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Challenges and problems of hybrid work: employees' perspective

ABSTRACT

Different work organisations function all over the world. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the perception of many employees concerning the concept of remote and hybrid work. Nowadays it seems to be the new normal, not only in the IT field. This paper aims to show the distinction between various work organisations and compare them in the context of work efficiency, focusing on in-company and remote work. The article also presents the problems of hybrid work. A study was conducted in the form of a survey. The study shows how remote work is perceived by the respondents, concerning its advantages, disadvantages, and working conditions.

Keywords: hybrid work, remote work, in-company work, work organisations, work efficiency, organisational effectiveness, hybrid work problems, working conditions, telework, COVID-19 **JEL Classification Codes:** M120, M140, K220, M540, I150

Introduction

The recent years in the Polish labour market have been characterised by dynamic changes. The year 2020, together with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, turned out to be a breakthrough period affecting the entire global economy. As a result, many enterprises had to face an unprecedented situation – the need to maintain the continuity of their activities while securing the health and life of their employees. Modern technological solutions have made it possible to achieve consistency between the implementation of these two requirements by providing work in the form of remote/hybrid work. This way of performing work, which has not been very common so far, is not without significance for the functioning of entire companies and their employees. Although thanks to remote/hybrid work, it is often possible for the company to operate on the market at all, it also has an impact on the people working in it.

Taking into account the above, this study aimed to assess the challenges and problems related to remote/hybrid work from employees' perspective.

Literature review

The essence of work organisation

Organisation of work or work arrangement (a commonly used tern in the world literature) is a broad term, as there are various approaches towards it in the literature. The definitions have evolved over the years as the dynamic development of companies and intense technological progress allow authors to add ever newer perspectives to this term [Sauter et al., 2002; Cordery, Parker, 2007; Kowolik, 2015; Marciniak, 2016; Jagoda, 2017]. Table 1 presents the overview of work organisation definitions.

Table 1. Chosen work organisation definitions

Author	Definition
Mreta (1968)	The technique of work organisation consists of three connected fields: research and improvement of work methods, measurement and regulation of work, qualification of work.
Haus (1972)	Work organisation is the choice, grouping and connecting of people and their activities to achieve an aim with the least amount of work.
Mikołajczyk (1973)	Work organisation means research on organising work to improve it.
Sajkiewicz (1977)	Work organisation is a system creating forms and methods of connecting the workforce and other factors of the work process and the internal relations of the workers.
Lachiewicz (1994)	Work organisation is the element choice and connection of workers activity, which ensure high efficiency of management and effectiveness of organisational units.
Sauter et al. (2002)	Work organisation refers to the process of work (how jobs are designed and done) and organisational practices (management and production procedures, as well as associated human resource policies) that impact job design. External elements such as the legal and economic environment, as well as technological aspects that encourage or permit new organisational practices, are also included in this definition of work organisation.

Author	Definition
Yeraguntla, Bhat (2005)	Work organisation is defined by four criteria: 1. full-time or part-time employment, 2. teleworking or not, 3. inflexible or flexible work schedule, and 4. regular shift or an alternate shift.
Cordery, Parker (2008)	Work organisation is the way of organising and coordinating the tasks within the context of an overriding work system.
Kowolik (2015)	Work organisation is a system of rules, methods, and activities aimed at fusing labour force, means of labour and work objects in the process of work, as well as the formation of internal relations between its participants.
Marciniak (2016)	The organisation of work in the company is primarily a skilful division, as a result of which determined work areas are assigned to the organisation's structures – departments and teams, and then to individuals.
Jagoda (2017)	Work organisation considers work division at the company and concentrates on the choices of management staff involving time of work performance, its place, and consolidation.

Source: own elaboration based on Sauter et al (2002), Yeraguntla, Bhat (2005), Cordery, Parker (2007), Kowolik (2015), Marciniak (2016), Jagoda (2017).

