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Navn:	Marie Oppegaard Roksvåg og Elise Bjørntvedt Øie

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Elise Bjørntvedt Øie

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Marie Oppegaard Roksvåg

Abstract

As the trend towards flexible work environments continues to grow, gaining a deeper understanding of the underlying motives and personal preferences driving employees' decisions regarding work location becomes increasingly crucial. This study aims to delve into these influential factors using a qualitative research approach. Our findings reveal how employees choose working arrangements that suits the nature of their tasks, conducting concentration tasks at home and tasks that require discussion and cooperation at the office. Further, employees choose their working environments based on their preferred extent of social interactions, seeking relaxation in the home environment and social interactions and belonging in the office environment. Also, home office arrangements seem to better facilitate work-life balance, despite the downside of increased boundary-setting challenges. Finally, we found that showing dedication was crucial for employees. When working from home this manifested in behaviors such as digital presence and availability, even working when they were sick. We also discovered that dedication and commitment served as a significant motive for employees to attend the office. Maintaining a physical presence was perceived to enhance positive evaluations and create opportunities. We applied the theoretical framework of self-determination theory, job crafting, work-life balance and presenteeism in our discussion of the findings. Our findings can offer knowledge to organizations about the significance of understanding employees' needs and desires, enabling to create tailored work environments that promote employee engagement, well-being, and performance.

Keywords: flexible working arrangements, telework, motives, preferences, self-determination theory, job crafting, work-life balance, presenteeism

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Flexible work environments: Understanding the role of employee's motives and personal preferences in work location decisions

The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT) has revolutionized the way work is conducted, particularly for workers in knowledge-based occupations (Chatterjee et al., 2022). Using digital tools, knowledge workers can now effectively communicate, collaborate, and access work-related information regardless of their physical location. This has paved the way for teleworking, where employees can carry out their tasks and responsibilities remotely, often from the comfort of their own homes. The introduction of work practices by ICT has fundamentally transformed the concept of a traditional office-bound work environment (Stiles & Smart, 2021). It has provided workers with the freedom to choose where and how they work, enabling a more personalized and adaptable approach to their professional responsibilities.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 brought about a significant shift in the working landscape (Wang et al., 2021). Prior to the pandemic, telework was not a widely used practice and was by some seen as a "luxury for the relatively affluent", including higher-income earners and white-collar workers (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018; Desilver, 2020). According to the IFMA Foundation (2017) the number of US employees who worked from home at least half of the time grew from 1.8 million in 2005 to 3.9 million in 2017. Even so, teleworking still made up only 2.9 percent of the total US workforce. Similarly in Europe, only around 2 percent of employees worked mainly from home in 2017 (Eurofound, 2017). The number of employees that engaged in some form of telework in 2017 was around 15%, with the Nordic countries among the most frequent telework users (Eurofound 2017; Messenger, 2019).

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic compelled millions of people worldwide to work remotely, effectively initiating an unintended global experiment in remote working (Kniffin et al., 2020). A survey conducted after the outbreak of the pandemic showed that approximately 50% of the US workforce now has the possibility to work from home and is inclined to choose this option for around 2-3 days per week (Barrero et al., 2021). Also in Norway, statistics show that approximately 50% of workers have the opportunity to telework, with 53% of them choosing to do so at least one day a week, with the majority choosing it more than one day a week (Ingelsrud et al., 2022). As combining

working from home and in-office work has become the new normal in several occupations, organizations and individuals have to navigate and refine telework practices, including e.g., addressing issues such as establishing effective communication and collaboration strategies, maintaining work-life balance and nurturing employee well-being and motivation (Wang et al., 2021). Moreover, it is crucial for organizations to craft effective and innovative leadership strategies, specifically designed to support employees working from home.

The COVID-19 pandemic has expedited the acceptance and integration of telework, reshaping our perception of work and offering opportunities to reimagine future work arrangements. As we move forward, it is essential for organizations and individuals to leverage the lessons learned during the pandemic. However, the experience of mandatory remote work during a pandemic greatly differs from the voluntary choice of a flexible work arrangement. Hence, new research is necessary to understand these post-pandemic dynamics more thoroughly. By embracing the flexibility that telework offers, we can strive to create a more resilient and sustainable work environment that blends the benefits of in-person collaboration with the advantages of remote work. As stated by Wang and colleagues (2021), there is a need to shift the research focus from *understanding whether to implement telework* to *understanding how to get the most out of it*.

Yet, to date there are still a lack of consistent guidelines regarding when, where, and to what extent employees can choose to telework, and even within organizations, different departments may have varying arrangements (Alexander et al., 2021). According to data from Ingelsrud and colleagues (2022), only 18% of employees with the opportunity to telework have a written agreement with their employer. Additionally, it has become increasingly common that the choice of workplace arrangement is put on the individual employee, with 59% of employees stating that they have a *large* or *very large* degree of perceived self-determination regarding their working arrangement (Ingelsrud et al., 2022). Consequently, employees now face more active decision-making regarding their work arrangements than ever before.

In the post-pandemic era, employees have begun to gain valuable insights into which working arrangements are suitable in which situations and how the workplace decisions impact factors such as their motivation and productivity. Data from Eurofound (2021) show that when employees are asked about their

preferences for working arrangements post-pandemic, most workers prefer to combine work from home with in-office work in the future. However, to date there is still limited research on how individual employees choose between different working arrangements, why they choose as they do, and what motivates their choices. In the current study we aim to investigate what drives employees in their decision-making processes. Our research question is as follows: "What are the underlying motives and personal preferences that drive employees when choosing their preferred work location within a flexible work environment?"

Our study could potentially offer valuable insights on how to create optimal working environments for employees in the post-pandemic era. By doing so, we can catalyze positive outcomes for both individuals and their respective organizations. A satisfied, motivated, and productive workforce is a significant contributor to organizational success, and our research may provide strategies to achieve these beneficial conditions.

Literature review and theory

Flexible working arrangements and telework

Definitions

There are several terms to describe work arrangements that include employees using ICT to conduct their work duties outside of the physical office, such as *flexible working arrangements*, *telework*, *remote work* and *virtual work*. The different terms are often used interchangeably, even though there are slight differences in the definitions. In this thesis the terms flexible work arrangements (FWA) and telework will mainly be used, even though in some parts of the thesis it is suitable to write about employees *working from home*, using *home office arrangements*, or *working remotely*.

FWA will be used as a general term, involving different working arrangements. It has been described as an umbrella term capturing different types of arrangements, such as flextime, remote work, telework and hybrid-work (Schonfeld & Chang, 2017). FWA is by Schonfeld and Chang (2017) described as organizational policies and practices that afford employees flexibility and control over how, when, and where work is completed.

When describing home office situations specifically, the definition of telework will apply. Telework is defined by Allen and colleagues (2015) as a

working arrangement that allows at least a portion of the job of a worker to be conducted away from a central workplace, typically from home or from another preferred location, using technology to interact with others. Typically, telework is described as a flexible working practice arrangement in which employers and employees agree to change the hours and location of their work, often with the aim of improving employee work-life balance and meeting organizational needs (Thompson et al., 2015). Verbeke and colleagues (2008) point out that telework may range from occasional to full-time use and is most frequently done on a part-time basis (often one or two days per week).

Lastly, it should be noted that telework can be categorized as a form of remote work, therefore the terms can be used interchangeably (Allen et al., 2015). However, not all remote work is telework, since some kinds of remote work practices also can include employees working and living far away from their workplaces or having jobs that have no physical office. When writing about employees working remotely in this thesis, the definition of telework applies.

Outcomes of flexible working arrangements and telework

Previous research has investigated the employee outcomes of different FWA, including telework, involving studies investigating domains such as productivity and job performance (e.g., Nakrošienė et al., 2019), work attitudes (e.g., Lim & Teo, 2000; Peters et al., 2010), work-life balance (e.g., Hayman, 2009; Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014; Elbaz et al., 2022), and health indicators such as well-being, stress, and burnout (Lunde et. al, 2022). Findings have demonstrated a range of positive outcomes associated with the use of FWA, including increased productivity due to employees putting more hours into work, lacking distractions, and being more focused on job tasks (Beauregard et al., 2019). Employees have also reported an increased sense of autonomy regarding their tasks and their ability to determine when and where to conduct their work, which in turn have been linked to increased job satisfaction (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Though, it has been shown that the positive outcomes of telework are dependent on how extensive the use of telework is, and the more extensive it becomes the more reported feelings of loneliness and isolation (Beauregard et al., 2019). Further, there are arguments questioning the validity of these outcomes, as much of the research in this area has primarily

relied on self-report measures rather than objective evidence (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

Regarding negative outcomes following the use of FWA, it has been argued that telework can negatively affect both individual performance, by leading to social and professional isolation, and team performance, by negatively affecting teleworkers' relationship with co-workers (Beauregard et al., 2019). However, factors such as the intensity of telework (i.e., the amount of time teleworkers work away from the office), communications with colleagues and task interdependence, may help to reduce or eliminate the potential negative effects of telework on team functioning.

The existing knowledge on FWA primarily stems from a context where it was practiced only occasionally or infrequently and was limited to certain individuals within an organization, rather than being widely adopted (Wang et al., 2021). This aspect has been criticized by Bailey and Kurland (2002), who argue that the sporadic nature of telework has potentially muted many anticipated individual-level outcomes for the majority of teleworkers. Research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic could also show results that are not necessarily similar to results from a post-pandemic context, where employees can choose more freely to work remotely, rather than being forced to do so.

In a recently published report, the "Work Trade Index Pulse" by Microsoft (2022) perceived productivity in relation to teleworking was measured. The results showed that there was a gap between employees and their managers in terms of their perception of productivity. A total of 85% of leaders reported that the shift towards hybrid-work has made it challenging to have confidence that employees are being productive when teleworking. On the other hand, 87% of employees report that they felt productive at work (both at the office and from home), indicating that there is a perceived productivity gap between employees and their leaders.

This gap seems to be larger than ever in the post-pandemic work era. Since the flexible work environment associated with the post-pandemic work era is relatively new, more research is still required on the field of employee outcomes in relation to different FWA.

Employee motives and preferences for use of flexible working arrangments

The decision of employees to adopt different work arrangements might be influenced by a variety of underlying motives, which may vary depending on their individual needs, preferences, and circumstances. Motives can be described as the internal forces that drive any behavior (Henderson & Smith, 2022). As stated by Thompson and colleagues (2022), employees are generally motivated to fulfill their needs and to avoid aversive states, such as being uncomfortable. Parker and Ohly (2008) have pointed out how employees are inclined to proactively change aspects of their work in order to maximize their motivation, reduce stress, and limit strain. Theories and concepts such as self-determination theory (SDT), job crafting, work-life balance, and presenteeism can offer insights for understanding the motives and preferences driving employees to choose certain work arrangements.

Self-determination theory

SDT, developed by Ryan and Deci (2000), is a prominent framework in the field of psychology that focuses on human motivation and optimal functioning. The theory posits that individuals can have a multitude of diverse motives that drive their investment of time and energy into specific actions. Motivation is classified into two distinct categories within the theory: autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation entails engaging in an activity because of personal interest, willingness, and an internal desire to do so (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2019). In contrast, controlled motivation arises when individuals feel compelled to perform an action due to external pressures, such as financial gain or the fear of punishment. When experiencing autonomous motivation, the activity itself provides the motivation, whereas the context provides the primary motivation when experiencing controlled motivation.

SDT proposes that individuals have three fundamental psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2017). These needs are inherent and play a crucial role in our psychological development and well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2017; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2019).

According to SDT, the term *competence* refers to the need to feel effective and capable in one's actions and pursuits (Ryan & Deci, 2017). It involves seeking challenges, acquiring skills, and experiencing a sense of mastery. When individuals perceive themselves as competent, they are more likely to be

motivated, engaged, and satisfied in their work. *Autonomy* involves having a sense of volition and being able to make choices and decisions that align with one's values and interests (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2017). According to SDT, when individuals have autonomy in their work, they experience a greater sense of ownership, leading to higher levels of productivity and well-being. Finally, *relatedness* revolves around the desire for social connection and belongingness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Humans are social beings and having positive relationships with others at work fosters a sense of belonging, support, and cooperation. According to SDT, when individuals feel connected and valued within their work environment, they are more likely to be motivated and satisfied.

SDT proposes that when these three basic psychological needs are met in the work context, individuals are more likely to experience autonomous motivation, engagement, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2017). Conversely, if these needs are obstructed or not adequately supported, individuals may experience diminished motivation, decreased performance, and psychological distress. Moreover, SDT acknowledges that the work environment plays a crucial role in shaping the fulfillment of these psychological needs. Factors such as leadership styles, organizational culture, and job design can either support or undermine autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the workplace.

