017). If the informant experienced stress related to the interpersonal relationship being threatened it could impact well-being in terms of lessened resources and increased stress (Harms et al., 2017).

Informant 3 seemed to experience the change from working fully at the office to working from home to be stressful. Most stressors can be said to be stressful because of the potential threat being either unpredictable, uncontrollable or both (Harms et al., 2017). The pandemic could be experienced as both unpredictable and uncontrollable, as the situation was constantly changing. It can therefore be discussed that the pandemic and the new way of working could be experienced as a stressor by leaders. If the new way of working impacted the thought process among leaders it could be described to be a job-stressor (Irawanto et al., 2021). This is aligned with the findings in this study as, informant 3 describes that the new situation that came with the pandemic had an impact on the thought process, as the mind was wandering. Informant 3 said: *“I was waking up early in the morning and did not manage to fall back to sleep, as my mind was wandering so much. It is getting better now, but it just something you must go through when a change like that happens.”*

If being exposed to job-stressors over a prolonged period, burnout could be a consequence (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). According to research burnout has a severe negative impact on well-being (Jenny et al., 2020). However, the informant did not seem to experience burnout, but it could be discussed that informant was at risk of experiencing burnout if the stressors would remain for a longer period. Even though the informant did not appear to experience burnout it could be discussed to be a demand, and hence negatively influencing well-being.

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In contrast, informant 8, elaborated on that stress could be positive as it contributes to achieving work tasks and goals. According to research, positive stress is associated with positive feelings and a healthy physical state (Kupriyanov & Zhdanov, 2014). This indicates that positive stress may result in increased feeling of well-being. Hence it could be argued that some informants experience stress as a demand, while other informants experience it as a resource. In any way, the stress that came with working from home could be discussed to have an impact on well-being, either positively or negatively.

### ***Work-life balance- Discussion***

Research has shown that work-life balance can have an impact on well-being (Sonnetag, 2015). Therefore, we examined whether the informants experienced any changes in their work-life balance during the period they worked from home. Some of the informants (2 and 8) didn't seem to experience a change in their work-life balance as they focused on the flexibility that came with working from home. Research shows that flexibility is a common advantage as one has the possibility to decide how they use their time and allows them to balance their responsibility of work with other everyday-life activities (Crosbie & Moore, 2004). However, other informants appear to not find that balance as easily. For instance, many of the informants (2, 3, 4 and 6) said that their computer was always in eyesight and always available which resulted in them continuously working. This continuous working has shown to have a negative impact on the distinguishment between work and home (Palumbo, 2020). As the distinguishment were minimal, one may argue that it impacted the informant's well-being (Sonnetag, 2015). Working late and working over a longer period without any variation during the day may result in work being monotonous and possibly be experienced as a demand. Job demands like this are not necessarily negative, but they can turn into negative consequences if meeting those demands requires high effort over a long period of time or if they are hinderance of resources (Demerouti et al., 2001).

There is a distinguishment between leaders and employees within the concept of work-life balance. For employees the concept focuses on balancing work obligations and personal obligations. In contrast, work-life balance from a leader's perspective focuses on creating a supportive company culture where

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employees can focus on their jobs while at work (Lockwood, 2003). Hence, research seems to focus on how leaders can facilitate good work-life balance for their employees and are limited on the facilitation of leaders' work-life balance. However, research also shows that leaders' well-being is important for the well-being among employees (Skakon et al., 2010). As work-life balance also seems to influence well-being, (Sonnetag, 2015) it underlines the importance of investigating work-life balance in regard to leaders' well-being. The findings of this study may contribute to research within this field, as it adds on the perspective of leaders.

Our findings suggest that work-life balance seemed to be impaired by some informants, while it remained the same for others. The informants seemed to argue that during the period with strict restrictions, there were no other social arrangements or anything else that happened, which resulted in the informants enjoying working more. Based on this, it could be discussed that well-being was not impaired or impacted as they enjoyed working and did it voluntarily even though most of the informants agreed that there were minimal distinguish between work and private.

