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BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

Master Thesis

**TELEWORKING & FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS AS A NEW
WORKING MODEL IN GREECE: IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES' WORK
EXPERIENCE.**

By

KONSTANTINA MATAFTSI

SUPERVISOR: DR. DIMITRIOS KAFETZOPOULOS

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Dedicated to my daughter Jenny, who was born during my MBA studies

Abstract

Greek enterprises recently shared the challenge of adapting to Covid-19 social-distancing restrictions, with teleworking and Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) being extensively used as safety practices to ensure their operation (Pouliakas, 2020). Currently, the Greek enterprises are looking into the possibility of employing those working models in their day-to-day operation; therefore, the present study came to investigate how teleworking and FWA in Greece affects employees' work experience, and more particularly, their job satisfaction, performance, job stress and well-being. Particularly, we hypothesized that FWA is associated with a better employee work experience than teleworking. A questionnaire was used to measure the variables associated with teleworking and FWA to a sample of 278 participants. The data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS statistical package. Our hypotheses were not verified, since the results showed that both teleworking and FWA did not have statistically significant differences in the reported employee experience. However, teleworkers were found to be significantly more rested than FWA employees, affecting positively their well-being. Furthermore, employee specific characteristics can also play an important role, such as household composition and education level. As both factors increase, the employee satisfaction decreases. Finally, the duration of remote working was found to have a significant impact on effectiveness. It was found that the longer the employee gets used to remote working the more effective he becomes. The continuation of remote working was found to have other benefits as well, such as feeling less pressure by the supervisor, less job stress, and an overall more positive experience.

Keywords: teleworking, Flexible Work Arrangements, job satisfaction, wellness, stress, performance, employee experience, Greece, Covid-19

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List of Abbreviations

FWA	Flexible Work Arrangements
WfH	Work from Home
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. The effects of Covid-19 pandemic

One very important impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its related restriction measures was the growing numbers of employees, who were forced to **Work from Home (WfH)**. When the opportunity presented to decide whether to expose one's health by working together in an office or working from home, the second option carried more benefits. These did not only include the possibility of stemming job and financial losses (Adams Prassl et al., 2020), but also an opportunity to service increasing child care needs brought about by closed schools and protecting personal and family health. Home based work could have also contributed towards the flattening of the Covid-19 curve and be a measure of control for further spikes in SARS-Cov-2 cases, in addition to ensuring continued economic performance (Redmond and McGuinness, 2020). With more than 80% of the world's population in lockdown (ILO, 2020a), what was an unusual work arrangement before the pandemic, employed by approximately 15-17% of EU workers (Eurofound-ILO, 2017; Eurofound, 2020), became widely used in order to avoid complete job loss, leave of absence or business closure. Although the numbers on actual teleworkers during the Covid-19 crisis are not fully disclosed yet, several experts have claimed that at least one third of all jobs in advanced countries could perhaps be performed from home (Dingel and Neiman, 2020; Boeri et al., 2020).

The impact of Covid-19 measures and the following economic deterioration is likely to have been lower for those countries that already had introduced some form of teleworking and/or flexible work arrangement. Likewise, countries with a superior technological or digital maturity in infrastructure and skills, organizational readiness, as well as management skills and attitudes, could have also adapted faster and easier to the increasing demand for remote work due to the coronavirus crisis. As WfH is not an option for all groups of workers and more specifically, for those employees, who are at the frontline of facing the pandemic consequences, countries with a focus in industries and with a more occupational structure instrumental in remote work should also have managed to adapt better.

Facing what has been the most grave public health crisis of the century, Greece was a country already damaged by the economic and financial debt crisis of 2008. The austerity measures employed as part of the country's economic restructuring or Memoranda programmes, augmented the concerns about the potentially destructive impact such policy measures had on the country's exhausted public health care system (Economou et al., 2014; Kotsakis, 2018; Kyriopoulos et al., 2019). Greece was also ranked at the bottom of European Union (EU) countries in digital preparedness (European Commission 2019), measuring indicators such as connectivity and internet access, use of digital services in the public sector, use of ICT technologies at home or work, integration of digital technologies within businesses and, most importantly, inadequacy in digital skills (Cedefop, 2018). The fact that Greece mainly relies on a small-and-medium-sized businesses is also a coefficient causing lower exposure and use of digital technologies (IOBE, 2018), supported by the low percentages of workers in digitally intensive occupations (SEV, 2020a).

The above deficiencies can interpret the 53rd position of Greece out of 63 countries in the IMD World Digital Competitiveness ranking, which measures the capacity and readiness of economies to adapt and explore digital technologies as a driver for financial transformation in business, government and wider society. Furthermore, traditionally, Greece relies more than other EU countries in the tourism industry as well as its relatively larger wholesale and retail trade and public administration service sectors. This is another factor that played a key role on the country's ability to mitigate the unfavorable economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 crisis. Furthermore, Greece was also one of the EU countries with the lowest percentage of employees WfH before the pandemic (Eurostat, 2020). As shown in Figure 1, Greece was ranked 24th out of 31 countries in terms of the share of employees working occasionally or usually from home in 2019. Only 5.3% of all employed persons worked remotely in Greece, higher than in neighboring Italy, Bulgaria and Cyprus, but considerably lower than the EU-27 average of 14% and the very high shares of homeworking (over 37%) observed in the leading countries of Sweden and Netherlands.

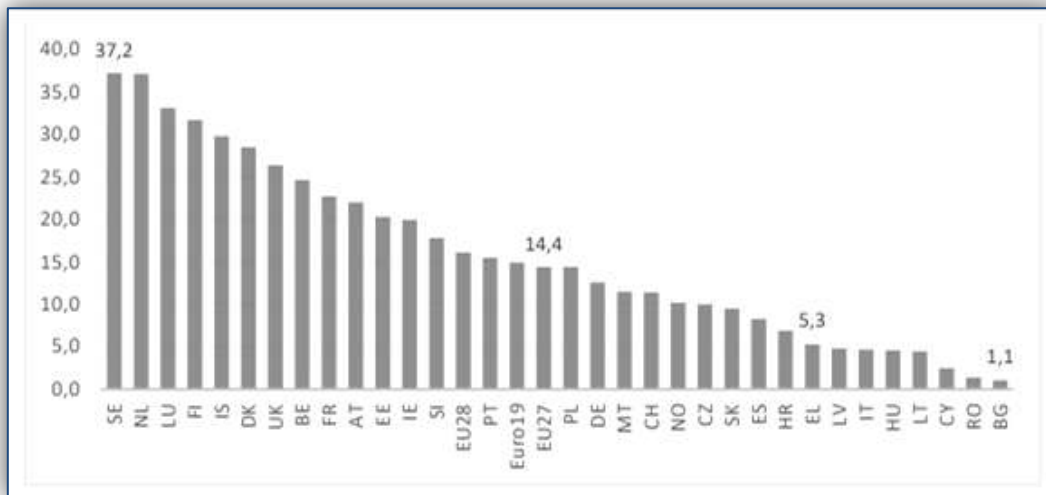


Image 1. Percentage of employed persons WfH, EU-27 and UK, NO, IS, CH, 2019. Source: European Labour Force Survey, Eurostat.

In spite of the several challenges that came with the pandemic, Greece experienced a very low Covid-19 toll during the first wave of the 2020 infection. However, in order to establish a satisfying level of public health in the medium-term and help the employment of essential social distancing practices, WfH will have to be used by a higher percentage of the Greek workforce. Organizational and public policies to ensure the fortification of home and online working in Greece will also become essential in order to stay in the same level with other EU and advanced economies, given that distance work arrangements are expected to become more widely used in the aftermath of the pandemic.

1.2. The objective of the master thesis

The goal of the present research dissertation is to examine the employee's work experience in teleworking, home-based working and in other flexible work arrangements (FWA). More particularly, we measure four different aspects of work experience, namely:

1. job satisfaction,
2. wellness,
3. job stress,
4. work performance

We examine whether a certain type of working model is associated with higher scores in the above four categories that describe an employee's work experience. Therefore, the paper engages in a comparison of three different working models, which are the most prevalent in the Greek labour market and perhaps globally, in order to draw valuable information on –simply- *what is the better way to work?*

A value added of the study is the investigation of employee specific characteristics that have been suggested to influence employee experience, such as the role of gender, age, education, profession, household composition and average distance between home and workplace in the preferred working model.

1.3. Contribution of the master thesis

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic until today, teleworking and FWA have been established as a basic form of work for millions of workers in the EU and worldwide. It is, then, understood that an extremely large number of workers were suddenly and abruptly called upon by the pandemic to change radically their way of working (and especially those who had no previous experience of teleworking).

The present study came to investigate how this new working model (teleworking and FWA) affects employees' work experience in Greece, and more particularly their job satisfaction, stress levels, their performance and well-being. These aspects of employee experience have never been studied together for teleworking in a single paper and more than that, prior papers have not measured for the post-pandemic Greece, three different constructs –as the present dissertation does- namely, **home-based teleworking, teleworking and mixed teleworking.**

An innovative characteristic of the present study is this **comparison in which it engages, between these 3 different working models/constructs.** More particularly, employee work experience is being examined in three different constructs, with the objective of examining which working model is associated with an overall better employee experience. The current study will fulfill the dire need for a solid theoretical model to explain how teleworking and FWAs affect distinct aspects of employees' work experience in Greece.

1.4. Structure of the master thesis

The present study is developed in 6 chapters, which aim to inform the reader both on the existing literature and statistics regarding the research topic as well as present the methodology and results of the current dissertation comprehensively and thoroughly.

In the **first chapter**, the Introduction, an effort is made to describe the topic of the study as well as its objective and structure.

The **second and third chapter** constitute the theoretical framework of the study, where the existing literature review is presented. In the **second chapter**, the focus lies in Teleworking and Flexible Work Arrangements, with introductory concepts and definitions explained, historical data presented, forms and types of teleworking and FWA being listed, policies of EE and Greece as well as key occupation sectors with higher use of teleworking and FWA being outlined.

The **third chapter** is focused on the Employee Work Experience. In particular, in this chapter, the impact of Teleworking and FWA on employee experience is analyzed, reviewing both advantages and shortcomings as well as employee specific characteristics that were found to be crucial for the association of employee experience and teleworking. Additionally, the chapter also includes an overview of the four aspects of employee experience measured in the present dissertation, the job satisfaction, wellness, stress and performance.

In the **fourth chapter**, which constitutes the Research Methodology, the focus lies on type of research, the objectives and the research hypotheses outlined in the beginning of the study, the design of the research tool, the research sample, the description of the methodological approach, the collection process and the data analysis process.

The **fifth chapter** is the Results section, which presents the results of the present study derived from the data analysis process, presented both through graphic illustrations and numerical data.

The **sixth chapter** is the Conclusions section, which outlines the conclusions of the study connecting both the literature review and the results of the study. The chapter also includes the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2. Teleworking and Flexible Work Arrangements

2.1. Definitions and Characteristics

2.1.1. Teleworking

Recently, the rapid development of Telecommunications and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) has brought about significant changes in both the way people communicate and the way they handle various tasks. The development of these technologies has made possible the emergence of **teleworking**, a new flexible form of employment based on the extensive use of these technologies.

The interest in telecommuting first arose in the 1970s, when the term "teleworking" was used to denote work away from the office, primarily using telephone communication as a substitute for physical work (Nilles, Carlson, Gray & Hanneman, 1976). In the 1980s, interest in telecommuting began to grow among employees, employers, communities and the telecommunications industry to end up becoming more frequent in the 1990s, with the most recent reports showing that telecommuting has become one of the most widespread bases of flexibility programs, with the expectation to become even more common in the near future.

The definition of teleworking is found internationally under various names, such as telework, telecommuting, work from home, virtual work, remote work, and distance working. In particular, in Article 2 of the relevant European Framework Agreement, teleworking is defined as "*a form of organization and/or execution of work, in the context of a contract or employment relationship, using information technologies, which, instead of being provided at the premises of the employer, it is provided outside of these facilities in a regular (systematic) manner*". This definition has been adopted

by many countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Finland, United Kingdom, Norway) including Greece (Economic and Social Committee of Greece, 2020). In accordance with the European Framework Agreement, basic features of teleworking are:

- Remote work (outside the company's premises and not only domestic work),
- The necessary use of information technology for the performance of duties. This restriction does not include traditional forms of domestic work such as tailoring in the textile industry.
- The provision of work remotely in a fixed and repetitive manner. This does not mean that mixed forms of teleworking and in-house work are excluded. However, a person who works away from his/her office for two or three weeks during summer is not considered a teleworker.
- The ability to provide work at the employer's premises,
- Its voluntary nature (for both the employer and the employee) and
- The definition of the terms for providing work through an individual employment contract.

Over time, teleworking, as remote work outside the employer's premises, has taken various forms, while it is constantly evolving, constantly adapting to the new data of technological developments and internationalization of production. Indicatively, it is mentioned that, in order to adapt to the needs of companies and employees, teleworking can, by agreement, be provided full-time or part-time, in a permanent place different from the employer's premises, either alternating with work within the premises of the undertaking, or simply acting in addition to the formal employment relationship, in various forms, such as full-time or part-time home teleworking in combination with mobile teleworking. Offshore teleworking is also quite common in the form of outsourcing services to companies located in low-cost countries, as well as the networking teleworking of teams of scientists-researchers interconnected online.

2.1.2. Flexible Work Arrangements

The employment of flexible work arrangements (FWA) has increased rapidly over the last years and especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Sinclair et al., 2020). While many businesses across the world were already offering their employees a variety of FWA, the COVID-19 pandemic forced other employers to immediately employ FWA for hundreds of millions of workers around the globe (Spreitzer et al., 2017). FWA have highlighted an extraordinary spike following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

More particularly, FWA can be broken down by **where (flexplace)** and **when (flextime)** one's work is performed (Kossek & Michel, 2011; Rau & Hyland, 2002). Flextime concerns the employee's working schedule and offers adjustments on the starting hour as well as the end of the work, compressed working weeks (where employees may work four long days and have one weekday off), reduced hours and more flexibility on days off. On the other hand, flexplace refers to policies, which allow individuals to work outside of the employer's premises and include telecommuting/remote work, home-based work or work from other locations of the company. Both these policies aim to assist the employees needs to work in certain locations or certain hours in order to maximize the benefits for both the organization and the employee (Kossek & Michel, 2011). The most important objective of such arrangements are to offer employees more time and energy to manage their everyday demands, allow employees across different work locations to cooperate, and, as of more recently, protect the health and safety of workers and their community (Allen et al., 2013; Kelly & Moen, 2007; Sinclair et al., 2020).

2.2. Forms of Teleworking

According to a recent study by the International Labor Organization (2016), which highlights the variety of modern forms of teleworking with the use of new technologies, other forms of teleworking are:

- a) **Hot desking**, i.e. teleworking provided from various, not clearly defined areas or even in a space available to the employer, where the employee provides its services online for all or part of its conventional working time to the employer's clients, usually by providing a two-way flow of information;

- b) **Hoteling**, which is equivalent to hotdesking, but in which employees must plan to reserve the space they will need for their work for the estimated time of exercising their duties,
- c) **Collaborative offices**, which are an "ideal" online environment where employees can collaborate using ICT, even if they are located in different locations,
- d) **Day extenders**, i.e. home workers, usually outside business hours, in the afternoon or on weekends as appropriate, usually during workloads, or near deadlines, but also as substitutes for workers who absent due to leave.

Finally, a recent form of teleworking is job sharing, where a group of employees assumes the responsibility to the employer for the same object of work. This group acts as an informal association of persons or as a civil company, with the employment relationship of each employee with the employer to maintain the characteristics of dependent work.

In a more recent study by the International Labor Organization (2017), three main types of terms of individual teleworking contract emerge:

- a. Regular home teleworking, where the employee systematically provides his work from home,
- b. Regular mobile teleworkers, where the employee systematically provides his work moving to different places outside his/her residence and the employer's establishment,
- c. Occasional teleworkers, where the employees provide their work mainly on the company's premises and occasionally from home or elsewhere.

Research at European Union level has found that, in the vast majority of cases, the main workplace for teleworkers is their home.

According to the Ministry of Employment & Social Protection (2004), the Study on the promotion and implementation of telework in Greece, Athens, ESC (2020) and INE-GSEE (2020), the forms of teleworking are the following:

Table 1. Forms of teleworking – own interpretation

Form of teleworking	Characteristics
Homebased Teleworking	A common type of teleworking is based at home (either exclusively or on a regular basis, e.g. 2-3 days a week). A necessary condition is that a space must be converted into a standard office and equipped with stationery, telephone, fax, computer, modem, etc. to connect the computer to the Internet, as well as additional devices depending on the requirements of the job.
Telework Centres	Telework centers are well-organized spaces in the form of offices that can be used by employees of different companies or by employees of the same company, but who belong to different sectors of work, or by the self-employed with a basic rent. Employees have access to basic computer and telecommunications equipment. Teleworking centers are different from traditional offices. On the one hand, they may be closer to the place of residence of the teleworker (for example, in the same neighborhood) than the offices of a company. On the other hand, the spaces of the telework centers are open, in the sense that they are used by all those interested. There is no sense of "property" that exists in the area traditional offices.
Nomadic Teleworking	The so-called "nomadic teleworkers" are mobile, with no fixed space and working hours. The use of laptops and mobile telephony forces teleworkers to turn their workplace into a place that allows them to connect their technological equipment. They are completely free from the condition of a stable work base. Nomadic teleworking mainly refers to occupations that by nature were already pervasive, such as sales representatives, inspectors and managers or senior business executives, who can benefit from the development of mobile equipment to be in constant contact with headquarters while on the road.
Telecottages	Telecottages are a form of teleworking centers, but they are usually located in remote areas and in small houses, which are equipped with the necessary teleworking tools. This form of teleworking has its roots in Scandinavia.
Televillages	Their spread from the beginning of 1980 until today has been rapid with the result that today there are more than 500 telecottages throughout Europe. Their broader purpose is to strengthen the local economy by: a) educating the inhabitants of remote areas in telework and the wider area of Telecommunications and Information Technology, b) absorbing the youth of these areas in the labor market, c) giving the opportunity to existing companies and local organizations to have access to equipment

	of higher technological standards. Televillages are a more modern form of telecottages, in terms of technological equipment and capabilities.
Remote Office Teleworking	An office is used which is located geographically at a distance from the company and its other offices. Teleworkers are usually employees, whose nature of work allows them or sometimes forces them to stay away from their colleagues. Also, the teleworkers of this model can even form headquarters support groups with sometimes full-time and sometimes part-time work, depending on the needs of the company. Mobile offices are required to provide direct access to the Internet and the company's Databases
Teamwork by distance	Typical examples are telemedicine, distance learning, e-commerce and distance research.
Tele-Services	They are external services to an organization, such as secretarial or remote technical support.

The concept of teleworking includes another concept, that of **Telecommuting**. The term Telecommuting refers to a form of work in which the employee works partly in his office and partly from home. This term is broad enough to include those employees who work from home voluntarily, for example on evenings or weekends, or those who work from home due to the policy of the employer company (National Institute of Labor and Human Resources, 2020).

2.3 Historical retrospective of teleworking and FWA

2.3.1. Global historical review

Interest in the practice of telecommuting seems to have first started after the end of World War II. However, at an early stage, the home-based work of various professionals such as bakers, dressmakers, shoemakers, potters, weavers, brewers, blacksmiths, during the Middle Ages can be considered as early remote work. At that time, either men or women could work at home, without any gender discrimination. But a few centuries later, during the industrial revolution (1760 – 1840), strong social movements for working outside the home were created. While, at the beginning of the 19th century, the first modern business offices began to appear in the USA (the

cubicle-style office, designed in 1968). And, **in 1926, the Ford Motor Companies adopted the five-day work, with 40 hours weekly work.**

The history of FWA is also set on around these times, the 1930s, with the W. K. Kellogg Co.'s willingness to move away from the standard schedules of eight hours a day, five days a week. The cereal company changed from three shifts of eight hours each to four shifts of six hours. This experiment took an end when President Franklin D. Roosevelt required companies to run at full capacity for war needs. In 1945, author Albert Morton Persoff proposed giving all working Americans a paid sabbatical every seven years in order to face unemployment and create a happier, more productive workforce. His idea did not win universal acceptance.