SDT has significantly contributed to our comprehension of the factors that enhance worker motivation by shedding light on how the work context impacts fundamental psychological needs (Gagné et al., 2022). As technological advancements and new working trends post-pandemic reshape the nature of work, SDT can offer valuable insights into how the resulting uncertainty and interdependence may influence worker motivation, performance, and overall well-being. For example, as Gagné and colleagues (2022) present, increased reliance on virtual collaboration and telework may influence the need for relatedness, while autonomy and competence may be influenced by factors like task variety, feedback, and opportunities for skill development.

Overall, SDT offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing worker motivation, performance, and well-being by emphasizing the importance of satisfying the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness in the work context.

Work-related motives and life-management motives

When examining the motivations behind the utilization of FWA, research before the COVID-19 pandemic has, according to Shockley and Allen (2012), mainly revolved around two overarching categories, first categorized by Sullivan & Lewis (2001) as *work-related motives* and *life management motives*.

Work-related motives are factors that may be used to increase personal productivity (Shockley & Allen, 2012). For example, the work environment at the office may be full of disruptions like social encounters with colleagues, nearby conversations of co-workers, or electronic media, making it more difficult to complete work at the office (Perlow, 1999). Employees who are easily disrupted by the environment at the office, may have work-related motives that drive them to choose to work non-standard hours at the office (less people present) or from a remote location. This can result in more effective work and more satisfaction among employees. Working from home can also provide employees with the opportunity to customize their own working space in order to optimize their creativity and inspiration (e.g., working with music in the background or working in total silence) (Shockley & Allen, 2012). Depending on the nature of the work, employees may more easily come up with ideas and gain inspiration working from locations other than the main office space.

Life-management motives is conceptualized as an umbrella term for any FWA motive that helps individuals better manage the intersection of work and their personal life (Shockley & Allen, 2012). Life-management motives for use of FWA have been linked to work-life-balance (e.g., McDonald et al, 2005), childcare (Sullivan & Lewis, 2001), and managing one's personal time (Sharpe et al., 2002). On the contrary, some researchers have presented that the use of FWA can have a negative effect on life management (Kurland & Bailey, 1999; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001). This is due to the blurred lines between different roles and places, which can lead to an increased burden of domestic responsibilities on individuals utilizing FWA. Individual differences, in terms of gender, marital status, and responsibility for children as well as work-nonwork segmentation preferences also affect employees and their motives for teleworking (Shockley & Allen, 2012).

The motives for why employees choose to utilize FWA, as explained through work-related motives and life-management motives, can further be investigated in relation to other research on the concepts of job crafting (work-

related motive) and work-life balance (life-management motive), which will be presented below.

Job crafting

The concept of job crafting, first introduced by Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001), refers to the ways in which individuals modify or adjust aspects of their jobs to better align with their personal needs, preferences, skills, and interests. Job crafting is considered a proactive behavior that involves individuals adapting to the challenges and limitations presented by their job.

Later, other definitions of job crafting have emerged. For example, Tims and Bakker (2010) define job crafting as a proactive behavior involving employees initiating changes to their job demands and job resources to match their personal abilities and needs to the job characteristics. A number of alternative conceptualizations and measures of job crafting do exist. However, we will mainly focus on the definition by Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001) as it highlights the individual motivations that produce job crafting behavior, and it is the definition mainly used in qualitative research (Lazazzaraa et al., 2020). Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001) also suggest that employees are motivated to engage in job crafting to fulfill basic psychological needs for autonomy, positive self-image, and relatedness, which align with our research question that focuses on individual motives and preferences.

Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001) describe three forms of job crafting: (1) task crafting, (2) relational crafting, and (3) cognitive crafting. *Task crafting* involves employees taking on more or fewer tasks at work, modifying their scope and changing how the tasks are accomplished. *Relational crafting* involves modifying the amount and quality of interactions, meaning employees choosing who they interact with more and less intensively. Lastly, *cognitive crafting* refers to how the individual employee perceives his or her job and how he or she is changing his or her view of the job, and in this way changes how employees approach the job. In summary, job crafting as Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001) defines it, can involve shaping the tasks employees perform as well as the relational and cognitive boundaries of their jobs.

Meta-analytic studies of both qualitative and quantitative research on job crafting have been conducted and show that job crafting behavior has several important antecedents and outcomes for the individual (Rudolph et al., 2017;

Lazazzaraa et al., 2020). Among the outcomes of job crafting behavior found in qualitative studies are changes in one's work identity, self-image, and experience of meaningfulness of work (Lazazzaraa et al., 2020), whereas the quantitative studies show that common antecedents and outcomes are proactive personality, general self-efficacy, work engagement, job performance, and job satisfaction (Rudolph et al., 2017).

In a constantly evolving work landscape, job crafting invites employees to proactively anticipate and initiate changes in their work patterns (Grant & Parker, 2009). Engaging in such reflective activities can assist individuals in effectively coping with ongoing changes. Consequently, job crafting serves as a valuable strategic advantage amidst periods of transformation (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti et al., 2010). Further, Parker and Ohly (2008) have suggested that employees can be an active part of their own change processes in the workplace, to be able to improve their work situations. This can e.g., be done by choosing varying tasks that are perceived as meaningful.

Researchers have highlighted the increased relevance of job crafting in the context of FWA. FWA enables greater independence in shaping one's own work environment, and in recent years, research on job crafting has introduced several new forms of job crafting behavior (Tims et al., 2021). An example is time-spatial job crafting, referring to the extent to which employees proactively select and alter suitable work locations and working hours to stay productive and engaged (Wessels et al., 2019).

In Wessels and colleagues (2019) proposed model of time-spatial job crafting, one cognitive component (reflection) and two behavioral components (selection and adaptation) of time-spatial job crafting are described. Through *reflection*, employees can learn about their workplace, work location, and work hours. *Selection* refers to the actual choice of a workplace, work location, or working hour to best meet time-spatial demands. Lastly, *adaptation* is described as behavior where employees need to adjust where they work to ensure that the workplace is appropriate to the task at hand. In sum, Wessels and colleagues (2019) argue that time-spatial job crafting can come particularly handy in situations where flexible forms of work become increasingly more prevalent, and when work-home boundaries are severely challenged. Engaging in time-spatial job crafting could lead to an increase in employee engagement and performance

(Wessels et al., 2019). However, the implementation and long-term consequences or outcomes of time-spatial job crafting are yet to be found.

Work-life balance

In recent decades, there has been significant public discourse and academic interest in the relationship between work and non-working time, commonly referred to as *work-life balance* or *work-family balance* (Kelliher et al., 2019). The growing attention towards this topic is in part motivated by the recognition that an imbalance between the work and life domain can have detrimental effects on the health and performance of individuals, families, and organizations (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Work-life balance has in research been defined in different ways, emphasizing both the reduction of conflict and the potential enrichment between the work and life domain (Thompson et al., 2021). Overall, according to Thompson and colleagues (2021), the concept can be categorized in terms of the two dimensions of (1) role engagement in multiple roles in both work and non-work-life and (2) minimal conflict between the multiple roles in the work and non-work roles.

In a flexible work environment, work-life balance is a relevant concept to consider for employees having the opportunity to choose working arrangements that makes it easier to balance roles in the life and work domain. FWA have been found as effective means of achieving work-life balance (e.g., Dizaho et al., 2017; Shagvaliyeva et al., 2014). Research indicates that the majority of teleworkers consider working from home practices to provide them with more time to be with their families in the morning and evening, to be available for family obligations and prepare children for daycare or school as well as be available for them when they return (For a review see Tremblay, 2006). In addition, individuals appreciate the possibility to conduct domestic tasks during the day to free time from the evening and weekends.

However, the increased flexibility provided to employees in flexible work environments has also increasingly blurred the work-home boundaries, making it more challenging for employees to switch off from work (Althammer et al., 2021). Sturges (2012) addresses how individuals have the opportunity to craft behavior such as adjusting the number of hours they work or the place they work from to better manage their own work-life balance. However, as he points out, less is known about how individuals actively choose to engage in such behaviors.

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of work-life balance has been linked to the "role identity theory" (Burke & Tully, 1977), implying that employees are likely to be motivated to achieve objectives that are in line with their most significant roles (Thompson et al., 2021). According to role identity theory, identities are formed based on the importance of the various roles that individuals hold (Burke & Tully, 1977). Work-related and family-related roles are often among the most salient for individuals. The most important roles for each individual will determine the individual's identity. Roles in the family and life domain can also be equally valued by individuals, adopting a dual-centered identity. Typically, individuals are driven to accomplish objectives that are in harmony with their role identity and to seek environments that assist them in balancing their work and family responsibilities. This can have an impact on their preferred work locations, thereby influencing their motivations for different FWA.

Presenteeism

Employees may on some occasions choose working arrangements based on preferences that are extrinsically motivated, meaning behaviors that offer an external reward (Reiss, 2012). Such rewards can be e.g., financial benefits, praise, or avoiding punishment. In that sense, employees may choose working arrangements based on a desire to either earn more money, gain recognition for their choices, or avoid uncomfortable situations, such as avoiding going against the group norm.

The underlying mechanisms behind the concept of *presenteeism* might contribute with insights about factors that drive employees to attend the office out of extrinsic motives, while having reasons to stay at home due to feeling unwell or unproductive. The concept of presenteeism is about showing up to work even though you are ill (Johns, 2010). Presenteeism has also been defined in terms of impaired work function and productivity loss, as being physically present in the workplace, but functionally absent (Cooper, 1996; Ishimaru et al., 2020). The phenomenon has been of interest due to its negative organizational outcomes, as presenteeism has been found to have more negative consequences than absenteeism in terms of reduced long-term productivity and increased costs for organizations (Lohaus & Habermann, 2019).

There have been several reasons detected for why presenteeism occurs and why employees choose to attend the office while feeling unwell and unproductive.

The factors investigated related to this can broadly be categorized into sub-groups concerning (1) the individual (e.g., burden to colleagues, perception from colleagues, financial concerns), (2) job characteristics (e.g., lack of cover, professionalism, job demands), and (3) the organization (e.g., policies, organizational culture) (Lohaus & Habermann, 2021; Webster et al., 2019).

The different reasons for why employees practice presenteeism have been investigated by Henderson and Smith (2022) in relation to different motives, categorized as either *approach*- or *avoidance* motives. They describe approach motives as "the desire or obligation to approach the discomfort of attending work while unwell in order to abide by one's work values and demonstrate loyalty to the profession and colleagues" (Henderson & Smith, 2022, p. 514). Johansen and colleagues (2014) found that Norwegian and Swedish employees choose to attend the office despite being ill out of reasons related to approach-motives, such as not wanting to burden their colleagues with their sick leave and because nobody else could carry out their responsibilities. Regarding values of professionalism, a considerable proportion of the participants also reported that they did not want to be considered lazy or unproductive by their colleagues. Interestingly, the Norwegian and Swedish participants varied in their response to this option, with the Norwegian participants being over-represented (21% vs. 12%).

Avoidance motives have been described as "the pressure to attend work while unwell to avoid the potential damaging consequences of seeking sick leaves" (Henderson & Smith, 2022, p. 514). Lu and colleagues (2013) found avoidance motives to be connected to the fear of salary reduction and the pressure to conform to expectations from peers or supervisors. Further, Golden and Eddleston (2020) found that employees that work remotely in companies where remote work was less common experienced slower salary growth than their in-office counterparts (Golden & Eddleston, 2020).

Furthermore, Saksvik (1996) has also provided a comprehensive exploration of potential pressures that may lead employees to attend work even when feeling unwell. Saksvik (1996) identified four types of attendance pressure. The first, *importance pressure*, refers to the pressure employees feel due to the significance of their roles and tasks, perceiving their assignments as important or believing that no one else can perform their work. The second type, *censure pressure*, arise from a fear of being accused of shirking by leaders or colleagues. Experiencing this kind of pressure, employees may believe that their jobs could be

threatened if they do not work hard enough. The third type, *moral pressure*, stems from personal work ethics and social norms, leading employees to feel an obligation to attend work when feeling unwell. The final type, *security pressure,* is related to job security, leading employees to attend work as they want to show themselves that they are indispensable and to reduce job security.

In addition, some individuals are more sensitive than others to social pressure, such as attendance-related workplace culture. A study by Baker-McClearn and colleagues (2010) found that work attendance was more important to employees who were sensitive to judgements from others (clients, colleagues, or supervisors). Sensitivity for stress has been linked to the personality trait of neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Individuals with a neurotic disposition tend to be more vulnerable to interpersonal influences, often stemming from a fear of disapproval from others. They also have a propensity to assess their surroundings from a pessimistic viewpoint (Eysenck, 1990).