### ***Social aspect and relations- Discussion***

The informants all agreed on that having good relations to their colleagues and employees, as well as the social aspect of work, to be important factors for their well-being. With the social- and relation aspect being reduced, it may seem that the interpersonal level of job resources has been experienced as a absent, as a result of restrictions and lockdowns. The pandemic seems to be experienced as an unfavorable physical environment, which could be described as a demand itself (Demerouti et al., 2001). Situational variables such as role expectations or formal rules can encourage or constrain a leader's behavior (Yukl & Gardener, 2020). The change of the formal rules could be argued to be one of the reasons that leaders felt that they had to follow up more often. Informant 2 said "(..) *some employees wanted me to be more present for them (..)*", which indicates change of role expectations. These changes in role expectations could also be assumed to be a reason for the change in leadership behavior among the informants (Yukl & Gardener, 2020). In a work-setting, well-being can be impacted by tasks and the social environment (Sonnetag, 2015). Based on the findings, it was a change in

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the informants work tasks to follow-up more. This could have had a negative impact on the informant's well-being (Sonnetag, 2015).

Moreover, there seem to be an uncertainty grounded in fear of losing resources, such as the relations to their employees. When a resource is missing, it eventually turns into a demand (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). There were from time-to-time strict restrictions where physical contact was reduced, which may have resulted in the social and relation aspect being more threatened. The fear of losing resources could indicate a gap between job demands and existing job resources and may lead to work stress. Work stress could eventually lead to dissatisfaction related to the job (Irawanto et al., 2021), indicating a negative impact on well-being.

The informants seem to experience that the interpersonal resource to be lacking, especially when onboarding new hired employees. They felt that they maybe weren't sufficient in terms of onboarding them properly, and to follow them up enough. Informant 6 emphasized a possible consequence of not onboarding the employees properly and not follow them up enough, which is that the employees don't feel as affiliated to the company and the team. The informants' feeling that they aren't sufficient may lead to them experience that the resource of the interpersonal relation is being threatened. Moreover, well-being related outcomes, including burnout, are moderated by the social climate at work (Montano et al., 2017). Hence, frequent contact with employees seems to be beneficial for relationships between the leader and employees but seems to also be beneficial for leaders' well-being (Schmidt, 2014).

To summarize, the job resource of interpersonal relations seems to be experienced as absent, which possibly could impact the informants' well-being in terms being a threat to available resources. There also seem to be a change in role expectations, regarding following-up more frequent, which also could influence their well-being (Sonnetag, 2015). Research (e.g., Schmidt, 2014) seem to focus on the importance of the social aspect between leaders and employees from an employee perspective rather than a leader perspective. The informants also seem to find the interpersonal aspect as important, in order to ensure the employees' well-being, rather than their own. However, the leaders' well-being are found to be just as important (Skakon et al., 2010), which is what this thesis aims to illuminate.

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### ***Workload- Discussion***

It appears that most of the informants experienced increased workload, while working from home. For instance, informant 4 experienced increased work pressure at the beginning of the pandemic, when everything was new. Higher workload or work pressure could be discussed to be a job-demand (Demerouti et al., 2001). However, it does not seem like the informants experience higher work pressure for a longer period of time, as working from home due to the pandemic was mandatory for a limited time period (Regjeringen, 2020). Job demands could impact well-being negatively if meeting those demands requires high effort over a long period of time (Demerouti et al., 2001). Also, the informants seem to have voluntarily chosen to work more, as there were less happening on their spare time.

The increased workload that seemed to be associated with working from home could be discussed to be grounded in the uncertainty that came with the situation. Resources such as effectivity could be felt as threatened, and it appears that the informants were afraid how the situation would impact both employee's effectivity and the organization. If the effectivity among employees were to be reduced while working from home, it is likely the economy of the organization could be impaired: "*I was unsure about the propulsion*" (Informant 4). It seems like this was a new and uncertain situation for the informants and there were more for them to handle and process, and at the same time being an uncertainty regarding employees' effectivity. The uncertainty that came with the unexpected change due to the pandemic, could appear to have had an impact on the informant's well-being, in terms of working more to ensure the effectivity as a resource.