Continuing with modern times, after the end of World War II, women with work experience and qualifications, who, during the war, worked in the tasks of men (who had been sent to war), they were forced to withdraw from their duties when the men returned from the front. Returning to the home and household contributed to implementing an innovative way of working that of working from home (teleworking). Primarily, at that time, most women worked in advertising and marketing. The Tupperware company was one of the first companies to take advantage of these women and implement a work-from-home policy.

During the 1970s, telecommuting began to gain special interest. Back then, the term telecommuting was used to denote working away from the office, primarily using telephone communication as a substitute for an employee's physical presence at a company's offices. Back then, environmental movements and institutions saw working from home as an opportunity to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. After all, telecommuting meant less travel, which translated into fewer vehicles on the road, less pollution in the air, and a lot of support from green environmental movements. In particular, this idea was supported in 1976 in the book "The Telecommunications Transportation Tradeoff", by Jack Nilles, who was working on NASA's communications systems. He is considered the father of modern telecommuting. In 1972, Hewlett Packard offered flexible working arrangements at its Waltham MA plant. In 1978, West Germany coined the term "flex time", establishing policies to balance work and family. In the late 1970s, IBM also allowed five of its employees to work from home. He did

this as part of an experiment. By 1983, approximately 2,000 employees of the company in question were working from home. In the 1980s, interest in telecommuting continued to grow, both among employees and employers, communities and the telecommunications industry. Also, in the mid-1980s, the company "J. C. Penney" allowed all of its call center employees to work from home. At the end of this decade (around 1987), in the US, the number of telecommuting workers reached 1.50 million employees.

In the 1990s, with the development of technology and the widespread use of the Internet and Wi-Fi wireless network, there was a significant increase in telecommuting. In the middle of that decade, companies and government institutions began acquiring items and equipment that could help employees work from home. The number of companies that implemented telecommuting was constantly increasing (Vries, et al., 2019). In the years that followed, many companies began to introduce telecommuting (even for a few times a week or month), enjoying the benefits that telecommuting can offer. The evolution of this form of work made many states, across around the world to create laws to protect the rights of remote workers. All this, until 2020, and the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, where governments around the world made teleworking mandatory as a measure to limit the spread of virus.

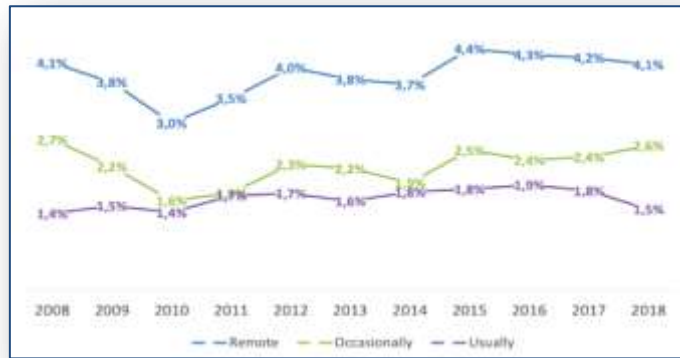
2.3.2. Historical review in Greece

Continuing, with the data of Greece, before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, teleworking was not particularly developed in the country, but neither was the number of employees working remotely controlled systematically. A survey carried out in 2002 by the Labor Institute (INE), the Hellenic General Confederation of Labor (GSEE) and the Confederation of Public Employees (Supreme Administration of Unions of Public Employees, ADEDY) showed that the percentage of employees who worked via telework then was just 1.10%. At that time companies were concerned about the growth of remote working practices, having a positive attitude towards it. Meanwhile, unions were concerned about the nature of contracts and the labor rights of telecommuters. They argued that a more specific regulatory framework was initially needed. In 1997, the labour force of Greece was 3,680,000 people of which 16,380 were teleworkers, a percentage of 0.46%.

A year later, in 2003, a study by the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection (YPAKP) stated that the actual number of people who are engaged in telecommuting in Greece is probably unknown. Unofficial statistics estimated that the number of employees under the telework regime amounted to 50,000 people (1.14% of the country's total workforce). The frequency of telework adoption was relatively higher in the industrial sector. Moreover, this new - for Greece - form of employment mainly attracted organizations and companies that are members of large business groups or multinationals, whose parent companies abroad had begun to adopt practices and organizational models of the telework regime. Occupations that mainly engaged in remote work were occupations that required familiarity with and use of new technologies (writers, journalists, translators, accountants, programmers).

A few years later, during the period 2006 - 2007, the National General Collective Labor Agreement (GLA) incorporated into the statutory framework for Greek labor relations the European framework agreement on the employment status of telecommuting. This integration covered all workers, in every sector and branch of the economy. But, due to the various parameters of the framework, the said agreement was essentially not implemented. For example, one of the articles of this framework agreement stipulated that the decision to switch to the telework regime is reversible. At this point it is up to both sides to determine the terms and conditions under which an employee under the telework regime could return to his previous employment status with the company. The EGSE did not make the provision more specific, as had been done in other European Union countries (Eurofound, 2021).

Subsequently, **before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, in Greece only 5% of employees were working remotely (2015 data).**



Graph 1. Percentage of Greek Workers under the Telework Regime (Occasionally or Usually), data 2008 – 2018. Source: <https://docs.iza.org/dp13408.pdf>

However, after the outbreak of the pandemic, the percentage of Greek employees working remotely or in some type of flexible work arrangement was 26,2% (Eurofound,2020). Furthermore, 95% of the country's businesses implemented some form of remote work. Even before the pandemic, the legal framework for remote work remained limited. Remote work was voluntary for both the employer and the employee. The employer could not force the employee to work under the telework regime, and could not fire an employee who rejected the remote work proposal. Efforts have been made to reform the existing legal framework, in order to address the various challenges that already exist or may arise from the establishment of teleworking in Greek society. The reforms are also related to the safe use of necessary work equipment, data security, and technical support. Whereas, the requirements for the health and safety of workers, of course, they still apply in remote working conditions. Employees working under the telework regime must enjoy the same rights as employees working in the company's offices/facilities each company and not to feel disconnected from the company and the employer.

2.4. Policies of Teleworking and FWA

2.4.1. European Policies

The regulation of telework in the European Union is defined by the European Framework Agreement on Telework, concluded between the European Social Partners

in 2002, pursuant to Article 139 of the EC Treaty, at the European Council's request (SEV, 2019).

The European Framework Agreement on Teleworking has the aim of establishing a general institutional framework for teleworking at European level, which will contribute to the encouragement and development of teleworking, "in a way that combines flexibility and job security and avoids degradation of the general level of protection of workers "(Article 1).

The Agreement establishes the general principles of the voluntary nature of telework (Article 3) and the guarantee of equal rights of teleworkers with comparable employees within the company's premises.

The ESPT also defines the responsibility of the employer for the provision of appropriate equipment and technical support as well as covering the cost of provision, especially telecommunications, while leaving significant room for flexibility to employers and employees.

*Finally, a number of sub-issues related to data protection, privacy, hygiene and security are regulated, but following a minimalist approach. That is, the obligations of employers and employees are not listed in detail but are referred to the existing regulations deriving from the *acquis communautaire* (eg Directive 91/533 / EEC on the employer's obligation to inform the employee of the terms of the contract or employment relationship, Framework Directive 89/391 / EC on safety and health).*

Unlike other similar agreements made under Article 139 of the Treaty (parental leave, part-time work, fixed-term work), the ESCP gave the member states the ability to implement it either by passing special laws that incorporate the regulations of the ESPT in the labor legislation, or by concluding collective agreements at the appropriate level (national, sectoral, operational), either with tools of the so-called soft law (non-binding guidelines, informal agreements, etc.), or even with a combination of the

above regulatory instruments. In this way, 5 different models of integration in its national law emerged following the procedures and practices of the social partners and Member States concerned (Image 2).

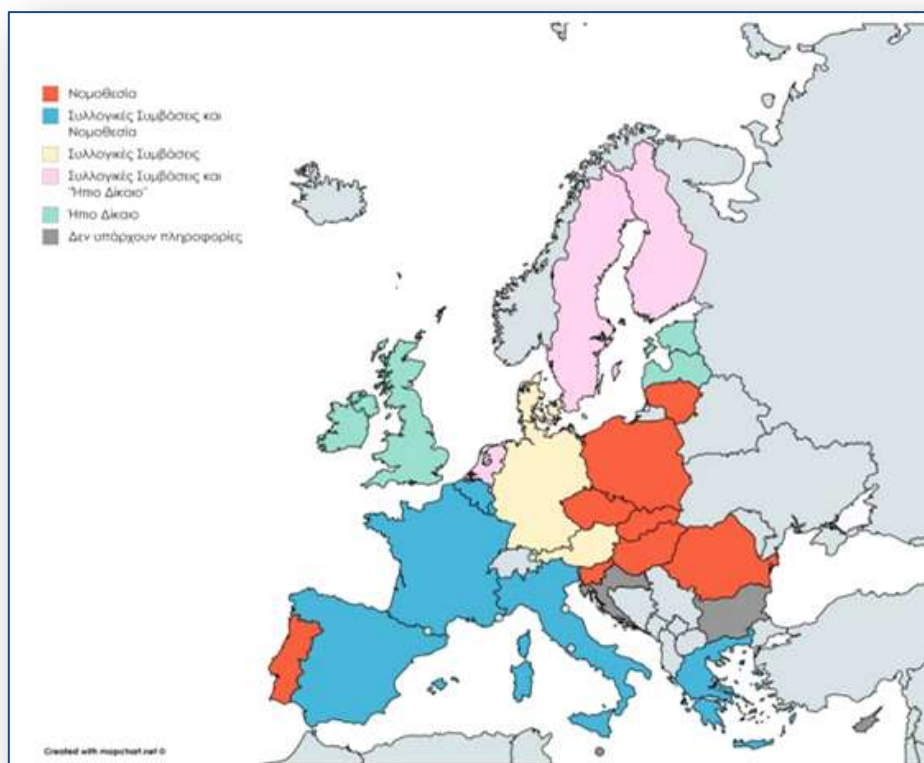


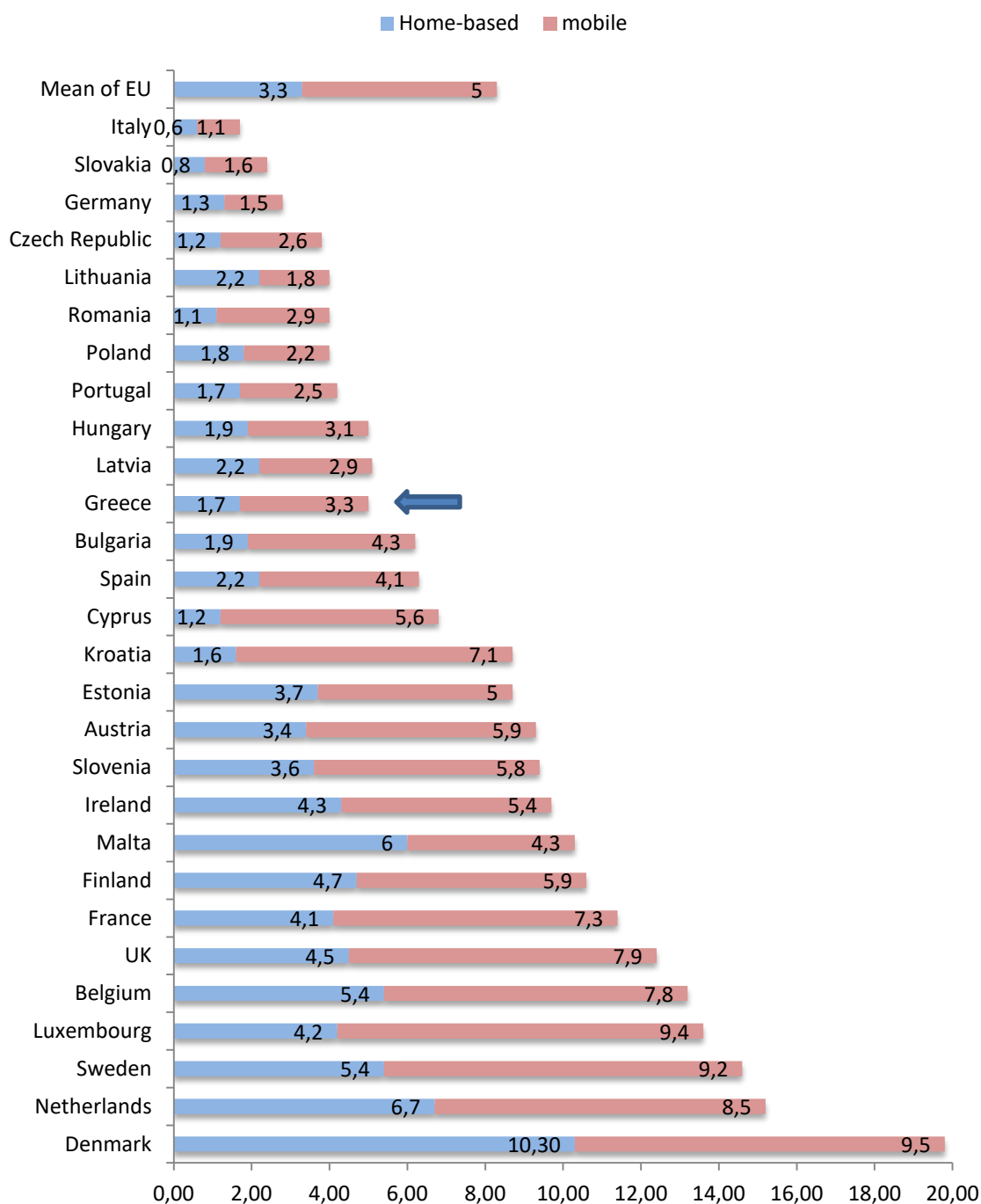
Image 2. Models of integration into national law of teleworking in the EU. Source: Eurofound, European Commission and SEV (2019).¹

It is noteworthy that countries such as Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Finland, where teleworking is regulated by informal rules, have a much higher degree of penetration than countries that have adopted legally binding regulations (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Lithuania, Hungary).

Across the EU, about 17% of employees were engaged in either telework or ICT-based mobile work, with most workers performing it occasionally rather than on a regular basis (Eurofound and the International Labour Office, 2017). Regular home teleworkers in EU countries account for 3.3% of the total of employees and mobile teleworkers at 5%. At the same time, a 10% teleworks on an occasional basis. That is, by 2017, despite technological advances, the vast majority continue to work in the

¹ Red countries: legislation, blue countries: collective agreements & legislation, yellow countries: collective agreements, pink countries: collective agreements & "mild" justice, green countries: "mild" justice, grey countries: no information.

traditional way. However, there are significant variations in the degree of penetration of telework between countries (Graph 2).



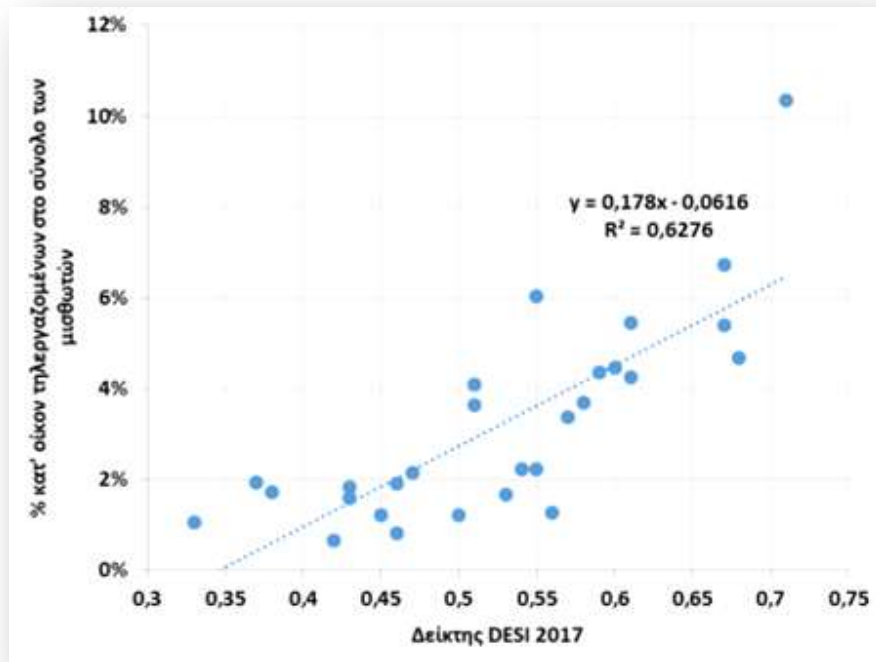
Graph 2. Teleworking in the EU. Source: ILO and Eurofound (2017). Working anytime, anywhere: the effects on the world of work.

It is indicative that in Denmark, which is by far the first country with the highest penetration of teleworking, one in five employees (19.7%) teleworks on a regular basis, while the corresponding percentage in Italy, which is at the bottom of the ranking is 2%. In general, teleworking is more widespread in Northern and Western

Europe and less so in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe. Greece, in 2017, ranks 18th with regular teleworkers amounting to 5% (1.7% at home and 3.3% mobile teleworking).

The relative delay in Greece is associated with the timeless difficulty of adapting to changing conditions due to technological changes or new trends in work organization (SEV, 2019). The need for a fruitful social dialogue for the future of work seeking creative solutions in the light of new technological possibilities remains relevant. The strengthening of telework is, after all, an important factor for the increase of labour productivity, which in our country fell by 12% in the years of crisis (2009-2013). At the same time, SEV studies have shown that, as internationally, the highest penetration of teleworking occurs in knowledge-intensive industries and businesses, such as the IT, healthcare and logistics industries. Their development and expansion is a key issue for our country. Since teleworking is linked to the use of ICT, the country's digital maturity was correlated, as determined by the DESI3 index, with the degree of penetration of the various forms of teleworking. The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) is a complex index developed by the European Commission (CNECT) to assess the progress of EU countries towards a digital economy and society. This index brings together a series of relevant indicators structured around 5 parameters: connectivity (Connectivity), human capital (Human Capital), use of Internet, integration of digital technology (Integration of Digital Technology) and digital public services (Digital Public Services). DESI scores range from 0 to 1. The higher the score the better the country's performance.

A strong positive correlation was found between the value of the DESI index and the extent of home teleworking (D2) but also with mobile teleworking, although less intense (Graph below). The general conclusion is that a country's progress in the field of digital maturity is necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the spread of telework.



Graph 3. Home-based teleworking and digital maturity. Percentage of home-based teleworkers to the total no. of employees. Source: SEV (2019), EWCS (2015) and DESI Index (2017).

The Telework Research Network estimates that about half of jobs in developed countries such as the US, Canada and the United Kingdom could be teleworking, at least on a part-time basis. The benefit to businesses and employees from implementing teleworking is estimated at \$ 52 million in the UK and Canada to \$ 645 million per year in the US. In Europe, there are still significant differences in the spread of distance work. The International Labor Organization (ILO) survey (2017) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) found that in the EU28, full-time employees make up 8.3% of all employees.

Although the recent reports highlighted the benefits of these new forms of work (teleworking and FWA), such as a reduction in commuting time and greater time flexibility, which can facilitate a better work–life balance, it pointed out that this new mode of working can also lead to working beyond normal or contractual working hours, with work and personal life often overlapping (Eurofound and the International Labour Office, 2017).

2.4.2. Greek policies

In Greece, the institutional framework largely follows European standards and is generally satisfactory. The National General Collective Employment Contract 2006 - 2007 incorporated for the first time the European Framework Agreement for Teleworking. Provisions concerning Teleworking are also mentioned in Law 3846/2010 "Guarantees for occupational safety and other provisions". In Article 5 of the law, some basic issues that were considered not adequately covered by the EGSSE are regulated and concern (SEV, 2019):

1. The employer's obligation to inform the employee, in writing, 8 days after the conclusion of the contract on all issues related to the performance of the work.
2. The establishment of a three-month adjustment period during which it is possible to unilaterally revoke the conversion of normal work to telework, either by the employer or by the employee.
3. The strengthening of the ESPT's provisions regarding the employer's obligation to cover the cost of teleworking.
4. The obligation of the employer to inform the employee within 2 months of the conclusion of the contract about the identity and contact details of the staff representatives in the company.