Virtual presenteeism

With an increase in the use of FWA post-pandemic, the term of flexibility has been relevant in relation to which working arrangements lead to the highest productivity among employees. The need to be perceived as productive, has also led to an increase in availability among employees (Truxillo et al., 2022). With more employees choosing to telework, it has become more common for employees to compensate for their physical absence in the workplace by showing digital visibility. The increased need to constantly show availability has resulted in employees working more non-standard hours, having longer working days than before, and even working from home while they are sick. Presenteeism has therefore not disappeared in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, even though the awareness of infection spread at the office may have increased. Presenteeism has been found to appear in a new, digital format- labeled *virtual presenteeism* (Ferreira et al., 2022). The term refers to the phenomenon where employees feel obligated to be constantly available and working, even outside of regular working hours, due to the use of digital communication tools and remote work arrangements.

There is limited evidence on the association between presenteeism and telecommuting. However, a study by Steidelmüller and colleagues (2020) found that the likelihood of engaging in presenteeism is higher with increased

telecommuting intensity. Steidelmüller and colleagues (2020) discuss that this could be attributed to factors such as the elimination of commuting, reduced risk of infecting others at the workplace, or increased flexibility in adjusting work conditions. However, there is still a need for more post-pandemic evidence regarding the role of virtual presenteeism in employee's workplace decisions.

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the empirical process employed in this master's thesis. By introducing the research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques, readers gain a clearer understanding of the methodology used throughout the study. Detailed descriptions of the methodology procedures will be presented to ensure transparency and facilitating comprehension of the research process.

Qualitative research design

A qualitative research design enables researchers to capture the meaning and significance that individuals attach to social phenomena and the way they make sense of them (Bell et al, 2019). Qualitative research designs are suitable for addressing research questions that aim to delve into the complexity, depth, and richness of human experiences, behaviors, and social interactions. It is typically used to gain an understanding of participants' experiences, meanings, and perspectives. Such data are not directly measurable or countable, in contrast to quantitative methods which are used for obtaining tangible and factual data (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

The aim of this study was to delve deeper into individuals' motives and preferences when deciding between home office and in-office arrangements in a flexible working environment. Considering the nature of the research question at hand and the objective of exploring diverse perspectives and experiences rather than seeking a singular truth, a qualitative approach appeared to be the most appropriate. In addition, since the study focuses on a relatively undiscovered research area of work arrangements decisions in a post-pandemic flexible working environment, it is beneficial to begin with a broad qualitative exploration. This allows for a comprehensive understanding that can later inform and be complemented by quantitative research methods. Hence, by starting with qualitative methods, we can gain a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, laying the groundwork for more targeted quantitative investigations in the future.

Sample

The informants were recruited through email and LinkedIn, based on a purposive sampling approach. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research (Bell et al, 2019). It involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics or criteria that are relevant to the research question or objectives. The goal of purposive sampling is to select individuals that possess certain qualities or experiences that can provide valuable insights and information for the research study. The criteria for participant inclusion in our study were as follows: (1) being employed in a company that offered flexible working arrangements, including the ability to work from home for at least one or two days per week, (2) actively utilizing this arrangement for at least one day per week, and (3) having a minimum work tenure of one year with the company.

Furthermore, the sample size was thoroughly considered during the recruitment process. The goal for this thesis was to conduct six to ten interviews. This is also consistent with the recommendation made by Braun and Clarke (2013) for thematic analyses, which is 6-15 participants for master projects. Our final sample consisted of 10 informants. It should be noted that some of the informants worked at the same company, but that they were not working on the same team.

On average, the informants in our sample telework one to three days per week. Further, all the informants had been working during the COVID-19 lockdown and had been practicing telework during that time. After the COVID-19 lockdown, the sample had FWA provided by their company that allowed them to work from home on average two to three days a week. Among the informants, three of them were commuters with more than two hours commute each direction.

Regarding in-office setup at the organizations, all the informants were located in open-office landscapes. Regarding their home office setup, it varied among the informants, with some of them having their own office-rooms with desk, office chair, and one to two computer screens, while others used the kitchen table and a laptop. In addition, some of the informants also reported that they occasionally worked from other places than their primary home when choosing to telework (e.g., from the library, the cabin, or from other cities in Norway when visiting relatives). A description of the informants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive information about informants

Informant	Age	Gender	Industry	Job title	Length of employment in years
1	26	Male	Consultant	Analyst	2
2	34	Female	Bank and insurance	Product developer	3,5
3	34	Male	Banking	Business advisor	10
4	59	Female	Food industry	Specialist food safety	20
5	58	Female	Telecom	Senior marketing advisor	35
6	56	Male	Telecom	Pricing manager	27
	61	Male	Telecom	Manager of CTO office	37
8	60	Male	Telecom	Product developer	14
9	48	Male	Telecom	Business manager sales force	25
10	29	Female	Finance	Product owner	4

Data collection

The structure of the interview

There are many ways to collect data when using a qualitative research design. The qualitative research interview is a widely used method. Qualitative interviews are driven by question-and-answer sequences, and they come in many forms. Since the aim of the study is to gain insight and views on a focused topic, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the preferred method for data collection for this thesis (Hammerberg et al., 2016). In semi-structured interviews the researchers have a defined set of questions for all informants, which makes the interviews organized and allows for time management. However, the questions are organized more loosely, as opposed to a structured interview where questions are asked in a specific order (Flick, 2018). Moreover, the flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows informants to guide the conversation to a larger extent than in structured interviews, and hence provide more in-depth responses on sub-topics and questions where they have specific interest or valuable insights.

As the research question emphasizes individual preferences, experiences, and motivations, we wanted to make sure we included as many open questions as possible during the preparation of the interview guide and the formulation of the questions. We had to anticipate how particular questions would work in practice, how informants would understand them, and how they would respond in the actual interview context (Flick, 2018). Furthermore, we conducted a few pilot interviews and modified or deleted the questions that were unclear or irrelevant to the topic. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

Conduction of the interviews

The interviews were conducted between March and April 2023. When scheduling the interviews, the informants were asked to choose their preferred form of communication - either to meet in person at a chosen location or virtually over Teams or Zoom. It was important that the interviews were conducted at a time and location convenient to the informants, where they could speak privately and openly, and without interruption. Seven of the interviews were conducted in-person at the office where the informants worked and three of the interviews were conducted over Teams or Zoom. In virtual interviews, the informants had their cameras on, so we could see their body language and facial expressions, which

helped us communicate better. The interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 35 and 60 minutes, with an average length of 45 minutes.

Transcription

When transcribing the interviews, we transcribed every word directly, word for word, to ensure that the written text reproduced exactly what the informants said. We did not include non-verbal communication like volume, rhythm, or interruptions in speech. We transcribed every interview right after it was conducted. It resulted in 106 pages with transcribed text.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a descriptive method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke's reflexive TA approach laid the foundation for our data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The approach allows the data material to be interpreted in a flexible and open way and emphasizes the researcher's active role in the process of identifying themes. Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasize that themes do not passively emerge from data but that they are a result of deep and prolonged data immersion, thoughtfulness, and reflection.

When analyzing the data, there are different considerations to be made in terms of the direction of the analysis (deductive or inductive) and the level of depth in the analysis (semantic or latent) (Terry et al., 2017). In our analysis an inductive approach was used. When using this approach, the researcher identifies meaning from the data bottom-up, without basing it on pre-existing theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involves identifying and interpreting what naturally generate from the data and finding patterns and similarities across the data. This differs from a deductive approach, where the researcher brings existing theoretical concepts or theories to provide a context for how the data is viewed (top-down).

The level of analysis was based on both a semantic and a latent approach. A semantic approach focuses on the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the researcher is primarily interested in investigating what the participants say (Braun & Clarke, 2006). On the other hand, a latent approach involves a more interpretative analysis focusing on the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations behind the semantic content of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the first stages of coding are often more semantic for those who are new to qualitative analysis. A latent orientation can, however, emerge as one

becomes more familiar with the data. In our analysis, the codes and themes are generated using a semantic approach. However, as further investigating the generated themes, a latent approach was applied in order to understand the underlying meanings of what the participants had said. This was suitable for our study, as the research question aimed to capture the underlying motives and preferences of the participants. Not all motives could be captured by directly analyzing what the participants said. Therefore, it was necessary to dive deeper into the data and try to find what really drove their workplace decisions.

When analyzing the data, we used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase analytic process: (1) familiarizing with the data, (2) generating codes, (3) constructing themes, (4) reviewing potential themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report (Terry et al., 2017). The familiarization with the data began already after the interviews were conducted, as we wrote down reflections and thoughts of what the participants had said. The coding process began after all the interviews were completed. Coding involves systematically creating meaningful labels for specific segments of a dataset that are relevant to the research question (Terry et. al, 2017). Codes allow data to be reduced and synthesized and allow researcher observations to be arranged into patterns. Coding a data item involves identifying relevant data within it, and then tagging it with a few words or a phrase that describes its meaning. To ensure that we were not affected by each other when coding the data, we began with identifying patterns and codes individually, and then compared them with each other.

Briefly described, the rest of the coding process involved gathering sentences and words that captured the same meaning and giving them a color tag. The different codes were put into a table. Later, we generated themes and reviewed them several times. Starting off with several codes, we narrowed it down and ended up with meaningful and independent themes. Table 2 provides an example of the analytic process.

Table 2

An example of the coding process

Transcript	Identified codes	Theme
"You indeed get to utilize your days better, and if you for example have something to do after work, you're already home when the clock strikes 4:00 PM" (informant 3)	Utilization of the day so you can spend more time on other non-work-related things	**Easier to juggle work- and home life**
"It's about the degree of concentration. I feel that distractions can easily occur and that I quickly lose the concentration necessary to solve tasks when I'm sitting at the office - therefore, I prefer to sit with fewer people around me" (informant 4)	No distractions and a sharper focus when conducting tasks at home	**Conducting concentration task at home**
"Not all knowledge can be effectively conveyed through Teams. Sometimes, it's difficult to accurately interpret each other's messages over Teams, leading to potential misunderstandings" (informant 10)	Cooperation and communication are easier when you sit physically close to colleagues	**Conducting tasks that require discussion and cooperation at the office**
"Sometimes I feel like others perceive me as more professional and dedicated to my work when I show up at the office" (informant 1)	Perceived as more dedicated when being present at the physical office	**Avoiding loss of opportunities**

Assessment of data

      In order to establish and assess the quality of the research, different methods of measurement are used. In quantitative research, different types of

reliability and validity are commonly used to determine and evaluate the quality of the data or measurement tools (Bell et al., 2019). It has been argued that qualitative research should be evaluated on different criteria than those used in quantitative research, because these criteria would appear to have limited application in qualitative research since they rely on non-quantifiable data (Bell et al., 2019).

Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose an alternative way to assess reliability and validity in order to ensure the quality of qualitative research by assessing the *trustworthiness*. Therefore, in this study we have been using the four criteria proposed by Guba and Lincoln that describe the trustworthiness of the research: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability.

Credibility is the term Guba and Lincoln (1994) parallels with internal validity. The concept of internal validity refers to whether there is a good match between researchers' observations and the theoretical ideas they develop. Credibility, however, refers to the extent to which the research is accurate in understanding the social world. It depends on both good research practices and asking the person who was studied to confirm that the investigator understands the social world correctly (Bell et al., 2019). Consequently, we ensured that our informants' answers were consistent and could be assessed against existing research findings in order to ensure credibility. In this way, we can assume that our data reflect the social environment in which the informants live.

Transferability, parallels with external validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Since external validity involves generalizing findings across an array of social contexts, researchers have argued that this can be difficult in qualitative research due to its small sample size (Bell et al., 2019). Researchers are encouraged to use rich descriptions in qualitative research when attempting to achieve transferability. These rich descriptions provide context for the behavior or culture being described. The role of the researchers is to provide others with databases that facilitate transferability. Therefore, choosing the right participants that are representative for research becomes important. As part of our preparation for creating our interview guide and recruiting participants, we made sure to gain a thorough understanding of the research field. Informants were selected based on their experience with FWA and their ability to provide relevant information for

our research project.

The criterion of *dependability* is similar to the criterion of reliability according to Guba and Lincoln (1994). The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that all records required of the research process are kept, including the original research question, the selection of participants, the interview transcripts, and the data analysis decisions (Bell et al, 2019). We have taken the most important step to create dependability by detailing every phase of our research process, so other researchers can replicate our results. Moreover, we tested our interview guide to ensure that it covered our research question and that the questions and concepts were easily understandable before conducting the interviews. Additionally, while conducting the interviews, we ensured that if we were uncertain or the answers were vague, we asked follow-up questions to get a clearer understanding of the answers. Furthermore, our transcripts had to be translated from Norwegian to English, which can result in misinterpretations, and the meaning of words and sentences of our informants may be lost in the translation. As a way of ensuring dependability in this case, we have translated it into English and then back into Norwegian, so that no meaning was lost.