Aligned with research (e.g., Köppe et al., 2018), our findings imply that leaders usually have high workloads which could impair their own health and well-being in terms of increased job-demands. However, the findings of this study suggest that the increased workload has not been experienced as demanding for most of the informants, and hence not seem to impair their well-being notably. This could be explained by that leaders are often selected for their ability to handle stress and crises well (Harms et al., 2017). Aligned with this research, our study implies that the leaders enjoyed working more and did not feel the increased workload that came with the crisis of the pandemic as stressful. Based on this it

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seems like the increased workload did not a notably impact on the informants' well-being.

### **Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications**

Research have shown little focus on leaders' well-being and rather focused on employees' well-being. Leaders are normally viewed as morally responsible for the well-being of their employees, and therefore has received little empirical attention (Barling & Cloutier, 2017). The fact that leaders' well-being can influence the well-being of their employees (Köppe et al., 2018), underlines the importance of putting more attention on leaders' well-being in research. Our findings seem to be aligned with previous research of well-being and the JD-R model but adds the perspective of leader's well-being while working from home.

It could also be argued that well-being was not notably negatively impacted as the balance between job-demands and resources seem to remain somewhat stable. Even though it seemed to be an increase in demands, the number of resources also seemed to increase. This is aligned with the JD-R model. Moreover, the findings suggest that resources such as support arrangement, good communication, flexibility, effectivity, and autonomy were all factors that were positively related to well-being. Which indicates that the findings of this study seem to be aligned with JD-R, and the research on well-being (e.g., Sonnentag, 2015). Our research therefore implies that the findings in previous research of well-being and JD-R could also be applied to leaders' specifically. However, one should have in mind that the findings in this study also indicate that as leaders are well established, the demands may not have influenced their experience of well-being notably. This is in contrast to the JD-R model where it is assumed that well-being is a result of a balance between job-demands and job-resources (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Hence, the relatively stable well-being among leaders that were found in this study could be argued to ground in the fact the leaders are selected for their ability to handle stress and crises well (Harms et al., 2017).

Looking at the findings in this study, and comparing it to research, we have found some practical implications based on the informants' experience. For instance, the informants seem to be using home office more broadly after the pandemic, compared to before, indicating a more frequent use of home office in general. According to our findings, the more frequent use of home office involves

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larger amount of flexibility and autonomy over one's own work, which are something the informants mentioned to be positively influencing their well-being. By having the opportunity to be flexible and schedule the day as pleased, the informants experienced increasing productivity and effectivity. Practically, this indicates that the trust between leaders and employees seem to have increased, as leaders now have experienced that employees can work as effective or even more effective from home. Hence, the practical implication of this study mostly involves lessons learned from working from home due to the pandemic.

### **Limitations, strengths, and future research**

Qualitative methodology intends to understand a complex reality and the meaning of actions in a given context (Queiros et al., 2017). Our method to examine this was to have an in-depth interview with our informants. However, one may argue that we could have needed a greater number of informants to get the bigger picture and understand the phenome in a deeper level. Having fewer informants affects the reliability and validity, as well as the consequences of not having enough variety in our findings (Maruster & Gijzenberg, 2013). Because of the small number of informants, we consider the representativeness to be a limitation (Tjora, 2017). However, one cannot be completely sure that having more informants will result in more variety in their answers and our findings.

Moreover, the informants seem to be more or less back at the office, which can make it difficult to reflect on their experiences of working fully from home. There is a possibility that they have forgotten how they experienced their well-being while working from home. Thus, one limitation could be the possibility that the findings are biased by informants' ability to reflect on the past (Bell et al., 2019). We were aware of this before the interviews, so we tried our best to make the informants reflect. However, there is no guarantee that they were able to remember everything.

Another limitation is that our thesis is written in English, while our interviews were conducted in Norwegian. Which means that there is a possibility that some of the essence of our findings could be "lost in translation" (Bell et al., 2019). However, we have been aware of this, and strived to keep the essence in every quote.

