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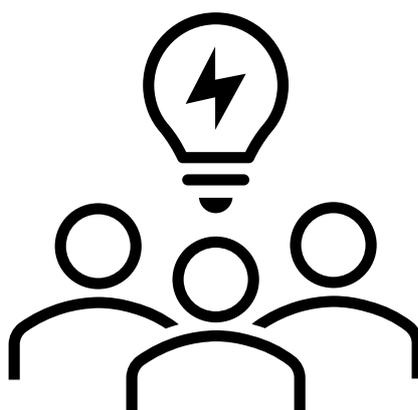
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Summary

Due to the covid pandemic the last couple of years have been dominated by a higher level of flexible working arrangement (Eiffe, 2021). In response to the new working life organizations have become more employee centric, and offer more flexible policies (Rastogi, Rangnekar & Rastogi, 2016). The organizations aim to facilitate for the employees to juggle different roles.

We investigated employees from two companies with flexible working arrangements, and what characterizes their experiences of motivation and work-family enrichment. The investigation of their motivation was based on self-determination theory, specifically autonomous vs controlled motivation. Employees with flexible work arrangements report higher levels of autonomy than others (Vargas-Llave, 2020), and flexible working arrangements offer autonomy to choose when and where to work (Hill et al., 2008).

Our research examines the employees' experiences with flexible working arrangements by using three different narratives: working mainly from home, mainly from the office, and hybrid. After interviewing 13 participants from the two companies, we outline findings and discussion in connection to theory to be able to reach a conclusion. We propose that individuals working hybrid, experience a higher level of work-family enrichment and feel more in balance between work and family. We also propose that the feeling of autonomy is highly influencing the participants motivation. These propositions have important implications for theory and future research on work-family enrichment, motivation, and flexible working arrangements.

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Introduction

In response to the new working life caused by changes in global and local domains, organizations have become more employee centric (Rastogi et al., 2016). Organizations are increasingly offering more initiatives to help employees manage work and family roles (Rastogi et al., 2016). Such initiatives include flexi time, assistance with child and elderly care, compressed work weeks, job sharing, and remote work among others (Rastogi et al., 2016).

The last couple of years have been dominated by a higher level of flexible working arrangement due to the covid pandemic (Eiffe, 2021). Flexible working arrangements can be defined as “alternative work options that allow work to be accomplished outside of the traditional temporal and/or spatial boundaries of a standard workday” (Shockley & Allen, 2007). This thesis will focus on flexible working hours, flexitime, and remote work (working from home or other convenient places). In fact, 39% from the financial sector reported that almost all their employees worked remotely in April 2020 (Eiffe, 2021). Eurofound further reports the percentage of workers doing remote work in 2015, before the pandemic, and shows that in Denmark there was a percentage of 38% and in Sweden it was 33% (Eurofound, 2020). These were the highest numbers compared to other EU countries (Eurofound, 2020).

The relationship between flexibility and work-family enrichment is a highly relevant topic to investigate after the pandemic (Eurofound, 2020). Work-family enrichment is defined as the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). For example, Martinez- Sanchez’s et al., (2018) research utilizes the work-family enrichment phenomenon to explain the influence of work-family policies on employees’ organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Rastogi et al., (2016) have explored one direction of work-family enrichment (work-to-family). The strong theoretical foundation explaining the interaction from family to work is missing (Rastogi et al., 2016). Furthermore, Siu et al., (2010) propose a model of work-family enrichment and test the mediating role of work engagement. Work engagement is a work-related state of mind that is positive and fulfilling, and is characterized by dedication, vigor, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Siu et al., (2010) extends to prior research and adds work engagement to the

investigation of work-family interface, which further allows for examining the influence of role resources, like job resources and family support, on work-family enrichment. Their results showed that work engagement mediates the relationship between family-friendly organizational policies, such as flexible working arrangements, and work-family enrichment. Work engagement was further found to be mediating the relationship between job autonomy and work-family enrichment (Siu et al., 2010). The term interface is difficult to define, however Whiston and Cinamon (2015) explain interface as the mutual influences and interactions of emotions, knowledge, and skills between work and family. To understand how to enhance work-family enrichment, it is beneficial to investigate what influences employees' motivation in a flexible work arrangement.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is the most suitable framework related to work-family enrichment and flexible work arrangement, since flexible work has increased work autonomy and led to higher productivity for organizations and individuals (Eiffe, 2021). Moreover, research suggests that propositions of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) provide a theoretical underpinning to describe autonomy and external control in flexible working arrangements (Gerdenitsch et al., 2015). For the purpose of this research, our thesis will focus on autonomous and controlled motivation from the SDT because workers with flexible work arrangements usually report higher levels of autonomy than other workers (Vargas-Llave, 2020), and the element of flexible working arrangement is the autonomy to choose when and where to work (Hill et al., 2008). By giving the employees more autonomy with remote work, it may provide more flexibility between work and time off, and therefore might make it easier for people juggling different roles to enhance work-family enrichment. The opposite of autonomy is controlled motivation, and both of these types of motivation are the main focus of SDT. Controlled motivation has an extrinsic focus and negatively influences performance and work engagement (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). Both of these aspects of motivation are important to understand how and why people feel motivated by autonomy, and how flexible work arrangements might enhance autonomy. The following section will explain the reason for our choice of method for this research.

The most relevant research within work family enrichment has applied a quantitative design, including Rastogi et al., (2016), Carlson et al., (2006), Ebrahimi (2021), and Martinez-Sanchez et al., (2018). Work-family enrichment is mainly a qualitative concept (Ebrahimi, 2020); however, many studies measure this variable in a quantitative way (Ebrahimi, 2020), which substantiates the importance of more qualitative research to fill the research gap. We aim to understand the participants feelings and reflections as well as the information gathered to get a deeper understanding of motivation and enrichment in a flexible work engagement. Our research will therefore use a qualitative research design, and this may contribute to provide a new perspective of work-family enrichment that has not been covered by quantitative research. When using a qualitative research method, our research aims to understand the dynamics of social relations by capturing motives, beliefs, attitudes, and values among the participants, which cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables (Queirós et al., 2017). Therefore, a qualitative approach to investigate this issue may give more freedom to the participants to describe their experiences about work-family enrichment by using storytelling and examples (Bell et al., 2018). Furthermore, the role of motivation will also be included, as research by Maharani et al., (2020) suggests that it is necessary to investigate motivation among individuals who fulfill multiple roles in life. Our research question is based on mainly three theoretical areas: enrichment, motivation, and flexible working arrangements. Thus, this research aims to answer the following research question:

What characterizes employees' experiences of work-family enrichment and motivation in a flexible work arrangement?

Our thesis elaborates on the following to contribute to the existing field of research within flexible work, motivation, and work-family enrichment. First, it investigates how the different roles employees have at work and at home influence each other. Furthermore, it discusses how organizational policies regarding flexibility influence the experiences of employees' motivation as well as work-family enrichment. Our thesis intends to provide a deeper insight of the employees' experiences of different flexible working policies and attitudes from the management, which is valuable information to organizations aiming to utilize the employees' abilities and motivation to the greatest extent possible. This thesis

differs from and adds to existing literature by using a qualitative method of data collection through in-depth interviews and storytelling, which generates an understanding of the participant's responses in a way that quantitative research methods cannot (Queirós et al., 2017). Enrichment is multi-dimensional, so in our collection of data through interviews our thesis intends to contribute to a different angle on ways which work, and family benefit each other. Lapierre et al., (2018) states that an examination of the daily processes and mechanisms of the positive spillover from the different roles, such as work-family enrichment covers, is important to look for in future research. This is what our thesis aims to get a deeper knowledge about. This is relevant on a practical level as the positive spillover influences the employees on a daily level (Lapierre et al., 2018). Furthermore, our thesis included the availability and usage of flexible working arrangements, as it is also interesting to investigate how often these flexible working policies are used. The relationship between the use of flexible working arrangements and work outcomes are moderated by the intensity of the utilization of such policies (McNall et al., 2009). By dividing the participants into three narratives depending on how they use their flexible working policies we are able to cover this and also explore working arrangements as a mean for improving work-family enrichment (McNall et al., 2009).

Theoretical background

The following section will present existing literature of the theory of flexible working arrangement, work-family enrichment, and SDT. This creates the fundament for the analysis that hopefully will help to address our research question.

Flexible work-arrangement

In the current organizational landscape, more employees are juggling both responsibilities at home, and at work (Shockley & Allen, 2012). To deal with both responsibilities, organizations have responded to the change of workforce from regular employment models, to offering flexible work arrangements (Shockley & Allen, 2012). Regular employment model refers to jobs where work is performed at the firm's place of business, and on a fixed schedule, where the firm has control and with a mutual expectation of continued employment. (Kalleberg et al., 2000).

Flexible working arrangement has been recognized by international labor organizations, the European Union, and the organizations of economic cooperation and development, as one of the most important matters for management of employees' health and well-being (Ebrahimi, 2021). Flexible working arrangements refers to the work schedules that differ from standard work arrangements (Ebrahimi, 2021). Berkery, Morley, Tiernan, Purtill and Parry (2017) as well as Stavrou (2005), explain FWA to include: flexible working hours, part- time work, flexitime, overtime, job sharing, teleworking, shift and weekend work, paid parental leave, annual hours, temporary work, annual hours contracts, flexible leave arrangements, choice of rosters and shifts, variable year employment, fixed-term contract subcontracting, compressed working weeks and working from home. Eiffe (2021) highlights the benefits of remote work including more flexibility between work and time off, increased work autonomy, higher productivity, and less commuting. In addition to this, firms can save real estate costs with a smaller office footprint (Eiffe, 2021). Despite the huge availability of FWA in organization, research has shown that employees often elect not to use the offered policed, and because of this discrepancy, research about organizational factors that might hinder FWA is important research to discuss. These kinds of hinders can be unsupportive supervisors, unsupportive organizations, and reward systems that are inconsistent in their use (Shockley & Allen, 2012). This shows the importance of gaining a better understanding of what drives employees to use FWA. Based on this information, organizations can adapt policies to their employee's needs (Shockley & Allen, 2017).

Crane and Hill (2009) reports that in the United States and Canada, flexibility, especially in the form of flextime and telework, also called remote work, has become the most offered family-friendly benefit. In fact, workers often cite such flexibility as a critical desired job feature. Remote work can be explained as work that uses computer technology to work from home or another location away from the office (Spreitzer et al., 2017). However, research results show inconsistent results on FWA's efficacy in terms of preventing work-family conflict (Crane & Hill, 2009). Such disparities in research findings have made researchers conclude that FWA alone is not a sufficient way to successfully manage work and family roles (Crane & Hill, 2009). Some work schedules are made flexible to meet the

needs of the organization, while others focus on the needs of the employee (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Americans are often working more strange hours to meet the organization's needs. Gajendran & Harrison (2007) meta-analysis states that remote work can reduce work-family conflict by helping employees juggle professional and personal time. Access to flexibility is necessary, but not sufficient alone to reduce work-family conflict and to enhance employee well-being (Crane & Hill, 2009). Contrary to these findings, prior studies have found a positive relationship between FWA and schedule flexibility with work-family enrichment (Rastogi et al., 2016). More than 80% of US families are either single parents or working a dual career. To meet these workers' needs, juggling work and family demands, they are dependent on a flexible working schedule (Spreitzer et al., 2017). In fact, a study by McKinsey shows that millennials (Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 is considered a Millennial) (Dimock, 2019) prefer to work for an organization that offers a flexible work schedule. It could also be a competitive advantage for the organization to allow flexible work arrangements as they are more likely to attract and retain top performers who reciprocate more productivity, engagement, quality work, and less turnover (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Furthermore, working remote from home is associated with profit and perceptions of organizational performance (Meyer et al., 2001). Organizations with a result-only work environment that is system wide, provides flexibility to choose where and when their employees do their work based on the individual's needs and responsibility (Spreitzer et al., 2017). According to Spreitzer et al., (2017), by increasing employee schedule control, organizations have seen a more positive work family interface and reduced turnover, as well as the organizational performance. Another advantage of a system wide practice like a result-only work environment is making flexibility available to all employees rather than just a few. This may also reduce the feeling of unfairness among the employees.