Lastly, the concept of *confirmability* is closely related to the concept of objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Confirmability is about not allowing personal values or theoretical biases to overtly influence the execution of the research and the resulting findings. At the same time, one should acknowledge that complete objectivity can be argued to be impossible in business research. To establish confirmability, we provide a clear and detailed methodology section so that others can follow our decision-making processes and potentially confirm our findings.

Reflexivity

When assessing the data in qualitative research, it is also central to consider the process of *reflexivity* in the research (Bell et al., 2019). Reflexivity refers to the process of critically reflecting upon one's own role as a researcher and how it might affect the research outcomes (Braun and Clarke, 2019). An important aspect is the acknowledgement that the researchers carry their personal experiences and interpretations, shaped by their backgrounds, cultures, and values. These perspectives inevitably shape the process and outcomes of the research. Even though it has been argued that research should be free of biases and not heavily influenced by the researchers, it has been questioned if it is possible to be fully objective in a qualitative research process (Bell et al., 2019).

Central to Braun and Clarke's (2019) reflective approach to TA, is the consideration of the researchers' subjectivity as a resource rather than a hindrance. In our research, we have adopted an open and curious approach, trying not to intentionally influence the participants or the research outcomes. However, we acknowledge that our own preexisting beliefs and experiences with different working arrangements to some degrees have influenced the way we have constructed the interview questions and approached the raw data. Also, our research is likely influenced by the Western and individualistic culture we belong to, as well as the socioeconomic environment in which we were raised.

Related to reflexivity is also the epistemological stance of the researchers. We have adopted an interpretivist epistemological stance, believing in the subjective nature of reality, and focusing on understanding the meanings that individuals attach to their experiences. Other researchers taking a different epistemological stance might interpret the data differently. However, by making our biases and influences transparent, reflexivity can contribute to the criterion of confirmability.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in the research process, demanding careful attention at every stage of the process (Bell et al., 2019). Ethical considerations should begin prior to the data collection, in terms of formulating a suitable research question and ensuring that the intended study design and the implementation of it adhere to ethical standards. Further, the documenting of these considerations should be included in the final research report. By actively addressing ethical concerns, researchers uphold the integrity and responsibility of their work.

To ensure that our research project followed the required ethical standards, our project was evaluated and approved by SIKT, the Norwegian agency for shared services in education, before any data was collected (see Appendix 2). All the informants in our sample signed a consent form containing participants rights, including the right to withdraw from the research at any time, information regarding the research purpose, and information regarding collection and storage of data and anonymity. In addition to participants signing a written consent form, we repeated the most important information about their rights verbally before starting the interviews.

We collected data through interviews and informed the participants that the interviews were being recorded. The interviews conducted over Teams and Zoom only recorded the sound and did not include a video of the participants. When choosing to record interviews in research projects, the storage of data is an important ethical aspect to consider (Tjora, 2017). In this project, we choose to store the recordings at OneDrive with login through BI requiring a two-step authentication, in line with guidelines from SIKT.

Ethical consideration was also made in the transcription phase of the research process. An important aspect at this stage was to anonymize information that could be traced back to our informants. We made sure to securely store the data and delete the recordings immediately after the transcriptions were done.

Results

As the aim of this study was to investigate what drives employees to choose between working arrangements, we found it convenient to structure the analysis around factors that lead employees to choose home office or in-office arrangements. Our analysis has resulted in seven themes, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Themes

	Theme
Choosing home office arrangements	**Conducting concentration tasks at home**
	Easier to juggle work- and home life
	Less stressful to work from home
	Working from home while sick
Choosing in-office arrangements	**Conducting tasks that require discussion and cooperation at the office**
	Being an active part of the workgroup
	Avoiding loss of opportunities

Choosing home office arrangements

Conducting concentration tasks at home

When questioned about the reasons for choosing home office arrangements, the informants predominantly expressed a preference driven by the perceived benefits of creating an environment that fosters tranquility and focused concentration. This preference stems from a desire to avoid potential disruptions that may arise from interpersonal interactions with colleagues in a traditional workplace setting. An example of this is illustrated by informant 4:

> It's about the degree of concentration. I feel that distractions can easily occur and that I quickly lose the concentration necessary to solve tasks when I'm sitting in the office - therefore, I prefer to sit with fewer people around me. The fact that I sit in an open office landscape also contributes to making it easier for me to get disturbed. I must say that I prefer, in the

cases where I have deep concentration tasks, to sit as quietly as possible for a long time without being interrupted.

Other informants highlight the advantage of doing certain tasks in quiet environments at home, for example phone calls to clients:

I like the quiet environment you get to conduct specific tasks. There is a heightened sense of productivity when you can work without interruptions, which I find appealing. Tasks like taking phone calls to customers can be done more effectively without the distraction of noise and chattering that often come with open office spaces. But when you are making calls from home where it is absolutely quiet, it is also more comfortable" (informant 3).

When asked about their perceived effectiveness and productivity, almost all informants state that when they can do concentration tasks at home, they feel more effective and that they are able to get more work done. This is illustrated by informant 7: "For example, if I have tasks that require my concentration for an hour or even a whole day, I can get more of that focused work done at home and accomplish more work in the same amount of time than otherwise at the office".

The answers varied between informants when asked if they actively chose to organize or facilitate their week according to specific tasks. Some say that they make spontaneous decisions regarding work arrangements from day to day or from week to week, depending on the tasks at hand. Others purposely craft their week in advance so that the nature of the task suits their work location. One informant also states that this is something the team has an agreement on and has purposely organized: "…And for example, we have organized ourselves in such a way that we work from home on Mondays. And then we have specific tasks we only do on Mondays, which are suitable for accomplishing while at home" (informant 3).

As a result of our analyses, we also found that informants who have jobs that involve a lot of concentration and result-oriented work, which are characterized by tasks such as creating spreadsheets, documenting, or making presentations, are likely to benefit from working from home. For example, informant 7 states: "The productivity is measured in terms of what I produce and deliver, it doesn't matter where I'm located."

When compared to informants with easily measured work outputs, some of our informants had work tasks that required creative processes, associated with greater difficulties in demonstrating exactly what they have conducted on a given day. Thus, they found it somewhat more difficult to choose a home office arrangement. For example, informant 10 highlights the importance of virtual communication and feedback interactions with their leader to show productivity when this is the case: "But, in a way, I might not have much to show other than the numerous plans I've formulated in my head. I can't demonstrate as much quantifiable output unless she initiates a conversation or discussion, and then she understands that I've been doing my job".

Easier to juggle work- and home-life

The consensus among the informants is that the possibility to choose home office arrangements on certain days makes it easier to juggle work-related tasks and non-work-related tasks, as informant 2 illustrates: "I believe it's about making everyday life a bit easier". For example, informant 3 points out that it is easier to make better use of the day when working from home, and therefore is able to do other non-work-related things immediately after one is done for the day: "You indeed get to utilize your days better, and if you for example have something to do after work, you're already home when the clock strikes 4:00 PM".

We found that many of our informants shared practical reasons for working from home. Among the reported practical reasons for choosing home office arrangements were responsibilities for pets or young children, appointments other than work-related (such as doctor's appointments, housework appointments, etc.) or other pending tasks at home. One of the informants also mentioned that it is much easier to take advantage of breaks at home and do things that one would not otherwise be able to do while at the office - for example, go for a walk with the dog or do other pending tasks at home in order to disconnect from work. As informant 2 illustrates: "But what I think I am better at is taking a walk during lunchtime. I wouldn't do that here at the office. And being able to take a break by doing some laundry really allows me to completely unwind, providing a genuine break.".

Others say that the fact that they are more effective at the home office allows them to have shorter days, and therefore are able to spend time on things not work related.

One informant mentioned that being able to choose home office arrangements makes it much easier to juggle between work and the parental role: "I have four children aged between 6 and 13 years. Being able to be at home, whether it's for morning or afternoon pick-ups and drop-offs, is invaluable" (informant 9). Informant 9 further highlights that he willingly crafts his workday so that he can be present for the children when they are awake and chooses to work later when the children have gone to bed: "For example, I work in the evenings, after the children have gone to bed".

Our informants appreciate the ability to juggle work-related tasks with private appointments or pending tasks at home. However, some also state that the boundary between work-life and private life is more challenging to manage because the line between the domains has been blurred out. For example, when the informants were asked if they answer emails or messages after they are done working for the day, informant 4 stated that it felt like an obligation to respond: "I suppose I have a built-in sense of duty there. I try to postpone until the next day, but often I end up responding immediately". Interestingly, some informants mention that they feel like they have a responsibility to do so, because they have been provided the opportunity to choose flexible working arrangements, and the availability is the price to pay.

Even though some informants mentioned that they use the breaks to do other non-work-related things, some also mention that the breaks have been fewer, as illustrated by informant 2:

> I have been in meetings with people who have been in back-to-back Teams-meetings from nine to four without taking breaks or having lunch. That is something we would never have done at the office. So, I think we put pressure on ourselves to ensure that we are not seen as 'slackers' while working from home.

Some informants even mention that they feel guilty when they take breaks or quit working earlier than they maybe are "supposed to", because they work more effectively at the home office: "I probably work 6-7 hours instead of 7-8 hours. But on average, I believe I work less, but it's just more efficient. You have to do what needs to be done. Of course, I could have done more. I haven't reflected upon it, but when I think about it now, I sometimes feel a little guilty because I work fewer hours when working from home" (informant 8).

Less stressful to work from home

Several informants prefer working from home simply due to its convenience and comfort. Some say that working from home allows them to get more sleep and start their days more smoothly. As informant 2 illustrates: "Having the possibility to sleep longer and enjoy a more peaceful morning is a perk. Moreover, the comfort of being in one's own home adds to the convenience, allowing for flexible mealtimes and other small comforts that make the workday a little easier".

Another informant also highlights that the comfort of own home both makes her more concentrated, less stressed, and even more energized, as illustrated by informant 10:

I have the freedom to dress more comfortably, which adds to the overall pleasant experience. It's nice to be in my own surroundings, where I can prepare a cup of tea and create a sort of oasis that enhances my concentration. Some days, wearing sweatpants and tying my hair up in a bun, give me a burst of energy, and I can jump right into my meetings. It's mostly about being comfortable, really.

Others state that the feeling of relaxation during the workday are helpful for their productivity and effectiveness. As illustrated by informant 8: "Working from home can be very relaxing, and at the same time, you can often accomplish your tasks even more efficiently".

Some informants also state that taking breaks during the day is sometimes more pleasant at home than at work, as there is less pressure to be social. For example, as informant 8 expresses: "When I work from home, I can fully relax and be myself, whereas in the office, I constantly have to be part of something".

Many of the informants stated that the fact that they do not have to travel to work is one of the reasons they chose to work from home on some days. Not having to travel to work saves a lot of time, is less stressful, and gives the feeling of a more productive workday. Informant 2 illustrates: "It takes almost forty-five minutes to an hour each way with traffic and public transportation - I take the bus. So, it's more efficient to work from home." Another informant mentions that the time saved not commuting makes it possible to start working immediately in the morning, as stated by informant 1: "Waking up at 6:30 AM and being able to start working on tasks right away is something I find very comfortable".

The commuters in our sample, with some of them traveling more than two hours each way to the office, highlight the importance of employers providing flexibility. They report that flexibility contributes to a better and less stressful everyday working life. As illustrated by informant 4: "Being a commuter, I feel that having the freedom and flexibility makes my workday much easier to plan". The consensus was that commuters would consider another job if working from home was not an option. For example, informant 9 stated: "You could say that even if I had found a local job that had good conditions and seemed exciting but required me to check in from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, I would never choose it no matter how exciting it would be. Because having flexibility is worth so much to me".

Working from home while sick

Another important finding shows that almost all our informants choose to work from home when they are feeling sick. It is evident from the informants that the consensus among them was that after the COVID-19 pandemic one has been more careful and mindful when it comes to transmitting disease to others. Almost all our informants' state that they do not show up physically at the office if they are afraid that they could transmit disease to others. As informant 6 illustrates: "If I'm feeling a bit unwell, coughing a little, or worried about disturbing others, I stay home. Previously, when people stayed home due to illness, they would take sick leave, but now you can still do some work from home - you're not so sick that you can't do anything".

Some of the informants even mentioned that sickness was one of their main reasons for choosing to work from home when asked about which situations lead them to choose home office situations. For some it almost seems as if it is a given. As informant 5 states: "On such days, it's about transforming my bed into an office space". Further, almost all report that their employer does not express an expectation of them working when they are sick. However, one informant expressed that this was something that had been more outspokenly expected: "Now, there is an increasing expectation to work even when one is not feeling well" (informant 5). Further, informant 9 stresses that the line between sickness and health has been blurred after the opportunity to be able to work from home: "The distinction between sickness and wellness is not as clear anymore. It's like,

okay, I can lie in bed or on the couch and do some work, just take a paracetamol and have my laptop with me".