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Moreover, generalization is a limitation for our study. Our informants were all leaders, but they were leaders within somewhat different industries and sectors. However, if we had leaders from more different industries and sectors, one could have gotten different insights and perspectives on their well-being, considering different tasks and responsibilities. Another limitation within generalization, could be that all our informants were located in Oslo. During the pandemic, there were different restrictions in all of Norway and the strictest restrictions were in Oslo. This could influence the way of practicing home office, as well as different support arrangements the informants had. Based on this, we believe this could influence the reliability and the validity of this study. Since we would have gotten different answers if we interviewed informants from other places than Oslo or in other sectors, the results of this study would not been repeatable as we receive new informants, experiences and point of views, which influences the reliability and the validity.

Lastly, another limitation could be that some of our informants were from the same company. Which results in the same answers, especially regarding support arrangements and the practice of home office before and after the pandemic. Having informants from different companies could possibly have given us more information and new perspectives we could have used in our study. On the other side, having informants from the same company could enlighten different experiences and point of views based on, for instance support arrangements and practical facilities. Thus, having informants from the same company could be discussed to be both a strength and a limitation. This also implies to the fact that our informants are based in Oslo. They experienced the same restrictions and made different experiences based on this.

We would like to propose recommendations for further research. Firstly, we believe it would be interesting to further investigate the topic of well-being while working from home, from a subordinate perspective. Maybe subordinates experienced working from home different than leaders. Many of our informants also raised concern for their junior employees, as they maybe did not have an established network or lived-in tiny apartments. Hence, investigating a subordinate perspective, and especially junior subordinates would be an interesting topic for further research. Even though it has been conducted research on employee's experience of well-being during the pandemic, there were no

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research on employees in Norway or more specifically Oslo. Secondly, some of the informants told us that they experienced their seniority to be beneficial, while working from home. Thus, we believe it would be interesting to investigate how more junior leaders experienced to work from home in terms of well-being.

Looking in to these two proposed fields, we believe that it would give different perspectives, than presented in this current study. Hence subordinates and junior leaders would be interesting fields for further research within well-being while working from home. For further research it would also be interesting to take a look at how different personality types could have an impact on the answers received.

### **Conclusion**

Our findings suggest that leaders' well-being has been experienced to be improved in some areas and impaired on other areas, while working from home. It could seem to be improved in terms of increased flexibility and increased autonomy. Moreover, our findings suggest that the number of support arrangements from the organization has increased. Conversely, well-being seems to be impaired by demands such as increased stress, higher workload, and impaired relations with employees and colleagues. To summarize, it could be discussed that the balance between resources and demands has remained somewhat stable while working from home. Based on these findings it can be argued that working from home did not have a notable impact on leaders' well-being. This can be explained by the fact that the balance between job- demands and job-resources remained somewhat stable. It can also be explained by the fact that leaders are often selected for their ability to handle crises well, and the increased stress associated with leadership roles is often not observable (Harms et al., 2017)

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1- Interview guide

#### Innledning:

Du har jo fått et informasjonsskriv av oss med informasjon om oppgaven. Som nevnt der ønsker vi i forbindelse med masteroppgaven vår å undersøke

*“What experiences did leaders make in regard to working from home, and how did it affect their well-being?”*

Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke hvordan ledere i norsk arbeidsliv opplevde endringen fra å lede primært på kontor til å til å lede mer virtuelt. For å finne ut av dette ønsker vi å intervjuere ledere om deres tanker og erfaringer rundt temaet jobbrelatert velvære i forbindelse med hjemmekontor.

Er du noe du lurer på før vi starter?

#### Innledende fase av intervjuet

1. Til hvilken grad har din bedrift praktisert hjemmekontor siden 2020?
2. Hvor mye har du jobbet hjemmefra siden 2020?
3. Til hvilken grad ble hjemmekontor praktisert i din bedrift før 2020?
4. Til hvilken grad hadde du hjemmekontor før 2020?
5. Hva er viktig for deg for å fungere best mulig i lederrollen?
6. Hvilke opplevelser har du knyttet til hjemmekontor og din rolle som leder?
  - Kan du gi eksempler på dine positive erfaringer knyttet til hjemmekontor?
  - Kan du gi eksempler på dine negative erfaringer knyttet til hjemmekontor?