Flexible working arrangement in place and time can generate positive organizational outcomes (Austin-Egole et al., 2020). Employees aiming for employee-driven FWA such as home-based working and teleworking are often motivated, self-disciplined, good communicators and tend to be high performers (Austin-Egole, et. al, 2020). Moreover, managers who stay in close contact with their employees by sharing information provide higher performance and prevent work-family conflict (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Flexible work schedules in the needs

of the employees results in less absence by allowing personal appointments during normal business hours, and the opportunity of such breaks during the workday has an important impact for work recovery (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Furthermore, flexible work-arrangements have shown a significant positive influence on both work to family and family to work enrichment (Ebrahimi, 2021).

However, Eiffe (2021) reports negative experiences with remote work, such as connectivity issues, reachability and lack of social element and poor work-life balance. As more employees work remotely, the potential for work community/relationships and knowledge sharing is reduced compared to the traditional workspaces. Some remote workers experience fewer opportunities for development and promotion (Spreitzer et al., 2017). In addition to this, flexible work practices also come with a cost (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Employees may be expected to be available through electronic communication during non-work hours, even outside of the flexible working hours, resulting in work-family conflict and increasing the stress of always being available. Remote workers who are encouraged to create strong work-life boundaries are less likely to work on non-work hours (Spreitzer et al., 2017). This underlines the importance of gaining a better understanding of employees' experiences and perceptions regarding flexible work arrangements, and how flexible working arrangements might enhance a functional balance between work and family life.

Work-Family Enrichment

The work–family literature has been dominated by the traditional hypothesis, suggesting there is a limited quantity of time, attention, and energy available for all, implying there is a conflict between work and family life (Rastogi et al., 2016). *Work-family conflict* is explained as a form of inter-role conflict where the pressures from work on one side and family on the other are mutually incompatible in some respect and can be described as the opposite from work family enrichment (Michel, 2011). The subject of work life and family life has been affected by the change in the society with both job models and family roles in the recent decades (Ebrahimi, 2021). Because of the changing identity of work and family roles, this has led to a growing interest in managing people in various roles, and the main focus in research has been on the conflict between the roles in

the past decades (Ebrahimi, 2021). *Work-family interface* covers family and work reciprocal relation, and it includes both the aspects of negative and positive interaction of peoples work and family lives (Ebrahimi, 2021). A challenge within the research of work and family is to clearly identify processes at work in the relationship between work and family (Brummulheis & Bakker, 2012). The research includes concepts such as work-family conflict, interface, and enrichment. These concepts suggest that work and family interfere with each other but leave the question of which factors predict what outcomes unanswered (Brummulheis & Bakker, 2012).

The work-family literature has long been dominated by the perspective that assumes that individuals who participate in more than one role, for example both work and family, will experience stress and a feeling of conflict (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). Work-family conflict implies that stressors or demands in one role make it difficult to meet the demands in the other role, creating a conflict between work and family. Researchers have later posed the question of whether work and family always compete with each other, and instead enhance the possible benefits of occupying dual roles (Brummulheis & Bakker 2012). For instance, it has been argued by Mark (1977) that some roles may produce a positive effect in the form of an increased energy for another role. Brummulheis and Bakker (2012) provide an explanation of why some people cope better with stressful circumstances and accumulate new resources such as optimism, self-efficacy, and social power. People with more of these resources seem to be better in problem solving and coping with stress (Brummulheis & Bakker, 2012). A conflict between work and family is essentially a psychological stressor resulting from incompatibilities between an individual's work and family responsibility (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). People with resources are better equipped to utilize contextual resources, for example a person with much conscientiousness is typically well-organized, hardworking and goal oriented. Further, the theory underscores that these persons may favor job autonomy as they plan their work more efficiently, and thereby saving time for nonwork purposes and avoid conflicts (Brummulheis & Bakker 2012).

Because there has been a preoccupation with conflict and stress, researchers have called for a more balanced approach that recognizes the positive influence of

combining work and family roles (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). In recent studies, the necessity of paying attention to more positive outcomes in the domains of work has been more important, such as work-family-enrichment. The theory about *work-family enrichment*, suggesting that under certain conditions that work, and family roles can function as allies rather than enemies. Work-family enrichment emphasizes on the positive interdependencies between work and family life is consistent with trends that are emerging in organizational behavior, psychology, and family studies (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). In understanding the potential of individuals and social systems, these trends focus on strengths rather than weaknesses, health rather than illness (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006).

Researchers have conceptualized work-family enrichment as consisting of two directions: First, we have the work-to-family enrichment, where a person's work experiences benefit his or her family life, where family-to-work enrichment uses family experiences to benefit his or her work life (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). The work-family enrichment was first proposed by Greenhouse and Powell in 2006, and in their framework, they also distinguish between two paths, as well as the two directions, namely the instrumental pathway and the affective pathway. Specifically for the instrumental path, is that enrichment occurs when resources such as for example skills, perspectives, and flexibility, gained from one role directly improve performance in the other role (Carlson, 2006). For example, information provided by an employee's spouse may be usefully applied by the employee to his or her career. Material resources gathered in one role, work, or family, can also promote performance in the other role. Money derived from employment can be used to enhance the quality of family life through purchase of services to make the family life easier (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006, p.81). Enrichment occurs by way of the affective pathway when an increase in resources in one role enhances mood, spilling over, and permitting for increased functioning in the other role (Carlson, 2006). By experiencing positivity in family life this might increase their ability to interact positively with coworkers, and improve performance positively (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006), and research has shown that work family enrichment and family to work enrichment are positively related physically to mental and (McNall et al., 2010).

As mentioned, researchers have mainly focused on the conflict between work and family, and not paid attention to the positive interactions of these two domains (Ebrahimi, 2021). Thus, most of the research in the work life interface field is allocated to the work life conflict rather than work life enrichment (Ebrahimi, 2021). It was when research shifted focus from the work-family interface, and looked further into work-family enrichment, the positive sides started to increase in numbers (Rastogi et al., 2016). Positive sides, such as relationships may be more valuable because they have more opportunities to interact with students / colleagues, and this helps the individual to reinforce or consolidate their skills to interact with their children and vice versa (Ebrahimi, 2021). Because empirical studies started to focus on both conflict and enrichment, the question of when enrichment versus conflict occurs started to arise (Brummulheis & Bakker, 2012). It is proposed that role demands will influence work-family conflict, which in turn affects employees' work motivation (Bakar & Salleh, 2015).

Self-Determination Theory

Most employees need motivation to feel good about their jobs and to be able to perform (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). Motivation results from the interaction of both conscious and unconscious factors that are the reasons one has for behaving a certain way (Ganta, 2014). Self-determination theory (SDT) is a motivation theory which is supported as an approach to work motivation by several studies as it shows relevance to theories of organizational behavior (Gagné & Deci, 2005). SDT has been successfully applied in the fields of work motivation and management and suggests employee performance and well-being are affected by the type of motivation they have for their job activities (Deci & Ryan, 1985a, Ryan & Deci 2017).

The difference between SDT and other work motivation theories is the focus of relative strength of autonomous versus controlled motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). As flexible work arrangements usually report higher levels of autonomy (Vargas-Llave, 2020), our research will use autonomy and controlled motivation from SDT to answer our research question. Deci and Ryan (2000) defined autonomous motivation in SDT as doing something out of interest, enjoyment, values, and meaning. Autonomy is about volitional, harmonious, and integrated

functioning, in contrast to more pressured, conflicted, or alienated experience (Deci and Ryan 2000). Employees are likely to become more autonomously motivated and perform better when they understand their worth, purpose and feel ownership of their job (Deci, Olafsen & Ryen, 2017). In contrast, controlled motivation has an extrinsic focus that can result in a narrow range in employees' effort and produce gains, and have a negative spillover effect on performance and work engagement (Deci, Olafsen & Ryen, 2017). They further suggest that people will feel self-determined if they have some autonomy in their work, which makes them feel that they have ownership to their work. Further people will feel competent if they obtain feedback in their progression at work and suggest ways they can increase their competence (Deci & Ryan, 1993).

SDT focuses on types of motivation rather than amount. Many historical theories of motivation perceived motivation as a unitary process where the focus was directed to the amount of motivation people had for specific activities and behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 2008, a). In contrast, SDT started to differ between types of motivation, where the type or quality of a person's motivation was more important than the amount of motivation in order to predict outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2008, a). The theory addresses many basic issues, including universal psychological needs, personality development, life goals, energy, and well-being. The concept of focusing on human needs is very useful as it gives the opportunity to understand how different social forces and interpersonal environments affect either autonomous or controlled motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008, a). In other words, one is able to predict the influence of whether contextual factors, such as opportunity for choice is likely to support or thwart the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, on outcomes like behavior, motivation, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008, a).

Employees, who are energized by an inner drive will perform better, more consistent, and more self-reliant (Luqman, Masood & Ali, 2018). When people are rewarded, surveilled, or threatened, they often feel controlled and pressured, which takes away the satisfaction of their autonomy. In contrast, when people are given a choice, they experience more autonomy satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008, b).

Research has emphasized the needs for employees to have more control in their lives to feel empowered (Cunningham et al., 1966, Honold, 1997). The psychological perspective on empowerment underlines the employees' feeling of control over their jobs, and it could be argued that increasing individual control over work time gives employees more control over both their job and personal time (Hall & Atkinson, 2006). Family-friendly organizational policies could enhance employees' control over their schedule and motivation. By providing flexible working hours, organizations can influence employee motivation and engagement, and Setiyani, Riyanto and Nawangsari (2019) highlights that this research is specifically relevant for the millennial generation. The following section will briefly explain the two organizations contributing to our research.

Organizational Context

Employees from two different knowledge-based companies were interviewed. By providing an understanding of which work sector they work within, this might give a better picture of the participant's experiences. The names of the organizations are excluded to provide anonymity for the participants. Both organizations offer remote working arrangements, as well as an office space.

Company X is a Norwegian bank known for developing a digital platform that strengthens their product and services. Company X has more than 400 employees, and a client base of more than 450 000 clients. Moreover, they have a major focus on their employees, by providing fun activities, flexible work schedules, individual training and development, and competitive compensation. Company Y is a leading IT-company in Scandinavia and the Baltics with more than 7000 employees. Through their 50 years in the industry, they have established 84 offices in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Litauen, Latvia, and Estonia. In Norway company Y has 1650 employees that are divided into 22 offices from north to south. Company X provides services through the whole value chain from assessment of need to development of product, services, and operation. Company Y describes the organizational culture as the soul of the company. They identify their culture as a performance culture where they involve the employees in decision making, challenging them to take responsibility.

Methods

Our master thesis is built upon a narrative method. By using this approach, we aim to get an extensive understanding of the employees' experience of work-family enrichment and motivation in a flexible working arrangement (Bell et al., 2018). Rather than reviewing existing literature of work-family enrichment and motivation, a narrative method will add to the existing knowledge (Bell et al., 2018). This is done by investigating what characterizes the employees' perception of work-family enrichment and motivation in flexible work by using storytelling (Bell et al., 2018). The purpose is to understand the feelings, opinions, and actions of the employees' motivation and flexible work and how this might influence their personal lives.