When the informants were asked why they chose to work from home despite being sick, almost all of the informant's stated that the reason for this was due to a pressure they laid on themselves. This could be either to avoid procrastination or that they experience time pressure at work, as illustrated by informant 6: "And then there's also the fact that we have deadlines and tasks to complete, so procrastination doesn't make things better. Even if someone else could take over, it's still in our own interest to keep up with the work. Even if we can't get everything done, doing at least something helps so we don't have to catch up on too much later". Moreover, one informant reports that the reason one works while ill is to show themselves that they are not lazy or slacking off, as stated by respondent 5: "It's simply because you feel that you get more done, instead of plopping down on the sofa, you work for an hour. There is no one else who does the job".

One informant also states that the reason for working from home while sick is to avoid laying pressure on someone else or avoiding letting colleagues down, because other colleagues are expecting things from them. This is illustrated by informant 9: "...I know that there are colleagues who have an expectation that things will be done. So, if I don't do it right away, it's not like they'll be disappointed, but then I know it's hanging over me when I come back to work. Then it's satisfying to be able to complete as many of my tasks as possible".

Furthermore, many of the informants also report that they do not tell their manager or colleagues when they are sick or ask for sick leave, when they have the opportunity to work from home. For example, informant 8 stated: "I no longer report when I'm sick, I don't take any sick days. I usually work as much as I can manage".

When asked how working from home while sick affects the informants, some say that this affects their productivity, as illustrated by informant 5: "It may be less efficient than it would have been otherwise, but the alternative would have been not working at all". While others say that they have more difficulties with disconnecting completely from work and become more stressed and have less time to rest. For example, informant 10 highlights this:

It affects me very negatively. I struggle with being on the verge of overworking all the time. It's also very difficult to say 'stop' when you're working from home because you're constantly logged in. It's partly about setting boundaries and delegating (when I'm sick). Some things can hardly be delegated, and it's challenging to say: 'You need to find someone else to ask because I'm sick'. Often, it takes more energy to say 'ask him or her' than to just provide an answer. So, I end up answering, and sometimes people don't fully understand that I'm actually sick.

Choosing in-office arrangements

Conducting tasks that require discussion and cooperation at the office

Our analysis consistently reveals that the majority of the individuals interviewed strongly believe that working together and discussing challenging tasks are more effective when done in person at the office, rather than remotely from home. This is for example highlighted by informant 10: "It depends on the nature of the work. If there is a need for extensive collaboration, being in the office would be beneficial". This observation can be attributed, in part, to the presence of body language and the enhanced richness of communication that occurs in face-to-face interactions, which may be compromised when working remotely. For example, informant 7 states: "The communication becomes more multi-dimensional rather than just two-dimensional with sound and image. Imagine a lecture on a web server - it's not the same. It's much more enjoyable to be there in person, as you can engage with others in a different way than just sitting and listening". Further, the significance of body language is emphasized by informant 2, who states: "I also feel that I accomplish more in meetings where I sit together with people. I interpret more body language and such. And that's very difficult to do on a screen. So, I feel that things go a little smoother".

Furthermore, some informants reported that cooperation with others is easier and better to conduct in person, as expressed by informant 1: "During collaboration, being in the office is often preferred because it's easier to collaborate physically".

Another reason for why several of our informants perceive cooperation and discussion as better when meeting at the office is due to the reduced distance to access knowledge and receive assistance. When employees are situated in open workspaces surrounded by colleagues, the ease of seeking help and engaging in

discussions with individuals in close physical proximity are enhanced. Some informants have expressed those initiating interactions digitally with colleagues for minor inquiries requires greater effort compared to approaching someone in person. Informant 3 explains:

> So, what's really great about being in the office, because there are advantages to that as well, is precisely the fact that the path to getting help is very short when you're sitting in an open workspace surrounded by people. So being able to just throw out a question and ask for things you don't know or need help with- it's much easier when you're in the office. If you're sitting at home all alone, it's not that easy.

Additionally, some informants feel that remote communication can lead to more misunderstandings than in-person communication, which, in turn, may hinder knowledge exchange between colleagues, as informant 10 points out: "Not all knowledge can be effectively conveyed through Teams. Sometimes, it's difficult to accurately interpret each other's messages over Teams, leading to potential misunderstandings". Employees can also miss out on important input from others because they sometimes choose not to approach someone if they have to do it remotely, as illustrated by informant 1: "There is a slightly higher threshold for people to call you on Teams".

Moreover, different preferences for work locations among employees can create difficulties. Employees who prefer to conduct teamwork activities at the office, may feel that the team is incomplete or that teamwork is less efficient if not all members are physically present. Informant 8 highlights this concern:

> It can be a problem sometimes. If someone constantly says that it doesn't fit their schedule to meet on the designated days, it can become challenging. If this argument is used repeatedly and the same individuals are never present for team activities, the team is not complete, and I feel that we lose a dimension of working together. While it may be possible to accomplish everything digitally in the short term, I believe that in the long run, not meeting in person would result in losing a vital aspect of teamwork. If it is always the same individuals missing, it can often lead to conflicts or become more of an issue.

Additionally, our analysis highlights the significance of an employee's job nature in determining the most appropriate work-arrangement. Specifically, for roles involving creative, exploratory, or advisory tasks, the office environment tends to emerge as the optimal location. Informants 2 explains: "I have more collaborative tasks than concentration tasks, I would say. That's why an open office landscape works so well for me. It's easier to brainstorm and collaborate with others in my department. Rarely do I find myself sitting alone, reading a document, for example. I have a more exploratory, creative role".

Being an active part of the workgroup

When exploring the underlying motivations behind our informants' inclination to be physically present at the office, a noteworthy observation emerges. Alongside facilitating collaborative tasks, a prevailing reason centers around the intrinsic value of belonging to the workgroup and participating in the social dynamics of the workplace. Informants express a strong desire to actively engage in the work community and foster interpersonal interactions throughout the day. For instance, informant 9 states: "When I'm working from home for an entire week, as has happened now after the pandemic, I can feel that something is missing, particularly related to the social aspect". Social interactions at the office can contribute to a feeling of being included in the workgroup, as stated by informant 1: "It can be nice to drop in and say hello to colleagues, and it can contribute to a sense of belonging to the workplace".

Additionally, informant 7 expresses a potential consequence of "falling out" of the work culture when solely working from home, stating: "You can feel a bit disconnected if you just stay at home. That's why, for example, students have an orientation week to include new students in the network. And if that is missing, I believe the network becomes weaker. It's not about the parties or simply showing up at work, but it's about the network and the sense of inclusion".

Some informants highlight that engaging in the culture at work is especially important to younger employees with shorter tenure, especially if an employee started in the firm during or after the COVID-19 pandemic when telework has been more frequently used. Spending time with colleagues becomes vital for assimilating into the established workgroup, developing personal connections, facilitating effective teamwork, and fostering mutual learning. This can be seen in connection to what some informants report regarding that it can be

more challenging to establish one's identity and build relationships with leaders and colleagues through digital means compared to physical interactions. Working remotely can pose greater difficulties for those who are newer to a workplace compared to those who have already established a sense of belonging and integration within the organizational group over the years. This is highlighted by several of the participants, informant 5 illustrates:

> If you are new to a job and need training and knowledge transfer, I believe that it is better to meet physically, so you can get to know each other before perhaps working together digitally. Therefore, I think it is more important when you are young and new in a company to be at the workplace more often to build a good work environment and learn from each other. You don't create culture by having everyone work from home, and if many new employees are joining the company, they won't be able to participate in the culture in the same way remotely as when meeting physically.

Attending the office to take part in the social group at work has become even more important after teleworking became increasingly commonly used after the COVID-19 pandemic. The technical aspects of tasks in typical "office jobs" can now be conducted from different locations to flexible times of the day. Our analysis shows that the office may have evolved into a place where employees proactively seek social engagement, transforming it from a mere workspace into a social hub that fosters interpersonal relationships. This is captured by a statement from informant 8:

> These days, it's possible to do almost everything without meeting in person, but you miss out on unplanned interactions with other people. And that's something you appreciate when you're at the office and encounter colleagues you've worked with before, but perhaps hadn't planned to meet.

Our informants express several ways the tendency of attending the office for social interactions appears, for example, it has been more common to take longer breaks at the office, as stated by informant 9: "The efficiency at the office is far from what I experience at home, I must say (...) And then we always have a pleasant lunch. It's not always just half an hour. We sit there and enjoy ourselves".

Another example is employees showing up only to attend meetings: "There is an encouragement to attend department meetings and to visit the office at least once a week. It's a smart arrangement" (informant 6).

Avoiding loss of opportunities

The fear of getting negative consequences and losing opportunities if not being at the office, could also be reasons for choosing to attend the office. One of these negative consequences of not attending the office, reported by some of the informants, is related to the fear of losing job opportunities when not being present at the office, as stated by informant 1: "...If you're going to be part of a project, they might just pick the first person they see in the hallway, so it might be practical to be there (…), and all humans are like that - who did I see last? Who did I last have a conversation with - and then it's kind of natural to choose that person". Especially in project-based jobs, it is an advantage for employees to demonstrate that they are dedicated to their jobs and hardworking, as well as being perceived as likable, in order to be selected for projects.

Attending the office and being physically present and in-sight can lead to career opportunities. Informant 1 explains that one can be perceived as more professional and dedicated to the job if choosing to work from the office: "Sometimes I feel like others perceive me as more professional and dedicated to my work when I show up at the office". Further, informant 1 elaborates by talking about the "value" of just being there (at the office):

> For example, if I'm working from home and I'm in the middle of writing something, then something else comes up that needs my attention instead. And it can turn into a situation where someone says, 'I see you haven't been able to get much work done.' But that wouldn't happen in the office because there, people would see that I've been working.

Even though some informants do not directly answer that they attend the office to be perceived as professional and dedicated, they later on in their interviews state that they sometimes are afraid of what colleagues think if they work from home and are afraid that they might not believe that they work equally productively outside the office. This tendency can be related to negative attitudes towards home office arrangements and how it affects employees' decisions to attend the office, in order to avoid losing opportunities. Informant 5 talked about

this: "I received a phone call from a colleague while I was working from home, and he asked me, "Are you working today?" and I replied, "Yes, I'm working from home"". This indicates, when you cannot be observed working, some might believe that you are "hiding" at home and not doing your job properly.

Some informants talk about how "the older generation" or leaders with a "more traditional" view on work, might have a more negative attitude towards home office arrangements:

> There has been a prevailing attitude of 'hiding at home' when it comes to remote work. Some leaders have held a more traditional view of what it means to work, and there has been a sense of mistrust when employees don't physically show up at the office. For some old-fashioned leaders, not being present in the workplace has been equated with not doing the job (informant 4).

This can in turn lead to that employees choosing to work from home can be perceived as less dedicated or effective in their work, and hence also receive fewer work opportunities.

Discussion

In this chapter, we will provide a comprehensive discussion of our findings, drawing upon the theoretical framework of SDT and its key components of competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, we will incorporate the concepts of job crafting, work-life balance, and presenteeism to provide a more comprehensive understanding of our findings. By integrating these concepts, we aim to address the research question of investigating the motives and preferences that influence employees in a flexible work environment when selecting their preferred work location. This discussion will contribute to a deeper understanding of the generated themes, placing them in a broader context by illuminating their interconnectedness and explore the deeper meanings behind them. Taken together, this section will discuss underlying motives and preferences that shape employees' workplace decisions.

Choosing a working environment that suits the nature of the task

When choosing between home office and in-office arrangements, it seems like the nature of the task and what it requires is a crucial determinant of where and when our informants prefer to conduct the tasks. This reflection is based on

our generated themes for conducting concentration tasks at home and conducting tasks that require discussion and cooperation at the office. Our findings illustrate how the informants engage in several different job crafting behaviors. Similar to Wessels and colleagues (2019) work on time-spatial job crafting, our findings revealed that informants actively reflected and constructed their tasks according to where and when they felt most effective, and thus engaged in time-spatial job crafting. This tendency is also similar to what Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001) labeled as task crafting, where employees change the tasks, scope and sequence of their jobs. However, in contrast to time-spatial crafting, task crafting does not equally emphasize the reflection employees actively make in their workplace decisions.

The majority of the informants reported that they felt more effective when they were doing concentration tasks at home due to the fact that they avoided interruptions and were able to have a sharper focus. This is in line with existing research findings that report reasons for teleworking to include working at peak productivity hours, reducing distractions and interruptions and being in an environment conducive to increased concentration (Thompson et al., 2021). It seems, however, that employees prefer coming into the physical office when the tasks are more challenging and there is a need for more face-to-face communication. Our informants emphasized that they felt more effective in such situations, as physical interaction tends to minimize misunderstandings compared to virtual communication methods.