In the organisational context and particularly in human resources, the organisation of work can be studied in many dimensions, such as the form of employment, employees' working time or place of work [Sauter et al., 2002; Klindžić, Marić, 2017; Majewska, Samol, 2016]. Therefore, different flexible or alternative work arrangements (FWA) can be identified by considering the work schedule, amount of hours worked, and the place of work [Workplace Flexibility, 2010, 2006; Bąk-Grabowska, Jagoda, 2012; Chung, Lippe, 2020; Mass, Pallais 2020; Gašić, Berber, 2021; Cerqueira, Motte-Baumvol, 2022].

In the aspect of elasticity of the workplace, there are at least two fundamental types of work arrangements. Table 2 presents the basic division of work arrangements.

This typology can be broadened by the frequency or the ratio of the traditional and remote work performance. Remote work can be performed occasionally (ad hoc teleworking, home office) or constantly (home-based teleworking, nomadic teleworking). Remote work can also intertwine with the in-company form, creating a hybrid working model (e.g., alternating home-based teleworking) [Szluz, 2013; Świątek, 2018; ILO, 2020; Gierszon, 2021, Radziukiewicz, 2021]. The terminology used to describe remote work is very broad. In the world literature, there are no unified definitions [Athanasiadou, Theriou, 2021]. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has proposed a flexible classification that enables different countries to measure specific remote work categories [ILO, 2020].

Table 2. Types of work organisation in the aspect of the place

Type of work organisation	Description
Traditional work organisation	Working at the employer's premises with fixed or changing workstations (hotdesking).
Flexible work organisation	Working at permanently set places of work e.g., working from home (tele-/homeworking) or co-working areas (hoteling, telecentres, telecottages) or working at places solely chosen by the employee (mobile or nomadic working). There is a possibility of connecting traditional (in-company) work and remote work in the hybrid working model.

Source: own elaboration based on Workplace Flexibility 2010 (2006), Szluz (2013), Wiśniewski (2014), ILO, (2020), Pruchnik M., Pruchnik K., (2020), Kwon, Choo, Song (2021), Radziukiewicz (2021), Gierszon (2021).

In Poland the terms 'telework', 'remote work', and 'home office' are often used interchangeably, but there are conceptual differences between these work arrangements. The term 'home office' was popularised in Poland to describe the situation of temporary work from home. Remote work, which may include home office, does not need to be performed from home. Polish legal regulations differentiate only the concepts of teleworking and remote work [Dziennik Ustaw, 2007; Dziennik Ustaw, 2020; Zander-Zięcina, 2020; Gierszon, 2021; Dojwa-Turczyńska, 2021; Moczydłowska, 2021; Radziukiewicz, 2021].

In Polish labour law, remote work is still not defined so there are no specific regulations that could secure the employer and the employee in case of any problems resulting from this form of work arrangement [Zander-Zięcina, 2020; Dojwa-Turczyńska, 2021]. It raises doubts, especially in the aspect of health and safety of work performed remotely [Kryński, 2020]. Nevertheless, Polish labour law specifically defines telework. It is understood as the work which is performed regularly outside the workplace, using electronic means of communication. The employer is obliged to provide the teleworker with the equipment necessary to perform the work, insure it, cover the costs of installation, service, operation and maintenance but also provide the technical assistance and necessary training in the use of equipment. The employer has the right to control the performance of the work of the employee at the place of telework [Dziennik Ustaw, 2007].

Currently, companies operating in Poland often decide to combine the in-company and remote work model and let the employees work in a hybrid system, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Polish government by The Act of March 2, 2020 introduced the term 'remote work' and announced that during the epidemic threat or state of epidemic, and in 3 months after its cancellation, the employer may recommend remote work for a specified time to counteract the disease [Dziennik Ustaw, 2020]. Table 3 presents the main differences between telework and remote work based on Polish law.