Our aim with this master thesis is to explore the flexible work arrangements in two different organizations. We chose a qualitative approach for this research to gain information regarding employees' experience and knowledge by being present and listening. Qualitative research is more open-ended than quantitative, and it often is expressed by committing to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people (Bell et al., 2018). The tendency in qualitative research is to view social life through processes, and Pettigrew (1997) explains the process as it understands how history shapes the present reality and how the interchange between agents and contexts occurs over time (Pettigrew, 1997). Further, we are not testing any theoretical approaches, but instead we are recording experiences and knowledge. Flexibility and limited structure are also important for the participants to be able to express and voice their experiences and feelings freely (Bell et al., 2018).

This study will use a qualitative research method, conduction of semi-structures and in-depth interviews, because there is a research gap in qualitative research within work family literature, and work-family enrichment is a mainly qualitative concept (Ebrahimi, 2020). Research methods such as semi-structured interviewing allow the researcher to keep an open mind about what he or she needs to know about, so that concepts and theories can emerge from the data (Bell et al., 2018). By utilizing semi-structured interviews, we have a great deal of leeway in how to reply to the respondents and enable the respondents to reflect on their own experience and express these experiences through storytelling (Bryman

& Bell, 2015). Questions may not follow exactly the way outlined in the interview guide, and questions that are not included may be asked. When conducting qualitative research, there are some weaknesses to be aware of. Most importantly the fact that it is less objective, time consuming, and difficult to replicate and generalize the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Such interviews are less objective as the respondents might be led in a different direction based on how the questions are asked by the interview holders. Due to the issue of objectiveness, it has been important to ask open questions and illustrate examples in a neutral way. A narrative review uses stories to convince the audience and generates an understanding of the topic area (Bell et al., 2018). We believe that the narrative research method will be helpful to gather detailed data by using in-depth and semi structured interviews. By using semi-structured interviews, we might discover additional information that might be relevant for our findings.

Narrative Interviews

Our interviews take the form of narrative interviews. A narrative review uses stories to convince the audience and generates an understanding of the topic area (Bell et al., 2018), and we have used the narrative review in our interview guide by asking questions related to experiences, perception, and stories for the participants. By having the interviewee tell stories about their lives and events around them, we aim to elicit their reconstructed accounts of connections among the events and between these events and contexts (Bell et al., 2018). Unlike most approaches of data collection, a narrative interview attempts to understand social life and not neglect the fact that people perceive their lives in terms of continuity (Bell et al., 2018). Furthermore, as Alheit (1982) states, is the central component of the narrative interview, the observation recounting of a story much less controllable than for example making a report. Relevant to our research question is Carlsen's (2016) four basic qualities of a narrative approach to understand what characterizes employees' motivation and work-family enrichment in flexible work arrangement in organizations. First, the narrative approach aims to connect experiences, time, and motives to specific situations and stories in the interviewees' lives (Carlsen, 2016). Second, the way the interviewee reflects is related to what the respondents are eager to achieve for the future, and vice versa (Carlsen, 2016). Third, the narrative approach addresses multiple levels at the

same time, meaning their stories will likely include reflections regarding individual, group, and organizational experiences (Carlsen, 2016). The participants have different roles such as employee, family roles, leader, colleague, just to mention some, so multiple levels are addressed. Lastly, the stories the interviewees express might seem small and simple from their everyday life, however these stories can bring meaningful information to the research (Carlsen, 2016).

The interviews were divided into four different sections. Starting with (a) general questions about the respondents and their career, (b) questions regarding flexible work arrangements, (c) motivation, and (d) work-family enrichment. The respondents were explained the definition of work-family enrichment and were also able to ask questions. When they told their stories and experiences, follow-up questions were asked to gain in-depth knowledge. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Data Collection

Our data is collected through semi-structured open-ended interviews from respondents working at two different companies. Two different companies were included to gain a broader insight of different flexible policies and how these policies influence the participant's perceptions of work and family life. We have interviewed people in positions with a flexible work arrangement. The number of interviews conducted was decided by when data saturation was reached. Data saturation was reached when enough information is gathered to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012), when we were not able to obtain new additional information, and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). Data saturation was reached when 13 interviews were conducted. Through our interviews we encouraged storytelling and examples to access in-depth knowledge and understanding (Bell et al., 2018). 11 of the participants had been in the organizations for a long time while two of the participants were new to the company. We intended to interview employees in roles with flexible work arrangements to understand how and why work-family enrichment and motivation is important in such roles. To ensure this, we approached knowledge-based companies and asked specifically for employees with flexible working

arrangements that were willing to participate. In addition to this, the interview guide consisted of questions regarding what kind of flexible working policies that were offered to them. To start our thesis, we interviewed eight employees from company Y, and afterwards five employees from company X. The first interview took place in March 2022, and the rest took place in April 2022 and the beginning of May 2022. We established some guidelines to include specific aspects and topics regarding the research question by using semi-structured interviews (Bell et al., 2018).

Due to the flexibility and time-effectiveness for the participants (Bell et al., 2018), we held the interviews digitally using Teams (video call) for both organizations. Evidence suggests that participants are affected by the characteristics of the interviewer, when conducting in person interviews (Bell et al., 2018). The remoteness of the interviewer in the team's interview removes this potential source of bias to a significant extent (Bell et al., 2018). Face-to-face integration is the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another human being, and you must participate in the mind of the participants to be able to acquire knowledge (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). However, by using digital interviews we might miss out on some facial expressions and body language that could influence our impression. We allowed the participants a lot of leeway and flexibility to get an in-depth understanding of their stories and experiences. At the end of each interview, we asked questions to make sure that we had understood the participants right, and also gave them the opportunity to fill in any additional information needed. The participants also gave us the opportunity to reconnect if we felt in need of more information (Bell et al., 2018). The interviews were transcribed verbatim right after each interview, and this resulted in 61 pages of single-spaced raw text. We conducted the interviews in Norwegian, and the quotations used were translated into English. After the transcriptions, the interviews were divided into three different narratives, working mainly from the home, working mainly from the office, and working hybrid. After the interviews were divided, each narrative was coded in Nvivo to provide a better structure in our thesis. Nvivo is a software program used for qualitative research to analyze unstructured text, including (but not limited to) interviews (Kent State University, 2022). Moreover, by using Nvivo to code different quotes from each of the narratives, we were able to assemble similar stories.

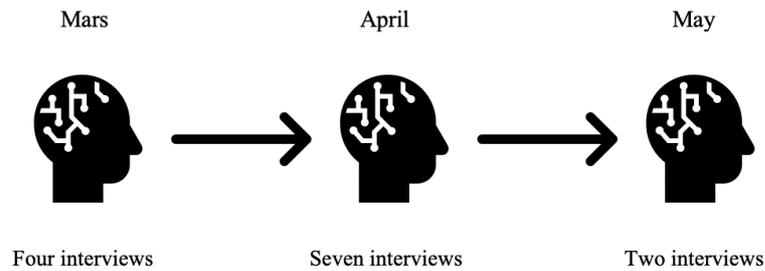


Figure 1. The timeline of interviews in the research

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two important criteria which qualitative research should be concerned about when judging the quality of a study and whether to trust the findings (Bell et al., 2018). However, some researchers have suggested that qualitative studies should be evaluated according to quite different criteria from those used by quantitative researchers (Bell et al., 2018). The researchers propose a primary criterion for assessing a qualitative study, *trustworthiness*. A study is considered trustworthy if the reader of the research judges it to be so (Gunawan, 2015).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a matter of persuasion whereby the researcher has made the practices visible and auditable for others (Sandelwsky, 1993). Trustworthiness has been divided into credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Sandelwsky, 1993). **Credibility** refers to the requirement of ensuring that the research is carried out according to the good practice of submitting research findings to the reader. This practice can be referred to as respondent validation (Bell et al., 2018). To enhance the credibility in our research, we did all the interviews together and were able to complement each other during the interviews. Each interview was transcribed right after it was conducted, to ensure we had as right information and experience as possible from each of the interviews. **Transferability** can be explained as whether the findings provide a thick description which makes it possible to transfer findings to other contexts (Bell et al., 2018). For our research it has been important to use the research within SDT, Work-family enrichment,

and flexible working arrangement due to the questions in the interview guide. *Confirmability* is concerned with making sure the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith, while also recognizing complete objectivity is impossible in business research (Bell et al., 2018). To provide as much confirmability as possible, to our research, it was important to have an open mind and try to be as objective as possible by trying to avoid using our own feelings or opinion regarding the questions, but rather express examples to illustrate. Confirmability is further the neutrality or the degree of whether the findings are consistent and can be repeated (Connelly, 2016) The consent document, information regarding the interviews and what we aim to find out was presented in an early stage for the participant and the HR teams in both companies, to provide confirmability for our participants and both organizations. During the interview we used time to explain the research question, as well as present our work experience and academic background to make sure the participants felt well informed.

Ethical Considerations

All the participants taking part in this research did so voluntarily, and the data collected was confidential. Before the interviews, all participants were asked to sign a consent document with the right to withdraw their participation at any time during the project's span, and that all data will be deleted after the project end 1. July 2022. The thesis and interview guide were submitted to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) and the research has followed their guidelines for saving and deleting audio tapes and transcriptions. Moreover, we did not use the participants real names, but divided similar answers into different categories, and also refer to everyone as employees to make the participant fully anonymous. We further did not use the name of the company in their answers but have the permission for each HR department in company X and company Y to use the company names in the thesis.

Results and Discussion

To address our research questions, we were told several stories of how employees characterize motivation, flexibility and how these two factors influence their everyday life. We argue that our method provided us with an interesting view of

the research question by using storytelling to gain the most possible insight to the participants' thoughts and experiences. In the following chapter, we present our findings and discussions. Additionally, it was necessary to underline some of our findings with research to support and explain the actions and initiatives taken. This study provides an in-depth understanding of how flexible working arrangements are experienced by employees, and how it influences different roles in their life. Our findings also address how employees' perception of motivation is due to flexibility. However, the participants' negative experiences are also included as it might be important to understand the complexity of work and family life. Furthermore, the findings have been voiced by using three collective narratives, based on their working conditions. These narratives have been organized and interpreted in light of autonomous/controlled motivation in the self-determination theory, work family enrichment and flexibility. We found it beneficial to separate the narratives this way as it makes the stories easier to follow for the reader because the stories in the different narratives had common features.

Throughout the interviews there were only two participants who preferred to mainly work from home, three participants in working from the office, and there were eight participants in the working hybrid narrative. It was important to collect information about how and why they preferred to either work from home, or at the office, and further how this influences work and personal life. Furthermore, it was beneficial to understand both the positive and negative aspects of working from home versus working from the office, to understand the different preferences the participants had. To deal with different working preferences, organizations have tried to change the workforce from regular employment models, to meet the employee's needs (Shockley & Allen, 2012). Even though the different narratives shared many of the same challenges and benefits as the other narratives, it was interesting to see how they valued different parts of working flexibly and how the negative and positive outcomes influence their personal life.

Our findings had a lot of similarities, and to provide anonymity the 13 stories are presented and discussed in three different narratives. These are second-order narratives in the form of collective stories. The three narratives are methods of presenting perspectives of the respondents by not focusing on each individual, but

the similarities in their stories (Elliot, 2005). Hence, the 13 interviews have been grouped into three collective narratives based on working methods the respondents apply. The narratives are named: (a) *working mainly from home*, which is the story of the employees who mainly work from home; (b) *working from the office*, which is the story of the employees who mainly work from the office, and (c) *working hybrid*, which tells the story of the employees who combine working from the office and from home. The narrative of working from home is based on two interviews, the narrative of working from the office is based on three interviews, and the narrative of working hybrid is based on eight interviews.