However, there are individual problems in the implementation of teleworking mainly due to the complexity and rigidity of current labor and tax law. For example, while employers are responsible for covering the costs caused by the provision of telework and in particular telecommunications, the strict restrictions governing non-wage benefits, under Law 4173/2012 do not make it easier for the company to cover the costs, without the employee being asked to pay additional tax on payments that are essentially part of the company's production costs and will therefore should not be charged as non-wage benefits (for the excess of € 300 per year).

Similarly, while part-time teleworking is not prohibited by the institutional framework, it is difficult to combine in practice with regular work on a daily basis / basis, as there are conflicting interpretations as to whether the business is covered in the event of scrutiny by the competent authorities. In order for a business to be

completely legal, teleworking days must either be strictly predetermined (e.g. every Wednesday), or the employment contract must be revised each time the teleworker's schedule changes. It is obvious that neither of the above two solutions is practically applicable, with the result that companies use teleworking for the benefit of employees, but at the risk of different interpretations of the law by the respective control mechanisms.

Also, the formal application of the generally applicable legal framework regarding the observance of working hours cannot be fully controlled in the case of teleworking, given the inherent difficulty of controlling the start and end time of teleworking. On the contrary, there is room for abusive practices regarding overtime, either on the part of the employer (imposition of informal overtime) or on the part of the employee (invoking unfulfilled overtime). In addition, the existing restrictions on the application of increased and variable break time in practice cancel out one of the most important advantages of teleworking, i.e. the ability of the teleworker to adjust his time at will in order to handle personal, family and professional affairs in the optimal time manner. It is pointed out that these issues have been addressed in several European countries (Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) with special regulations that give great autonomy to the employer and the employee in determining the schedule, with the exception of generally applicable provisions

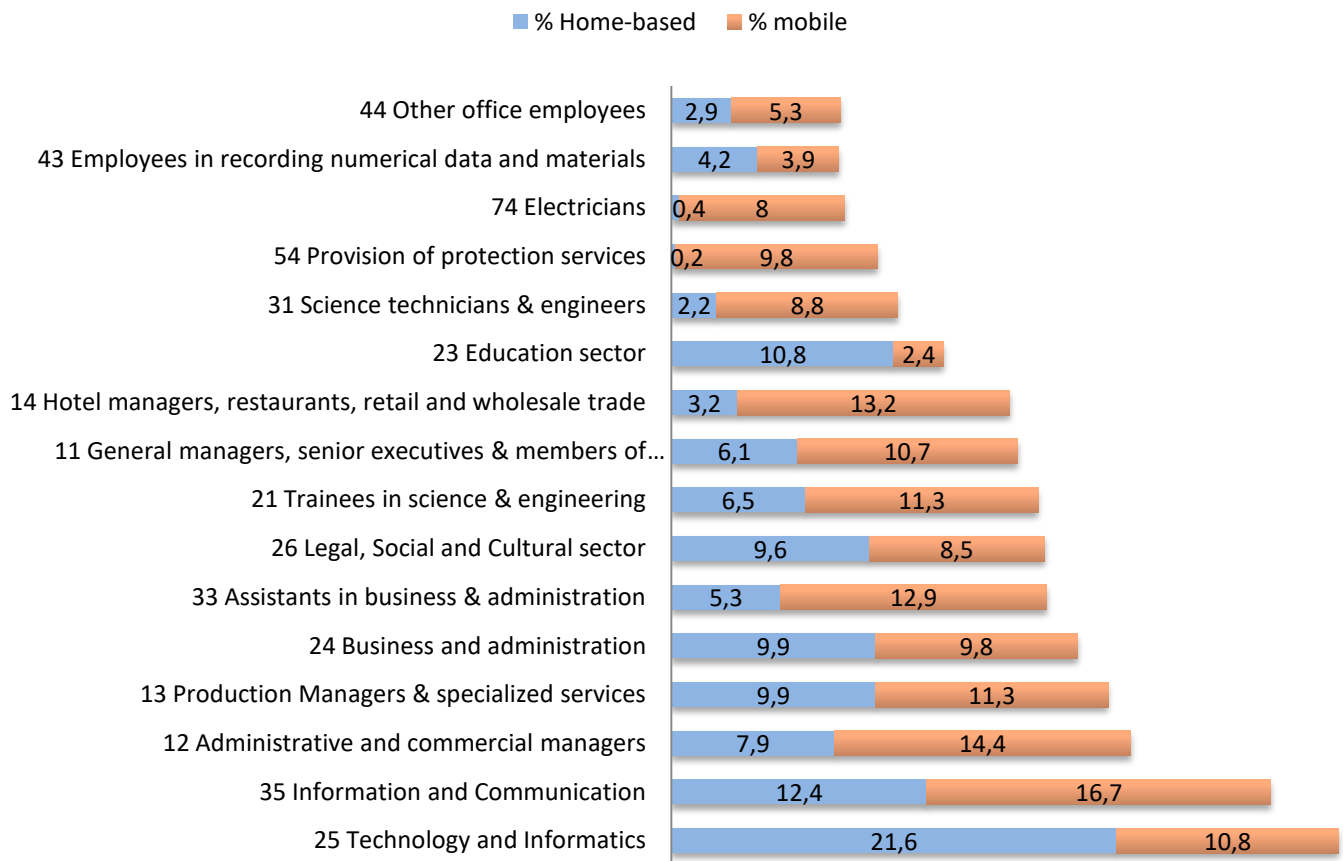
The main problems with the existing legal framework for teleworking do not derive from the provisions on teleworking which are largely based on corresponding European ones. The problems stem from the multiplicity, complexity and overall rigidity of Greek labor legislation, which fails to incorporate the expanding principles of flexibility and variability that govern modern "post-industrial" societies (SEV, 2019).

2.5. Occupation sectors with higher use of teleworking and FWA

Despite teleworking diversity in relation to the flexibility of arranging the place and time of work, a fact that allowed its dissemination and adaptation to the needs of companies, its very nature is not suitable for all kinds of professional specialties of employees and any kind of operational needs of businesses. In general, teleworking is

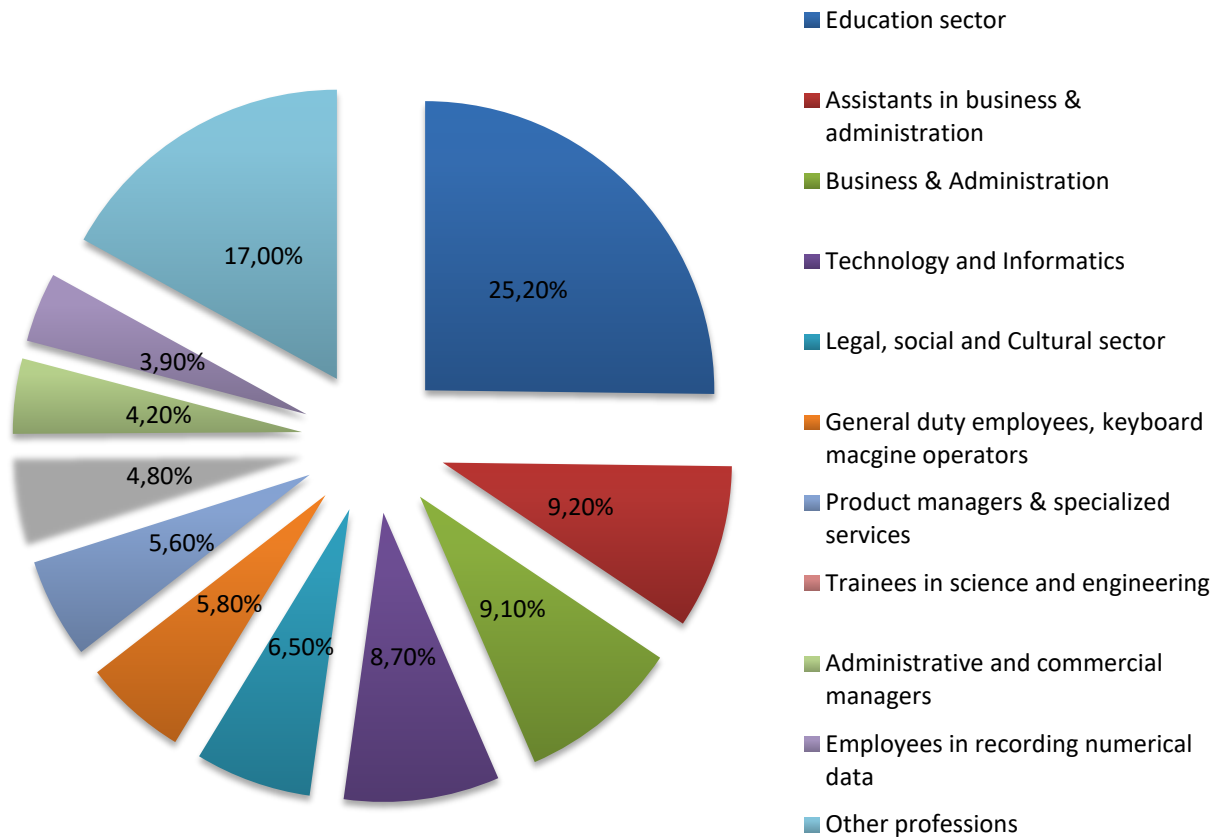
normally used in service companies that have the appropriate information systems infrastructure and develop online communication and customer service. In order for teleworking to find fertile ground for growth, the tasks assigned to employees need to have specific features, such as the ability to perform them without personal contact with other people on a daily basis, the ability to organize periodic meetings remotely through technology, the ability to target within specific time intervals, the ability to access information electronically, the ability to use even basic technological equipment, the ability to perform work tasks with flexible hours and measurable results.

According to the Special Report by SEV (2019), teleworking is considered to be more widespread and applicable at European level, in the areas of financial services and information and technology services, and then in public administration, defense and education. Finally, as evidenced by relevant research, another feature of teleworking is that it is more prevalent in high-level professions (senior managers, professionals, technicians and related professions). As we see in the following Graph only 16 of the total 42 occupations included in this classification have a percentage of teleworkers higher than the general European average (8%). Of these professions, 12 are characterized as high level of qualifications and 4 as medium level of qualifications.



Graph 4. Occupations that use teleworking more than the general average (% of teleworkers out of total employees practicing the profession). Source: SEV calculations based on EWCS 2015.

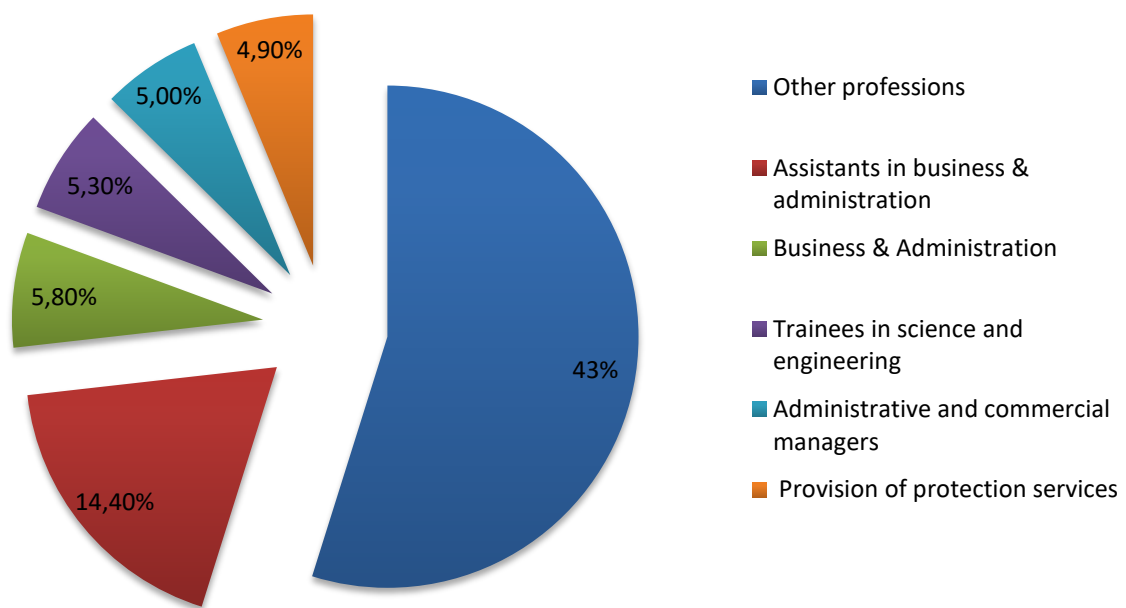
Therefore, it is concluded that teleworking focuses on specific professions with a high level of qualifications. As we see in the following Graph, the vast majority of home teleworkers (83%) come from 10 occupations, while 17% practice another of the 42 professions. Of the 10 professions with the highest share, 8 are considered high level qualifications and only 2 medium level qualifications.



Graph 5. Shares of home-based telecommuting professionals (ISCO-08). Source: SEV calculations based on EWCS 2015.

In mobile teleworking the concentration trend is less pronounced, as the share of 10 represents just over half of teleworkers (Graph 3). Here, too, the professions of high level of qualifications dominate, but there are also 2 professions that are considered as intermediate level of qualifications, as well as one of low level of qualifications. Teleworking can potentially be applied as a relatively regular form of work to 35% -40% of the workforce in EU countries depending on the structure of each country's economy, in specific industries and professions, which are considered "teleworkable" and in combination with a number of factors (National Institute of Labor and Human Resources, 2020). For Greece, it is estimated that approximately 25% of employees (up to 500,000 employees) in total could work fully teleworkable with an additional 12% of employees having high telework rotation capabilities.

The expansion of teleworking will be further marked in office and administrative occupations where the use of computers is the main means of work, in the sense that teleworking is expected to include a larger number of low- and middle-paid employees, compared to the pre-pandemic situation, where teleworking concerned more executives and senior administrative, financial or technical executives of companies with great autonomy in terms of their organization and working time (National Institute of Labor and Human Resources, 2020).



Graph 6. Shares of mobile telecommuting professionals (ISCO-08). Source: SEV calculations based on EWCS 2015.

At the same time, teleworking is a tool for companies to respond to modern trends and desires of employees, especially the generation of Millennials, who record a desire for flexibility in the organization of place, manner and time of work.

Chapter 3. The employees' Work Experience

3.1. Introduction

From the moment a prospective employee reads a job opening, to the moment they leave the company after having worked there for a period, everything that the employee does, learns, sees, and feels contributes to their **employee experience**. For an organization to excel in employee experience management, they should listen to their employees at each stage of the employee lifecycle, identify what aspects are important to them, and create personalized experiences. The employee experience is essential to performance, productivity and mental health. Ultimately, it is their experiences – positive and negative – that will influence the way they work, how much they collaborate, or how much they invest in improving the operational performance. Since money is no longer the primary and most important motivating factor for employees, focusing on the employee experience is the most valuable competitive advantage that organizations can create.

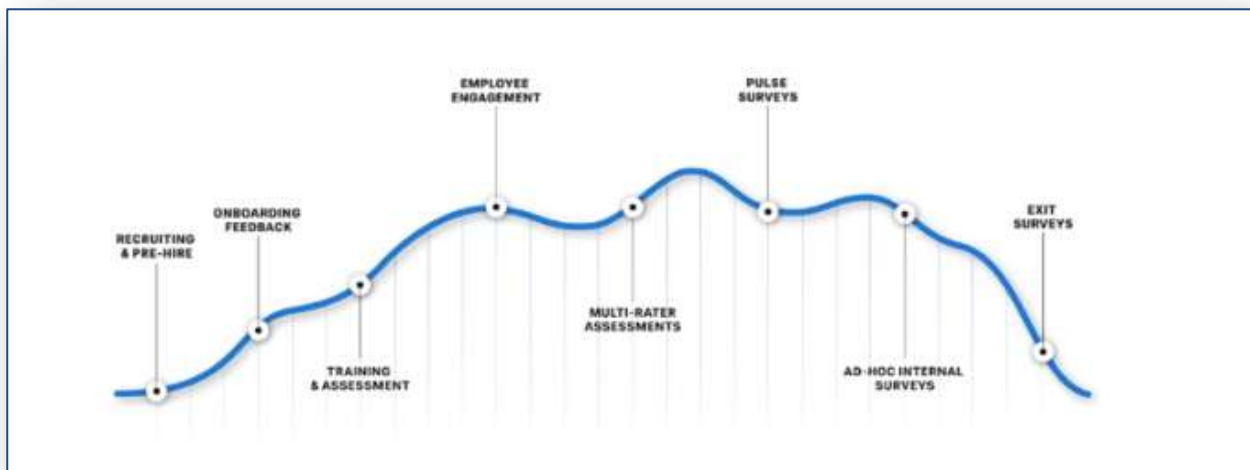


Image 3. The 5 stages of employee work experience.

3.2. The effect of Teleworking and FWA on employee experience

3.2.1. The advantages of teleworking and FWA on employee experience

Teleworking can bring significant, reciprocal, benefits to businesses and employees. For businesses, the main benefits are an increase in productivity of up to 50% (Bailey and Kurland, 2002; Fonner and Roloff, 2010; Golden and Veiga, 2008; Martinez-Sanchez et al., 2008; Tremblay and Genin, 2007), the attraction and retention of younger staff, a reduction in operating expenses, but also a reduction in emergency absences. However, in the present dissertation, the focus lies on the employee experience.

For employees, teleworking has been found to improve the balance between work and personal life and brings economic benefits, mainly through reduced travel. It also increases employment opportunities for social groups, which until now had limited employment opportunities (e.g. disabled and new mothers), but also for those living in remote areas, with simultaneous benefits for the environment, due to the potential reduction in vehicle traffic in roads and the corresponding energy savings. Furthermore, telecommuting can offer more employment opportunities for employees because they can also look for work in companies located far from their place of residence. At the same time, the place of residence is a product of free choice as it is released from the consideration of the parameter of employment prospects that a specific area has.

According to the recent, scientifically documented positions of the Economic and Social Committee (OKE, 2020), which is one of the leading social dialogue institutions in Greece, the positive aspects of Teleworking are:

- The increased opportunities to access the labour market of special population groups (such as facilitating the integration into the labour market of people with disabilities, or people for whom telecommuting is deemed preferable, due to parental, family or other obligations).
- The reduction of environmental burdens through the reduction of transport needs and therefore traffic congestion, noise and air pollution.

- Its potential to contribute to the retention of the population in the region with a positive impact on regional development and social cohesion, as it provides equal opportunities to the labour force in the rural areas and the employees in the larger urban centres.
- The increase in productivity through the modernization of the organization of work and the provision of services of the organization after the end of the standard operating hours of its offices.
- The reduction of fixed operating costs of businesses (e.g. energy savings, reduction of operating costs of building and mechanical equipment).
- The increase of initiative and better management of human resources as it enables expansion.

3.2.2. The disadvantages of teleworking and FWA on employee experience

The implementation of telework, in addition to the benefits it offers to employees, also entails risks associated with the exclusion of some teleworkers from the protection of labour law by entering into independent work contracts that conceal dependent work. At the same time, there is a risk of reduced protection for teleworkers as the phenomenon of circumvention of certain employment and insurance rights is observed. Possible problems - disadvantages of teleworking according to the positions of the Economic and Social Committee (OKE 2020), can include:

- The difficulties of controlling the place and time of work, resulting in doubts as to the legal nature of telework, i.e. whether this is a contract of dependent work or whether there is a risk of being included in the "grey zone", between dependent work and work in the form of independent service provision. In this case, the risk of not applying the protective provisions is visible provisions of labour and insurance law (OKE, 2020).
- The risk of confusion and crossing the boundaries between professional and private life, with consequences even for the mental and physical health of the teleworker. The flexibility of time and pace of work, telecommuting and the wide range of combinations of telework and other flexible forms of work, which can lead to work intensification and excessive commitment (Koukiadis, 1996).

