PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS ON POST PANDEMIC HYBRID WORKING

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ABSTRACT

Remote work is a form of location-based flexibility in which employees are permitted to do their duties outside of the office. In a 'hybrid' work arrangement, employees spend some time working from home and some time in an office or shared work space provided by their company. The majority of person and household variables were shown to have a weaker correlation with the end measures of productivity and job satisfaction than were organisational and work variables, according to the available research. This is important for businesses since processes and HR policies are much more effective at altering organisational and job-related characteristic variables than are individuals' work styles and personal situations. During the work-from-home trial phase brought on by the pandemic, it became clear that a large number of businesses have the resources to implement remote work permanently, and that employees strongly value the opportunity to do so. In contrast, it demonstrated how much we've missed our coworkers and how much we need to be back at the office after a year away.

1. INTRODUCTION

Most tech companies around the world instructed their employees to work from home in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 epidemic, marking a turning moment in the scope of experience and perception of work from home (WFH). Even though restrictions have been loosened and attempts have been made to reopen society on a regular basis, nearly two years later, many information workers have expressed a preference to continue working from home, demonstrating that the pandemic has left an indelible mark on the fundamental principles of the workplace. Hence, it's safe to say that WFH will be around for a while.

An extensive survey of over 30,000 American workers identified five main reasons for the large shift in favour of WFH: better-than-expected WFH experiences; new investments in physical and human capital that enable WFH; a change in attitude and stigmatisation of remote workers; persistent concerns about crowds and contagion risks; and a pandemic-driven surge in technological innovations that support WFH (Barrero et al., 2021a). The ubiquitous productivity of software developers, as summarised by Smite et al. (2022), is another example of the advantages of working from home. Although early reports that fully remote work from home was not difficulty free and not for everybody, we have seen the emergence of technology breakthroughs that assist remote working and greater experimentation with practises that alleviate remote teaming and working from home (Ford et al., 2021). For instance, (Dent et al., 2021). People are starting to accept the idea that the golden era of "being employed" being synonymous with working in an office is fading away. New workers' requests for remote work options throughout the hiring process have prompted companies to update their policies. To what extent one is allowed to be flexible in one's work schedule may now determine one's success or failure in the workplace. We've heard similar stories from our industry partners over the past few months, and they're reflected in the dialogue below between a developer (D) and a manager (M), which shows how the norms for retaining and attracting employees are changing.

A decade's worth of office culture was abruptly upended when the Covid-19 outbreak wiped out

millions of people around the world. The first upheaval prompted a lot of people to start wondering if the traditional 9-to-5 office arrangement is the best possible setup, or if companies could adopt a new method of work in which workers can choose between working from the office and from home. The conventional wisdom before the epidemic was that workplaces were crucial to prevailing in the global competition for intellect, creativity, and efficiency. Companies competed fiercely for prime office space in major cities across the world, with many focusing on open-office layouts, co-working, densification, and hoteling as ways to encourage workers to work together. Managers also showed significant resistance to employees working from home. Managers have voiced concerns about their staff's performance and productivity, as well as their use of technology and adherence to employment laws.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The effects of Covid on workplaces and operations will be long-lasting. Improved cybersecurity and autonomous cleaning equipment are just two examples of the technology that CB Insights highlighted as influencing the future of the workplace in the wake of a pandemic. Several businesses will likely reconsider their corporate real estate footprint in the near future, potentially leading to reductions or reallocations of space to branch locations. Given the advantages of in-person cooperation, invention, and social connection, it's hard to imagine a workforce that operates solely remotely. Yet, the ideal conditions for working both remotely and in an office setting will need to be established. It will be essential for firms to invest in mobile cybersecurity technologies, employee wellness, readily available human resources solutions, remote collaboration tools, and workforce training programmes for professional upskilling and growth in order to maintain a competitive edge. In Figure 1 below, you can see CB Insights's rendering of a technologically advanced workplace in the aftermath of a global epidemic (2020). This office features touchless entryways and cutting-edge remote collaboration capabilities.
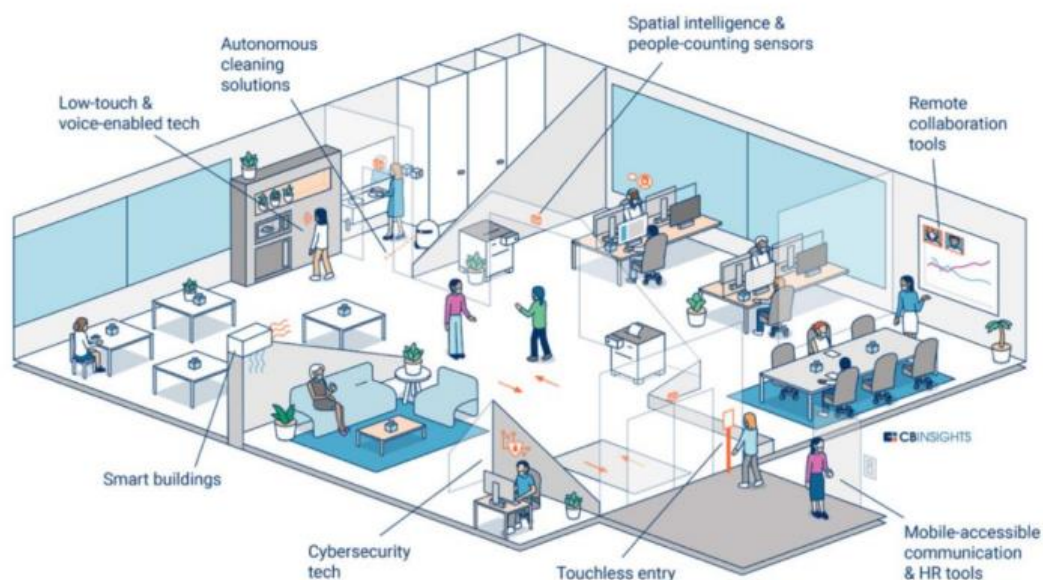

Figure 1. Reopening: The Tech-Enabled Office in A Post-Covid World (CB Insights 2020).