#### Hovedspørsmål

7. Hvordan har du opplevd arbeidsmengden i forbindelse med hjemmekontor?
  - Kan du utdype?
  - Kan du komme med eksempler?
  - Hvordan har dette påvirket deg?

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8. Hva legger du i jobbrelatert velvære?
  9. Hvordan har du opplevd det å ivareta egen velvære i en hjemmekontorsituasjon?
    - Hva har disse opplevelsene gjort med deg og hvordan du har det?
  10. Hvilke faktorer ser du på som viktige for å ivareta din jobbrelaterte velvære?
    - Til hvilken grad har disse faktorene vært til stedet i forbindelse med hjemmekontor?
      - Hvordan har dette påvirket deg?
    - Til hvilken grad har disse faktorene vært fraværende i forbindelse med hjemmekontor?
      - Hvordan har dette påvirket deg?
  11. Kan du beskrive din balanse mellom hjemmekontor og privatliv?
    - Hvordan har din opplevelse med dette vært?
    - Kan du gi eksempler?
    - Til hvilken grad har dette påvirket deg?
  12. Hvordan vil du beskrive at stressnivået ditt har vært i forbindelse med hjemmekontor?
    - Hvordan har dette påvirket deg?
    - Hvilke faktorer påvirker stressnivået ditt?
      - Kan du utdype?
    - Kan du komme med eksempler?
  13. Kan du beskrive eventuelle støtteordninger bedriften har tilbudt deg i forbindelse med hjemmekontor?
    - Hvis ja: hvordan har du opplevd disse støtteordningene?
    - Hvis nei: hvordan har mangelen på støtteordningen påvirket deg?
    - Kan du utdype?
  14. Hvordan har kommunikasjonen i bedriften vært i forbindelse med hjemmekontor?
    - Hvordan har dette påvirket deg?
    - Har du noen eksempler på når kommunikasjonen har fungert bra?
    - Har du noen eksempler på når kommunikasjonen har fungert mindre bra?

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### **Avsluttende spørsmål**

14. Jeg har bare noen få avsluttende spørsmål til deg. Kan du avslutningsvis reflektere litt rundt hvordan dette intervjuet her i dag har vært for deg.

- Hvilke tanker og følelser hadde du i løpet av intervjuet?
- Hvordan tror du dette intervjuet har påvirket deg?

Avslutningsvis – Har du noen andre kommentarer til intervjuprosessen, eventuelt noe annet du ønsker å tilføre i intervjuet? (Noe du ikke fikk sagt, noe du ønsker å utdype ytterligere?)

Takk for at du tok deg tid til å delta i dette intervjuet.

### **Støttespørsmål underveis i intervjuet:**

- Hvordan opplever du det?
- Kan du si mer om det?
- Hva mener du med det?
- Kan du utdype?
- Kan du gi et eksempel?

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## Appendix 2- NSD approval for Data Collection

### NSD sin vurdering

<b>Dato</b>	<b>Type</b>
16.03.2022	Standard

### Referansenummer

275729

### Prosjekttittel

Hjemmekontor og lederes jobbrelaterte velvære

### Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Handelshøyskolen BI / BI Oslo / Institutt for ledelse og organisasjon

### Prosjektansvarlig

Christina G. Leonore Nerstad

### Student

Suna Erga Gaard & Rojin Amini

### Prosjektperiode

01.01.2022 - 01.09.2022

### Kommentar

#### OM VURDERINGEN

Personverntjenester har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

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Personverntjenester har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

### **TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET**

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige personopplysninger og særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om helse frem til 01.09.2022.

### **LOVLIG GRUNNLAG**

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

For alminnelige personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a.