- The risk that the operating costs of the business or part of them (such as electricity, telephone, purchase and maintenance costs of the equipment) will be burdened by the employee himself, in the home telecommuting and in the absence of a clear institutional framework.
- The risk of breaching the privacy of telecommuters, as the exercise of managerial authority using new technologies, may take the form of electronic surveillance, the extent of which may exceed the limits of employees' privacy (Papadopoulos, 2021).
- The risk of non-compliance with the health and safety rules of home teleworkers: e.g. unsuitable workplace, unsuitable air conditioning, heating and furniture unsuitable for correct posture and computer placement, work stress, worsening of illness or risk of accident at work (OKE, 2020).
- Telecommuters find it difficult to realize organizational values and goals (Madsen, 2003), are less visible to others and feel weaker management support (Cooper and Kurland, 2002). Consequently, this lower visibility reduces teleworkers' career opportunities (Khalifa and Davison, 2000).
- However, the most important disadvantage of telecommuting is the reduced communication time with colleagues. Social isolation and lack of communication with colleagues have been cited as the main disadvantages of telecommuting (Baruch, 2000; Wilson and Greenhill, 2004). The lack of informal communication with colleagues and the lack of social interaction reduce telecommuters' organizational identification and limit identification with organizational values (Ammons and Markham, 2004; Cooper and Kurland, 2002).
- The growing scope of telecommuting has created its own challenges. Information technologies weaken face-to-face communication with colleagues, which is an important source of social interaction (Papadopoulos, 2021).

3.2.3. The study of Blumberga and Pylinskaya (2019)

Blumberga and Pylinskaya (2019) examined the advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting. As a case study, they took workers in Russia. Blumberga and Pylinskaya (2019) found that before the transition to telecommuting, more than a third of employees were dissatisfied with the existing format and organization of their work.

This has changed with the shift to telecommuting. After switching to telecommuting, their research results showed a reduction in stress levels, a reduction in office operating costs, and a growth in financial performance. Other advantages of telecommuting that the authors found were savings and better management of time and money (commuting time to/from work), as well as the balance between work and personal life. Conversely, after the transition to telecommuting, employees reported problems communicating with their managers, colleagues, and subordinates. Something that was recognized as a disadvantage of telecommuting. Finally, Blumberga and Pylinskaya (2020) recognized the need for effective, properly developed and coordinated communication and interaction process between managers and workers under the telework regime.

3.2.4. The study of Béland et al. (2020)

A year later, and after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Béland et al. (2020) examined the short-term consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and teleworking, on employment sectors, and on wages. For their purposes, their research obtained data from US workers. They used secondary data extracted from current population surveys, through comprehensive public use samples. These surveys are monthly surveys, which are addressed to approximately 60,000 households at a time. They are done either in person or via telephone interviews. The authors used data from January 2016 to March 2020, for people aged 16 to 70. Overall, 4.30% of the sample was unemployed, while 71% worked in factories and the manufacturing sector. Béland et al. (2020) concluded that the pandemic increased unemployment rates, reduced working hours, but had no significant impact on workers' wages. These negative effects were more pronounced in men, younger workers, Hispanics, and less educated workers. Essentially, the pandemic is increasing inequalities in the market work. Regarding telecommuting, the authors concluded that occupations that depend on physical proximity suffer more financially than occupations that can be practiced with the status of telecommuting.

3.2.5. The study of Brynjolfsson et al. (2020)

Likewise, Brynjolfsson et al. (2020) examine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and telecommuting on US workers. However, unlike Béland et al. (2020),

Brynjolfsson et al. (2020) limit their sample in time, to two short periods. The first period was between April 1 and 5, 2020, and the second period was between May 2 and 8, 2020. Also, the authors used primary data, extracted from a questionnaire survey constructed in Google browser. They created two surveys, based on the time period under consideration. About 25,000 people responded to each survey. Brynjolfsson et al. (2020) concluded that half of the workers who were working before the outbreak of the pandemic, after the outbreak they are working through the telework regime. Younger people appeared to work at a higher rate via telework. Of course, in agreement with the findings of Béland et al. (2020), there were also workers who were laid off after the outbreak of the pandemic.

3.2.6. Employee characteristics

The home-based teleworking model is inevitably affected by employee demographics, such as gender, age, and income (Santana and Cobo-Martín, 2020). Even in 2022, gender gaps in the workplace and at home continue to exist, which can lead to the misconception that women present lower productivity than men because they are burdened with the household chores and child caregiving (Fend and Savani, 2020). However, relevant studies before the Covid-19 pandemic has supported that women's productivity is similar –if not higher—compared to men's productivity (Bönte and Krabel, 2014). Income and age have also been the focus of many studies concerning the work-related productivity, showing that higher-waged, middle-aged employees are more productive than lower-waged, younger ones (Roosaar et al., 2019). The impact of these demographic factors on productivity in remote work is less clear.

To same extent, other factors at home, such as other family members, could change the standard age-income-productivity association. For instance, middle-aged employees who work in the presence of their children can become overwhelmed due to parenting demands at the expense of their work engagement and this can negatively influence their productivity (Gorlick, 2020). In addition to the demographic factors, working from home may also create challenges for employees with different jobs. Relevant studies have examined the effect of WFH on productivity within specific groups of employees but, there has not been a study that investigated effects of WFH on productivity across different professions. Home-based teleworking would have low risk

of performance loss for employees who mainly work with computers (e.g., programmers) compared to individuals working in jobs that require mixed tasks in an interpersonal environment (e.g., health care office workers).

Furthermore, WFH is associated with increased sedentary lifestyle and other potential hazards in the personal health and well-being. As it is expected, employee health has been consistently associated with productivity, in a sense that the healthier an employee is, the more productive he/she can be (Lerner et al., 2003). A variety of physical health issues such as eye strain, nose related symptoms, fatigue, and headache, as well as mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, and insomnia can all have a negative impact on performance. Specifically, there are many prior studies that have shown that reduced work performance is an effect of physical and mental health issues (Goetzl, 2004).

Workspace environment plays an essential role in shaping the employee's work experience. Satisfaction with one's workspace, privacy, and ability to personalize workspace are predictors for workers' productivity (Fasoulis and Alexopoulos, 2015; Soriano et al, 2020). Relevant studies have shown that separating the workspaces from the living spaces is an important factor when working from home. It is suggested to have a dedicated workspace in order to establish physical boundaries, assist workers create a productive work atmosphere, increase workers' willingness to stay longer hours at their workstation and communicate to other family members that they do not want to be distracted [Lopez and al, 2020]. To that extent, in a survey conducted by Suart et al. (2020) it was found that only 48.6% of the participants had a dedicated workspace, 31% were sharing their workspace with others and the remaining 20.4% were working living areas. In addition to the above, indoor environmental quality (IEQ) (e.g., lighting, temperature, ventilation, air quality, noise) also plays an important role in creating a satisfying work experience (Awada and Srour, 2018).

Regarding the age factor, Ernst & Young's 2015 Global Generations report asked millennials, Generation X and boomers to rate the following attributes:

- 45 percent (millenials), 44 percent (Gen X) and 33 percent (Boomers), respectively, said telework three to five days a week;

- 50 percent (millenials), 48 percent (Gen X) and 38 percent (Boomers), respectively, said they would like to telework one to two days a week;

These results show that millenials (born between 81'-96'), who are the younger participants of the study, preferred teleworking/FWA to a great extent than Gen X (born 65'-80') and Boomers (born 46'-64').

3.2. Job Satisfaction

In 2005, Lussier defined job satisfaction as the overall attitude of employees towards work. In their study Smith et al. (2018) shows that job satisfaction has five aspects, compensation, the work itself, promotion, the supervisor and co-workers. However, regardless of the perspective from which researchers study the concept of job satisfaction, their definitions of job satisfaction are more or less about the personal feelings of the employee. If employees have positive and pleasant feelings at work, their attitude towards work will be defined as job satisfaction (Zhu, 2013).

Teleworking, as a working model, meets the complex needs of employees as the flexibility it offers contributes to the balance between professional and private life, the variety of different types of employment contracts, mobility in the labour market between companies and sectors of the economy and the access to training programs given that labour and insurance rights are guaranteed. Teleworking reduces commuting time and offers the employee the possibility of flexibility in organizing their working time (Gurstein, 2001; Morgan, 2004), given the increased pace of the modern lifestyle, which is valued by employees as part of the quality of their work and increases their satisfaction. It also helps people avoid commuting and reduces other expenses, such as parking and fuel (Weikle, 2018), while it can increase other costs, such as internet connection and electric bills. It is noteworthy that, in that direction, 40% of Canadian businesses were reimbursing at least in part home office costs during teleworking in Covid-19 pandemic (Conference Board of Canada, 2020).

Employees enjoy a more efficient distribution of working time, meeting their needs in terms of increasing free time (Ammons and Markham, 2004; Johnson et al., 2007), reconciling professional and private life and generally adapting working time to their lifestyle (e.g. simultaneous work and childcare, of people with disability or

elderly, combination of holidays and work, work during the weekend, early morning or late at night, etc.) (Morgan, 2004). Teleworking can therefore contribute to the harmonious development of the employee's personality through his work. Additionally, greater flexibility in managing time and work structure frees the workforce from excessive regulation and control by offering an increased sense of freedom and initiative, opportunity for self-expression, self-esteem and job satisfaction (Harpaz, 2002).

Teleworking and/or FWA are forms of employment that can satisfy young and highly skilled workers who want a less dependent employment regime and offer the worker the possibility to earn more money as he has the flexibility to work for more employers.

A recent study realized by Eurofound (2020) concluded that of those working from home during the crisis, 54% of employees reported having worked from home before, while 46% were new telecommuters. Most are satisfied with the implementation of teleworking and wish to continue working from home. The experience of working from home during the COVID-19 crisis appears to have been positive for the majority of employees who did so. Respondents were particularly satisfied with the quality of their work (77%), somewhat less so with the volume of work completed (69%), and 70% being "overall satisfied with the experience of working from home". More than half of employees can count on receiving support from colleagues and managers. This support is part of the total resources available at work, which not only supports them in coping with the demands of the job, but it is also crucial in enhancing motivation to achieve goals and personal development (Eurofound, 2020).

The positive relationship between telecommuting and job satisfaction has been confirmed by a number of empirical studies (Golden & Veiga, 2005; Smith et al., 2018). On the other hand, studies support that the positive benefits of telecommuting are offset by a reduction in social interaction and feelings of isolation (Cooper & Kurland, 2002). Due to the separation of telecommuters from the office environment, the negative effects of isolation and reduced social interaction can worsen employees' relationship with their supervisors and colleagues, which in turn can lead to job dissatisfaction (Yap & Tng, 1990).

Finally, the results of Golden & Veiga (2005), regarding the relationship between telework and job satisfaction, showed a negative correlation between level and telework. That is, when the level of telecommuting is relatively low, job satisfaction increases, while when the level of telecommuting increases, the effects of loss of interaction and feelings of isolation offset the benefits of telecommuting, with a negative impact on job satisfaction. On the contrary, Suh & Lee (2017), using technology stress as a mediating factor, argue that the lower the intensity of telecommuting, the greater the stress and, by extension, the smaller the job satisfaction.

Therefore it is found that there is no consensus in the international literature regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and telecommuting (Athanasiadou & Theriou, 2021).

3.3. Wellness

Work-life wellness, which is defined as being well in various aspects of life and feel well concerning the work-life balance, is essentially connected to mental health. Work-life balance simply means finding balance between work life and personal life. According to Soni and Bakrhu (2019), work-life balance should not be mistaken with equal division of hours to personal and work life, as it may be hinted by the term. It is a rather subjective division of time to work and personal life, as the individual wishes. According to Lunau et al. (2014), poor work-life balance correlates with lower self-rated health and mental well-being in a sample of European employees from different professions. Haar et al. (2014) has shown that work-life balance for employees who worked full-time, was negatively associated with depression/anxiety. Rudolph et al. (2020) included work-family problems and telework as two of the ten most important industrial/organizational psychology research in order to support society during the pandemic.

Organizations who offer remote work as a possibility to their staff, chose this type of model to minimize land expenses, retain talent, recruit younger employees, and boost mental health (Anderson, Kaplan, & Vega, 2015; Vilhelmson & Thulin, 2016; Weikle, 2018). Working from home, though, may bring more isolation and less cooperation between employees (Siqueira, Dias, & Medeiros, 2019).

The company Best Buy found that employees who worked in flexible work arrangements, which involved telework, slept 52 minutes more every night, they were more likely to book an appointment with a doctor when sick, slept better due to better work–life balance, they were less stressed and reported better overall health (Moen et al. 2011). The results of the study by Society for Human Resource Management (2014), showed that 68% of human resource professionals supported that flexible work arrangements ameliorated the employees' quality of life and 58% supported that it had a positive outcome on employee health and wellness. Only 5% of human resource professionals reported that flexible work arrangements increased absenteeism.

According to Lister and Harnish (2010), teleworking and FWA have a positive effect on employee health and well-being due to the following:

- More time to care for family members, such as children and elderly and thus, less worrying about them.
- More time for family, fitness, friends and themselves
- Less stress from transportations and traffic congestions and accidents
- More empowerment owing to the trust they enjoy by their supervisor and managing their own time;
- Less work–life conflict;
- Reduced danger by illnesses at the workplace
- Reduced stress from office distractions;
- More satisfaction, productivity and better performance
- Working while being at the comfort of your home (clothes, surroundings)
- More sleep;
- Working at their own schedule.

At the same time, teleworking and FWA also have negative health and wellness effects, such as the following:

- Stress and burnout from always being available to the employer
- Feeling alone and isolated
- Not informed on important communications that occur in the workplace
- Unclear boundaries of working and not working

- Fear of losing participation in projects or promotion opportunities
- Feeling pressured of doing home chores by family members due to their presence at home
- More sedentary life
- More inclined to eat more, sleep more or work more
- Feeling less productive
- Tend to work even during sick days

3.4. Job Stress

In a recent study by Montano and Acebes (2020), Covid-19 stress predicted depression, anxiety, and stress. “Covid stress” mainly refers to the COVID stress syndrome, which includes fear of contamination, along with xenophobia, trauma symptoms and compulsive checking (Montano & Acebes, 2020; Taylor et al., 2020).

Dodi Wirawan Irawanto, Khusnul Rofida Novianti and Kenny Roz in their work “Work from Home: Measuring Satisfaction between Work–Life Balance and Work Stress during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia” (2021) examine job satisfaction in terms of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study was to fill scientific gaps by investigating various determinants of job satisfaction from home in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors are the balance between professional and personal life (Work-Life Balance) and work stress (Work stress).

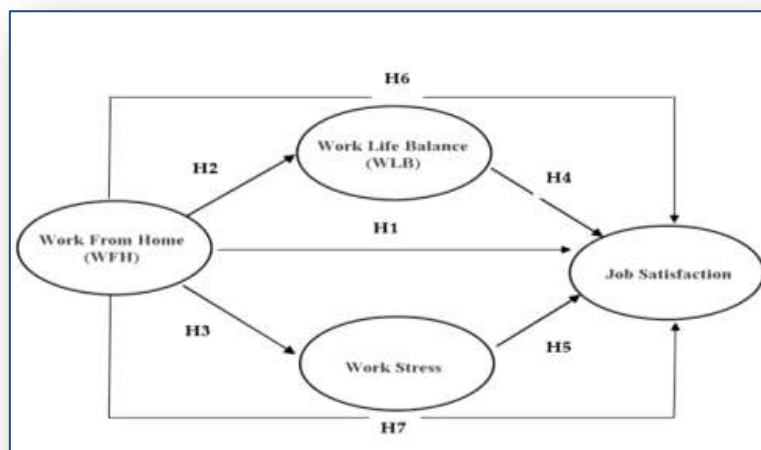


Image 4. Model of Job Satisfaction by Dodi Wirawan Irawanto et al. (2021)

The study revealed that work from home (WFH), work-life balance (WLB) and working stress (WS) have a significant impact, both directly and indirectly, to job satisfaction. The conclusions they reached with their research were:

- Working from home as a new work rhythm can affect employees' work-life balance and work stress.
- In addition, it is also necessary to pay attention to the provision of support from the office in IT and software matters, as their inadequacy leads to a decrease in job satisfaction.
- Organizational leaders should pay attention to the satisfaction of their employees during their work from home.

However, most empirical research shows both positive and negative effects. For example, telecommuting is found to have exacerbated feelings of mental and physical fatigue among employees in a large company, as these individuals struggle to balance their work, their personal needs and their responsibilities. The specific approach concerns that many employees feel pressured by their employers who want to monitor them, but do not develop strategies on their own to avoid burnout. Researchers from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) believe that “isolation is not only a source of stress but also a source of chronic stress” (Weinert et al., 2015). While isolation and stress don't necessarily rank on the same scale, they can have similar effects on the brain. Telecommuting creates job stress related to factors such as overwork, short deadlines, intense and long working hours, inability to stop and reduced breaks (Hartig et al., 2007).

Focusing on the employee's constant desire to impress the boss, there are often troubling behaviors of telecommuters. For example, the excessive and continuous sitting appears to increase the risk of death from cardiovascular disease and the aforementioned cancer. To that extent, the long-term effects of poor posture can affect body systems such as digestion, breathing, muscles, joints and ligaments. Working for many hours at a computer, usually at home, is associated not only with a static and restricted posture with repeated movements and with long periods of continuous work. Thus, musculoskeletal problems are created in the neck, shoulders, wrist, hand and lower back (Crawford et al., 2011).

3.5. Job Performance

The increase in employee productivity and performance during teleworking and/or FWA is one of the most important arguments for the establishment of telework as a new work arrangement. The increase in productivity according to Hesse and Grantham, (1991) results from time saving that is otherwise wasted on resolving differences and problems between colleagues. Telecommuters can be more productive because they can work during their most productive time and be less distracted by their colleagues (Golden and Veiga, 2008; Martinez-Sanchez et al., 2008; Tremblay and Genin, 2007).

Derrick Neufeld and Yulin Fang (2005) investigated the topic of productivity during telecommuting. According to the research they carried out, they wanted to examine how employees' beliefs and attitudes about telework, the quality of their social interactions with their supervisors, fellow customers and family members, and the work environment (equipment, distraction) are related directly with productivity. The main conclusion of the research was that opinions and beliefs determine productivity in telecommuting. More particularly, the elements that determine the productivity of the teleworker, according to the research, are the following:

1. The personal characteristics of the person (gender, age, education, family situation).
2. Telework beliefs, attitudes, and productivity were not associated with marital status but were associated with the other criteria.
3. Cooperative relationships with co-workers, supervisor, and family are positively associated with beliefs and behaviours, but productivity is only positively associated with supervisor and family relationships and not with co-workers and customers.
4. Objective environmental factors (required equipment, relative authorization, distraction at home) are positively associated with both beliefs and attitudes toward telework, and productivity.
5. The worker's views and beliefs (if he believes he is more productive, if he is motivated by telecommuting) are positively associated with productivity.

Awada et al, (2021) investigating the extent to which, factors related to worker and workplace characteristics affect productivity and time spent at a workstation during the pandemic, they concluded that: *«The overall perception of the level of telecommuting productivity has not changed significantly relative to in-office productivity as it was before the pandemic. However, women, the elderly and high-income workers reported an increase in their productivity. Also, productivity appeared to be positively affected by increased communication with colleagues and the existence of a dedicated work space within the home».*

Chapter 4. Development of the research hypotheses

According to the Economic and Social Committee (OKE, 2020), teleworking has been found to facilitate working for special population groups, reduce transportation costs, and increase productivity and performance. These benefits lead to a total improvement in work-life balance and the way employees manage their personal and working time. In terms of job satisfaction, teleworking offers the employees flexibility in organizing their working time (Gurstein, 2001; Morgan, 2004), which is highly valued by employees as part of the quality of their work and increases their satisfaction. It also helps employees avoid commuting and reduces other expenses, such as parking and fuel (Weikle, 2018). More flexibility in managing time leads to an increased sense of freedom and initiative, opportunity for self-expression, self-esteem and job satisfaction (Harpaz, 2002). Teleworking and/or FWA are forms of employment generally satisfy young and highly skilled workers who want a less dependent working model and enjoy the flexibility of working for more employers.

At the same time, there is also the risk of confusing the professional and private life, which can lead to overworking, with consequences even for the mental and physical health of the teleworker (Koukiadis, 1996; OKE, 2020). To that direction, unsuitable seating arrangements, lack of proper furniture and lightning can cause the employee distress and even physical and mental symptoms. Furthermore, the distance from the office, the employer and the other employees can make employees feel less valued and with fewer opportunities for promotion (Khalifa and Davison, 2000). Of course, this social isolation and lack of communication can by itself lead to feelings of stress, sadness and other mental illnesses (Baruch, 2000; Wilson and Greenhill, 2004).