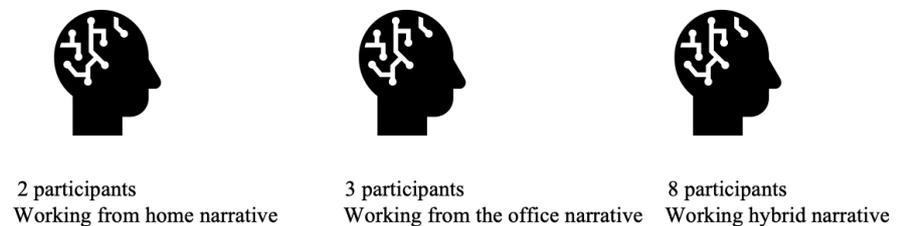


Figure 2. The number of participants in each narrative

Working Mainly from Home Narrative

Work Family Enrichment/Work Family Conflict

The “*working mainly from home*” narrative represents employees who mainly utilize their flexibility by working from home. Table 1 presents illustrative quotes from the respondents, showing both positive and negative experiences of work-family enrichment/conflict, autonomous/controlled motivation, and flexible work. When the participants experience positivity in their personal life, this might increase their ability to interact positively with coworkers and also improve performance positively (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). This is one of the two directions in work-family enrichment (family to work), the other direction is when a person's work experience benefits his or her personal life and uses family experience to benefit his or her work life (work to family) (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). By being less stressed due to work, the participants in the “working mainly from home” narrative believe they do a better job and as well as also influence their personal life in a positive way. It is clear that the narrative “working mainly from home” experiences mostly positive outcomes by working from home, _____

however as the quote in table 1 indicates, it is important for the participants to set boundaries for themselves to prevent a healthy balance between work and personal life. The narrative describes the experience of work-family enrichment as allowing them to spend more time outside of work, which reduces stress levels and affects their professional as well as their personal lives in a positive direction. For example, by having the time to become a better grandmother. This might indicate that the narrative working mainly from home, experiences enrichment and are able to use positive experiences from work to family, and family to work (Carlson, 2006). It further indicates that the participants that work mainly from home are able to set boundaries for themselves to establish a positive balance between work and family life (Shirmohammadi & Beigi, 2022).

Table 1.

The employees in the narrative "working mainly from home" perception of work family enrichment and motivation

Categories	Illustrative quotes - positive	Illustrative quotes - ambivalent	Illustrative quotes - negative
Work family enrichment/conflict	“Stress affects me negatively, and when I get to decide where I work, I become less stressed. I also think I do a better job, and I become a better grandmother”	“I have many digital meetings during the workday, and very many inquiries. So even though working from home is helpful to my private life, I can often forget the time or just do one more thing before I close the computer for the day”	“I think I work way too much. I think it's easy to work too much sometimes. I have a boyfriend who also works a lot and since we do not have a dog or children, it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between what is working time and what is private time”
Autonomy / controlled motivation	“I have much more flexibility to do private things while I work and vice versa” “We have freedom under responsibility. Core time is from 9-15, so you should be online and available in this time frame. However, it is not very strict. I even think some people find it ok to do a workout within these hours” “We have budgets we need to meet, so it is freedom under responsibility. If your numbers are good, nobody cares if you take some time off in the middle of the day. If	“The flexible way of working has positively affected my motivation a lot. However, it is a bit confusing now when many of the leaders say we can finally go back to normal. And when I state that it is a new normal now, they say that so many millions have been invested into a new head office, so of course we shall use it”	“We moved offices to an open-plan office with free seating where you could sit anywhere on any floor. We did not feel the connection to the other colleagues. We felt a bit rootless” “The management finds it difficult to get us back in the office and are trying to make policies to encourage people to be at the office”

you are behind, people would mind if you left to go for a run at 15.00”
“I can inform you that I will do my job outside of core time. For example, today the weather was nice, so I went for a walk outside, and then I worked some more hours in the evening instead”

“We do not have a clear policy. I believe the management is scared, they think trust is good, but control is better. As a leader you should measure people from what they do and how they work”

“I notice a frustration and insecurity in the organization. I know people have left the company because they did not get adequate facilitation for working from home and the possibility of flexibility”

“I feel a bit dragged to spending more time in the office than I really want, just to be nice to my colleagues who enjoy being there”

Flexible work

“Our boss says work is a task and not a place. We can work from anywhere where we can be online”

“When people turn off their camera and mute themselves, they can do anything anywhere. It is about trust. However, in meetings you can risk being asked a question anytime, so you better pay attention. There are pros and cons to digital meetings”

“Bigger teams-meetings are a challenge. It is easier to hide, turn off the camera and not participate. You don’t know if the other participants are listening at all or doing something completely different”

“I feel that I get more time for myself and my family and friends. My grandchildren can visit at 15.30, I can go for a walk during lunchtime, I can do laundry, and I do not have to spend time in traffic. My quality of life is much better”

“Some people, especially the newly hired, wish to be a part of a physical working environment. They want help from people with experience and ask for “office days”

“I am much more productive at home. People do not disturb me as much as when working from the office”

“It is hard to notice people's body language in digital meetings. Sometimes I miss meeting in person, chatting before and after the meetings and so on”

“It is much easier to plan meetings with people. We have come much closer with our clients as it is much easier to get in touch with them”

“I was a workaholic before, but now I am able to do the same amount of work in a much shorter time”

“Stress affects me negatively, and when I get to decide where I work, I become less stressed. I also think I do a better job, and I become a better grandmother”

“I have much more flexibility to do private things while I work and vice versa”

The narrative of “*working mainly from home*” acknowledges that there are pros and cons regarding work-family enrichment when it comes to flexible work. It is expressed that even though working from home can make life easier in many ways, it is also the case that losing track of time or saying to oneself “I just have to do this one thing” before ending the workday. Such things can influence one's private life and have the possibility of creating a conflict between work and private time (Bakar & Salleh, 2015).

“I have many digital meetings during the workday, and very many inquiries. So even though working from home is helpful to my private life, I can often forget the time or just do one more thing before I close the computer for the day”

On the opposite sides are the participants also experiencing some negative outcomes of flexible work, resulting in a conflict between their roles at work and in private. It can be hard to know when enough is enough when working from home, especially when there are no kids or pets that demand your time. This might indicate that even though most of the participants in this narrative are able to set boundaries for themselves, they might experience a struggle with drawing a line between work life and family life, from time to time. Such conflict between work and family, is a stressor that might occur from juggling between personal and work responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This is in conflict with Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) findings that flexible work can reduce work family conflict. Furthermore, researchers have concluded that flexible work alone is not sufficient enough to manage work and family roles successfully (Crane & Hill, 2009). This might indicate that juggling different roles is more complex to

enhance work-family enrichment than what flexible work alone can offer. This can result in the different roles floating into each other, as seen in Table 1;

"I think I work way too much. I think it's easy to work too much sometimes. I have a boyfriend who also works a lot and since we do not have a dog or children, it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between what is working time and what is private time"

The following section will explain the second factor presented in table 1, namely autonomous/controlled motivation. This may provide an insight of the participants' experience of autonomy at work.

Autonomous/controlled motivation

Research has emphasized the needs for employees to have more control in their lives to feel empowered (Cunningham et al., 1966, Honold, 1997). Moreover, as Hall and Atkinson (2006) suggest, psychological perspective on empowerment underlines the employees' feeling of control over their jobs. The narrative representing the employees who mainly work from home further expresses their experiences regarding autonomy and controlled motivation. The respondents value the possibility of being able to control their own workdays and highlight that as long as they do their job properly, it is up to them when and where they do so. Freedom under responsibility is frequently mentioned by the participants, reflecting that it is up to the employees to do their work. As the participants illustrate in Table 1, taking a workout or going for a walk in the middle of the day is up to them, however that might imply that they must finish their work for the day in the evening. It could be argued that increasing individual control over work time gives employees more control over both their job and personal time, such as the respondents highlights (Hall & Atkinson, 2006).

"We have freedom under responsibility. Core time is from 9-15, so you should be online and available in this time frame. However, it is not very strict. I even think some people find it ok to do a workout within these hours"

“We have budgets we need to meet, so it is freedom under responsibility. If your numbers are good, nobody cares if you take some time off in the middle of the day”

“I can inform you that I will do my job outside of core time. For example, today the weather was nice, so I went for a walk outside, and then I worked some more hours in the evening instead”

This underlines the individual control to choose somewhat when and where they spend their time during the day, as long as the work gets done. Furthermore, as also mentioned several times by the participants in the narrative of working mainly from home, freedom under responsibility is much valued. This seems to be the case among both the employees and the managers. The managers then might also reduce their workload if they have trust in their employees and do not spend time and energy to monitor them. Research suggests that people feel self-determined, if they have autonomy and freedom to manage their own workdays (Deci & Ryan, 1993). The participants highlight that flexible work has positively influenced their motivation. Even though the “working mainly from home” narrative expresses positive opinions regarding having the control to decide where and when to work, they also share some concerns about the expectations from some leaders. As the illustrative quote in Table 1 states, the flexible way of working has been positive to their motivation, but some of the leaders are experienced to be confused regarding the future of flexible work. The leaders convey “going back to normal” and use “how much money has been spent on a new head office” as a way of explaining why. From the respondent’s perspective this might complicate the positive experience of working from home and can be viewed as a threat to flexible working arrangement and the option of having autonomy over their own working arrangement. This might hinder the participants' flexibility, by feeling the need to be at the office. This might lead to a feeling of being controlled and reduce their experience of autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

“The management finds it difficult to get us back in the office, and are trying to make policies to encourage people to be at the office”

“The flexible way of working has positively affected my motivation a lot. However, it is a bit confusing now when many of the leaders say we can finally go back to normal. And when I state that it is a new normal now, they say that so many millions have been invested into a new head office, so of course we shall use it”

It is obvious that the participants in the narrative of working from home value their freedom and autonomy to make their own decisions regarding their work time and -place. Their frustration towards being controlled is illustrated in Table 1. It is conveyed that conflicts between the employees and the management regarding policies stating where the employees should work from, have even resulted in some employees leaving the company. Some of the participants in the narrative of working mainly from home have experienced that leaders in their organization try to make policies regarding their flexibility. This might decrease the feeling of control and autonomy for the employees and might reflect distrust to the employees. From our interpretation, we believe the need for control might influence the employee's motivation and turnover rate in the organization. When people feel controlled and pressured, it takes away the satisfaction of their autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2008, b), and has a negative spillover effect on performance and work engagement (Deci, Olafsen & Ryen, 2017).

“I notice a frustration and insecurity in the organization. I know people have left the company because they did not get adequate facilitation for working from home and the possibility of flexibility”

“We do not have a clear policy. I believe the management is scared, they think trust is good, but control is better. As a leader you should measure people from what they do and how they work”

Flexible Work

Flexible working arrangements are of the most important matters for management regarding employees' health and well-being, and the importance of some sort of flexible work is clearly illustrated in all of the narratives presented (Ebrahimi, 2021). The respondents representing the narrative of mainly working mainly from

home are not surprisingly positive about flexible work. They report being more productive than when working from the office due to less distractions from other people. The narrative of working mainly from home expresses the respondent's workload as much easier to balance when they work from home, even though they do the same amount of work as they did in the office. This might indicate that by having a flexible working arrangement, the narrative of working mainly from home is more efficient, and this might lead to the experience of work family enrichment. Furthermore, they also find it easier to connect with colleagues and clients digitally, and state that planning meetings are less of a hassle. This might illustrate that they experience more positive sides of working digitally, since it is easier to plan meetings. This might indicate that the participants do not experience some of the most common challenges with working remotely, mainly collaboration with colleagues (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018).