Individual needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness have been found to be drivers of job crafting behaviors (Bindl et al., 2019). According to SDT, a fundamental component of autonomous motivation is the need for competence, hence, to feel effective and capable in one's actions and pursuits (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Therefore, working on tasks that require different skills from the individual and in an environment where one feels most capable, can contribute to the feeling of mastery and control over their work, thus leading to a greater autonomous motivation.

However, it is fair to argue that the independence offered by FWA can impose considerable pressure on individual employees to efficiently manage and organize their time and tasks. This can entail various aspects, such as establishing boundaries, being mindful of their working environment, understanding the required skills for each task, and recognizing their own peak productivity periods.

Research has shown that job crafting behavior can be dependent on characteristics such as personality (e.g., proactive personality) and self-efficacy in one's work (Rudolph et al., 2017). Some individuals might not have the skills, or the tools required to actively engage in job crafting behavior, and this could potentially lead to poor time-spatial job crafting (e.g., doing tasks in a place or time that is not beneficial or productive for the individual), stress, less boundary control, and procrastination, which neither benefits the individual nor the organization.

Choosing a working arrangement based on desired level of social interaction

Crafting behaviors can also be expressed through what Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001) described as relation crafting. Our results are evident with the behavior people perform when they craft their job based on relations, meaning the proactive behavior one engages in to change the quality and intensity of interactions with others at work (Niessen et al., 2016). This reflection is based on what we found in our analysis, expressed through the themes "less stressful to work from home" and "being an active part of the workgroup". When working from home, informants found it less stressful and more comfortable not only to work in a quiet environment, but also to stay away from social activities during breaks or if they simply wanted to be alone.

On the contrary, we found that many of our informants actively choose to attend the office, not only to engage in knowledge sharing, conduct tasks that require cooperation and to have professional conversations, but also to fill their social needs and participate in social dynamics at work. As emphasized in SDT, the need for belonging and the need to connect with other people are described as basic psychological need for autonomous motivation. It is evident that the informants see this as an important motive for showing up at work, and that it stems from a desire and need to get social support, connect with others, and gain trust and respect from colleagues and leaders.

In addition, having the autonomy to decide when and where to meet people during working hours, juggling between home office and in-office arrangements, can provide a feeling of a more autonomous work environment. However, as our analysis revealed, several of our informants had fixed office days requiring physical attendance, potentially threatening their autonomy. It can be argued that dissolving such agreements could be beneficial, allowing employees to choose their office attendance based on their daily desired level of social

interactions, hence increasing their autonomy, and facilitating an optimal relational crafting process. On the contrary, if employees are not bound by fixed office-day arrangements, it may result in employees showing up at the office on different days. This, in turn, can hinder the relational crafting process of seeking in-office arrangements on days when social interactions with colleagues are desired. Consequently, fulfilling the need for belonging and fostering effective social connections may become more challenging.

Moreover, one may argue that there has been a change in perspectives on how the informants now view the physical office space, as a result of the ability to choose between different arrangements. Changing perspectives and in turn changing how employees approach their jobs could be indicative of cognitive crafting (Wrześniewski & Dutton, 2001). It is evident that the increased flexibility has changed how the informants now view their job as more an integrated part of their everyday life, instead of being separate from their private lives.

Striving for a work-life balance

As Sturges (2012) proposed, crafting behaviors can also be relevant in terms of better managing one's work-life balance. This can be done by e.g., adjusting the number of hours employees work or the places they work from to better facilitate their everyday lives. Our findings indicate that several of our informants opt for teleworking as frequently as possible out of a motive of better managing their work and family responsibilities. In our analysis this was presented through the theme of easier juggling between work- and home life.

As Thompson and colleagues (2021) point out, achieving balance between work and life roles is about choosing the environment that best facilitates fast role transmissions. Many of our informants found home office arrangements to facilitate the best environments for combining work and life roles. This was particularly evident among those with young children and long commute time to the office. They highly valued the opportunity to spend more time at home and less time traveling, thereby facilitating their everyday lives better. Consistent with research on work-life balance and role identity theory, the concept of balance entails prioritizing the roles in the domain that holds the greatest importance for each individual (Thompson et al., 2021). The autonomy to make workplace decisions that better align with what some consider the most meaningful aspects of life, namely their families, serves as a motivating factor for work engagement

and enhances overall well-being. SDT highlights the importance of experiencing a sense of choice and willingly embracing one's actions in order to be autonomously motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

However, for some, work-life balance can be about having a more distinct boundary between their personal and professional life. Different preferences on the importance of separating or integrating roles from the home and work domain, are related to what Shockley and Allen (2012) refer to as work-nonwork segmentation preferences. A consequence of a misfit between work-nonwork segmentation preferences and the opportunities for segmentation offered by individuals' work environments, is e.g., increased stress (Kreiner, 2006). In that sense, FWA, which opens for greater integration of roles, could be a potential challenge for individuals with strong segmentation preferences.

According to our findings, informants also find it easier to juggle work- and home life in the sense of being able to conduct domestic tasks during the day, freeing after-work time in the evenings. In addition, our informants appreciated the opportunity to have more time to engage in other non-work-related tasks and activities during the day and immediately after the workday is over. However, a paradox emerges from these findings, as informants express a preference for working from home due to the perception of having more time for non-work-related activities. Simultaneously, they experience a sense of obligation to remain digitally available for work-related matters, even beyond their designated working hours. This dual experience highlights the conflict between desiring flexibility and work-life balance while also feeling compelled to maintain constant digital presence for work, even when they consider their workday to be over. This is related to the desire to show dedication by being effective and available, as further elaborated below.

Expressing dedication and commitment by being digitally available

As our informants express, the flexibility to choose home office arrangements also increases the need to show digital availability. The widespread use of ICT such as email, instant messaging, and video conferencing has made it easier for employers to monitor employees' availability and responsiveness. This constant digital connection has created an "always-on" culture, where employees may feel compelled to respond to work-related requests and messages, even during non-working hours. The increased availability pressure in a flexible

working environment is shown in literature on virtual presenteeism, where employees struggle to disconnect from work, negatively affecting their well-being and productivity over time (Ferreira et al., 2022). The fear of missing out on important information or opportunities can drive employees to remain digitally present even when they should be taking time off or focusing on personal responsibilities.

It could also be argued that showing availability could be a way of expressing dedication to one's work, which is often associated with professionalism, commitment, and strong work ethics. The desire to show dedication seems to be an underlying motive behind several of our generated themes, including conducting tasks that require consternation at home and tasks that require discussion and cooperation at the office (in sense of being effective in the execution of the tasks), working from home while sick, and avoiding loss of opportunities. Some employees associate dedication with efficiency and productivity, leading them to prefer home office arrangements, believing that they can perform their work duties more effectively from home. As discussed, our informants highlight the importance of choosing working locations that lead to the highest productivity (as described through engaging in job crafting behaviors).

On the one hand, it can be positive for organizations to have employees that are motivated to choose a work arrangement that leads to increased productivity. Also, for the individual employee, feeling effective can be beneficial in the sense of fulfilling the need for competence emphasized in SDT, when experiencing one's behaviors as effectively enacted. On the other hand, if the need to be constantly available or visible stems from controlled motivation, in the sense of getting approval from others, avoid punishment or feelings of guilt, it could potentially lead to poor work outcomes like burnout, decreased well-being, less affective commitment and turnover intention (Kuvaas et al., 2017; Gillet et al., 2016).

Interestingly, almost all the informants worked from home even though they were sick. Some of the reported reasons for this were that they did not want to show themselves that they were lazy or slacking off, as it was "always possible to do something" or that "no one else could do the job". They even acknowledged that working while sick was not productive, but that they chose to work anyway. Their motivation stemmed from a desire to minimize their workload upon returning to work and to avoid disappointing colleagues by not contributing to

ongoing projects. However, being dedicated (e.g., being available at all times, adhering to a strict schedule, showing responsibility for the workplace, having a high work ethic, etc.) is not necessarily related to productivity. Research on presenteeism illustrates that showing up for work when you are sick (displaying dedication to your job) can lead to decreased long-term productivity (Lohaus & Habermann, 2019). So, the activity in itself (showing up or being digitally available while sick), does not necessarily equate with being productive.

It can be argued that showing dedication comes from a desire to convince others that we are hard workers. A study by Celniker and colleagues (2023) found that people tend to moralize effort and that this stems from a social heuristic that humans are prone to think that those who work hard are more moral than those who work less hard. This applied even in situations where one's efforts did not directly increase economic output. In the study, demonstrating good work ethics and effort was also found to influence cooperative partner choice decision-making (Celniker et al., 2023). The importance to show others that one is putting in effort can also be understood in light of the need for relatedness in SDT. Individuals have a desire to be positively viewed by others at the workplace, as it is fundamental for humans from the evolutionary side to feel connected to others and belong to groups. As equal to humans wanting to be liked in terms of finding romantic partners and friends, it is important to be liked by colleagues in order to be viewed as an attractive cooperative partner, illustrating that you are a person that will contribute during challenging times and help the group achieve its goals.

We argue that a fundamental shift in how work is conducted has emerged together with the opportunity for FWA. FWA is a massive contrast to the traditional "clocking in and out" tradition. It might be that employees in the previous office-bound work environment showed effort by just being present at the office. Everyone could observe that they were working, and they had designated tasks that they were supposed to complete before clocking out. However, with the ability to work from home, employees might be more likely to engage in behaviors such as being digitally visible or working while sick to demonstrate that they are engaged or putting in effort.

On an organizational level, it may seem beneficial in a short-term perspective to have employees working from home when they are sick, in relation to less absence and sick leave. However, on an individual level working while sick can result in employees not receiving the break they might actually need,

leading to exhaustion from continuously being "plugged in", following more destructive long-term consequences such as reduced productivity over time, stress, reduced well-being or burnout. This could potentially result in longer sick leaves, further assisted with increased costs for organizations. These long-term consequences are shown to be true in the research on presenteeism when employees choose to attend the office when they are sick (Lohaus & Habermann, 2019).

Expressing dedication by being physically present at the office

Another manifestation of dedication expressed through our informants is choosing in-office arrangements in order to be physically available at the office. We found that employees who prefer to work from home may sometimes feel a pressure to attend the office in order to be connected to the work group, and also to be perceived as equally dedicated to their work as their colleagues preferring in-office arrangements to a larger extent. Previous research on presenteeism has shown that employees sometimes come to work even though they are feeling unwell due to attendance pressure (Saksvik, 1996). The different attendance pressures, as described by Saksvik (1996), is similar to the approach- and avoidance motives for attending work while unwell as described by Henderson and Smith (2022). Our informants expressed many of the same kind of pressures or motives for attending work as found in the literature on presenteeism (Saksvik, 1996; Henderson & Smith, 2022), although not directly related to sickness. As a result, we argue that the mechanisms behind presenteeism is also influential for employees in the sense of feeling a pressure to attend the office, even when feeling unproductive and having the opportunity to work from home.

Similar to what Henderson and Smith (2022) described as approach motives for presenteeism, and what Saksvik (1996) labeled importance- and moral attendance pressure, our informants attended the office out of motives such as desiring to be perceived as professional and to uphold one's work values, as well as demonstrating loyalty to the profession and colleagues. The informants seemed to desire showing high work standards and commitment and indicated that attending the office was a way of adhering to those work values.

Furthermore, similar to avoidance motives for presenteeism (Henderson & Smith, 2022) and censure- and security attendance pressure described by Saksvik (1996), our informants expressed a fear of being accused of shirking, potentially

leading to negative social evaluations by leaders and colleagues, as well as the fear of receiving negative consequence if not being physically present. Avoidance motives of presenteeism has been seen in connection to avoid potential damaging effects of seeking sick leaves (Henderson & Smith, 2022), such as e.g., salary reduction (Lu et al., 2013). We found that some employees attended the office to avoid the potential damaging effects or negative consequences of not being present at the office. In this case, the employee's motivation seemed more controlled than autonomous. This was evident among our informants when they expressed a fear of potentially being punished in terms of not receiving job opportunities as e.g., participating in exciting projects. Not receiving job opportunities may in a long-term perspective lead to slower promotions and hence, slower salary growth. As Golden and Eddleston (2020) found, employees that work remotely in companies where remote work was less common, experienced slower salary growth than their in-office counterparts. In that sense, choosing home office over in-office arrangements, could have negative economic consequences for employees employed in companies were in-office arrangements still is favored.