Blumberga and Pylinskaya (2019) found that teleworking led to a reduction in stress levels, better management of time and money as well as better balance between work and personal life. On the other hand, telecommuters face problems in communication with their employers and colleagues (Siqueira, Dias, & Medeiros, 2019).

Overall, the positive relationship between telecommuting and job satisfaction has been confirmed by a number of empirical studies (Golden & Veiga, 2005; Smith et al., 2018). On the other hand, studies support that the positive benefits of telecommuting are offset by a reduction in social interaction and feelings of isolation (Cooper & Kurland, 2002). ***Thus, a logical assumption could be that mixed teleworking may combine some of teleworking benefits, such as less transportation costs, better work-life balance etc., but with better communication and connection to the company and its values as well as the colleagues.***

Furthermore, companies enabling teleworking as a choice to their employees, choose this type of model, among others, to boost mental health (Anderson, Kaplan, & Vega, 2015; Vilhelmson & Thulin, 2016; Weikle, 2018). Flexible work arrangements, which involved telework, have been found to be associated with better sleep, better work–life balance, lower stress levels and better overall health (Moen et al. 2011). However, most empirical research shows both positive and negative effects. For instance, teleworking is associated with mental and physical fatigue among employees and at the same time, “isolation is not only a source of stress, but also a source of chronic stress” (Weinert et al., 2015). Telecommuting creates job stress related to factors such as overwork, short deadlines, intense and long working hours, inability to stop and reduced breaks (Hartig et al., 2007). It is, then, understood, that teleworking as a permanent working model may bring negative effects in terms of well-being and stress levels, mainly, due to the isolation and lack of communication. A recent paper on job quality and mental health during COVID-19 has found that telework improves job quality mostly when it takes place as a part-time work arrangement (Fana et al, 2020). Employers agree with that notion, since regular visits to the workplace can foster team-building and knowledge exchange (Behrens et al, 2021). ***To that extent, we could hypothesize that mixed teleworking may retain the positive effects of teleworking in terms of well-being and job stress, and at the same time make up for***

its negative effects, such as isolation. Mixed teleworking gives the employees the opportunity to both telework and visit their workplace maintaining a relationship with the company's values, the employer and their colleagues. In 2021, Telenet, Belgium's the second-largest telecommunications company in Belgium, employed a new modern hybrid work model, where employees work 60% of their time anywhere in the EU and the remaining time in Belgium (Haeck, 2021; Vanlommel and De Roest, 2020).

Finally, regarding the employee productivity and performance, there is a consistent result among a variety of studies that teleworking and/or FWA are associated with an increase in both productivity and performance. Studies have found that since teleworkers manage their own time, they choose to work in their most productive hours (Golden and Veiga, 2008; Martinez-Sanchez et al., 2008; Tremblay and Genin, 2007).

Therefore, the study develops the following **research hypotheses**:

H01. Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) are associated with higher employee job satisfaction, compared to teleworking.

H02. Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) are associated with higher employee well-being, compared to teleworking.

H03. Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) are associated with lower employee job stress, compared to teleworking.

H04. Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) are associated with better employee performance, compared to teleworking.

Chapter 5. Research Methodology

4.1. The type of research

Quantitative research was chosen as the preferred method of research in the present methodology, in order to achieve the purpose that was originally set. This type of research includes the collection and analysis of various quantitative data, as obtained from the respondents themselves. The specific type was selected, since it offers the possibility of collecting a larger volume of data, as well as exploring the views and perceptions of a larger sample size (as opposed to qualitative research which has significant limitations in sample size). It is an experimentally controlled research technique, which enables the possibility of a more efficient and objective analysis and presentation of the data (Kyriazi, 2012). The main difference in relation to qualitative research is that the data resulting from quantitative research are pure numerical data, thus offering a higher degree of objectivity, in which there is no need to carry out any form of coding (as is necessary in qualitative), a technique which has a high degree of subjectivity and is inextricably linked based on the coding chosen by each researcher (Babie, 2011). The basis of quantitative research is the reliable numerical and statistical measurements of the total population, through which an objective reality can be expressed not only for the sample, but also for the entire population (Babie, 2011). Its difference with qualitative research is found in the large number of people included in such research. As previously mentioned, this method offers a high degree of objectivity, in contrast to the qualitative method in which the data are based on the subjective perceptions of the respondents (Russell-Bennett, Rosenbaum & McAndrew, 2020).

4.2. The sample and the survey instrument

For the purpose of the research, a sample of 282 people (men and women) was selected through convenience sampling, with only two criteria of participation:

- aged 18 and over
- and living in the Greek territory.

The tool of this research was a questionnaire of a total of 29 questions, which was distributed electronically via Google Forms, for a period of two months (9/5/2022 – 9/7/2022). After the specified time period, the questionnaire had been made unavailable (it should be noted that the sample size was covered within the originally set time period).

The questionnaire includes an introductory question of whether the participant has previously had an experience of teleworking and/or flexible work arrangement (participation in the questionnaire ends for those who answered «no»), six questions in the demographic sector, two questions evaluating the aforementioned experience, five questions regarding job satisfaction, five questions regarding well-being, five questions regarding job stress and five questions regarding job performance.

Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. The data were used exclusively for scientific purposes in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The research was also in accordance with the ethical conduct issues and no issues of discrimination arose.

4.3. Data preparation and analysis

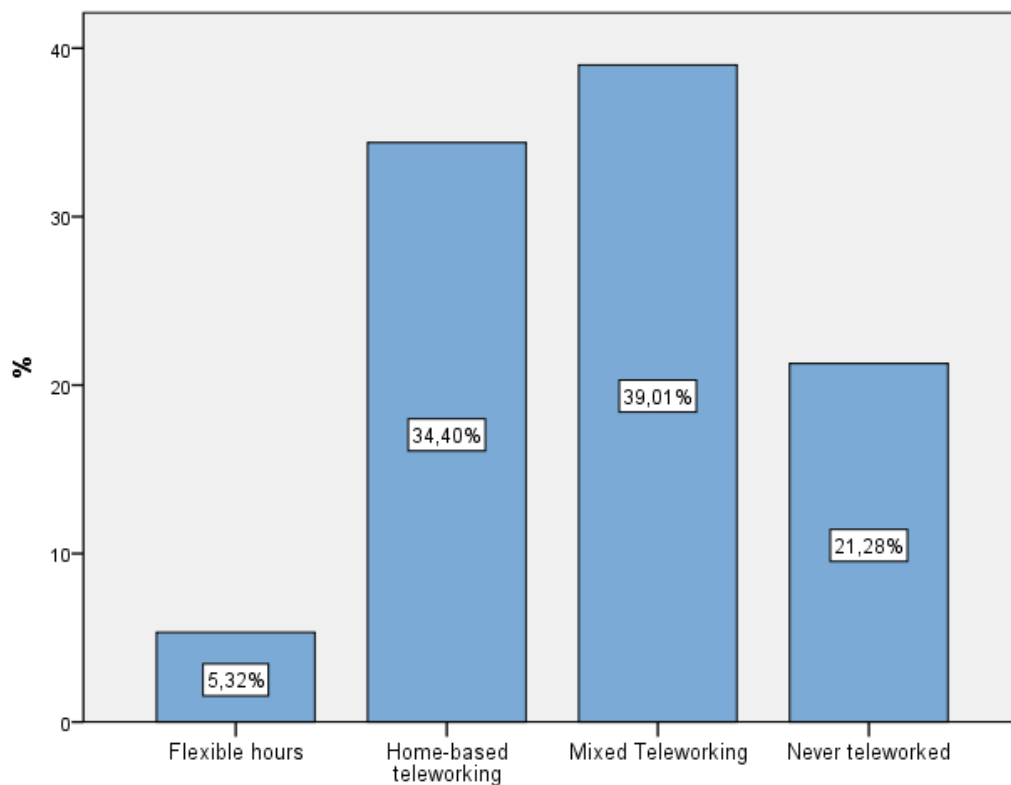
The data were collected automatically through the Google Forms platform. They were downloaded and saved in an excel format and the file was then transferred to the statistical package SPSS 2.0 for analysis.

Descriptive statistics analyses are initially undertaken in order to analyze the variables. The hypotheses are tested using multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation.

Chapter 5. Results

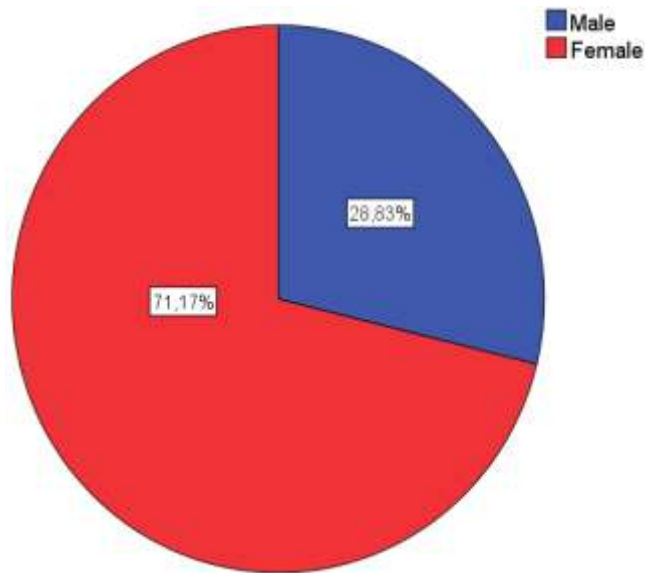
5.1. Profile of the respondents

The sample includes 282 valid responses from a total of 282 participants and according to the working model they follow, they are divided to home-based teleworkers (34,4%), mixed teleworkers (39,01%) and employees working with flexible hours (5,32%) (Graph 7). Since flexible hours and mixed teleworking both belong to flexible work arrangements (FWA), they are grouped together in one category. Thus, we have two categories of employees, the teleworkers (34,4%) and those with FWA (44,33%). It's noteworthy that 21,28% of the participants never had a remote work experience and they were not included in the study.



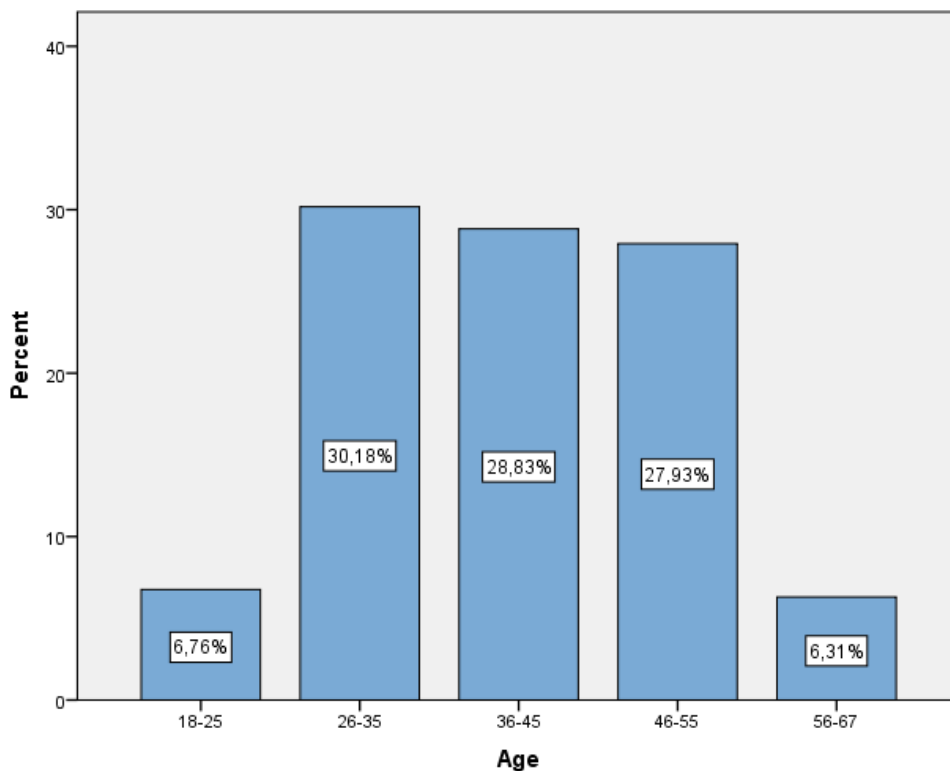
Graph 7. The profile of the respondents according to their working model.

Furthermore, the majority of the employees who participated in the study are women (71,17%) compared to the men, who are 28,83% of the sample (Graph 8).



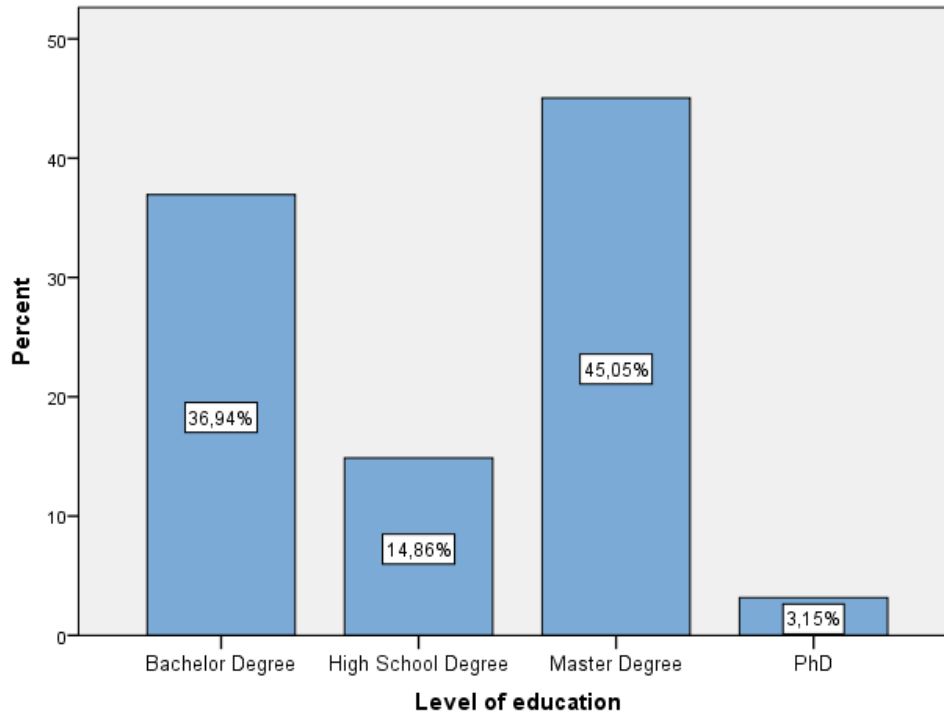
Graph 8. The profile of the respondents according to their gender.

The Graph 9 below shows that the majority of the employees participating to our study are between 26 and 55 years of age (86,94%), with a small minority of 6,76% being in the age group of 18-25 and a percentage of 6,31% in the age group of 56-67. Nevertheless, the age groups with the largest representation is the 26-35 (30,18%), with a small difference from the second largest 36-45 (28,83%) and the third largest 46-55 (27,93%).



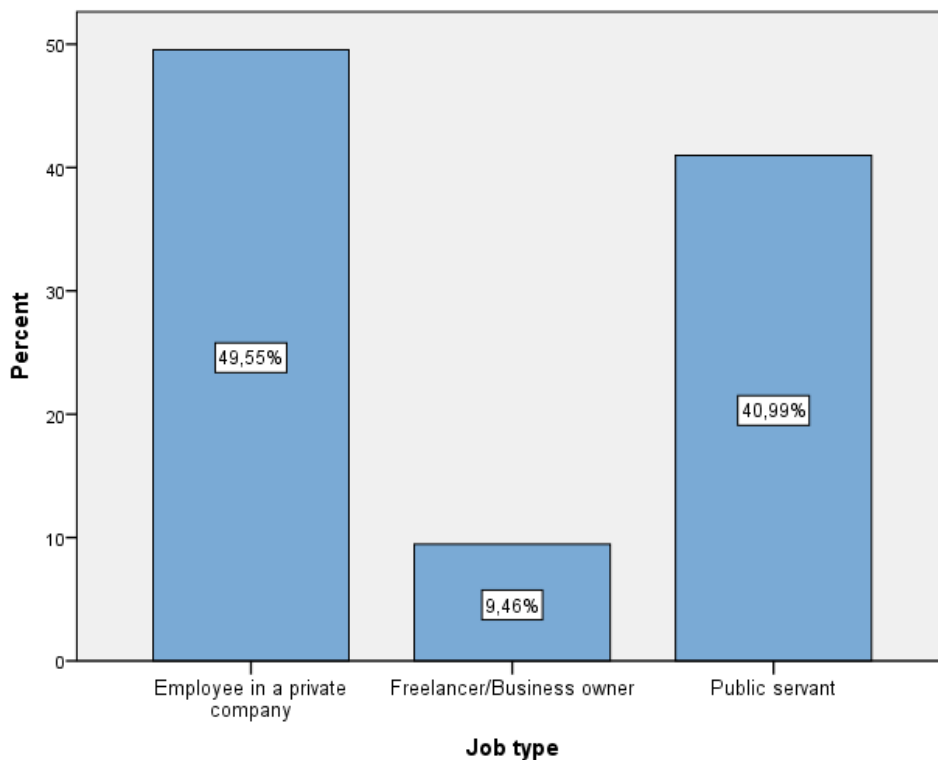
Graph 9. The profile of the respondents according to their age group.

Graph 10 presents the profile of the participants according to their education level. The majority of the participants holds a Master's Degree (45,05%) and the second largest category holds a Bachelor Degree (36,94%). Only a very small percentage (3,15%) has a higher degree (PhD) and the rest (14.86%) has a High School Diploma.



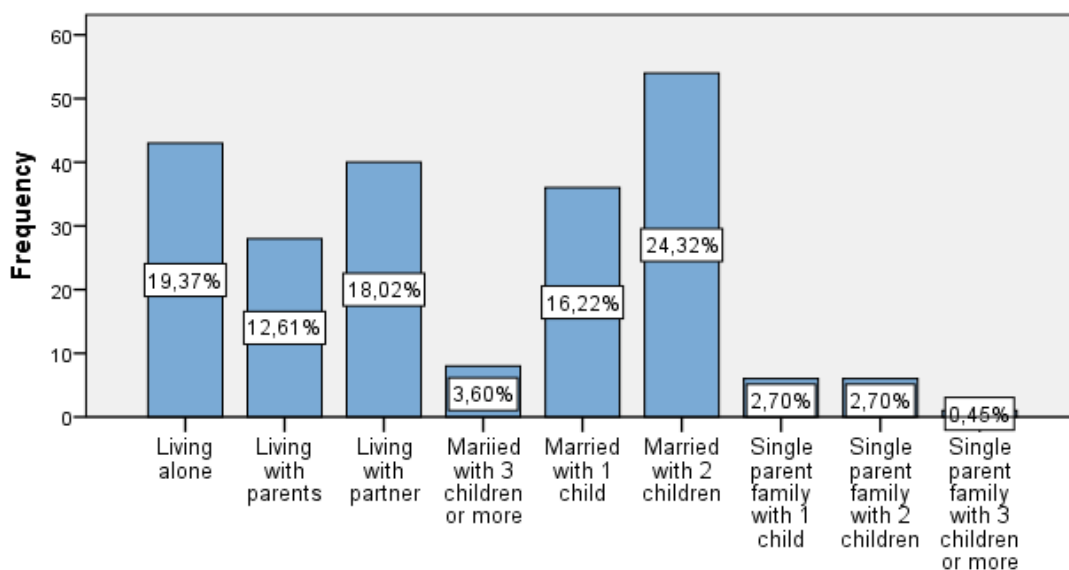
Graph 10. The profile of the respondents according to their level of education.

Graph 11 displays the type of profession of the respondents. The 49,55% of the participants are private employees, the 40,99% are public servants and only 9,46% are freelancers and/or business owners.