For særlige kategorier av personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes uttrykkelige samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a, jf. personopplysningsloven § 10, jf. § 9 (2).

### **PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER**

Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen:

- om lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet.

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## **DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER**

Vi vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

## **FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER**

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Microsoft OneDrive er databehandler i prosjektet. Vi legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må prosjektansvarlig følge interne retningslinjer/rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

## **MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER**

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilken type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

<https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

## **OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET**

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos oss: Simon Gogl

### **Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet?**

#### *Hjemmekontor og lederes jobbrelevante velvære*

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å belyse eventuelle utfordringer/fordeler knyttet til hjemmekontor, samt ta stilling til hva dette har å si for lederes jobbrelevante velvære. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

### **Formål**

Vi er to masterstudenter ved Handelshøyskolen BI- Oslo. Denne våren skriver vi Masteroppgave i ledelse og organisasjonspsykologi, og tema for oppgaven er *jobbrelevante velvære*. Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke hvordan ledere i norsk arbeidsliv opplevde endringen fra å lede primært på kontor til å til å lede mer virtuelt. For å finne ut av dette ønsker vi å intervjuere ledere om deres tanker og erfaringer rundt temaet *jobbrelevante velvære* i forbindelse med hjemmekontor.

### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Handelshøyskolen BI

### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Vi ønsker å intervjuere ledere i bedrifter som har gått fra den tradisjonelle måten å lede på, det vil si primært på kontor der kommunikasjon og oppfølging av ansatte har foregått gjennom ansikt til ansikt interaksjoner og møter, til et miljø der kommunikasjon og ledelse skjer primært virtuelt. Vi kontakter ledere med erfaringer og tanker rundt akkurat dette. Gjennom nesten to år med pandemi har de fleste dannet tanker og erfaringer rundt dette, og vi håper noen i din bedrift har mulighet og lyst til å delta.

### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Vi kommer til å innhente informasjonen vi trenger til oppgaven gjennom semi-strukturerte intervjuer. Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer det at du har mulighet til å stille opp på et intervju som vil vare omtrent 1 time. Intervjuet vil

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innholdet spørsmål relatert til dine tanker og erfaringer og din opplevelse av jobbrelatert velvære i forbindelse med hjemmekontor. Du vil få spørsmål om din opplevelse og erfaring rundt endringen til hjemmekontor.

Under intervjuene ønsker vi å benytte båndopptaker, samt ta noen notater underveis.

### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Opplysningene vi innhenter vil kun være tilgjengelige for oss og veileder for prosjektet. Oppgaven legger ikke opp til at personopplysninger som navn og kontaktinformasjon er nødvendig. Informantene vil også anonymiseres i den grad at de ikke kan gjenkjennes. Opplysningene vi innhenter vil lagres kun i prosjektperioden og slettes når sensuren foreligger.

### **Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?**

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 01.09.2022. Datamaterialet anonymiseres i en slik grad at det ikke vil være mulig å identifisere deltagerne. Ved potensielle publikasjoner vil det heller ikke være mulig å identifisere deltagerne

### **Dine rettigheter**

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og

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- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Handelshøyskolen BI har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

### **Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?**

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Suna Erga Gaard (student) på e-post [suna.erga@hotmail.com](mailto:suna.erga@hotmail.com) eller telefon 95829492
- Rojin Amini (student) på e-post [rojinamini@live.no](mailto:rojinamini@live.no) eller telefon 40163182
- *Vår veileder* Christina Nerstad på e-post [christina.g.l.nerstad@bi.no](mailto:christina.g.l.nerstad@bi.no)
- *Vårt personvernombud* Vibeke Nesbakken, e-post: [personvernombud@bi.no](mailto:personvernombud@bi.no)
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost ([personvertjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personvertjenester@nsd.no)) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

#### **Studenter**

Suna Erga Gaard

Rojin Amini

#### **Veileder**

Christina Nerstad

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### **Samtykkeerklæring**

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Hjemmekontor og jobbrelatert velvære blant ledere*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju

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Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet,  
ca. [01.09.22]

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)