Table 3. The distinction between telework and remote work in Polish law

Telework	Remote work
Performed regularly	Performed periodically
Not limited in time	During and up to 3 months after the end of COVID-19 pandemic
Employers cannot introduce telework independently. Mutual agreement of the employee and the employer is required	Employers can introduce remote work by a work order
No consequences for the employee for not joining the telework system; a possibility of termination of telework	Refusal to work remotely is the basis for holding the employee accountable
The right to control by the employer announced and with the consent of the employee	Standard remote control
The employer ensures the equipment – possibility of usage of private equipment and cash equivalent for the employee	The employer ensures the equipment – a possibility of usage of private equipment if it is possible to protect confidential information; cash equivalent is not regulated by the Act

Source: own elaboration based on Dziennik Ustaw (2007), Dziennik Ustaw (2020), Kryński (2020), Prasołek, Kiełbratowska (2020), Zander-Zięcina (2020), Sidor-Rządkowska (2021).

No matter the kind of work organisation, entities want it to be effective and efficient. It is the reason why sometimes the work is reorganised.

Work efficiency and its determinants

Many employers want to increase organisational effectiveness. Flexible work arrangements seem to be a way to reduce costs and improve employees' work satisfaction, motivation, commitment, work-life balance, and as a result, boost their performance [Choo et al., 2016; Cekuls et al., 2017; Chung, van der Lippe, 2020; Mas, Pallais, 2020; Bagaskara et al., 2021].

Up to this day authors have used the terms 'effectiveness', 'efficiency' or 'performance' as synonyms, however, these terms have their separate definitions in the literature [Skowron-Mielnik 2009 Mihaiu et. al., 2010; Sawicki, 2018]. Often organisational performance is treated as the measure of organisational effectiveness, which can be measured by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (Pyszka, 2015; Grabowska, 2017]. Nevertheless, organisational effectiveness is a broad term connected to the performance of the whole organisation. 'Work efficiency' or 'employee performance' are the terms used rather concerning the human resources of the company. Table 4 presents the distinction between work efficiency and organisational effectiveness.

Table 4. Chosen definitions of work efficiency and organisational effectiveness

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Work efficiency	Organisational effectiveness
Work efficiency is the ratio of the result of an action to the costs incurred (material, human, moral, social, etc.), and work is efficient when significant results are achieved with fairly low costs (Karney, 1998)	Organisational effectiveness is the company's ability to adapt strategically to changes in the environment on an ongoing basis and to use its resources productively and economically to achieve the adopted structure of objectives (Ziębicki, 2010)
Work efficiency is the relation of the value of material and non-material benefits obtained thanks to human labour to the amount of material and non-material expenditure incurred as a result of human labour (Jasiński, Chomątowska, Janiak-Rejno, 2002)	Organisational effectiveness is both effectiveness of functioning, as well as additional results obtained in connection with operational activities, therefore, quantitative and qualitative determinants (inc. work effects, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, innovation, etc.) (Waśniewski, 2018)
Work efficiency is the ratio of work effects, in terms of results, to broadly understood work expenditure (Skowron-Mielnik, 2009)	Organisational effectiveness encompasses a wide range of increasingly complex performance outcomes, including commitment, satisfaction, customer service, organisational, and financial performance (Bustinza et al., 2019)

Source: own elaboration based on Skowron-Mielnik (2009), Ziębicki (2010), Waśniewski (2018), Bustinza et al. (2019).

An efficient worker is a person that achieves goals. fulfils satisfactorily his or her tasks, and has great results at work. High worker efficiency is connected to better employee performance, which means higher profits and lower costs for the employer [Walentek, 2019].

Effective and efficient work is a component of various factors that directly or indirectly affect the performance of the organisation and the employee. Scientists, especially in the COVID-19 pandemic period, focus more and more on the research on factors influencing the efficiency of remote and hybrid work arrangements, as well as the consequences of these work models for the organisation and the employee [Chung, van der Lippe, 2020; Bagaskara et al., 2021; Heiden et al., 2021; Himstedt, 2021; Wöhrmann, Ebner, 2021; Lunde et al., 2022].