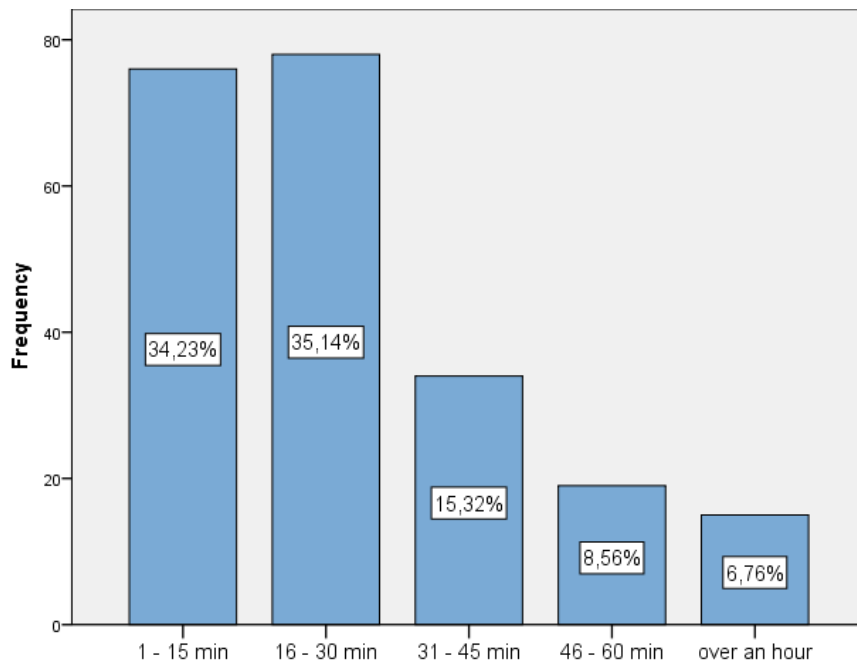
Graph 11. The profile of the respondents according to their profession.

Graph 12 represents the profile of the participants according to their household composition. The majority of the employees are married with 1 child (16,22%), 2 children (24,32%), 3 children or more (3,60%). The second largest category are the employees living with their partner (18,02%), their parents (12,61%) or alone (19,37%). Other employees are single parent families with 1 child (2,70%), 2 children (2,70%), 3 children or more (0,46%).



Graph 12. The profile of the respondents according to their household composition.

Graph 13 represents the profile of the participants according to the distance they need to travel to arrive at their workplace. The overwhelming majority of the employees are within half an hour maximum from their workplaces (69,37%). 34,23% are within 15 minutes and 35,14% are within 30 minutes. 15,32% of the employees are 45 minutes away, 8,56% are one hour away and 6,76% are more than 1 hour travel distance.



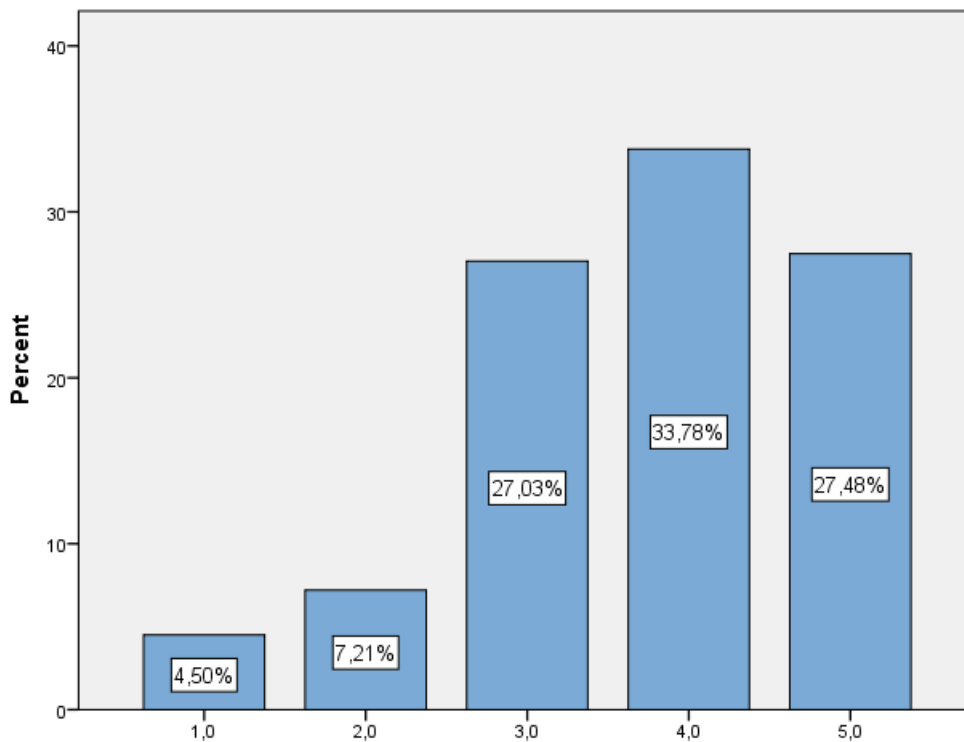
Graph 13. The profile of the respondents according to their distance from the workplace

5.2. The employee evaluation of remote working

The employees were asked to rate their experience of teleworking or FWA in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (bad) to 5 (very good). The mean score of the employees' responses was computed and analyzed in order to evaluate the overall level of employee satisfaction from teleworking and FWA practices. The total score is above average, meaning that it was rated as a rather good experience (M = 3.725, SD = 1.08).

Descriptive Statistics			
How would you rate your experience?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	222	3,725	1,0810

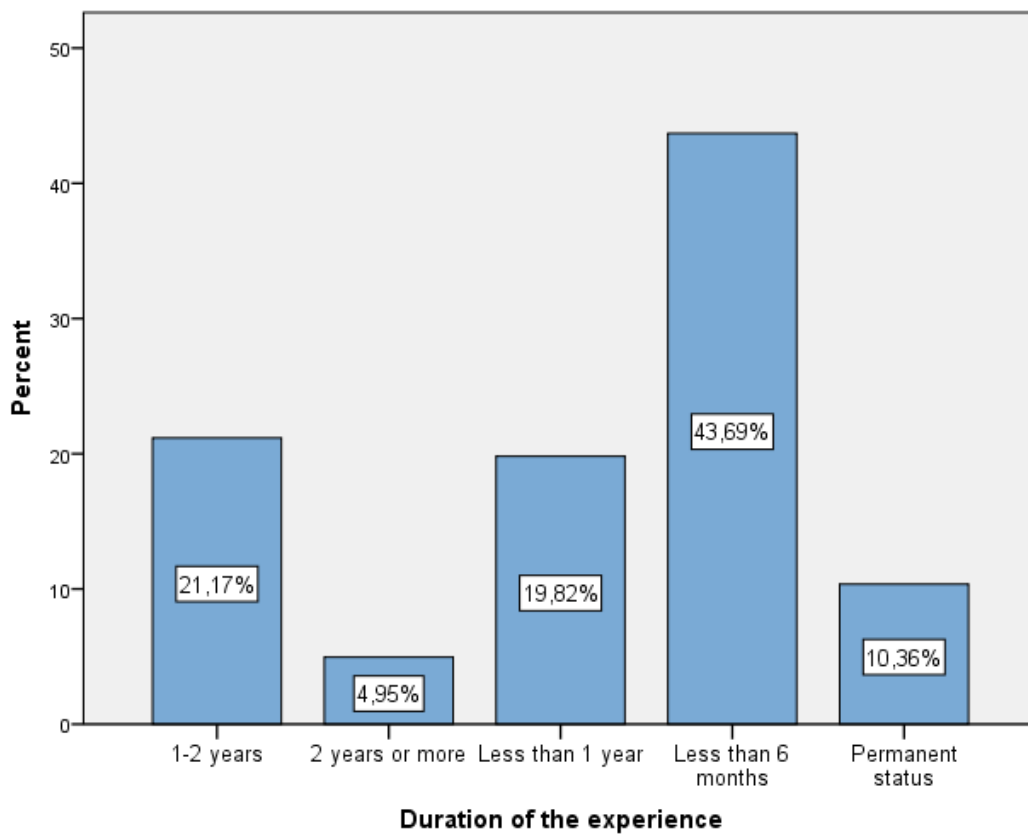
As it is shown in the Graph 14 below, the majority of the participants viewed their experience as good (33,78%) or very good (27,48%) and ok/neutral (27,03%). Only 4,50% rated their experience as bad or somewhat bad (7,21%). The response good/very good concentrates 61,26%, the neutral reactions range at 27% and the negative evaluations are at approximately 12%. The majority of the participants did enjoy the experience of teleworking, but the results were not overwhelming.



Graph 14. The evaluation of the remote working experience as rated by the participants in a 5-point Likert scale.

Furthermore, multiple regression analysis was used to test if different working models can significantly predict the evaluation of the experience by the employees. The overall regression was not statistically significant for teleworking ($R^2 = .000$, $p = .935$), mixed teleworking ($R^2 = .011$, $p = .650$) and flexible hours ($R^2 = .011$, $p = .182$).

Furthermore, the participants were asked to note the duration of their teleworking/FWA experience. As we can conclude by Graph 13, the remote working did not last more than 6 months for the majority of the respondents (43,69%). For an approximate 20% remote working lasted less than 1 year or between 1-2 years (21,17%). Only a 5% reported that remote working lasted more than 2 years and a 10% reported that for them remote working is a permanent status.

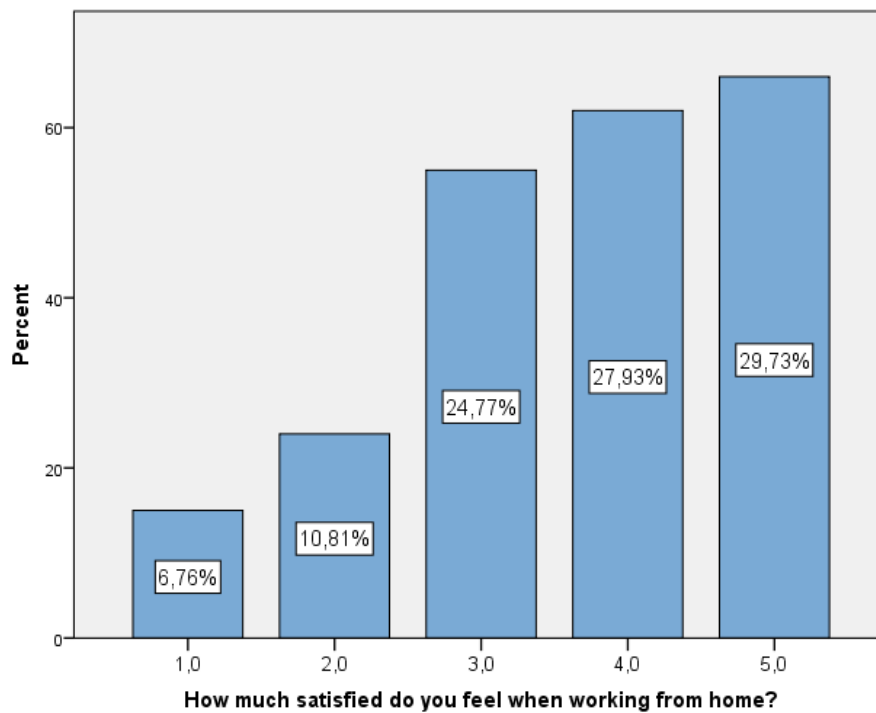


Graph 15. The duration of teleworking/FWA as experienced by the participants

Simple regression analysis was used to test if **the duration of teleworking and/or FWA can significantly predict the evaluation of the experience by the employees**. The overall regression was **statistically significant** ($R^2 = .064$, $p = .000$). Furthermore, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between duration and experience evaluation. There was a **positive correlation** between the two variables ($p = .253$), suggesting that as the duration of the remote working increases, the evaluation improves as well.

5.3. Job Satisfaction

The employees were asked to rate their satisfaction levels when working from home -whether it is in the context of teleworking or FWA- in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (bad) to 5 (very good). The mean score of the employees' responses was computed and analyzed in order to examine the employee satisfaction from working from home. The total score was above average, meaning that working from home was rated as rather satisfactory ($M = 3.631$, $SD = 1.206$).



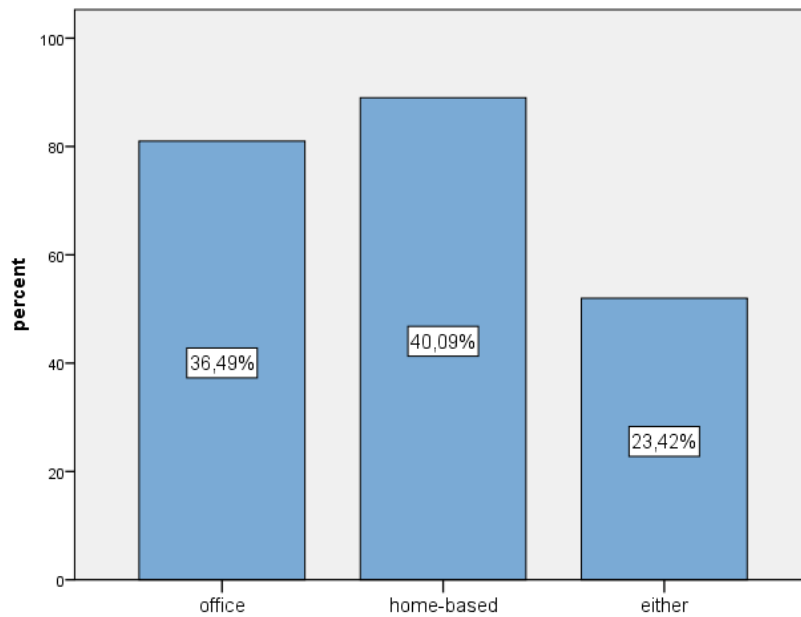
Graph 16. The satisfaction levels of the employees when working from home in a 5-point Likert scale.

Simple regression analysis was used to test if **an employee’s household composition can significantly predict the satisfaction of working from home**. The overall regression was **statistically significant** ($R^2 = .032$, $p = .008$). A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between household composition and satisfaction in home-based working. There was a **negative correlation** between the two variables ($p = -.178$), suggesting that as the individuals in the same household increase, the satisfaction from home-based working decreases.

Furthermore, the employees were asked to evaluate in which condition they feel more satisfied with their hours worked (schedule). They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where either condition of the two does not make a difference. As we can conclude from Graph 17, the majority of the respondents chose their homes (40,09%), a 36,49% chose the office and a 23,42% said that either condition doesn’t make a difference. The responses were close together without a strong lead by a certain condition.

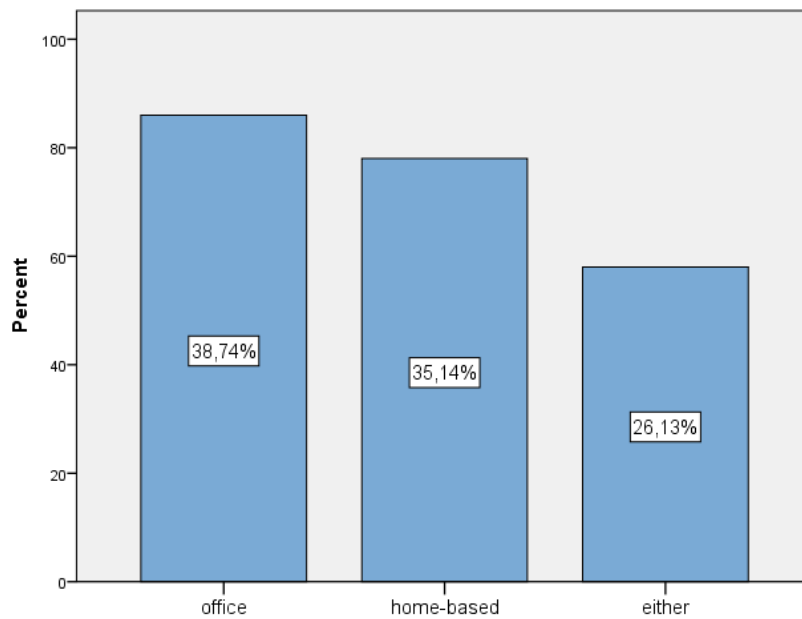
Simple regression analysis was used to test if the education level of the employees can significantly predict the satisfaction from working hours. The overall regression was **statistically significant** ($R^2 = .017$, $p = .050$). A Pearson correlation

coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the two variables. There was a **negative correlation** ($p = -.131$), suggesting that as the education level of the employees increases, the satisfaction from working hours decreases.



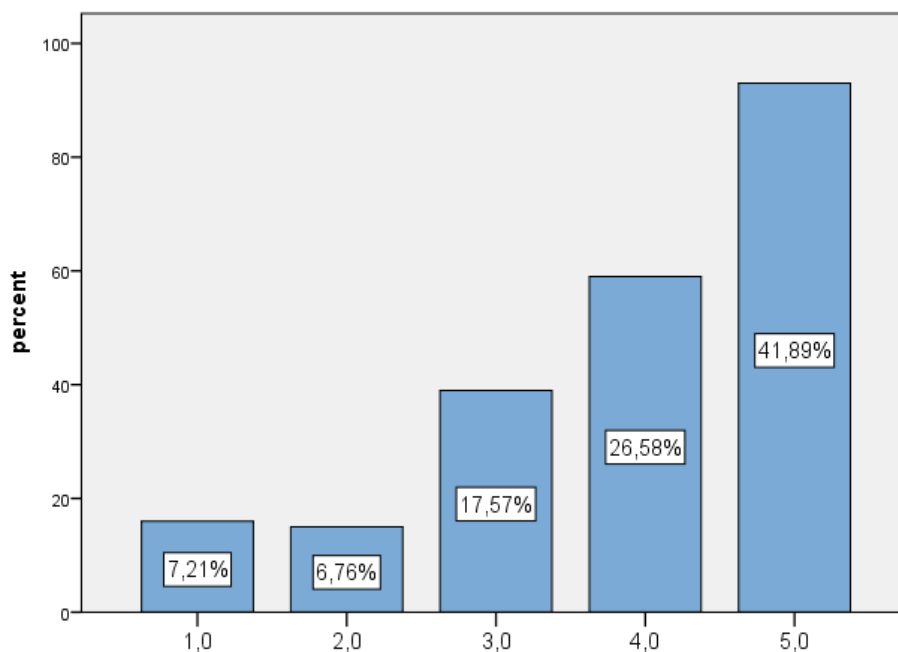
Graph 17. The employees selected in which condition they are more satisfied with their hours worked.

To the same extent, the employees were asked to evaluate in which condition they feel more satisfied with their workload. They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where either condition of the two does not make a difference. As we can conclude from Graph 18, some of the respondents chose their office (38,74%), a 35,14% chose their homes and a 26,13% said that either condition doesn't make a difference. The responses were all close together without a strong lead by a certain condition.



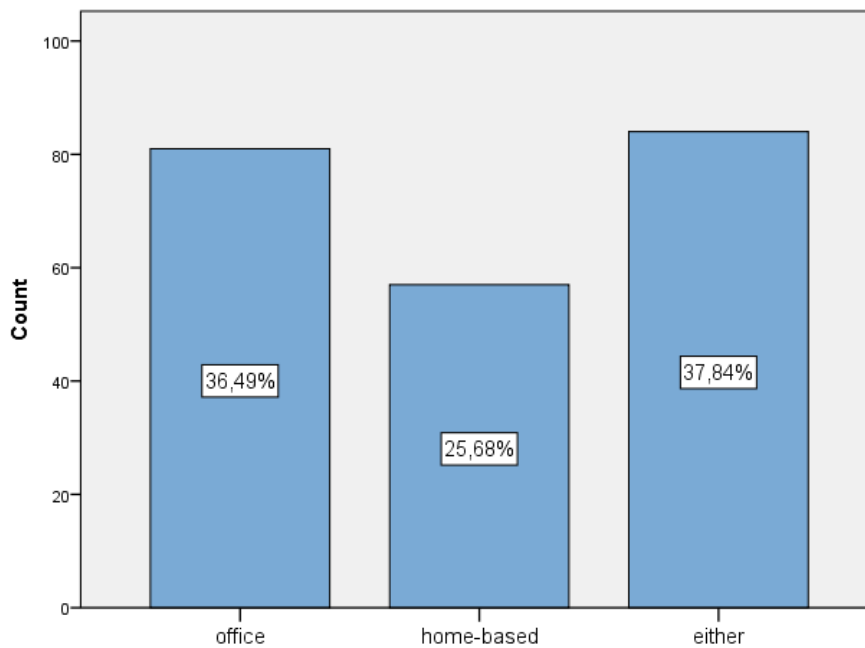
Graph 18. The employees selected in which condition they are more satisfied with their workload.