"I am much more productive at home. People do not disturb me as much as when working from the office"

"It is much easier to plan meetings with people. We have come much closer with our clients as it is much easier to get in touch with them"

Even though the possibility of working from home clearly provides numbers of positive outcomes for this narrative, they also underline the challenges with digital meetings regarding participation. The narrative of "working mainly from home" expresses some ambivalent feelings towards digital meetings that comes with the flexible way of working. On one hand, people have the possibility to do anything anywhere when they turn off their camera and mute themselves. On the other hand, it is easy to lose focus and not know what to say when being called out to answer a question. This might be unfortunate for both the employee not paying attention as well as it is annoying and demotivating for the people who are presenting or holding the meeting. If such meetings are going to work effectively, there must be trust in the participants in the meeting that even though the camera is off, they are still able to listen and comment when necessary. Table 1 presents a quote illustrating this:

“When people turn off their camera and mute themselves, they can do anything anywhere. It is about trust. However, in meetings you can risk being asked a question anytime, so you better pay attention. There are pros and cons to digital meetings”

However, even those who prefer working from home find some challenges with this way of working. As the quotes in Table 1 illustrates, the digital way of meeting with people comes with some restrictions. People hiding and not participating in bigger digital meetings is an issue. This is challenging both for the sake of the quality of the meeting, as well as the people speaking or presenting may find it particularly difficult and unmotivating if there is little response. Based on the interviews, it seems like the participants find it easier to plan meetings, but the quality of the meetings might decrease. The participants further express a challenge with new employees who might miss some part of the information sharing from more experienced workers. This might be one of the reasons why organizations have “office days” and try to fit all needs of the employees into their current policies. The negative experience with working remotely is reported by Eiffe (2021), including connectivity issues, reachability and lack of social element and poor work-life balance. It could also be important to discuss opportunities in the narrative of working from home. Some remote workers experience fewer opportunities for development and promotion, and this might also influence the workers at the office for not receiving help from the remote workers (Spreitzer et al., 2017). It could be discussed that this might influence the participants' motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008, a), and further influence turnover and work engagement.

“Bigger teams-meetings are a challenge. It is easier to hide, turn off the camera and not participate. You don't know if the other participants are listening at all or doing something completely different”

“I was a workaholic before, but now I am able to do the same amount of work in a much shorter time”

“Some people, especially the newly hired, wish to be a part of a physical working environment. They want help from people with experience and ask for “office days”

The following section will present the second narrative representing the participants working mainly from the office, by discussing quotes presented in table 2.

Working Mainly from The Office Narrative

Work Family Enrichment/Work Family Conflict

The narrative of “working mainly from the office” represents the employees who prefer and spend most days working from the office. They expressed similar positive and negative outcomes as the narrative of “working mainly from home” regarding work-family enrichment. Even though they are mostly working from the office, the flexibility has some positive consequences for them when it comes to work-family enrichment. They appear to be appreciative of the freedom to choose when and where to work as it helps the bad conscience of not being enough either at work or at home. They are able to be more present where they are, at work or at home, when they know that if something happens at home, they can take care of that and work more in the evening. It also goes the opposite way, if something is urgent at work, they may be able to fix it from home at any time of the day. This might indicate that they value flexibility in a different way than the narrative of working mainly from home. It could further be discussed that the participants in the narrative working mainly from the office, use the flexibility to be able to work more rather than gain more private time. The participants expressed that if they are performing well at work, this impacts how they feel and behave at home. This is supported by research where enrichment occurs when individuals have the belief that engagement in one role directly increases the ability to perform in other roles (Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). This might indicate that it is important for the participant to perform well at work, to be able to perform in other roles as well. However, the narrative of “working from the office” underlines that the impact goes both ways, positive and negative. Quotes in Table 2 illustrate this:

Table 2.

The employees in the narrative "working mainly from the office" perception of work family enrichment and motivation

Categories	Illustrative quotes - positive	Illustrative quotes - ambivalent	Illustrative quotes - negative
Work-family enrichment / conflict	<p>"If things are going well at work, I am a much happier person at home and vice versa"</p> <p>"I am much freer to choose when and where to do things, which helps with my bad conscience. I often think I should be more home when I am at work and that I should do more work when I am home. It helps a lot with more freedom"</p>	<p>"You bring both roles into each other. A good day at work makes me come home as a better mother, friend, and spouse. It also goes the opposite way, things happening in my private life affect how I perform at work, either positive or negative"</p>	<p>"I don't think it is a negative thing that I have a lot of work to do, I enjoy what I do. However, a big workload in combination with negativity will absolutely affect how I am at home. I get less patient for things at home then"</p> <p>"I am an emotional person, so I find it hard to separate my feelings from work and free time. I try to at least try to be professional at work, but if I am in a bad mood, I find it hard to just switch it off when at work"</p>
Autonomy / controlled motivation	<p>"I am going to take the Easter break off work, and I do that with a good conscience. I do not have any time off in my position, however that is just how it is in my role. I work a lot in periods and then it slows down later. It goes both ways, you give and take"</p> <p>"I can work from the office, I can work from home, I can work overtime for a period of time and then take a Friday off. Everything is fully flexible"</p>	<p>"It is nice to have the flexibility to choose ourselves, however we are a small team so if "everybody" works from home on Fridays to be able to drive to the cabin as soon as possible, we have been informed that the rules must be discussed"</p>	<p>"Often if I work from home and do something else at the same time, I make sure that my computer does not go off and that I am on "active" on teams. It sounds very insecure of me, but I must admit that it feels uncomfortable to not be active for too long"</p> <p>"The management wants us back in the office, at least three days per week. It has been communicated that every Wednesday should be spent at the office, and fun activities such as casinos and other competitions are arranged to make it more enticing"</p>
Flexible work	<p>"I get energy from producing stuff and being effective. If I am in meetings a whole day, I get drained. This is one positive side of working from home, I get more time to do work and be productive there. At the office it is facilitated for meetings"</p> <p>"The flexibility affects my private life very positively. I save a lot of time; I can go to appointments such as going to the doctor or meetings at my son's school without all the</p>	<p>"A positive thing about flexible work is that you don't spend time on the commute to and from the office. There are also quite a lot of distractions at the office, chatting with colleagues and such. On the other hand, when working from home it could be that the kids come home from school before the workday is over and they are expected to be present as a parent"</p>	<p>"An open-office plan is not suitable for hybrid meetings. When I work from home, I don't need to find a quiet place to call a colleague, but at the office I have to move to a separate room where it is more appropriate to have a digital meeting"</p> <p>"I have my work mail on my phone, so when I am home on the couch watching tv I also pay attention to work mails. When working from the office there is a clearer distinction between work</p>

commuting. It benefits my family life very much”

and free time. I think about work all the time, even when I am not using the computer”
“It is difficult to have discussions in digital meetings. Everybody has to be quiet, or else the conversations stop. Meetings in person have much better flow, and it is easier to say, “I agree” or “good”. You can send thumbs up on teams, but it is not always easy to notice them”

Note. Participants with preferences of mainly working from the office

“I am much freer to choose when and where to do things, which helps with my bad conscience. I often think I should be more home when I am at work and that I should do more work when I am home. It helps a lot with more freedom”

“You bring both roles into each other. A good day at work makes me come home as a better mother, friend, and spouse. It also goes the opposite way, things happening in my private life affect how I perform at work, either positive or negative”

“I don't think it is a negative thing that I have a lot of work to do, I enjoy what I do. However, a big workload in combination with negativity will absolutely affect how I am at home. I get less patient with things at home then”

The respondents representing the narrative of “working mainly from the office” express that the different roles they have, at home and at work, blend into each other. As stated in a quote in Table 2, a good day at work has the possibility to bring positive consequences into the private roles as a mother, friend and spouse when coming home. Equally, this may also go the other way around. It is difficult to completely separate one's different roles. It could be discussed that the participants experience enrichment by performing better in different roles in their life. However, it could also be argued that the participants might experience a conflict between work and family due to the challenges of separating work and personal life. It could therefore be argued that the participant should focus on the

positive spillover to increase work family enrichment and try to reduce the negative spillovers. This might also be important for the organization to focus on in the “new normal” since negative spillover influences work engagement and performance (Deci, Olafsen & Ryen, 2017). The “working mainly from the office” narrative describes the experience of emotions blending into different roles at the same time. They may have difficulties separating how they feel at home versus at work, and report that a bad mood at home is difficult to let go of when coming to work, even when trying to be professional. The quote from table 2 illustrates that a huge workload in combination with negativity, such as challenges with coworkers, impact their relationships at home. Such negative outcomes might lead to a work-family conflict when pressure from work and family becomes incompatible and is the opposite of work-family enrichment (Michel, 2011).

“I am an emotional person, so I find it hard to separate my feelings from work and free time. I try to at least try to be professional at work, but if I am in a bad mood, I find it hard to just switch it off when at work”

Autonomous/Controlled Motivation

Deci and Ryan (2008, b) argue that employees feel a sense of autonomy when they are intrinsically motivated, as their basic need for autonomy is satisfied. The narrative working from the office, highlights that they work a lot in some periods and have the possibility to slow down in other periods, so it is possible to give and take both from the participants point of view, and the employer. The “working mainly from the office” narrative shares their experiences regarding both autonomy and controlled motivation. Autonomy seems to be appreciated by the respondents, especially in terms of working more in a period of time to be able to take some time off later. They express that they enjoy the freedom to decide both where to work, as well as working overtime in order to later have a longer weekend or a full week of vacation during Easter. They further underline that it is nice to have the flexibility and being able to choose for themselves. Despite the ability to choose, research has shown that employees often select not to use the offered policies (Shockley & Allen, 2012). This might indicate that organizations are not able to exploit the positive outcomes of autonomy and flexible working

arrangements. It could therefore be discussed whether it is the participant's feeling of autonomy that is important, or the actual choice itself.

"I can work from the office, I can work from home, I can work overtime for a period of time and then take a Friday off. Everything is fully flexible"

"I am going to take the Easter break off work, and I do that with a good conscience. I do not have any time off in my position, however that is just how it is in my role. I work a lot in periods and then it slows down later. It goes both ways; you give and take"

As the narrative of "working from the office" expresses, they do enjoy having the flexibility to work from home when they wish to do so. However, as one of the respondents' remarks, it is problematic if nobody works from the office on Fridays because everybody is eager to drive to their cabin for the weekend as early as possible. If so, the leaders have expressed that some rules must be made, taking some of the employees' autonomy away. This is illustrated in Table 2;

"It is nice to have the flexibility to choose ourselves, however we are a small team so if "everybody" works from home on Fridays to be able to drive to the cabin as early as possible, we have been informed that the rules must be discussed"

This narrative seems to have the same challenge as the narrative of mainly working from home regarding the management wanting them back in the office a few times per week. The respondents in the "working from the office" narrative also experience the feeling of being controlled or monitored. Even though the option of working from home is flexible, the respondents feel the need to be "active" on their computer just in case somebody were to check if they were actually working. They report experiencing an uncomfortable feeling when not being "active" for too long. It is admitted that they find this weird, as they would not care if anybody saw them get a cup of coffee and chat with some colleagues when working from the office. As discussed in the narrative of working mainly from home, the participants might feel increased autonomous motivation by having the flexibility, however when they feel obligated to work more from the

office by their organization, the feeling of controlled motivation increases, even though the actual policies have not changed. Increasing controlled motivation can as mentioned have a negative spillover effect on work engagement and performance (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017), and when organizations plan for “the new normal”, this should be taken into consideration.