One of the most important determinants of work efficiency is the working environment. Ergonomics is a science that focuses on designing and adjusting the technical infrastructure and the material environment to the needs of the employee [Jasiak, 2017; Leskovsky, 2019]. In other words, ergonomics shapes the spatial structure of work to human psychophysical abilities, and its main goal is to humanise the work and improve human working conditions [Bartkowiak, Dąbrowska, 2016; Kalinowska et al., 2018]. Neglecting ergonomic principles leads to inefficiency and experiencing physical pain [Mohammad et al., 2019]. For the work to be efficient, an employee needs [Jóźwiak, 2018; Bajdur et al., 2019; Christy et al., 2020]:

- appropriately arranged workspace (clean, spacious, and safe office space);
- adequate work equipment (fast, user-friendly equipment and comfortable, regulated furniture);
- correctly planned workstations (maintaining appropriate distances between workstations and ensuring good lighting);
- personalised workstation (adjusting equipment and furniture to the characteristics of the employee);
- appropriate working conditions (proper microclimate, lighting, lack of excessive noise exposure);
- the correct way of performing the work (appropriate sitting position, having breaks from computer work and work in general, equipment and furniture check-ups).

The correct way of work performance leads to the aspect of time management. Proper time management plays a crucial role in work efficiency [Lušňáková et al., 2021]. The literature presents many methods of time management [Olejniczak, 2013; Okoye, Obi, 2014; Rezmer, 2020]. To manage the work in time, a fundamental target needs to be set. Setting the right goal allows for defining minor tasks that can be carried out in stages. The SMART technique is a popular tool that enables to set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound objectives [Biela, 2016; Marszał, 2018; Otręba, Knop, 2019].

Not only setting a goal but also planning and scheduling has a significant impact on work efficiency. The Eisenhower Matrix is a technique for the management of relatively short periods. It enhances compiling a list of tasks that need to be performed on a given day and allows to prioritise them based on the urgency of tasks and their importance (four combinations of urgency and importance) [Bast, 2016; Rafke, Lestari, 2017 Murray et al., 2022]. This matrix allows for an effective solution to dilemmas related to the hierarchy of tasks and the assessment of the order in which they should be performed [Rybińska 2015; Gresakova, Chlebikova, 2020].

Another similar technique is ALPEN, which assumes that 60% of work time should be planned, and 40% is a margin for unexpected activities and unplanned actions. It emphasises the need of delegating tasks and postponing for the next day those which could not be completed in a set time [Jinalee, Singh, 2018; Ogorzelec, 2018; Piskorz et al., 2019]. Interesting methods of time management that can support the work organisation are also the ABC analysis, the Pareto rule and the Pomodoro technique [Panayotova et al., 2015; Stoińska, 2019; Danylyuk, 2020; Skryhun, Nyzhnyk, 2020]].

Beyond the time management methods and techniques, there are also tools and applications which can enhance work efficiency. Still very common are traditional tools of time management such as calendars, planners, checklists, and notebooks [Stoińska, 2019; Rezmer, 2020]. Such tools are created and sold in a paper form that a person can use at their job to manage their tasks efficiently [Sasin, 2020]. In the current times, electronic tools and applications become more and more popular and important for organisations and their employees. Besides electronic calendars such as Google Calendar, planners, checklists, and notebooks like Microsoft To Do or Trello, e-mail box is a fundamental tool that enables communication in a fast and concise manner, which influences work efficiency [Basilaia, 2020; Radziukiewicz, 2021].

A less formal, but also very popular way of communication are Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies and instant messengers (IM), which are commonly used in digital work environments. Applications such as Slack, Facebook Messenger, Skype, and Google Hangouts became even more popular during the COVID-19 pandemic [Trziszka, 2016; Shah et al., 2020; Smoląg, Ślusarczyk, 2021; Radziukiewicz, 2021; Vargo et al., 2021].

With appropriate working conditions and good time management, an employee has a background for the work to be efficient. Nonetheless, to use the equipment, tools, and techniques, the employee needs psychophysical fitness. In addition to mobility, the employee also needs the right competencies that include [Hysa, Grabowska, 2017; Barasa et al., 2018; Parashakti et al., 2019; Krasnova, 2021]:

- personal characteristics and abilities;
- attitude, motivation, and emotions;
- · experience and formal qualifications.