The employees were asked to rate in what degree they find it helpful when working from home to occasionally pause their work in order to take care personal matters. The employees were asked to rate in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (not helpful at all) to 5 (very helpful). As Graph 19 shows, the majority of the respondents reported that it was very helpful (41,89%) or helpful (26,58%). A 17,57% answered neutrally and the rest said that it was very little helpful (6,76%) or not helpful at all (7,21%).



Graph 19. The employees rated in what degree they find helpful being able to take a break while working from home to take care personal matters.

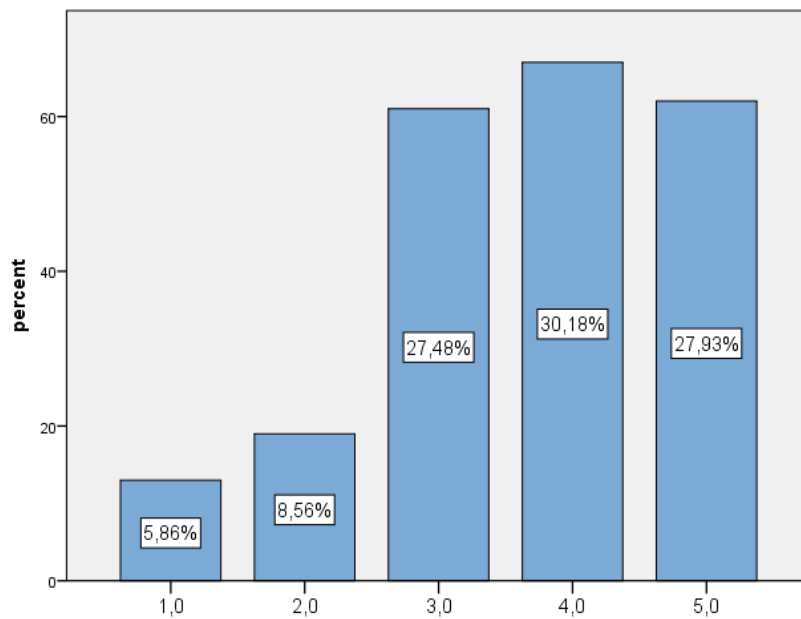
Finally, the employees were asked to select in which condition they feel that their personal relationships are more satisfactory. They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where either condition of the two does not make a difference. As Graph 20 shows, 37,84% of the respondents answered that the place of work does not play a role in the quality of their relationships, a 36,49% reported that they feel their relationships are better when working from home and only the minority (25,68%) chose their homes.



Graph 20. The employees rated in which condition they find their personal relationships to be more satisfactory.

5.4. Wellness

The employees were asked to rate their mood when working from home in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (bad) to 5 (very good). As Graph 21 shows, the majority of the respondents reported a good (30,18%) or very good mood (27,93%). A 27,48% answered neutrally and the rest said that their mood is somewhat bad (8,66%) or bad (5,86%).

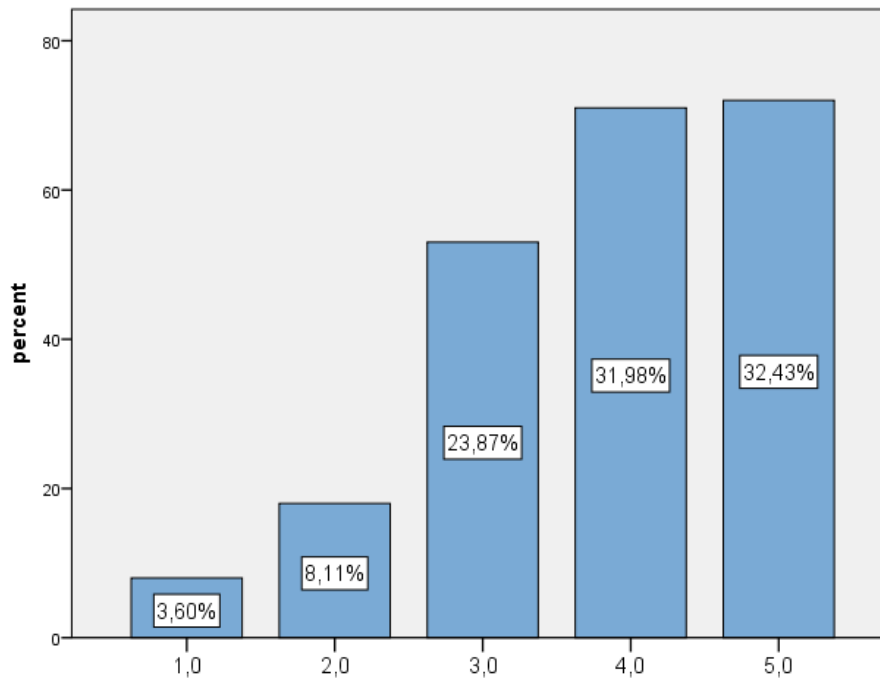


Graph 21. The employees rated their mood when working from home.

Simple regression analysis was used to test if different working models (teleworking, mixed teleworking, flexible hours) can significantly predict the employee mood. The overall regression was not statistically significant for teleworking ($R^2 = .009$, $p = .150$), mixed teleworking ($R^2 = .008$, $p = .184$) and flexible hours ($R^2 = .000$, $p = .841$).

The employees were asked to rate their calmness levels when working from home in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (no calm at all) to 5 (very calm). As Graph 22 shows, the majority of the respondents reported a very calm (32,43%) or calm mood (31,98%). A 23,87% answered neutrally and the rest said that they are little calm (8,115) or no calm at all (3,60%).

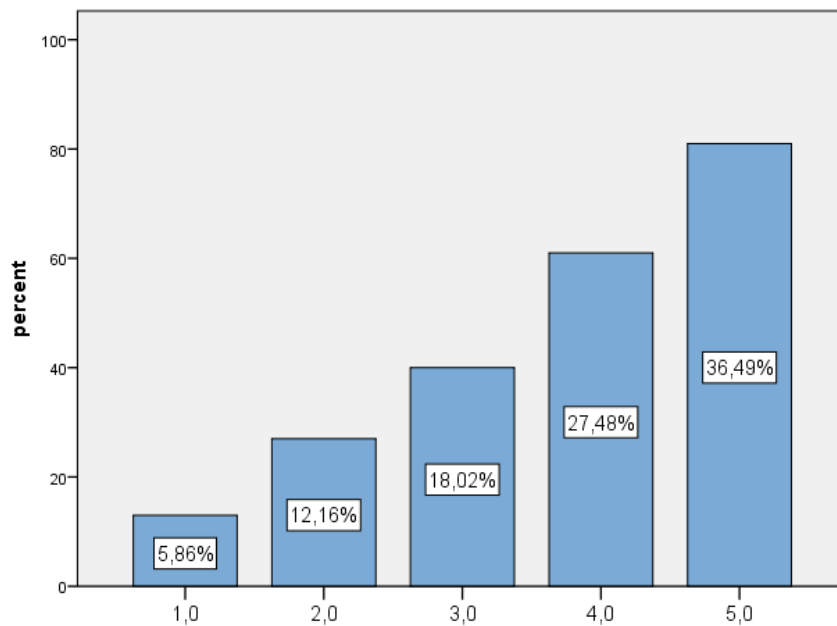
Simple regression analysis was used to test if different working models (teleworking, mixed teleworking, flexible hours) can significantly predict the employee calmness. The overall regression was not statistically significant for teleworking ($R^2 = .012$, $p = .108$), mixed teleworking ($R^2 = .006$, $p = .233$) and flexible hours ($R^2 = .003$, $p = .428$).



Graph 22. Employees rated their calmness levels when working from home.

The employees were asked to answer whether they feel more rested when working from home in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (no rested at all) to 5 (very rested). As Graph 23 shows, the majority of the respondents reported being very rested (36,49%) or rested (27,48%). A 18,02% answered neutrally and the rest said that they are little rested (12,16%) or no rested at all (5,86%).

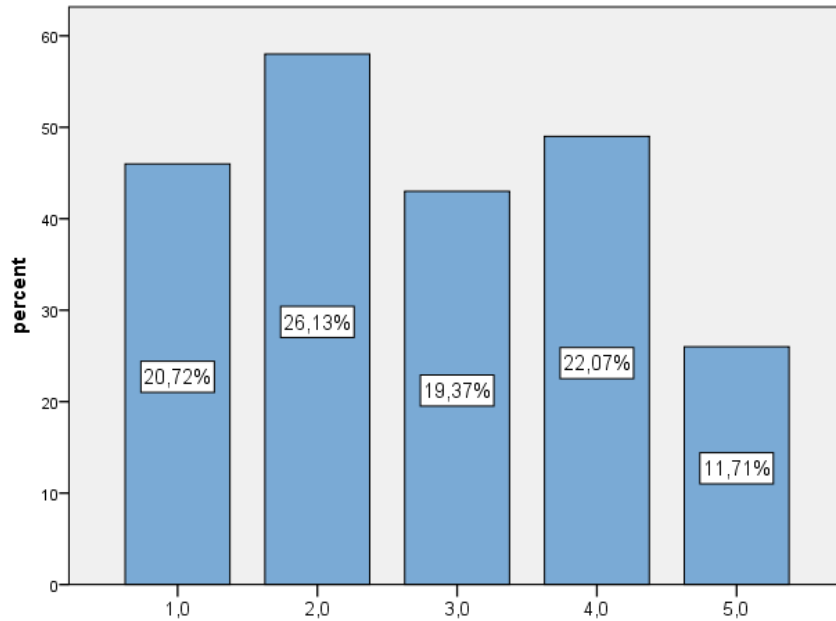
Simple regression analysis was used to test if **different working models (teleworking, mixed teleworking, flexible hours) can significantly predict the employees' feeling rested.** The overall regression was nearing statistical significance for teleworking ($R^2 = .017$, $p = .051$), not statistically significant for mixed teleworking ($R^2 = .013$, $p = .096$) and flexible hours ($R^2 = .001$, $p = .590$).



Graph 23. Employees answers regarding feeling rested when working from home.

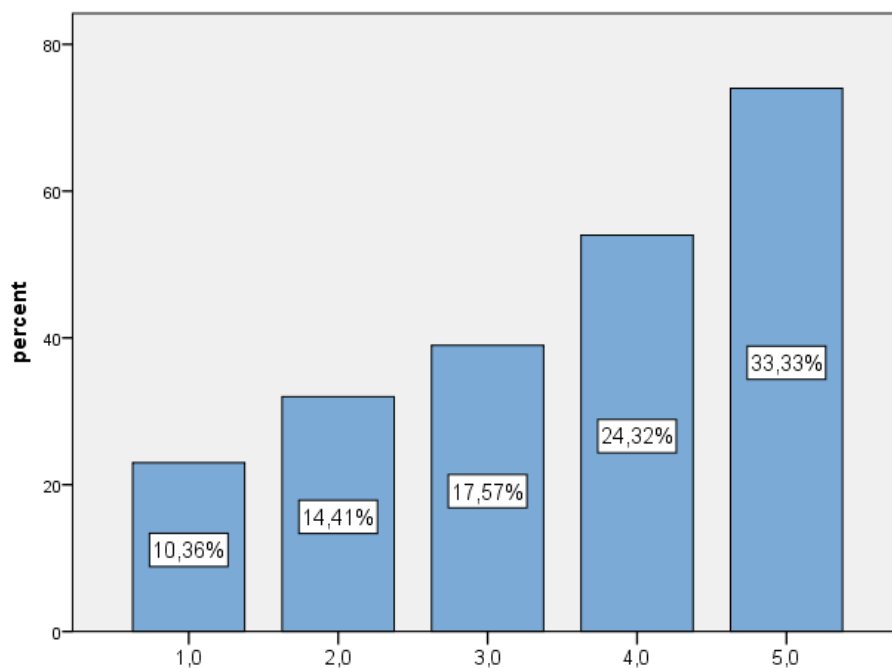
The employees were asked to answer whether they feel that their mental and physical health is negatively influenced when working from home in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (no at all) to 5 (very much). As Graph 24 shows, we cannot conclude a clear tendency from the responses. Some of the respondents felt very negatively influenced (11,71%) or influenced enough (22,07%). A 19,37% answered neutrally and the rest said that they were not influenced at all (20,72%) or very little (26,13%). The majority of the respondents, however, reported that their mental and physical health was negatively influenced at least to a small degree.

To that extent, Pearson correlations coefficient were computed to assess the linear relationship between mental/physical health and satisfaction from hours worked. There was a **positive correlation** between the two variables ($p = .206$), suggesting that as the working hours increase, the employees are more negatively influenced in terms of mental/physical health. Additionally, a **negative correlation** was found between the mental/physical health and the overall satisfaction from home-based working ($p = .492$), suggesting that as the negative influence in the employees' health increases, their satisfaction in home-based working decreases. Finally, a **negative correlation** was found between the mental/physical health and the evaluation of the overall remote-working experience, suggesting that as the negative influence in the employees' health increases, their evaluation of home-based working decreases.



Graph 24. Employees report whether their mental and physical health is being negatively influenced when working from home.

The employees were asked to answer whether they feel more free to express themselves when working from home in a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (no at all) to 5 (very much). As Graph 25 shows, the majority of the respondents reported feeling very free (33,33%) or free (24,32%). A 17,57% answered neutrally and the rest said that they did not feel free at all (10,36%) or little free (14,41%).

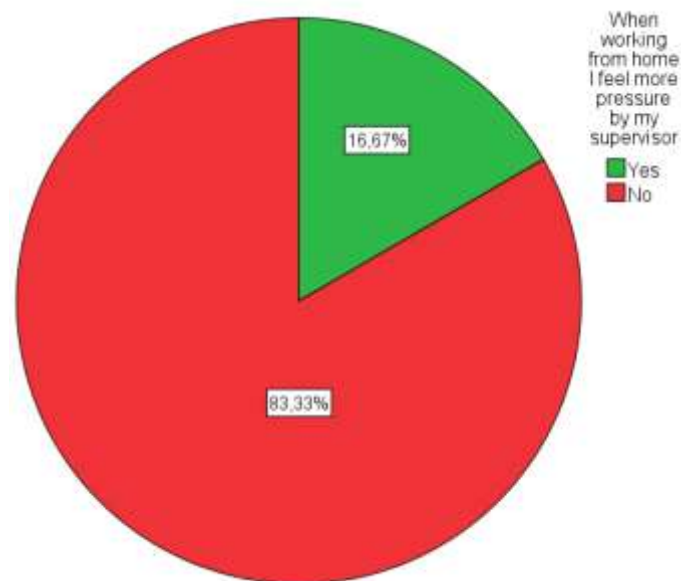


Graph 25. Employees report whether they feel more free to express themselves when working from home.

5.5. Job Stress

The employees were asked to answer whether they feel more pressure from their supervisors when working from home in a simple yes/no closed question. As Graph 26 shows, the majority of the respondents reported not feeling any pressure (83,33%) and only a 16,67% reported pressed by their supervisor.

Simple regression analysis was used to test if the **duration of the home-based working can significantly predict the feeling of pressure by the supervisor**. The overall regression was **statistically significant** ($R^2 = .026$, $p = .016$). A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the duration of home-based working and feeling pressured. A **negative correlation** was found ($p = -.162$), meaning that as the duration of home-based working increases, the employee feels less pressure by their supervisor.



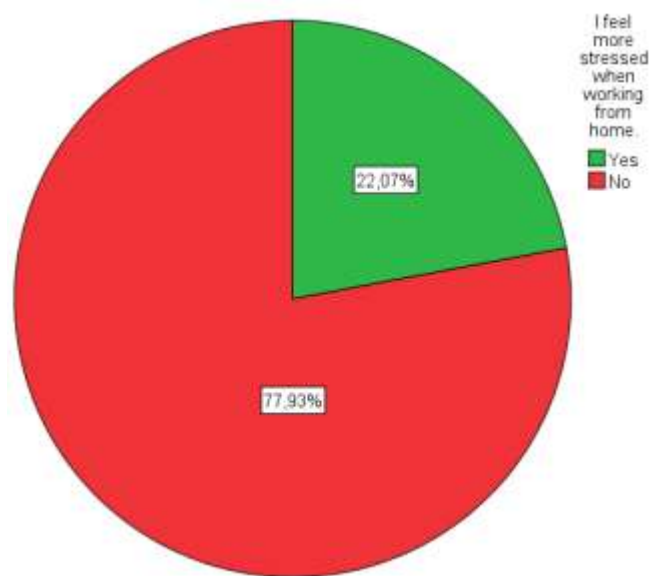
Graph 26. Employees report whether they feel more pressure by their supervisors when working from home.

Additionally, the employees were asked to answer whether they feel more stressed when working from home compared to the office, in a simple yes/no closed question. As Graph 27 shows, the majority of the respondents reported not feeling any stress (77,90%) and a 22,1% reported feelings of stress.

Simple regression analysis was used to test if the **duration of the home-based working can significantly predict the employee job stress**. The overall regression was

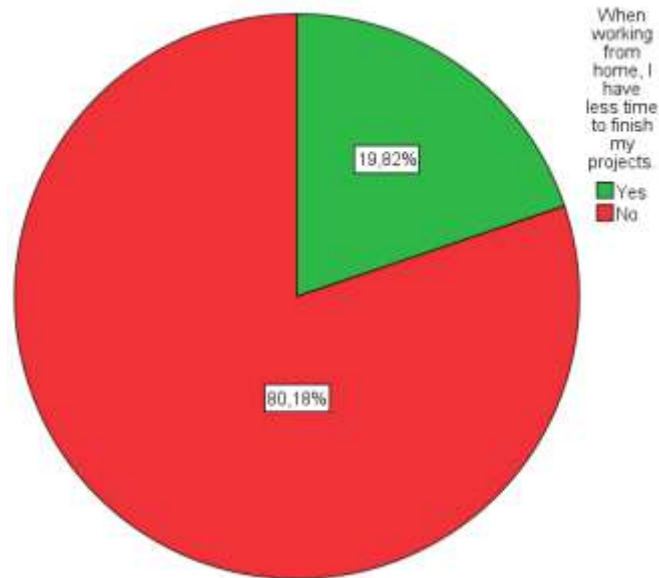
statistically significant ($R^2 = .018$, $p = .044$). A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the duration of home-based working and job stress. A **negative correlation** was found ($p = -.135$), meaning that as the duration of home-based working increases, the employee job stress decreases.

Simple regression analysis was used to test if different working models (teleworking, mixed teleworking, flexible hours) can significantly predict the employee job stress. The overall regression was not statistically significant for teleworking ($R^2 = .003$, $p = .400$), mixed teleworking ($R^2 = .001$, $p = .680$) and flexible hours ($R^2 = .003$, $p = .400$).



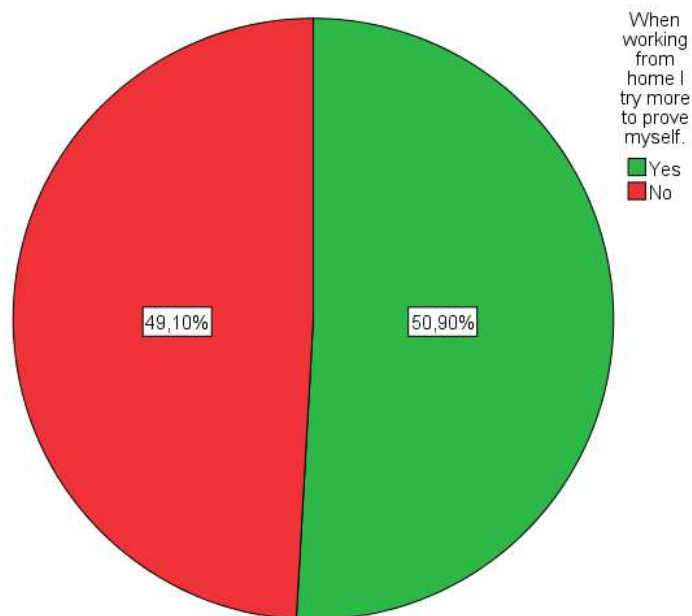
Graph 27. Employees report whether they feel more stressed when working from home.