“Often if I work from home and do something else at the same time, I make sure that my computer does not go off and that I am on “active” on teams. It sounds very insecure of me, but I must admit that it feels uncomfortable to not be active for too long”

“The management wants us back in the office, at least three days per week. It has been communicated that every Wednesday should be spent at the office, and fun activities such as casinos and other competitions are arranged to make it more enticing”

Since autonomy and flexible work are closely related, the next section will explore how the participants experience flexibility at work and how this influences their family/personal lives.

Flexible Work

As conveyed through work-family enrichment and autonomy, the narrative of “working mainly from the office” does also value some sort of flexibility, even though they most often choose to work from the office. Being able to go to a doctor's appointment or meetings at the kids' school without all the commuting to and from the office is a big advantage that seems to make the employee's everyday lives easier. Research has underlined the benefits of having the opportunity to work from home to increase productivity and work autonomy (Eiffe, 2021). When having the possibility to work from home on such days, time is saved, and the family logistics go much smoother when an appointment in the middle of the workday does not imply taking half the day off. This might increase the experience of work-family enrichment and the feeling of autonomy by being able to optimize the family logistics as well as giving the participants a feeling of control.

“I get energy from producing stuff and being effective. If I am in meetings a whole day, I get drained. This is one positive side of working from home, I get more time to do work and be productive there. At the office it is facilitated for meetings”

“The flexibility affects my private life very positively. I save a lot of time; I can go to appointments such as going to the doctor or meetings at my son's school without all the commuting. It benefits my family life very much”

The narrative of “working mainly from the office” further recognizes that depending on the situation, flexible working arrangements can be both positive and negative. As a respondent quotes in Table 2, there are quite a lot of distractions in the office. This argument is mentioned several times by the participants in the interviews and might influence the amount of workload they accomplish. Furthermore, the open office plan might be a reason that the employees are easily distracted by each other at the office. However, a workday from home is not necessarily free from distractions either. The participants in this narrative with kids underlines that there are distractions at home as well, for example when the kids come home from school and expect their parents to be present. According to the interviews, the distinction between their professional and private roles might be in conflict and decrease work efficiency. In other words, the participants acknowledge that there are both benefits and challenges with both options of working from home or working from the office.

“A positive thing about flexible work is that you don't spend time on the commute to and from the office. There are also quite a lot of distractions at the office, chatting with colleagues and such. On the other hand, when working from home it could be that the kids come home from school before the workday is over and they are expected to be present as a parent”

However, if the benefits of the flexible work arrangement outcompete the disadvantages and challenges that comes along with it is up to the individual to consider. The “working mainly from the office” narrative remarks a few of them,

as illustrated in Table 2. Firstly, even though the respondents representing this narrative prefers working from the office, they still must work together with and cooperate with colleagues that might choose to work mostly from home. Having to do hybrid meetings from an open-office plan is not ideal as one must move to a separate room where it is appropriate to have a digital meeting, which also sometimes can be difficult if there are not enough such rooms to use. Digital meetings make it difficult to provide a good flow in the conversation, and some ideas and reflections might get lost compared to physical meetings. The participants feel that it is difficult to facilitate good discussions in digital meetings because of interruptions by other colleagues. However, it is also challenging to engage all of the participants in the meeting. Furthermore, the issue of also being available from home can affect some people's distinction between when it is working hours and when it is free time. The computer set-up at home makes it easier to think "I am just going to do this one thing", when it actually should have to wait until the next workday. A respondent also emphasizes the disturbance one gets from having work mails ticking in one's phone and reminding one of what needs to be done when doing private things like eating dinner with the family or watching TV in the evening.

"An open-office plan is not suitable for hybrid meetings. When I work from home, I don't need to find a quiet place to call a colleague, but at the office I must move to a separate room where it is more appropriate to have a digital meeting"

"I have my work mail on my phone, so when I am home on the couch watching tv I also pay attention to work mails. When working from the office there is a clearer distinction between work and free time. I think about work all the time, even when I am not using the computer"

"It is difficult to have discussions in digital meetings. Everybody has to be quiet, or else the conversation stops. Meetings in person have much better flow, and it is easier to say, "I agree" of "good". You can send thumbs up on teams, but it is not always easy to notice them"

Working Hybrid Narrative

Work Family Enrichment/Work Family Conflict

The narrative of working hybrid represents the eight participants that both prefer and usually work from the office, and at home. Eight participants is 61,5 percent of the participants in our study. Table 3 presents the participants' perspective of positive, negative and the ambivalent sides of the main aspect in the analysis; work-family enrichment, autonomous/controlled motivation, and flexible working. The narrative of working hybrid due to the first aspect with work family enrichment, is applying their knowledge in one role, into another role in life such as problem solving and pragmatic, and they further told that this is important for this narrative. Moreover, they also tell us their story about how a situation at work might influence their mood with their friends and family after work. The narrative working hybrid highlights that work and personal life influence each other, in a similar way as narrative 1 and 2. They express that work and personal life go hand in hand, and if they feel productive at work it is a huge possibility to be productive at home as well.

Table 3.

The employees in the narrative "working hybrid" perception of work family enrichment and motivation

Categories	Illustrate quotes – positive	Illustrate quotes – ambivalent	Illustrate quotes – negative
Work family enrichment/conflict	<p>"I became much more pragmatic and problem-solving after I became a parent. You must be able to do several things at once, and to have a lot on your mind at the same time"</p> <p>"I think my personal life and work life go hand in hand. A good day at work often makes me happier after work as well. In fact, if I feel productive at</p>	<p>The job probably gets more in return for it than me. But I think it is a good balance. I probably worked a little more during the pandemic than I did before. At the same time, I control myself. There is a lot of trust-based work in my company, so I work as much as I want and consider it necessary. So, it is difficult to say if it is a good balance between work and family I guess"</p> <p>"I believe that it is up to me to have an even better balance. That is the advantage and the disadvantage for your personal and work life, with flexible work"</p>	<p>"If I am stressed at work for a reason, I will go home, and this will automatically influence my family. I can walk around thinking and sitting at the dinner table and not being present, I would think that there are negative and positive spiral effects here"</p> <p>"Yesterday I got a dismissal, so I was angry after work too"</p>

Autonomy/
controlled
motivation

work and that things have been done, I will most likely have a good afternoon, and my girlfriend will feel it too, I think”

“If I have positive stress at work, it does not have to be negative, but can be positive and demanding and something that is stimulating. This is influencing my daily life as well”

“I think it is important to take what you learn into all the roles you have in life. I try to use it positively with the different qualities I acquire”

“I get great motivation from freedom under responsibility.”

“I have had a flexible position now for 15 years at least, so I decide the working hours a bit myself. It has always been nice and motivating for me”

"Now I have actually noticed that both the flexibility to work and the flexibility to be able to come to the office are very important. You actually spend more time with your colleagues than your family, so it is important that you thrive with them"

"I think we have great pleasure and success in that we are concerned with the delivery to the employees versus when they work and what. What is relevant to me is that employees deliver what they are supposed to"

"Freedom under responsibility motivates

“When I’m in my bubble and stressed, my husband steers me away and asks me to act together. I take it home a lot with me. If I’m frustrated at work, I’m frustrated at home too”

“Being an employee in a knowledge company today, it's a lot about freedom under responsibility, but for me personally I have not thought much about the importance of it”

“If I had switched to an employer who was the same, but who was old-fashioned and rigid, I think it would have had a negative effect on motivation. It says something about the company and the trust of the employees”

“Controlled conditions give me a feeling of insecurity and dissatisfaction, and it has made me ask the management if it is good management. It’s not good, and it means a lot more than just where you sit and when”

“If I did not have flexibility and autonomy, it would probably have affected my motivation to a great extent”

“For me, it is so important to look at the different cultures in an organization. Is it a culture of control that is old-fashioned and incompetent, or a culture with flexibility and autonomy without the need for control. This is so important to me and my motivation, and is important when I chose my job opportunities”
“I feel that I should work from 8 to 16. I do

	<p>me. We do not have vertical management. We give employees the freedom to make decisions and it is up to everyone what they achieve flexibly. It is important for my motivation, and the employees I think"</p> <p>"What motivates me is to share knowledge, get feedback, and freedom under responsibility. I have been clear that it is important for me to have full freedom professionally and in terms of time, and it is actually worth quite a few thousand kroner in salary for me"</p>		<p>not really take the flexibility I might have; I feel it is controlled even though I know it is not quite like that"</p>
<p>Flexible work</p>	<p>"I can have a home office, and now it's the case that I am not quite sure if there are some restrictions on when I go to work during the day, so it indicates that I have good flexibility"</p>	<p>"It has changed during the pandemic that I take more meetings in the car now. If I am going to the office or home, I can have meetings in the car if there is no presentation, only discussions. It makes the day more efficient for me and for my employer. But sometimes the meetings are not as good as when we all were at the office"</p>	<p>"The downside of flexible work is that work and leisure flow together. It is after the corona pandemic that I started working much more in the evening"</p>
	<p>"If there is something practical with a craftsman that day then of course you can be at home, also it has been a bit in relation to illness that you do not want sick people in the office. You can somewhat influence where you work"</p>	<p>"I'm introverted, so I really enjoy sitting at home without relating too much to others. It's nice to be in the office for a few days, but I like the combination. But it can also isolate me a bit"</p>	<p>"I often pick up the phone with emails and teams in the evening, and some apps for work are built like other social media. They are addictive. So, you must be a little aware of whether you should be on or not. Then it may take more energy than it generates productivity"</p>
	<p>"Saving travel time is the most important thing I think for me related to flexibility. I get started a little later in the morning and it's about the logistics with the kids"</p>	<p>"My experience is that I work more at home because I take less breaks. Sometimes that is a good thing, and other times I need to be better at taking breaks. So that has become both the negative and positive part of the home office"</p>	<p>"I think the collaboration would have been better if we were physically together. I think we draw as much good from teams as we possibly can, but it will not be quite the same"</p>
	<p>"One of the advantages of a home office is that I can go out and take a walk-in nature at lunch and I rarely do that in the office. It is much easier to combine some physical activity at home, and it is also very healthy"</p>	<p>"I am introverted, nice in the office, but also really like to sit at home without relating so much to others. Like the combination, I will not choose either or"</p>	<p>"I'm not good at using flexibility. Too bad really. I can put on a sink, but nothing more than that. So, it can be a disadvantage because it is difficult to distinguish what is work and not, and the days get long"</p>

“The pandemic made us more productive. We did the same as before but wasted less time in committing socially and coffee chatting. We have delivered better productivity”

Note. Participants with preferences of alternating working from home and the office

"I became much more pragmatic and problem-solving after I became a parent. You must be able to do several things at once, and to have a lot on your mind at the same time"

"I think it is important to take what you learn into all the roles you have in life. I try to use it positively with the different qualities I acquire"

"I think my personal life and work life go hand in hand. A good day at work often makes me happier after work as well. In fact, if I feel productive at work and that things have been done, I will most likely have a good afternoon, and my girlfriend will feel it too, I think"

As Table 3 presents, the participants in the narrative working hybrid, expressed many positive outcomes regarding work family enrichment by being able to work both from the office and at home. Yet, the participants had some uncertainty regarding the issue of a good or bad work life balance, and even expressed that having the total control of the balance is both the advantage and disadvantage. It seems like some of the participants reflect on whether they are pleased with their current balance between work and family life. The respondents in narrative working hybrid differ a bit from the other narratives, by expressing a more positive experience of work and family role emerging. This might indicate that the hybrid workers are able to juggle their roles in a good way and utilize both their personal time as well as their work hours. The challenges seem to be with their family and partners reacting to their work-balance. One might argue that their perception of the balance between work and family is healthy, however it might indicate that they work more than expected by their partners/other family members. In fact, Eurofound (2017) reports that hybrid workers tend to work longer hours than average employees. Average workers who work from the office work an average of 42.6 hours per week, while hybrid workers work an average of

44.5 hours per week, resulting in 1.9 hours more (Eurofound, 2017). Furthermore, the participants in narrative working hybrid discuss whether the question on balance relies mainly on themselves or the organization. Research suggests that work life balance is a lack of conflict or interference between work and family roles (Frone, 2003). Some of the participants express that most of the responsibility relies on themselves. This might indicate that the participants have a feel of autonomy in their role, and the organization might have less power to influence the participants' balance. The participants further reflect whether this power is exclusively a good thing, or if the organization should have a bigger influence.