Good psychophysical fitness is also determined by the work-life balance state, which is a factor strongly influencing work efficiency [Haider, 2018; Bataineh, 2019; Wolor et al., 2020]. An employee who can balance the private and professional life experiences greater satisfaction with the work performed and, therefore, has better results at work [Walentek, 2019].

There are various external and internal determinants of efficient work. The organisation, its approach, and behaviour towards the employee play an important role, but also the determinants on the employee side have a key role in shaping work efficiency [Skowron-Mielnik, 2009; Buchcic, 2014; Kopczewski, Płucienniczak, 2018]. No matter if the employee works in a traditional workplace, works fully from home, or has a hybrid job, the determinants of efficient work are very similar. Table 5 presents chosen determinants of employees' efficiency at work.

Table 5.	Factors influencing	the employee's	efficiency at work
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Internal determinants (employee)	External determinants (employer)
Skills	Training programmes, knowledge management systems
Abilities	Training programmes, knowledge management systems
Attitude	
Motivation	Engagement programmes, managerial leadership, organisational culture
Emotional intelligence	33.6.3

cont. Table 5

Internal determinants (employee)	External determinants (employer)	
Experience	Learning anyironment rules, and guidelines	
Qualifications	Learning environment, rules, and guidelines	
Psychophysical fitness	Working conditions, equipment and technologies, benefits	

Source: own elaboration based on Skowron-Mielnik (2009), Hysa, Grabowska (2017), Dakhoul (2018), Chrisdianto, Respati (2019), Karim (2019), Bjelland (2020), Swanson et al. (2020), Tuffaha (2020), Alshahrani (2021).

Problems of hybrid work

One can find many advantages of hybrid work for an employee and the employer but various issues can arise in this work arrangement model as well. As this form connects in-company and remote forms of work, the employee faces not only the standard problems that can happen at the employer's premises but also those that can occur in the remote environment.

In the context of working from home, ergonomics can be a serious issue [Matisāne et al., 2021]. At the employer's premises, the employee has usually his/her own, adjusted workstation. In the case of telework, in Polish law regulations solve this problem to a specific extent. Choosing the unregulated remote work model, however, might create a dangerous situation, as the health and safety of the employee can be jeopardised [Kryński, 2020]. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the switch to remote jobs, however, it also shortened the time to adapt to the new conditions [Pracodawcy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2020; Dojwa-Turczyńska, 2021]. Employers should ensure that the employee has an appropriately arranged workspace at home, adequate work equipment, a personalised and correctly planned workstation, appropriate working conditions, and knows how to correctly perform the work (is trained) [Langovska, Rozentale, 2021]. As in Poland, it is common to live with one's family under a small roof, there is the danger that the work ergonomics are not maintained. The average floor area of a newly delivered flat in multi-family buildings was 52.8 m² in the first quarter of 2021 [GUS, 2021]. It means that remote workers often face issues of the lack of space, which not only affects negatively their physical condition but also their mental state, as the children or other family members may distract and disrupt the work of the employee [Matisāne et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021].

The second problem that is often pointed out as an issue of remote working is the dependence on technology. Sometimes the employee is not equipped with the appropriate tools and electronic devices at home. If something breaks down, he/she sometimes needs to handle the hardware and software malfunction on their own [Staniec et al., 2022]. Another issue is the security and the possibility of losing data while performing remote work [Trziszka, 2020; Kobis, Karyy, 2021]. Furthermore, technological disruptors, such as TV, also influence employees' concentration and engagement at home, and thus can negatively impact their efficiency [Smoder, 2021]. Dependence on technology can also increase the feeling of isolation and weaken the relationships and ties with co-workers and the company [Mierzejewska, Chomicki, 2020; Staniec et al., 2022].