The employees were also asked to answer whether they feel they have less time to finish their projects when working from home compared to the office, in a simple yes/no closed question. As Graph 27 shows, the majority of the respondents rejected the statement (80,18%) and a 19,82% reported having indeed less time to finish their projects.



Graph 28. Employees report whether they have less time to finish projects when working from home.

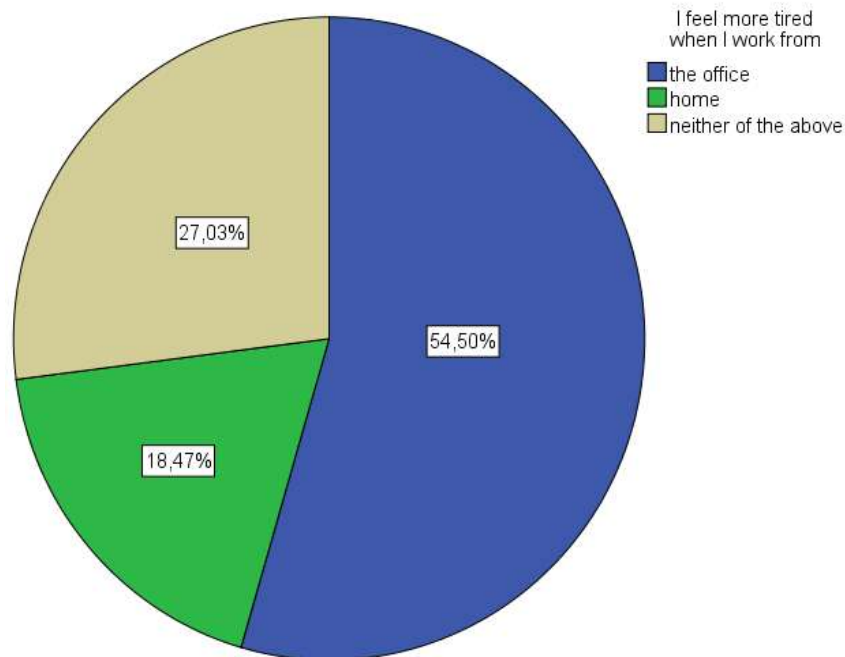
The employees were also asked to answer whether they try to prove themselves more when working from home compared to the office, in a simple yes/no closed question. As Graph 29 shows that the responses were equally divided between yes (50,90%) and no (49,10%).



Graph 29. Employees report whether they try to prove themselves more when working from home.

The employees were asked to select in which condition they feel more tired. They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where neither

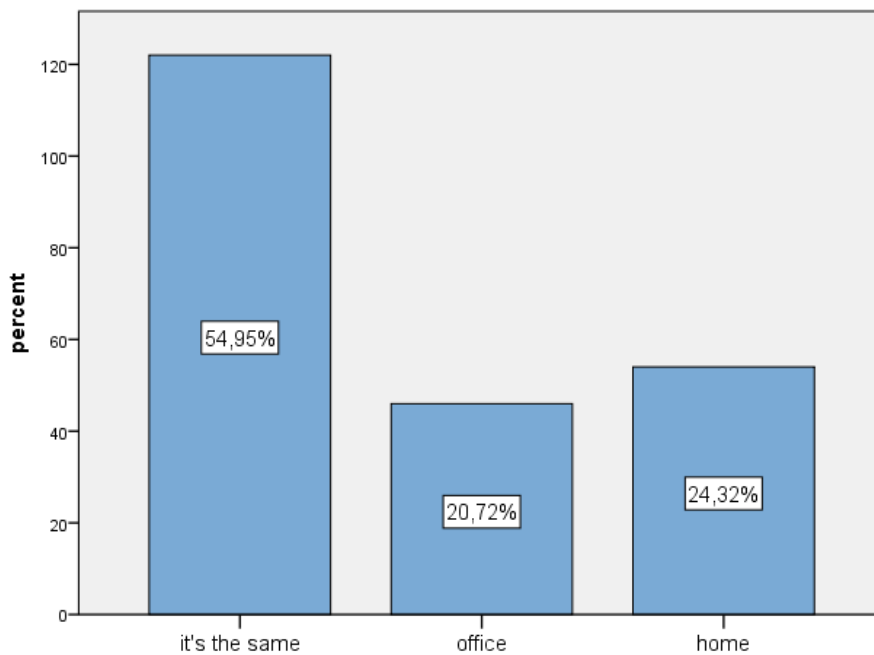
condition makes a difference. As Graph 30 shows, 54,50% of the respondents answered that they feel more tired in the office, a 27,03% answered neutrally and only a 18,47% chose their homes.



Graph 30. Employees report in which occasion they feel more stressed.

5.6. Job Performance

The employees were asked to select in which condition they put in more effort in order to be effective in their jobs. They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where neither condition makes a difference. As Graph 31 shows, 54,95% of the respondents answered that the place of work does not influence their effort, a 20,72% answered their office and a 24,32% chose their homes.



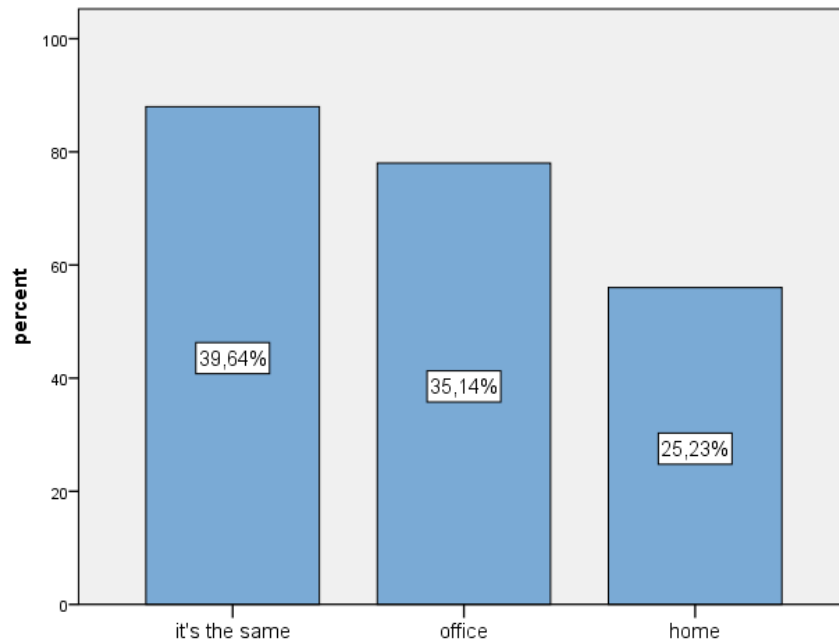
Graph 31. Employees report in which occasion they put in more effort in order to be effective.

The employees were asked to select in which condition they consider themselves better in their jobs. They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where neither condition makes a difference. As Graph 32 shows, 39,64% of the respondents answered that the place of work does not influence their effectiveness, a 35,14% answered their office and a 25,23% chose their homes.

Simple regression analysis was used to test if **the duration of the working model can significantly predict the employee effectiveness**. The overall regression was **statistically significant** ($R^2 = .018$, $p = .043$). A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the duration of home-based working and employee effectiveness. A **positive correlation** was found ($p = .136$), meaning that as the duration of the remote working model increases, the employee effectiveness increases as well. Simple regression analysis was also used to test if **employee stress can significantly predict the employee effectiveness**. The overall regression was **statistically significant** ($R^2 = .052$, $p = .001$). A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between job stress and job performance. A **negative correlation** was found ($p = -.229$), meaning that as the job stress increases, the employee effectiveness decreases.

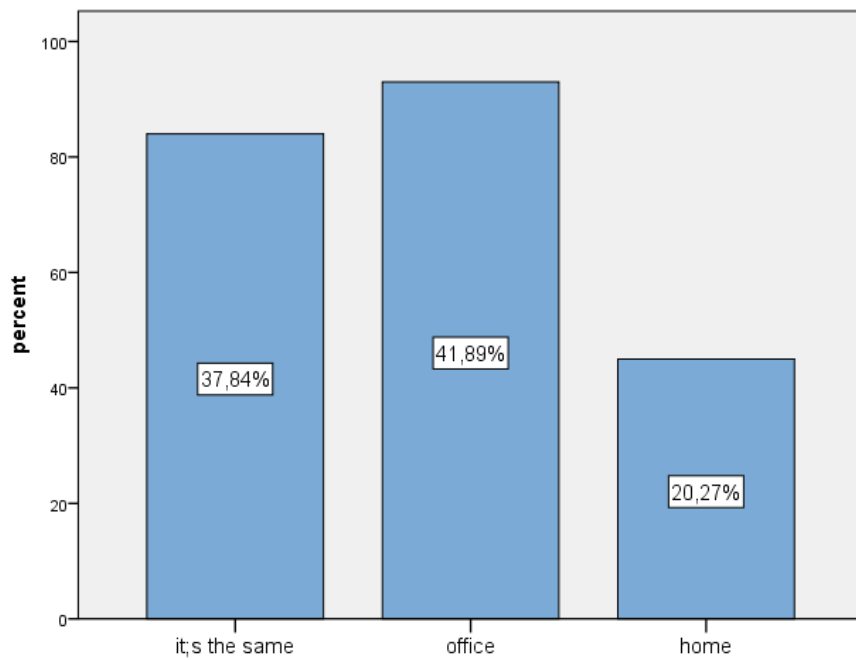
Simple regression analysis was used to test if different working models (teleworking, mixed teleworking, flexible hours) can significantly predict the employee

effectiveness. The overall regression was not statistically significant for teleworking ($R^2 = .004$, $p = .320$), mixed teleworking ($R^2 = .009$, $p = .161$) and flexible hours ($R^2 = .003$, $p = .410$).



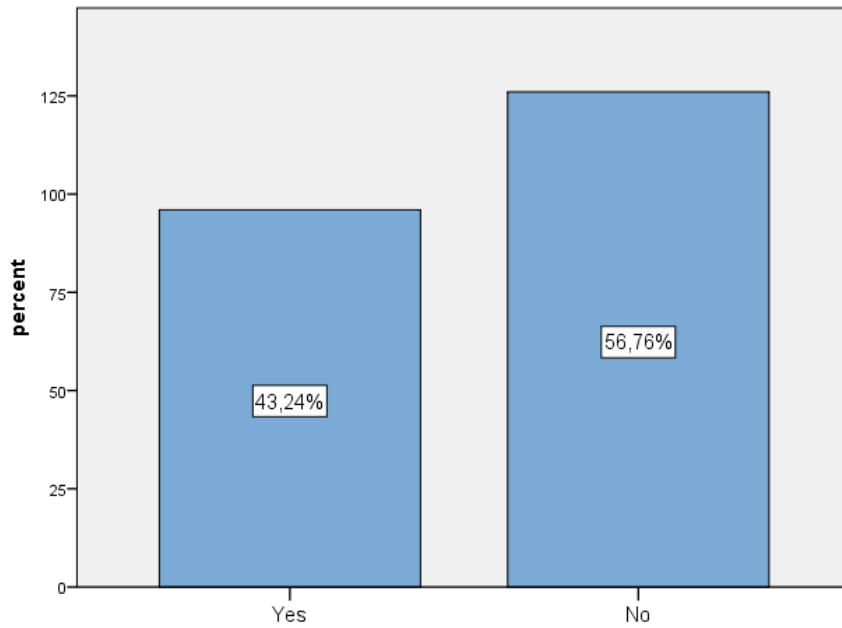
Graph 32. Employees report in which occasion they consider themselves more effective at their jobs.

The employees were asked to select in which condition they encounter more problems in their jobs. They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where neither condition makes a difference. As Graph 33 shows, the majority reported to encounter more problems in their office (41,89%), a 37,84% of the respondents answered that the place of work does not influence this factor and a 20,27% answered their homes.



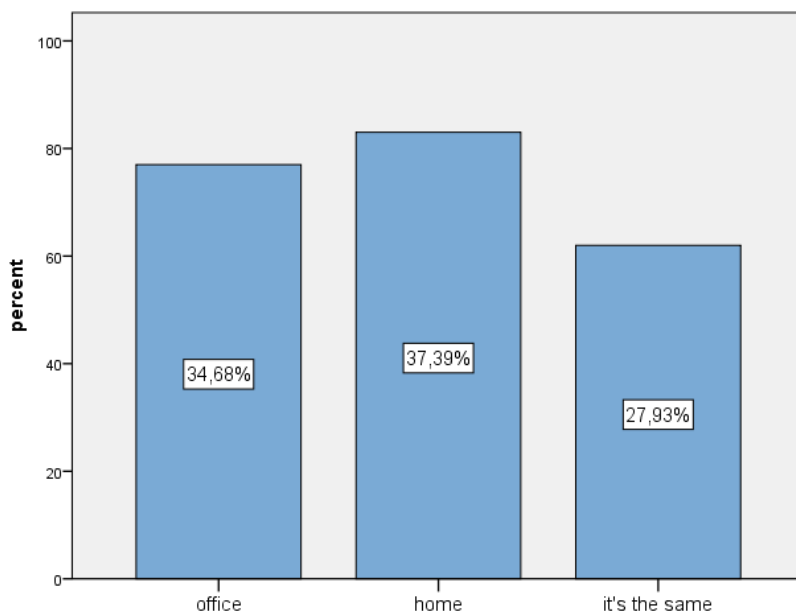
Graph 33. Employees report in which occasion they encounter more problems in their jobs.

The employees were called to answer whether they face more distractions when working from home, compared to the office, in a simple yes/no closed question. As Graph 34 shows, the majority does not feel more distracted at home (56,76%), but the participants who feel more distracted are quite a lot as well (43,24%).



Graph 34. Employees answer whether they face more distractions when working from home.

The employees were asked to select in which condition they manage their time better. They were able to choose between home, office and a third option where neither condition makes a difference. As Graph 35 shows, the answers did not present much distance from one another. A 37,39% answered their home as the place where they succeed in time management, a 34,68% answered their offices and a 27,93% answered that the place of work does not influence their ability to manage their time.



Graph 35. Employees answer in which condition they manage their time better.

Chapter 6. Discussion

The present research examined the employee's work experience in teleworking, and in other flexible work arrangements (FWA), which are the most prevalent working models in Greece, after traditional office working. The aspects of employee experience we measured were job satisfaction, wellness, job stress and work performance. We examined whether teleworking or FWA is associated with higher scores in the above four categories that constitute an employee's work experience. Therefore, in a few words, the study set out to determine *which is the better way to work* –from the employee point of view.

The employees who participated in the study were divided in two categories, the teleworkers and the FWA, and the necessary analyses were run to determine which of the two categories has a better employee experience. Initially, we hypothesized that FWA are associated with higher job satisfaction (H01), well-being (H02), job stress (H03) and job performance (H04) compared to teleworking. Our hypotheses were mainly based in the assumption that FWA combine some of teleworking benefits, but at the same time, due to their frequent visits to their workplace, employees have fewer feelings of isolation and more social interaction (Behrens et al, 2021; Cooper & Kurland, 2002).

However, ***the results did not verify our hypotheses for FWA being associated with higher job satisfaction (H01), job stress (H03) and job performance (H04) compared to teleworking.*** The analyses showed that both categories (teleworkers and FWA) did not have statistically significant differences in their reported employee experience in terms of job satisfaction, performance and stress. Neither FWA nor teleworking is associated with higher scores in the above aspects of employee experience. Studies regarding virtual work were still inconclusive up to this point, due to the fact that different types of working arrangements were not included in the studies carried out (De Menezes and Kelliher, 2011). However, the present study includes three types of remote working, but with the same inconclusive results. It seems that teleworking and FWA offer the employee a variety of benefits which are shared in both categories, making these working models rather similar in terms of work experience. Naturally, the social isolation in full-time teleworking is more intense

than in other FWA, but this factor seems to influence negatively only an insignificant portion of the employees. One explanation could be that the majority of employees value indeed socialization with people, but not necessarily with their employers and/or colleagues. Thus, the connection of FWA employees with their colleagues may not contribute that much to their social needs as their connection to their friends and families.

Nevertheless, when hypothesis H02 was tested concerning well-being, the results showed that ***teleworkers displayed a statistically significant difference compared to employees with FWA, in the feeling of rest. Teleworkers seem to be more rested than employees with FWA. This result is exactly contrary to our hypothesis, which assumes superiority of FWA in the well-being factor.*** However, well-being included 5 items (mood, calmness, rest, emotional/physical health and expression of oneself) and teleworking was found superior to only one item, which does not allow us to conclude that teleworking has higher overall employee well-being scores than FWA. One explanation for this finding could be that full-time teleworking does not demand any special preparation, such when we leave the house, nor any transportation, driving, commuting, stress of arriving on time etc. (Weikle, 2018). The lack of the above demands is indeed associated with more time to rest or less opportunities to get tired, than with other working arrangements. Consequently, for the above reasons, our ***results did not verify our hypothesis for FWA being associated with higher employee well-being (H02) and neither was teleworking associated with higher employee well-being.***

Another finding of the study was that **employee stress can significantly predict employee effectiveness**, suggesting that as the job stress increases, the employee effectiveness decreases. This result is in accordance with prior studies, which have proven that stress negatively impacts not only effectiveness at work, but all other aspects of an individual's personal life. Teleworking has been previously found to bring up mental and physical fatigue among employees, as these individuals struggle to balance their work, their personal needs and their responsibilities, leading to a drop in effectiveness and performance (Montano & Acebes, 2020; Taylor et al., 2020).

A value added of the study is the investigation of employee specific characteristics that have been suggested to influence employee experience, such as the role of gender, age, education, profession, household composition and average distance between home and workplace in the preferred working model. Concerning the above qualities, our results showed that **the employee's household composition can influence job satisfaction, suggesting that as the no. of members in the family increases, the job satisfaction decreases. This is a novel result compared to prior relevant studies.** Other studies have linked the probability of teleworking to family composition, suggesting that workers benefit from teleworking when having children or elders to care for (Pigini and Staffolani, 2019). However, working with parallel caring for other people decreases the satisfaction for the employee and perhaps adds extra responsibilities to their day-to-day work schedule. In other words, it demands multitasking in order to succeed in teleworking while caring for family members.

Furthermore, **the education level of the employees can influence job satisfaction as well, suggesting that the higher the education level, the less satisfaction an employee feels from their hours worked.** Again, prior studies have linked the probability of teleworking to higher education, suggesting that higher education is mostly needed in professions with "teleworkability" (Pigini and Staffolani, 2019). However, the negative impact of higher education in satisfaction can be possibly explained by the expectations of educated people to lead a more comfortable life with more reasonable working hours. In a sense, highly educated employees may feel that the fatigue and toil from their studying years should earn them a more easy-going life in their professional years.

Finally, an unpredicted finding of the study was associated with the duration of the teleworking and/or flexible work arrangements. The duration of remote working seems to influence a variety of factors, with the more important being associated with employee effectiveness. It was found that **as the duration of the remote working increases, the employee effectiveness increases as well.** To the same extent, **the duration of teleworking/FWA was found to influence the employee evaluation of the whole experience. The more the remote working continues, the employees give a higher and more positive evaluation to the experience.** Finally, **as the duration of remote working increases, the pressure by the supervisor and the job stress**

decreases. This is another novel result brought up by the data analysis. The duration of remote working was found to have a significant impact on employee experience. Our results show that the longer the employee gets used to remote working the more effective he becomes. The continuation of remote working was found to have other benefits as well, such as feeling less pressure by the supervisor, less job stress, and an overall more positive experience. One possible explanation could be that employees get used to the new working condition, they adjust, they learn to manage their time, connect with friends and families instead of colleagues and slowly start to enjoy the benefits of remote working. After all, it is known that people don't like sudden changes. The sudden need due to Covid to execute work through the computer by employees who may have been less familiar with digital tools and all that, in a new environment (even if it is their home) may have made them initially insecure.

Overall, teleworking and flexible working arrangements are not as different as we initially hypothesized. Their impact on employee experience is rather similar and no significant differences were identified. It seems that both working models share common benefits and perhaps future research is needed to identify their possible differences on employee experience.

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