The pressure employees may feel to attend the office in order to avoid potential negative consequences, can partly be understood in light of basic psychological needs to conform to the group norm and being a part of the in-group at work. The need for belonging, outlined in SDT, can therefore lead employees to seek arrangements where they feel accepted by and connected to others (Deci & Ryan, 2017).

The discussed motives and pressures driving employees to attend the office, may be a result of the fact that there still seems to be a tendency to favor those who are physically present, even though home office arrangements have been increasingly more common and accepted in society in later years. This can potentially be explained by biases such as the *mere-exposure-effect* and *the halo-effect*.

The mere-exposure-effect appears as humans tend to develop a preference for people or things they are repeatedly exposed to. The effect operates on the principle that familiarity breeds liking (Cutting, 2020). When individuals are consistently in the presence of others, whether physically or through frequent interactions, they tend to develop positive feelings towards them. This phenomenon is not necessarily based on specific qualities or interactions but

rather on the subconscious familiarity that arises from repeated exposure. Therefore, by actively making themselves more visible, employees increase their opportunities for interaction and exposure to colleagues and leaders. As a result, they have a greater chance of being liked, which can contribute to building positive relationships in the workplace.

Also, the "halo-effect" can appear, when leaders or colleagues get a positive impression of an individual in one area, which affects the feelings and impressions in another unrelated area (Nicolau et al., 2020). For example, if an employee sits overtime or comes early into work, one might assume that the employee also is productive and delivers high-quality outputs, even though these areas are not directly related. It might be that the employee e.g., is not so effective in the execution of work tasks, and therefore needs extended time to complete the working obligations. In that sense, the employee can receive opportunities at work based on the physical appearance in itself and the fact that others assume that the employee is effective. Similarly, employees could potentially lose opportunities by choosing to work from home and miss out on the important everyday physical exposure and interaction with others at the workplace.

Theoretical implications

Our research has several theoretical implications which enriches the understanding of FWA. Our study adds to SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017), assessing how flexible work affects fundamental psychological needs. Our findings indicate that employees adjust their work environments based on the nature of the task as well as on desired levels of social interactions. We have found this to relate to SDT's fundamental needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The findings indicate how SDT can be extended to include how employees take use of these needs to adjust their own everyday work routines and work environments. In that sense, we have presented a new application of the well-established SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Even though SDT provides a strong fundament for the understanding of human motivation, we argue that the theory might not capture all the important aspects of motivation for choosing between different working arrangements. SDT was developed in a time where workplaces were more strictly organized and were less affected by digitalization. The flexibility offered in the new world of work could affect how the psychological needs presented in SDT are being satisfied. Therefore, research on motivation and FWA could benefit

from applying also other theories that take these aspects into account, such as job crafting and work-life balance theories, as we have been applying in our research.

Our data confirm how employees engage in job crafting behaviors (Wrześniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wessels et al. 2019) within flexible environments and contribute by examining how and why employees use these opportunities. We have been applying both Wrześniewski and Dutton's (2001) categorization of the term, as well as Wessels and colleagues' (2019) definition of time-spatial job crafting. We found time-spatial job crafting, which is a context-specific form of the term entailing reflection on time and space, to be suitable in research on FWA. Time-spatial job crafting is more directed towards the importance of reflecting upon crafting choices, which is an important future skill for employees in the new world of work (Wessels et al., 2019). In that sense, we argue that task crafting, as presented by Wrześniewski and Dutton's (2001), is narrower in the sense of being able to consider all the important aspects when deciding time and space for execution of work tasks in a flexible work environment. However, we found the component of relational crafting, as presented by Wrześniewski and Dutton (2001), to be a suitable crafting form also in the context of flexible workplaces and this could contribute to the understanding of how employees navigate between home office and in-office arrangements based on their desired level of social interactions. Also, cognitive crafting (Wrześniewski & Dutton, 2001) is relevant in the context of FWA, as we found that the perception and meaning of an employee's job seem to have changed in line with the opportunity for increased flexibility.

Another theoretical contribution is related to work-life balance theories, as flexible work arrangements blend personal and professional lives to a greater extent than traditional office-bound environments. Our study could offer insights into how the increased flexibility influences employees' perception of "balance".

Additionally, our study offers new theoretical perspectives on presenteeism, suggesting a broader understanding of the term beyond sickness, by showing that the mechanisms behind presenteeism can also be relevant when employees consider whether they should be physically present in the office. In addition, our research also contributes to the relatively new application of presenteeism in a virtual format. We have identified several aspects of virtual presenteeism, including the constant pressure to be logged on and available and

working from home during illness. This provides a more nuanced understanding of presenteeism and its potential effects on employee well-being and productivity.

Practical implications

This study has significant practical implications both for individuals and organizations utilizing FWA. The results of our research contribute to the ongoing evolution of FWA, providing vital information to businesses and policymakers by examining how employees navigate different work arrangements. Our findings can be used to design more effective and appealing flexible work programs, increasing employee productivity, satisfaction, and overall well-being. In doing so, we provide a practical framework for the implementation and management of FWA in the post-pandemic workplace. By understanding the motivations behind employees' choices, employers can better tailor their FWA options, improving recruitment, retention, and performance. In an increasingly flexible labor market, these insights can inform policies aimed at promoting healthy work practices.

A potential practical implication of this study is the need to enhance employees' understanding of the factors influencing their decision-making process concerning when and where they perform their work. While some employees may make comprehensive and thoughtful decisions independently, others might require support to fully comprehend the implications of their choices in a flexible work environment. The insights emerging from our study may foster a heightened awareness among employees about the appropriateness of certain work arrangements in order to fulfill different psychological needs. This, in turn, could empower employees to make more sustainable decisions that balance their professional duties and personal needs effectively.

Further, organizations can consider facilitating learning and development-programs about how to navigate in the new world of work and ensure overall well-being for its employees. For example, learning about techniques for managing time-spatial jobs or recognizing their own work preferences and peak productivity periods could be provided by the organization. In addition, managers could also foster an understanding with employees communicating that crafting behaviors is encouraged. By maintaining open channels of communication and cultivating trust between themselves and their employees, managers can help promote a form of job crafting that benefit both the individual employee and the organization as a whole.

Further, a practical implication might be for organizations to rethink their reward and recognition systems to reflect the new work reality. Making sure employees are recognized and rewarded for their efforts, even if they work from home, is important. In turn, this may increase employee motivation and foster a positive work environment. For example, management could develop leadership strategies focusing on feedback and follow-up of employees working from home, without diminishing their autonomy. This could potentially decrease some of the pressure to show dedication both digitally and with physical appearance.

To ensure health and well-being among employees, it could be beneficial to make employees aware of the potential consequences of their choices. As discussed, working home while sick could negatively impact both the individual and the organization in a long-term perspective and potentially lead to some of the same consequences as researchers have found on sickness presenteeism in its original form (Lohaus & Habermann, 2019; Webster et al., 2019). It could therefore be beneficial for organizations as well as the individual to receive guidance in how to manage these problems. Organizations could encourage employees to take time off when they are sick, hence contributing to overall well-being, and reducing stress and burnout.

Strengths and limitations

A strength with the qualitative research design, applied in this study, is the opportunity to get rich and detailed descriptions from significant individuals within a specific context. Utilizing semi-structured interviews, we have managed to gather rich and meaningful descriptions that laid a solid foundation for our analysis. In comparison to quantitative methods, qualitative research often tends to be less structured, relying heavily on the researcher's unique interpretation and understanding (including personal values, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, age, or personality). This subjectivity can serve as both a strength and a limitation in this study. As researchers, our preexisting knowledge on the topic has guided us to formulate effective research questions that provided useful responses.

Our role as researchers could also serve as potential limitation to this study. We acknowledge that our limited experience with conducting interviews might have influenced the research results. Our limited experience may have prevented us from conducting all interviews in a perfectly consistent manner. As we progressed and learned from each interview, the quality of the sessions

improved, potentially making the latter interviews more effective than the initial ones. Therefore, we recognize this variation in interview execution as a potential limitation in our study.

Another potential limitation with qualitative research is to assess generalizability, mainly because the data builds on small samples. Our sample, which had an average age of 47 years and average employment tenure of 18 years, may have benefited from greater diversity in age and tenure. A more varied sample might have yielded a broader array of responses and insights across different age groups or career stages. Additionally, the fact that some of our informants were from the same company could potentially have reduced the diversity in perspectives. However, the recent implementation of flexible working arrangements post-pandemic, impacts workers across all ages and tenures, thus still providing valuable insights. Furthermore, having informants with long-term employment with the company prior to the pandemic allowed us to get a better understanding of how their working tendencies had changed as a result of the pandemic and implementation of FWA.

Future research

Future research on the field of FWA, motives and preferences post-pandemic can build on the findings and implications from our study. As this study had an explorative nature aiming to get an impression of drivers behind work-place decisions in a flexible work environment, it only provided a narrow insight into a particular group of employees' experiences and thoughts. Testing the findings in quantitative larger scale studies could help strengthen and validate our results.

Furthermore, each of our findings could be more thoroughly investigated separately in future research. The different motives detected in this study could for instance be investigated in relation to personality and individual differences. Such studies could help understand the relationship between personality traits and workplace decisions. For example, as neuroticism has been linked to an increased sensitivity towards stress and the fear of being negatively evaluated by others (Baker-McClearn et al., 2010), neuroticism could be investigated in relation to the motive for showing dedication with physical appearance at work.

Additionally, it might be interesting to explore potential links between motives for workplace decisions and concepts like emotional intelligence, self-

esteem, and self-efficacy. Preliminary observations from our findings hint that self-perception, self-awareness, and decision-making confidence could influence choices about work arrangements. However, this area needs more research to substantiate our assumptions. Future research might e.g., investigate how these concepts related to self-reflections, emotional awareness and confidence determine how comfortable employees are with their decisions, and further how this level of comfort might affect their productivity and well-being.

Conclusion

This study explored employee motives and preferences in choosing between home office and in-office arrangements. Our findings revealed that employees preferred working from home for tasks requiring focus and concentration, while in-office arrangements were favored for collaborative tasks. The ability to choose where and when to work emerged as a significant motivation, fulfilling both autonomy and competence needs. Moreover, our results indicated that employees valued the opportunity to selectively engage in social interactions at work. Fulfilling the need for relatedness, they opted for the physical office to address challenging issues and satisfy their weekly social needs. However, we argue that the role of the physical office may have shifted, now serving more as a social arena for informal conversations and meeting social interaction needs that are foregone in home office arrangements.

Additionally, the convenience of balancing work and home life was a key motive for choosing home office arrangements. However, this flexibility also brought greater individual responsibility and challenges in setting boundaries. Furthermore, dedication emerged as an important motive regardless of the chosen arrangement. Demonstrating dedication was reflected in behaviors such as being productive, including answering inquiries, such as emails, outside of working hours, and working from home even while sick. Additionally, employees believed that physical presence at the office was associated with stronger social connections, positive perceptions from others, and increased job opportunities.

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Appendix

Appendix 1- Interview guide

Innledning

Som deltaker til dette intervjuet har du på forhånd blitt tilsendt et informasjonsskriv om studien som skal utføres. Som nevnt i skrivet vil din anonymitet ivaretas, og du kan på hvilket som helst tidspunkt trekke din deltagelse. Det vil som nevnt bli gjort lydopptak av intervjuet, som vil bli slettet umiddelbart etter transkribering.

Formålet med prosjektet

Med denne studien ønsker vi å undersøke ansattes valg omkring arbeidslokasjon (fysisk kontor/hjemmekontor) etter covid-19 pandemien og hvorfor man velger som man gjør. I tillegg ønsker vi å undersøke om valg av arbeidslokasjon påvirker opplevd produktivitet hos og trivsel hos ansatte.

Før start av intervju

Intervjuet har en estimert varighet på rundt 40-60 minutter.

Du er invitert til å delta i denne studien fordi du jobber i en organisasjon som tilbyr fleksible arbeidsordninger og har oppgitt at du foretrekker å jobbe hjemmefra en eller flere dager i uken. Kan du bekrefte at denne opplysningen stemmer før vi begynner intervjuet?

Har du noen andre spørsmål før vi begynner intervjuet?

Intervjuspørsmål
Innledende fase av intervjuet:

Bransje/sektor:

Stillingstittel:

Kjønn:

Alder:

Lengde på arbeidsforhold:

Kartlegging av praktiske forhold tilknyttet arbeidsordninger

1. Hva slags ordning for hjemmekontor tilbys av din arbeidsgiver? Og hvor mange dager har du mulighet til å sitte på hjemmekontor?

2. Har du merket en endring i bruk av fleksible arbeidsordninger i din bedrift etter covid-19-pandemien (hvis du jobbet i bedriften før pandemien)?