Another issue that can arise in the hybrid working model is the right time management and work organisation. This is a matter of both employees' competencies, training, and available tools and applications. The employer should ensure that the employee is trained, knows different time management techniques, has appropriate tools and applications to control work progress, and knows how to use them [Wszendybył-Skulska, 2019; Manko, Rosiński, 2021]. It is especially important in the case of remote work, as it is more difficult to supervise the worker. The lack of routine and poor organisational skills can lead to work disorganisation [Furmanek, 2015].

The problem of psychophysical fitness can be an issue both in in-company and remote work, as office work is difficult for maintaining employees' mobility. Here, the employer can support employees by giving additional breaks or financing sports activities [Babapour et al., 2022]. Nevertheless, without the motivation of the employee, it is not possible to stay fit, both physically and psychically. The lack of motivation can arise from the feeling of isolation, poor sense of belonging to the company, and worsening of interpersonal relationships, which can happen in the case of remote work [Zalega, 2009; Wszendybył-Skulska, 2019]. The research shows that employer engagement programmes are needed to motivate the workers in crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic [Tarczydło, Klimczak, 2021].

Table 6. Employees' problems in the hybrid work organisation

Employees' problems in the hybrid work organisation
Logistic aspects of combining in-company and remote forms of work
Lack of remote work regulations
Insufficient working conditions outside of the employer's premises
Dependence on technology
Problems with data security
Lack of appropriate training and the employer's support
Employer's lack of trust for the employee working outside of the employer's premises
Work disruption and disorganisation
Lack of motivation and engagement
Deterioration of interpersonal communication skills
Disturbed work-life balance
Deterioration of mental condition

Source: own elaboration based on Furmanek (2015), Jeran (2016), Wszendybył-Skulska (2019), Trziszka (2020), Sliż (2020), Kobis, Karyy (2021), Mączyńska (2021), Matisāne et al. (2021), Smoder (2021), Wang et al. (2021), Babapour et al. (2022), Staniec et al. (2022).

One of the most important issues that can arise due to hybrid work is the problem of disturbed work-life balance [Godlewska-Bujok, 2020; Popvici V., Popvici A-L., 2020]. Long hours are problematic for in-company workers, however, in the case of remote work, it is even more critical. Often, employees do not control their working time at home and tend to spend more time looking at the screen [Smoder, 2021]. In the case of in-company work, employees

rarely bring their work home. In the hybrid working model, this can be a serious issue that may destroy the work-life balance of an employee and, as a result, worsen the family relationships or even cause workaholism [Kurkus-Rozowska, Konarska, 2002; Makowiec, Bober, 2008]. The research shows that there is a relationship between the work-life balance experienced by employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and the workplace [Bukowska et al., 2021]. Table 6 summarises the possible issues of working in a hybrid environment for employees.

Methodology

Methodology of the conducted research and characteristics of the respondents

To achieve the set goal, empirical research on hybrid work was conducted. It was carried out using an online survey method on a randomly selected research sample (N=103). The respondents are mainly women (76% of respondents) up to 40 years of age (86%), most often living in large cities (over 150,000 inhabitants) – 50% of the respondents or villages (23% of the respondents). They have higher or secondary education (47% of responses each) and most often hold office positions – 43% of responses (characteristic of remote/hybrid work). However, there are also executive employees (18%). They also include owners and managers of enterprises (21%). The respondents are employed in both the SME sector (46%) and large companies (44%). Taking into account the business profile, these are companies that provide services (53% of responses), especially in the education, IT, medical, financial, and beauty industries. They run a business mainly as a limited liability company (42%) or sole proprietorship (21%).

Remote work in the light of own research

To learn the respondents' opinions about remote/hybrid work, they were asked about the role of the COVID-19 pandemic in changing the way of working. As it turned out, 74% of the respondents did not deal with remote/hybrid work at all before the pandemic. Those who had experience working remotely most often performed it sporadically (18%). Only 2 of the respondents worked in this way constantly. This changed with the outbreak of the pandemic. Currently, 51% of the respondents work remotely permanently or at least once a week. 33% of the respondents work remotely at least once a month, in a quarter or less. However, some have never provided such work (15% of responses).