“I believe that it is up to me to have an even better balance. That is the advantage and the disadvantage for your personal and work life, with flexible work”

“The job probably gets more in return for it than me. But I think it is a good balance. I probably worked a little more during the pandemic than I did before. At the same time, I control myself. There is a lot of trust-based work in my company, so I work as much as I want and consider it necessary. So, it is difficult to say if it is a good balance between work and family I guess”

On the other hand, the narrative also highlights the negative aspect, with their conflict between work and family life. The participants find it somewhat difficult to differentiate between work life and family life since work is such a huge part of their lives, which might create a work life conflict. Having a hybrid work schedule might incur long work hours, and influences parenting, the role as a boyfriend/girlfriend, and relationship in general. It is admitted that “they are only humans' ' and might not be able to differentiate between the roles at work, and at home, and therefore bring the feeling and mood into all their roles during the day. The combination of being stressed and bringing work home, might indicate to influence more than just the participants in a negative way. By providing a negative atmosphere in their personal life, this might create a visual circle by bringing this negativity back to work. The consequences of this might make it difficult to obtain work-family enrichment, and rather enhance a work-family

conflict between the roles. People with resources, such as optimism, self-efficacy, and social power seem to be better in problem solving and coping with stress (Brummulheis & Bakker, 2012). This may indicate the importance for organizations to enhance policies to provide stress and create optimism at the workplace.

“Work has always been a big part of my life, so I take it with me at home, the feelings. Too much actually”

“If I am stressed at work for a reason, I will go home, and this will automatically influence my family. I can walk around thinking and sitting at the dinner table and not being present, would think that negative and positive spiral effects here”

“When I’m in my bubble and stressed, my husband steers me away and asks me to act together. I take work home with me a lot. If I’m frustrated at work, I’m frustrated at home too”

Autonomous/Controlled Motivation

Autonomy is clearly important for the participants in the working hybrid narrative. By being able to choose their working hours as well as having a flexible position, is a motivational factor reported. This is supported by research by Deci & Ryan (2008, b) showing that employees who feel a sense of autonomy are performing better at work and are more consistent and self-reliant than when experiencing controlled motivation (Luqman, Masood & Ali, 2018). The autonomous/controlled motivation part in Table 3 presents quotes regarding how the employees highlight the important aspect of autonomy in their work. Autonomy and freedom under responsibility is mentioned as a motivation factor at work for several of our respondents and seems to be one of the most important motivational factors for this narrative. They point out that the freedom to make different decisions is important for their motivation, and that flexibility is worth more than higher salary in a few cases.

“Freedom under responsibility motivates me. We have little vertical management. We give employees the freedom to make decisions and it is up to everyone what they achieve flexibly. It is important for my motivation, and the employees I think”

“What motivates me is to share knowledge, get feedback, and freedom under responsibility. I have been clear that it is important for me to have full freedom professionally and in terms of time, and it is actually worth quite a few thousand kroner in salary for me”

“I have had a flexible position now for 15 years at least, so I decide the working hours a bit myself. It has always been nice and motivating for me”

The respondents representing the narrative of “working hybrid” express many examples of how the participants have autonomy in their current role, and how freedom influences their motivation. However, some respondents admitted that they had not really thought about the importance of freedom and therefore might question themselves if the benefits of autonomy and freedom outcompete the disadvantages. It is important to mention that this differs from the other participants in this narrative, since the majority of this narrative find autonomy mainly positive. This raises the question of whether the autonomy to choose their own workplace and -time benefits their work-family enrichment, compared to if the organization were to decide their work schedule.

“Being an employee in a knowledge company today, it's a lot about freedom under responsibility, but for me personally I have not thought much about the importance of it”

Despite that all the participants in this study have flexible working arrangements in their current role, we received some experiences of controlled work hours. Research has shown that some employees do not use the flexible policies because of the feeling of being controlled, and because of the discrepancy this might hinder from utilizing their flexible working arrangement (Shockley & Allen, 2012). The respondents working hybrid points out that if they were supposed to

change employers with less freedom, or lose their autonomy, it will affect their motivation to a great extent. The participants point out how the culture of control is experienced as old-fashioned, and they prefer a culture that gives them the autonomy to control their own workdays. This might indicate that some of the participants find it difficult to fully use their flexibility, and still feel the need of working regular working hours. Furthermore, it might be beneficial for the organization to promote the flexibility they offer, and expectations in the organization. By promoting flexibility and clear expectations, the employees might feel safer to take advantage of the possibilities with flexible working arrangements. Flexible working arrangement is one of the most important matters for management of employees' health and well-being (Ebrahimi, 2021), this indicates that promoting flexible working arrangement might benefit both the organization and the employee. In these examples, autonomy to choose where and when to work is important for the respondents and flexible work is therefore our next section.

“If I did not have flexibility and autonomy, it would probably have affected my motivation to a great extent”

“For me, it is so important to look at the different cultures in an organization. Is it a culture of control that is old-fashioned and incompetent, or a culture with flexibility and autonomy without the need for control? This is so important to me and my motivation, and is important when i chose my job opportunities”

“I feel that I should work from 8 to 16. I do not really take the flexibility I might have; I feel it is controlled even though I know it is not quite like that”

Flexible Work

The third and last narrative, emphasized both some similar and some other outcomes due to flexible working. Most of the working hybrid participants have many positive related stories regarding flexible work. The respondents in Table 3 illustrate flexibility as a positive advantage to combine work life and personal life.

They point out traveling time, the possibility to exercise different times of the day, and also working without distraction is a positive advantage with flexible work. By working from home, due to the pandemic they experienced that the employees actually produced better and had higher productivity. This is also supported by research on virtual offices, and it is shown to enhance productivity and morale (Hill et al., 1998). The change due to the pandemic is also mentioned by how and when they work to make the day more efficient. One example from the participants is taking meetings from the car to take advantage of the commuting time. This might indicate that the employees have managed to create new working opportunities during the pandemic, that might make the family and work logistics easier to combine. This further might influence the work family enrichment, by reducing their stress level and improving their work recovery, as stated by Spreitzer et al. (2017).

“The pandemic made us more productive. We did the same as before but wasted less time in committing socially and coffee chatting. We have delivered better productivity”

“One of the advantages of a home office is that I can go out and take a walk-in nature at lunch and I rarely do that in the office. It is much easier to combine some physical activity at home, and it is also very healthy”

“Saving travel time is the most important thing I think for me related to flexibility. I get started a little later in the morning and it’s about the logistics with the kids”

Even though the respondents representing the narrative of “working hybrid” express many examples on positive outcomes of flexible working, they still expressed some ambivalent answers regarding outcomes of flexible work. The respondents that enjoy working from home in particular, expressed the positive side of not relating too much to others from home, but on the other hand being a bit isolated. Furthermore, by working from home, some of the participants express that they are able to work and do more because they forget about taking breaks, which can be both positive and negative depending on the situation. These further underlines that some hybrid workers have longer work hours, and therefore

produce more work (Eurofound, 2017). However, this might influence their stress level and personal life. Increased work stress might result in lost productivity and absence in addition to poorer well-being (Fritz et al., 2013). Therefore, breaks during the workday can help employees regain energy and maintain a high job performance (Fritz et al., 2013).

“I'm introverted, so I really enjoy sitting at home without relating too much to others. It's nice to be in the office for a few days, but I like the combination. But it can also isolate me a bit”

“My experience is that I work more at home because I take less breaks. Sometimes that is a good thing, and other times I need to be better at taking breaks. So that has become both the negative and positive part of the home office”

“It has changed during the pandemic that I take more meetings in the car now. If I am going to the office or home, I can have meetings in the car if there is no presentation, only discussions. It makes the day more efficient for me and for my employer. But sometimes the meetings are not as good as when we all were at the office”

However, by working hybrid, the participants feel that it sometimes is difficult to juggle their role, and their work time and personal time float together during the day, with both positive and negative outcomes. As mentioned, they experience that work and personal life flow together, especially after the corona pandemic. One of the negative outcomes is that it is difficult to avoid checking Teams, emails, and other digital platforms during the evening. If the employees feel the need and expectations of being available during non-work hours, this might result in a work-family conflict and increasing stress (Spreitzer et al., 2017). It is therefore important for the organization to encourage remote workers to create strong work-life boundaries to avoid working non-work hours (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Furthermore, the issue of remote collaboration is also discussed by some of the participants in the working hybrid narrative, by stating that they think the collaboration would have been better if everyone were physically together. This indicates one of the down sides of working remotely when working in teams. It

could be discussed if collaboration could be more efficient if the employees were physically at the same place. This is also supported by research, presenting many advantages for collaboration by working face to face, such as making breaches of trust less frequent and that it is also easier to repair (Bos et al., 2006).

“The downside of flexible work is that work and private life flow together. It is after the corona pandemic that I started working much more in the evening”

“I think the collaboration would have been better if we were physically together. I think we draw as much good from teams as we possibly can, but it will not be quite the same”

“I often pick up the phone with emails and teams in the evening, and some apps for work are built like other social media. They are addictive. So, you must be a little aware of whether you should be on or not. Then it may take more energy than it generates productivity”

Our thesis provides a deeper insight of the employees' experiences of different flexible working policies regarding time and place, and how flexibility influences their daily life. The findings provide valuable information to organizations regarding employees' motivation and enrichment, aiming to utilize their abilities to the greatest extent as possible. Based on the interviews it is reason to believe that the feeling of flexibility helps reduce their bad conscience of not performing enough at both work and family life. As the findings indicate, the participant working mainly from the office seems to value the flexibility of choosing when to work, over where to work. The statement from the interviews underlines the possibility to work more in a period of time, and less in others.