3. Hvor mange dager i uken **velger du** å sitte på hjemmekontor?

4. Hvis du kunne valgt selv, uavhengig av den avtalen du har med din arbeidsgiver, hvor mange dager i uken **ville du foretrukket** å sitte på hjemmekontor?

5. Er det noen praktiske årsaker til at du velger hjemmekontor én eller flere dager i uken (f.eks. reisevei, ansvar for barn, etc.)?

6. Hvordan er utforming av kontorlokaler på din arbeidsplass og hvor sitter du når du er fysisk på kontoret (har du f.eks. åpent landskap eller privat kontor)?

7. Hvordan er utformingen av ditt hjemmekontor/hvor sitter du når du jobber hjemme?

8. Hva slags type arbeidsoppgaver eller type arbeid har du?
   - Krever arbeidsoppgavene dine høy grad av **konsentrasjon**?
   - Krever arbeidsoppgavene dine høy grad av **samarbeid med andre**?
   - Krever arbeidsoppgavene dine høy grad av **autonomi**?

Hovedspørsmål:
Valg av arbeidslokasjon

9. Kan du utdype hva det er du liker eller foretrekker med å sitte hjemme eller andre steder enn det primære kontoret å jobbe?

10. De dagene du kommer på det primære kontoret annet enn at du må av praktiske årsaker/har forpliktelser, hva er grunnene til det?

11. Kan du beskrive en dag du hadde lyst til å jobbe hjemme, men likevel dro på kontoret?
    - Hva var grunnene til at du likevel dro på kontoret?
    - Hvordan påvirket dette for eksempel produktivitet, effektivitet eller motivasjon?

12. Hvor viktig for deg er det at din arbeidsgiver gir deg muligheten til å velge selv hvor du vil jobbe fra?

13. Ser du på det som et gode med jobben å kunne benytte deg av fleksible arbeidsordninger, og kunne det potensielt vært avgjørende for om du ville blitt værende i en jobb eller funnet deg en annen?
    - Hva gjør valgmuligheten med jobbmotivasjonen din og trivsel på jobb? Vil du vært mindre motivert eller vært mindre tilfreds i jobben din hvis du ikke hadde hatt muligheten til å velge hjemmekontor?

Opplevelse av leder og kollegaers holdninger til hjemmekontor/bruk av fleksible løsninger

14. Hvordan opplever du at din leder og/eller kolleger forholder seg til bruk av hjemmekontor?
    - Hvordan påvirker det deg/ditt valg? Fortell gjerne om hendelse.
    - Bruker din leder hjemmekontor?
    - Har du hatt ledere/kolleger tidligere som har hatt en annen holdning til hjemmekontor - hvordan har det eventuelt påvirket deg?

15. Opplever du at din leder har tillitt til at ansatte gjør en like god jobb hjemmefra som fra kontoret?

16. Hvordan blir det kommunisert at hjemmekontor er en mulighet? Blir det oppfordret til å brukes?

17. Opplever du at holdningene til at du velger hjemmekontor kan variere mellom ulike kollegaer ut ifra den spesifikke kollegaens egne forhold til bruk av hjemmekontor?

Oppmøtepress

18. På et generelt grunnlag- i hvor stor grad påvirkes du av hva du tror andre tenker og mener om deg og dine valg? Er du disponibel for press?

19. Hvordan forholder du deg til å oppholde deg på steder med mange mennesker til stede- får du energi av å være rundt mennesker eller krever det mye av energien din?

20. Når du er på kontoret- kan du føle at det er vanskelig å «si nei» til å snakke med kollegaer eller svare på spørsmål når du egentlig ikke har tid eller ønsker å bli forstyrret?

21. Har du noen gang opplevd et press, enten direkte eller indirekte, til å møte opp på det fysiske kontoret?
-   Kan du fortelle om en konkret gang eller hendelse der du følte et slikt oppmøtepress? Hva tror du var grunnene til at du følte på dette presset?

22. Føler du noen gang skyld eller dårlig samvittighet overfor andre hvis du velger å jobbe hjemmefra?

23. Kan du føle et *press* til å møte opp på kontoret hvis du skal gjennomføre oppgaver som krever samarbeid, hvis de du skal jobbe sammen med foretrekker å være på kontoret?

24. Hvis du føler deg syk en dag- men det er fysisk mulig for deg å komme på kontoret- hva gjør du?
-   Blir hjemme, jobber ikke?
-   Blir hjemme, men jobber hjemmefra?
-   Drar på kontoret?

25. Hvis du velger å jobbe hjemmefra: hvorfor jobber du når du er syk?

- Hadde du dratt på kontoret hvis du ikke hadde hatt mulighet til hjemmekontor?
- Hva gjør det med deg hvis det «forventes» at du skal jobbe selv når du er syk?

Opplevd produktivitet

26. Hvordan opplever du din produktivitet når du sitter på hjemmekontor?

27. Hvilke dimensjoner med hjemmekontor trekker opp og ned produktiviteten din?

28. Kan du tenke på en gang du dro på kontoret selv om du hadde ønsket å sitte hjemme- hvordan opplevde du at det påvirket effektiviteten, konsentrasjonen eller motivasjonen din? (For eksempel: mer/mindre effektiv, mer/mindre konsentrert, mer/mindre motivert)

29. Hvilke dimensjoner med fysisk kontor trekker opp og ned produktiviteten din?

30. Føler du et press til å prestere **bedre** eller være **mer produktiv** når du jobber hjemmefra enn du ville gjort ved fysisk oppmøte på kontoret?

    - Hvis ja: Hvorfor eller hva er det som gjør at du føler på et slikt press?
    - Hvis relevant: Har du et konkret eksempel på en gang du følte på et slikt press?

31. Svarer/sender din sjef mail etter «normal arbeidstid»? Er det forventet at du skal svare/være tilgjengelig hele døgnet?

32. Hva er viktig for deg for at du skal trives i jobben din? Hva gjør deg motivert?

Avsluttende spørsmål:

33. Har du noen tanker rundt hjemmekontor, produktivitet eller annet på temaet som du føler at du ikke har fått sagt?

34. Har du avslutningsvis noen refleksjoner rundt hvordan dette intervjuet har vært?

Takk for at du tok deg tid til å delta i dette intervjuet. Vi setter stor pris på din deltagelse.

Støttespørsmål underveis i intervjuet:

- Kan du utdype?
- Hva mener du med det?
- Har du noen eksempler på dette?

Appendix 2- SIKT approval for data collection

Referansenummer

804837

Vurderingstype

Automatisk

Dato

10.02.2023

Prosjekttittel

Holdninger til hjemmekontor og faktorer som påvirker valg av arbeidslokasjon

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Handelshøyskolen BI/BI Oslo/Institutt for ledelse og organisasjon

Prosjektansvarlig

Ingrid Steen Rostad

Student

Elise Bjørntvedt Øie og Marie Oppegaard Roksvåg

Prosjektperiode

01.01.23-01.09.2023

Kategorier personvernopplysninger

Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysninger er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som
oppgitt i meldeskjema. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 01.09.2023.

Grunnlag for automatisk vurdering

Meldeskjemaet har fått en automatisk vurdering. Det vil si at vurderingen er
foretatt maskinelt, basert på informasjonen som er fylt inn i meldeskjemaet. Kun
behandling av personopplysninger med lav personvernulempe og risiko får
automatisk vurdering. Sentrale kriterier er:

- De registrerte er over 15 år
- Behandlingen omfatter ikke særlige kategorier personopplysninger;
- Rasemessig eller etnisk opprinnelse
- Politisk, religiøs eller filosofisk overbevisning
- Fagforeningsmedlemskap
- Genetiske data
- Biometriske data for å entydig identifisere et individ
- Helseopplysninger
- Seksuelle forhold eller seksuell orientering
- Behandlingen omfatter ikke opplysninger om straffedommer og lovovertredelser
- Personopplysningene skal ikke behandles utenfor EU/EØS-området, og ingen som befinner seg utenfor EU/EØS skal ha tilgang til personopplysningene
- De registrerte mottar informasjon på forhånd om behandlingen av personopplysningene.

Informasjon til de registrerte (utvalgene) om behandlingen må inneholde

- Den behandlingsansvarliges identitet og kontaktopplysninger
- Kontaktopplysninger til personvernombudet (hvis relevant)
- Formålet med behandlingen av personopplysningene
- Det vitenskapelige formålet (formålet med studien)
- Det lovlige grunnlaget for behandlingen av personopplysningene
- Hvilke personopplysninger som vil bli behandlet, og hvordan de samles inn, eller hvor de hentes fra
- Hvem som vil få tilgang til personopplysningene (kategorier mottakere)
- Hvor lenge personopplysningene vil bli behandlet
- Retten til å trekke samtykket tilbake og øvrige rettigheter

Informasjonssikkerhet

Du må behandle personopplysningene i tråd med retningslinjene for informasjonssikkerhet og lagringsguider ved behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Institusjonen er ansvarlig for at vilkårene for personvernforordningen artikkel 5.1. d) riktighet, 5. 1. f) integritet og konfidensialitet, og 32 sikkerhet er oppfylt.

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

"Hva påvirker beslutningen om bruk av det fysiske kontoret og hjemmekontor post-covid og hvordan påvirker valget opplevelsen av produktivitet?"

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke ansattes valg av arbeidslokasjon (fysisk kontor/hjemmekontor) etter covid-19-pandemien. Hvorfor velger man som man gjør og hvordan påvirker det produktiviteten?

I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Vi er to masterstudenter som studerer «ledelse og organisasjonspsykologi» ved Handelshøyskolen BI-Oslo. Denne våren skriver vi masteroppgave om *preferanser* og *valg* av arbeidslokasjon (hjemmekontor/fysisk kontor) hos ansatte i bedrifter som tilbyr fleksible arbeidsløsninger etter covid-19-pandemien. Hva er det som påvirker ansatte i sine valg av arbeidslokasjon? Vi ønsker å finne ut hvorfor man velger som man gjør og hvilke sosiale konsekvenser som eventuelt kan følge av valgene man tar. Videre ønsker vi å undersøke hvordan valg av arbeidslokasjon påvirker den ansattes opplevde *produktivitet*.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Handelshøyskolen BI er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Vi ønsker å komme i kontakt med deg som *foretrekker* og har mulighet til å jobbe hjemmefra eller et annet sted enn det primære kontoret én eller flere dager i uken. Du må ha jobbet minst et halvt år i bedriften du er ansatt i for å delta. Vi kontakter deg fordi du jobber i en bransje der fleksible arbeidsløsninger er mulig.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Vi kommer til å gjennomføre semi-strukturerte intervjuer for å innhente nødvendig informasjon til oppgaven. Hvis du ønsker å delta må du **ha anledning til å stille opp på et intervju som varer rundt 40-60 minutter**. Det er ønskelig at intervjuet gjennomføres fysisk, men det er også mulig å gjennomføre digitalt. Det vil bli gjort opptak av intervjuet, slik at viktig informasjon ikke vil gå tapt i transkriberingen. Opptakene vil bli slettet etter transkribering.

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.

Opplysningene vi innhenter vil kun være tilgjengelig for oss og veileder for prosjektet. Personopplysninger som navn og bedrift er ikke nødvendig. E-post vil bli benyttet for å komme i kontakt med respondenten og planlegge tidspunkt for intervju, men vil kun være tilgjengelig for oss og slettes etter prosjektslutt. Informanter vil anonymiseres i den grad at de ikke kan gjenkjennes. Innhentede opplysninger vil kun være lagret i prosjektperioden og vil slettes umiddelbart etter at sensuren foreligger.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 01.09.2023. Etter prosjektslutt vil datamaterialet med dine personopplysninger slettes. Informasjonen som innhentes fra intervjuene vil kun være tilgjengelig anonymisert i masteroppgaven. Ved potensielle publikasjoner vil det heller ikke være mulig å identifisere deltagerne.

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 Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør 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:

- Elise Bjørntvedt Øie (student) på e-post elise.oie@live.no eller telefon 41177322
- Marie Roksvåg (student) på e-post m.roksvaag@gmail.com eller telefon 95446146
- Vår veileder, Ingrid Steen Rostad, på e-post ingrid.s.rostad@bi.no eller telefon 99263663
- Vårt personvernombud, Vibekke Nesbakken, på e-post personvernombud@bi.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til vurderingen som er gjort av personverntjenestene fra Sikt, kan du ta kontakt via:

- E-post: personverntjenester@sikt.no eller telefon: 73 98 40 40.

Med vennlig hilsen

Studenter   **Veileder**

Elise Bjørntvedt Øie   *Ingrid Steen Rostad*

Marie Roksvåg

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *"Hva påvirker beslutningen om bruk av det fysiske kontoret og hjemmekontor post-covid og hvordan påvirker valget opplevelsen av produktivitet?"*, 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, ca. 01.09.2023.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)