The people working remotely are satisfied with this form of work (64%), but only 24% of the respondents consider it a very good form of work. And although they had no previous experience in remote work, this work did not require much training from them (70% of responses). Perhaps this is because, as noted at the beginning, a vast majority of the respondents

are employed in office positions (43% of the respondents), young, up to 40 years of age who most often have fluent knowledge of operating the computer and other electronic tools. As research has shown, these tools are often provided to the respondents by employers (which results from legal provisions), but there are also voices that the respondents do not receive this kind of support and use only their own equipment. Perhaps this is since today's office work is often carried out by smartphones or smartwatches and does not require a company computer. It is a different case when the respondents need, for example, specialised software. Then there is no problem receiving it.

As mentioned in the theoretical part of the study, remote work is associated with many advantages. The respondents were also asked about them. It turns out that remote work primarily saves time, e.g., on commuting to work (64% of the respondents). Most often, the respondents save 1–2 hours a day (29%), up to 1 hour (14%) or even 2–3 hours (11% of the respondents). It seems to be obvious, taking into account the fact that the respondents most often live in large cities with high car traffic or outside it (rural areas). In this situation, the possibility of working from home facilitates the organisation of work. Working remotely, the respondents most often use various electronic tools to facilitate work organisation, such as Google Calendar (78%), planners (39%), and electronic organisers, such as Microsoft To Do (39%). The basic form of communication for the respondents, which significantly improves it, next to e-mail, which is most often used to transmit official messages (97%), is Messenger. It is most often used by people up to 30 years of age (69% of indications).



Figure 1. Assessment of the advantages of remote work

Apart from significant time savings, the respondents also indicated other **advantages** of remote work. They are presented in Figure 1. It shows that the respondents can work remotely, i.a., to reconcile work and private duties (M0 = 6), devote more time to loved ones than in the case of in-company work (M0 = 6), no dress code (M0 = 6), the ability to work from anywhere

^{*} The respondents assessed the satisfaction of the above-mentioned factors on a scale of 1–6, where 1 is definitely a lack of satisfaction and 6 – definitely high satisfaction.

Source: own elaboration.

on the Earth (M0 = 6), facilitating the mobility of the respondents, which is so important for young people, saving money, e.g., on commuting to work (M0 = 6) or adapting work to personal needs (M0 = 6).

Remote work, however, is not associated with mere superlatives. As the respondents point out, there are many disadvantages of working outside the office. They are presented in Figure 2.

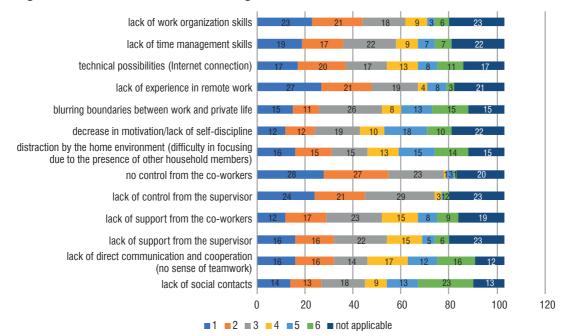


Figure 2. Assessment of the disadvantages of remote work

Source: own elaboration.

As shown in Figure 2, among the most serious disadvantages of remote work the respondents indicate the lack of social contacts (M0=6), the lack of direct communication and cooperation, and thus the lack of a sense of teamwork (M0=4), or blurring of boundaries between work and private life (M0=3). Importantly, the respondents also indicate a decrease in motivation or the lack of self-discipline (M0=3). It is certainly related to the lack of direct control on the part of the superior or co-workers, which, as one should assume, does not bother the respondents (M0=3). Interestingly, the respondents admit that they do not have the skills to manage their time (M0=3) and organise their work, but they do not mind it (M0=1). When asked about the time management methods they use, it turned out that this is not the strongest side of the respondents (as many as 34% do not use any methods). Among those who know and use time management methods, the most popular are: the method of setting SMART goals (59% of the respondents using any method of time management utilise it and 39% of all the respondents) and the Eisenhower Matrix (this method is used by even fewer