One of the crucial findings in the research is the ability to transfer skills and abilities from one role into another. By developing problem solving skills from parenting, the participants are able to transfer this ability into a work setting. The interviews revealed that the narrative of working hybrid experienced a healthy balance between work and family, even though they acknowledge that they have a high workload. It is also supported by Eurofound (2017) that employees working

hybrid have more work hours than employees working mainly from the office. The interviews revealed that the participant felt more efficient and got more job done, in less time. This was representative for all the narratives, especially from the narrative of working hybrid. Even though our findings suggest a lot of positive outcomes, it is important to mention some of the challenges experienced. All narratives admit challenges from time to time, juggling different roles at the same time. Despite the negative challenges, the positive outcomes outcompete the negative spillover effect. It could therefore be discussed that flexible working arrangements enhance work family enrichment. The participants illustrate that flexible working arrangement is possible because of the trust and freedom provided from their organization, enhancing autonomous motivation. Our findings have shown what employees categorized as work-family enrichment as well as motivation in a flexible working arrangement. Each of the narratives had some similarities and differences, and the combination of these findings can provide useful insight for both employees and organizations with flexible policies. The following section will explain the thesis' theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The results from the current study may have practical implications for both the employees and their organizations, in terms of highlighting the success criterion that should be strived towards obtaining. As a prolonging of the theoretical contributions, the practical consequences for the organization related to flexible working arrangements help to exhibit which practices organizations can and might implement due to their flexible policies. Our thesis differs from other research and existing literature on the topic by using a qualitative method of data collection through in-depth interviews and storytelling. Storytelling uses stories to convince the audience and generates an understanding of the topic area (Bell et al., 2018), which cannot be understood by using variables through quantitative research methods (Queirós et al., 2017). Moreover, the positive spillover influencing the employees on a daily level has been an important finding requested by researchers in existing research (Lapierre et al., 2018). The daily processes such as travel time, family logistics and mechanisms influencing the positive spillover is presented by the participant. The participants highlight the benefits of flexible

working arrangements and how flexibility and autonomy enhance work family enrichment.

The findings also identified potential pitfalls with flexible working arrangements and that despite the huge availability of flexible working arrangements in their organization, employees often elect not to use the offered policies (Shockley & Allen, 2012). Hinders by the organization, or the feeling of controlled motivation are some of the presented pitfalls regarding flexible working arrangements, as well as opportunities for developing.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Research Directions

We acknowledge that our study also has some limitations that may be resolved in future research. First, as in-depth interviews are time consuming, 13 interviews were conducted. We consider this to be adequate to cover our research question, since the data saturation was reached (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012) and we were not able to add additional information (Guest et al., 2006). However, it would always be beneficial to collect more data through a larger number of interviews and gain a broader perspective through interviewing employees in different organizations and work sectors. Furthermore, there is a possibility that participants were nervous to speak the truth in the interviews (Bell et al., 2018). However, we had the impression that the participants showed transparency and spoke from their hearts which made us trust their responses. Credibility is a strength in our research. We did all the interviews together and each interview was transcribed right after it was conducted (Bell et al., 2018). Another limitation to this study is that the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and the quotes included in the thesis are our own translations to English. There is a possibility that some information could be lost in translation, and should be taken into consideration (Bell et al., 2018). However, Kahneman and Egan (2011) argue that participants should be able to use their first language when conducting the interviews to prevent risk to the reliability. Furthermore, the fact that the interviews were held digitally through Teams could have had some consequences. Facial expressions could be more difficult to notice, making our impression of the participants somewhat weaker than it would have been in a physical interview (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Contradictorily, the participants may have noticed less of our facial expressions as well, which might have made them feel more

comfortable to open up and speak freely about their experiences and perceptions. Because our data was collected at one point in time, our study is based on a single snapshot of participants' thoughts and feelings. Further research could benefit from collecting longitudinal data that are able to assist in pinpointing the direction of causality of enrichment over time (McNall et al., 2009). Our findings could provide evidence that the strength. It could be beneficial for further research to examine the organizational outcomes in organizations with flexible working arrangement, related to work family enrichment and motivation, since our main focus in our research is the employees.

Conclusion

The different narratives have some similarities as well as differences while characterize work-family enrichment. The narratives of mainly working from home experience less challenges regarding remote work and digital collaboration. They characterize their work-family enrichment, and the quality of life as much better, using working mainly from home as a flexible work arrangement. To this extent, the participants have more time for themselves, family, and friends, and feel less stressed.

In the narrative of mainly working from the office, the feeling of autonomy and being able to choose when and where to work is considered as flexibility, rather than actually using the flexibility. The efficiency of working hybrid is higher than working from the office, and in addition the participants feel more in balance juggling their roles.

It is reason to believe that having flexible working arrangements influences work efficiency and enhances work family enrichment by their positive spillover effects. The participants in the three narratives illustrate that flexible working arrangements have a positive spillover effect on work-family enrichment by providing trust and freedom from their organization, which further enhance autonomous motivation (Deci, Olafsen & Ryen, 2017).

In conclusion, the research suggests that despite the challenges involved in flexible working arrangements, the participants characterize motivation through

freedom under responsibility and flexibility as the main factors influencing work-family enrichment.

"Freedom under responsibility motivates me. We do not have vertical management. We give employees the freedom to make decisions and it is up to everyone what they achieve flexibly. It is important for my motivation, and the employees I think"

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Employees

Hva karakteriserer medarbeideres oppfattelse av jobb-familie berikelse og motivasjon i en fleksibel arbeidshverdag?

Fase 1: Generelle spørsmål	<u>Innledning: (5 minutter)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Løs prat• Introduksjon av oss• Formål med oppgaven• Informere om samtykke• Spørre om tillatelse til å gjøre opptak • Kan du fortelle litt om deg selv og din karriere så langt? (Alder, bakgrunn, karriere, barn/familiesituasjon)• Hvor lenge har du jobbet i din organisasjon og rolle i dag? • Hvilke fleksible arbeidsmåter tilbyr din arbeidsplass i dag? Sted, tid, lokasjon, plattformer og andre policyer?• Hvordan benytter du deg av de policyene som bedriften tilbyr innenfor fleksible arbeidsmåter?	Bli bedre kjent med intervjuobjektene
Fase 2: Historiefortelling fra intervjuobjektets erfaringer	<u>Flexible work arrangement, motivation og work-family enrichment (30-45 minutter)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hva er din erfaring og opplevelse med fleksible arbeidsmåter? Har du noen eksempler som illustrerer dette?• Hvordan opplever du at fleksibelt arbeid påvirker din nåværende familie/private situasjon? (eks: fokus, skille mellom jobb og privat) • Hva gir deg energi i jobbsammenheng?• Hva er motivasjon for deg? (Kom gjerne med noen eksempler)• Kan du komme opp med et eksempel på noe som begrenser din motivasjon? (Kom gjerne med eksempler)• Hvordan opplever du at en fleksibelt arbeid påvirker din motivasjon? (er det for eksempel viktig for deg å ha muligheten til å kunne trene midt på dagen?) • Jobb-familie berikelse handler om hvordan man opplever at de ulike rollene man har (jobb/familie) påvirker hverandre positivt. Hva er dine tanker rundt dette og din jobbsituasjon?• Hvordan vil du beskrive din balanse mellom jobb og privatliv i dag?• Hva skal til for at du føler på en slik balanse?• Hvordan påvirker fleksibelt arbeid din hverdag?	Målet er å danne oss et bilde av hvordan fleksibelt arbeid påvirker motivasjon og jobb-familieberikelse gjennom historiefortelling. Støttespørsmål underveis i intervjuet: <i>Hvordan opplever du det? Kan du si mer om det? Hva mener du med det? Kan du utdype? Kan du gi et eksempel? Vi forteller våre perspektiver for å få i gang deres tankeprosess.</i>

<p>Fase 3: Avslutning og oppsummering</p>	<p><u>Oppsummering (5-10 minutter)</u> <i>Intervjuer:</i> 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvordan syns du intervjuet var? Noen tanker om hva vi kunne gjort annerledes? • Hvilke tanker og følelser hadde du i løpet av intervjuet? • Hvordan tror du dette intervjuet har påvirket deg? • Oppsummere funn • Har vi forstått deg riktig? • Er det noe du vil legge til? <p>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?)</p> <p>Takk for at du tok deg tid til å delta i dette intervjuet.</p>	<p>Få en felles forståelse av funnene som er samlet inn</p>
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Appendix B: Informed Consent

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet: «Hvordan kan fleksibel arbeidsmetodikk og motivasjon forklare jobb-familie berikelse?»

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvordan fleksibel arbeidsmetodikk og motivasjon forklarer jobb-familie berikelse. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette er en masteroppgave der formålet er å undersøke forholdet mellom fleksibel arbeidsmetodikk, motivasjon og jobb-familie berikelse. Data vil bli samlet gjennom intervjuer av medarbeidere i tre ulike bedrifter. Self-determination teorien med sine tre komponenter: autonomi, kompetanse og tilhørighet, vil bli brukt i kombinasjon med teori om jobb-familie berikelse og fleksibel arbeidsmetodikk i intervjusetting. Oppgaven ønsker å gi en forbedret forståelse av hvordan fleksibelt arbeid og motivasjon forklarer jobb-familie berikelse hos medarbeidere.

Forskningsspørsmålet i denne studien er: Hvordan kan fleksibel arbeidsmetodikk og motivasjon forklare jobb-familie berikelse?

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Dette prosjektet er en del av en masteroppgave ved Handelshøyskolen BI (Campus Oslo).

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får denne henvendelsen om å delta i dette prosjektet. Vi har valgt ut målgruppen medarbeidere med høyere utdanning innenfor business-sektoren. Vi har kontaktet din bedrift og har dermed fått din kontaktinformasjon for gjennomføring av et intervju. 10-15 andre medarbeidere fra din og to andre bedrifter vil bli intervjuet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Deltakelse i dette prosjektet involverer et intervju på maksimalt 1 time. Det kan også ta kortere tid avhengig av lengden på svarene dine. Intervjuet vil dekke temaer som fleksibel arbeidsmetodikk, motivasjon og fritid/familieliv. Vi vil ta opptak av intervjuet med en mikrofon som ikke er tilkoblet internett (for din sikkerhet).

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. 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 skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. All informasjon samlet i intervjuet vil forbli konfidensielt og det vil ikke være identifiserbar informasjon om deltakerne i lydopptaket. Personene som har tilgang til informasjonen er prosjektansvarlige; Mia Hagen og Johanne Ellingsen, og vår veileder Christina G. L. Nerstad (professor ved BI).

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er 1.juli 2022. Alle digitale opptak vil bli slettet etter endt prosjekt.

-

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.

-

Dine rettigheter

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

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med: Mia Hagen eller Johanne Ellingsen (mia-hagen@hotmail.com eller johanne.k.ellingsen@gmail.com) eller vår veileder Christina G. L. Nerstad (christina.g.l.nerstad@bi.no).

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost
(personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Mia Hagen og Johanne Ellingsen

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Hvordan kan fleksibel arbeidsmetodikk og motivasjon forklare jobb-familie berikelse?», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix C: NSD Approval

29.06.2022, 10:24

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

[Meldeskjema](#) / [Masteroppgave](#) / Vurdering

Vurdering

Dato
01.03.2022

Type
Standard

Referansenummer
856877

Prosjektittel
Masteroppgave

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Handelshøyskolen BI / BI Oslo / Institutt for ledelse og organisasjon

Prosjektansvarlig
Christina Nerstad

Student
Johanne Kolsrud Ellingsen

Prosjektperiode
10.01.2022 - 01.07.2022

[Meldeskjema](#)

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.

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.

DEL PROSJEKTET MED PROSJEKTANSVARLIG

For studenter er det obligatorisk å dele prosjektet med prosjektansvarlig (veileder). Del ved å trykke på knappen «Del prosjekt» i menylinjen øverst i meldeskjemaet. Prosjektansvarlig bes akseptere invitasjonen innen en uke. Om invitasjonen utløper, må han/hun inviteres på nytt.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til den datoen som er oppgitt i meldeskjemaet.

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 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

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

- lovlig, 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 behandles 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

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

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).

<https://meldeskjema.nsd.no/vurdering/6206289c-11da-4882-84b1-6a19ea6c927b>

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

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).

Nettskjema er databehandler i prosjektet. Personverntjenester 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 dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller 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

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

Lykke til med prosjektet!