 $^{^*}$ The respondents assessed the above-mentioned factors on a scale of 1–6, where 1 means I definitely do not mind a given factor, and 6 – I definitely mind a given factor.

people – 29% of the respondents using any method of time management and 19% of all the respondents). This aspect is worth improving, especially since remote work, as confirmed by research, is largely related to the blurring of the boundaries between private and professional life, which is conducive to, e.g., reducing work efficiency.

At this point, it is worth looking at the assessment of the efficiency of the respondents' work. As it turns out, the respondents rate their work highly; as rather efficient (45%), efficient (25%), or definitely efficient (15%). This efficiency may be due to, i.a., proper working conditions, discussed in the theoretical part of the study. According to the respondents, their working conditions are very good (M0 = 5, D = 6), as shown in Figure 3.

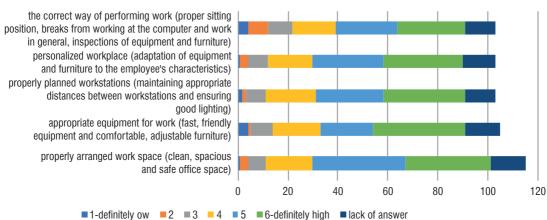


Figure 3. Assessment of the working conditions of the respondents

Interestingly, opinions on the changes in efficiency associated with the transition to remote/hybrid work vary. For 44% of the respondents, this efficiency even improved, while for 33% – it decreased. It is important that in each case the respondents were not convinced as to their arguments (prevalence of the answers rather increased than decreased). However, when asked about their willingness to continue remote/hybrid work after the COVID-19 pandemic, the respondents confirmed it (65% of responses), while 26% of the respondents would rather continue hybrid work, and 29% would definitely want to continue it. Importantly, the age of the respondents does not matter here. Work both from the office and from home is appreciated by people under 30 and between 30 and 50.

Therefore, it appears that the COVID-19 pandemic changed a lot in the lives of many people. Although they are doomed to work from home, often without social contacts that are essentially important to young people, they cannot imagine returning to the 'normal' full-time job, known before the COVID-19 pandemic.

^{*} The respondents assessed the above-mentioned factors on a scale of 1–6, where 1 is definitely low, and 6 – definitely high. Source: own elaboration.

Summary

As indicated in the literature on the subject, remote work is a necessity now. Flexible work arrangements seem to be a way to reduce costs and improve employees' work satisfaction, motivation, commitment, work-life balance, and as a result, boost their performance.

For it to be effective, however, one should remember several important factors, such as ergonomics of work (proper preparation of the workplace), rules of work organisation, and proper time management.

This was confirmed by the research carried out by the authors of the study.

According to them, the COVID-19 pandemic has definitely changed the lives of many employees. Until now, few of the respondents were provided with remote or hybrid work. This is a standard in the current situation. This work organisation has many advantages, such as large savings in time and money on commuting, or the possibility of reconciling work and private duties. Interestingly, the same possibility is indicated as a significant disadvantage of this form of work. It causes a blurring of the boundaries between private and professional life. Lack of social contacts, direct communication and cooperation, and thus the lack of a sense of teamwork or, as a result, a decrease in motivation to work are the aftermaths of remote work. The results obtained by the authors fully comply with the trend discussed in the literature on the subject.

The authors realise that the conducted research process is characterised by many limitations. First of all, a small research sample that makes it impossible to generalise the results, a small percentage of the respondents of mature age (certainly more 'resistant' to moving to remote work) or performing other jobs than office work. It seems that what is undoubtedly possible to apply to office work will not work for traditional production work. Taking this into account, it is planned to expand the subjective and objective scope of the research. This seems justified. By learning about all the mechanisms influencing the efficiency of this form of work, managers will be able to take action to minimise negative costs, including significant social costs.

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