Hybridization in the workplace is expected after a pandemic, as reported by McKinsey (2021). Once past that point, though, details become less clear. Most companies have only just started to plan for a permanent combination of remote and in-office work for all positions that aren't strictly required to be performed in the physical location of the company's headquarters. According to a survey of 100 C-suite executives from different countries and industries, 90% of companies plan to adopt some hybrid of remote and on-site work arrangements. The survey shows that despite the pandemic, both consumer happiness and productivity have risen. Most companies required workers to spend the majority of their time at the office prior to the pandemic. Once the pandemic subsides, business leaders predict that the hybrid regime will become the norm. The majority of workplaces only require employees to show up between one and four days per week (for non-essential tasks).

In the post-COVID-19 future, C-suite executives expect an increase in hybrid work.
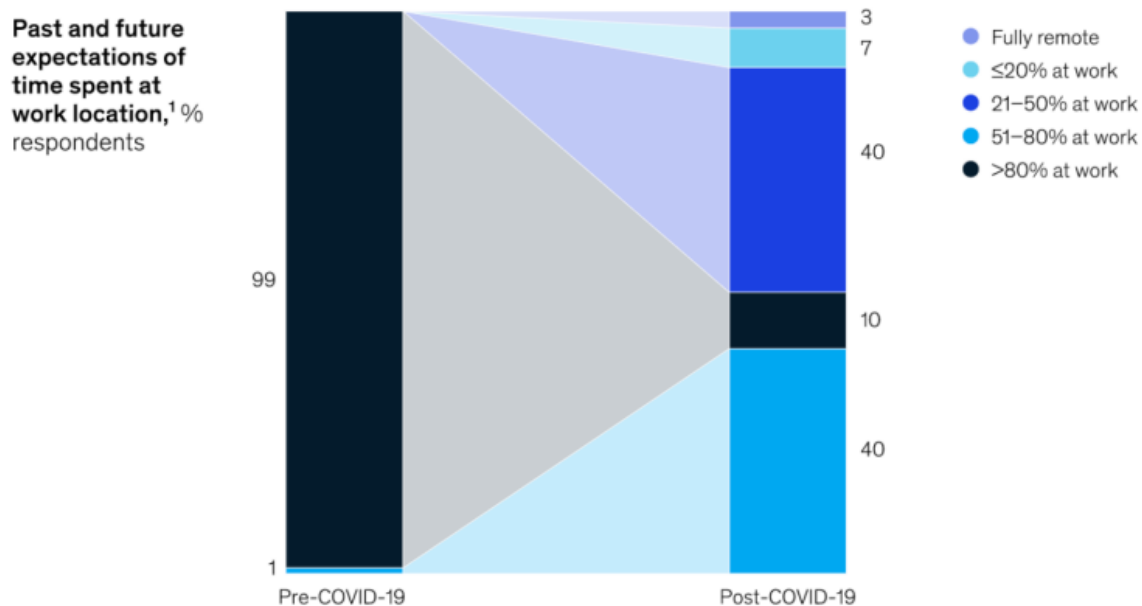

Figure 2. The future will be more hybrid (McKinsey 2021).

Both businesses and workers have benefited greatly from the option of working remotely. A more positive outlook on working from home has becoming the norm. There was an increase from 73% in June 2020 to 83% in December 2020 of businesses reporting that remote work had been successful for their company. Even more so, less than one in five C-suite executives express a desire to go back to work as it was before the pandemic. Just 13% of CEOs are ready to entirely forego coming into the office, while the remainder are debating how far to extend remote work possibilities. Meanwhile, 87 percent of workers say they value the office most for its potential for social interaction and teamwork (PWC 2021). No one can seem to agree on the best combination of in-office and remote work. Sixty-eight percent of managers think an average worker needs to remain in the office at least three days a week after pandemic worries subside, while 55 percent of workers would rather work from home at least that often (PWC 2021).

Castellum polled 1007 professional office workers across Sweden, asking their opinion on the future of office design in October 2020. The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 65. Employees under the age of 25 favoured open areas, while those between the ages of 26 and 64 favoured individual or small group work (Castellum 2020).

3. POST-PANDEMIC WORK POLICIES:

3.1 How much do companies allow employees to work from home?

The next critical inquiry is what kind of action businesses should take in response to the rising demands for adaptability that have emerged from employee surveys. To get to the bottom of this, we compiled 17 firms' worth of rules, strategies, and policies governing remote employment.

3.2. Most companies have established new WFH policies, instructions or regulations

According to our findings, only a small number of organisations (Norwegian Blank, Spanish GFT, German CQSE, and global Tietoevry) had built cultures of flexible scheduling before the epidemic. It's important to note that these companies, unlike many others, have always given their employees the option of working remotely if they so want. Companies in our sample set have already begun preparing for the post-pandemic era by formulating guidelines or policies that will be piloted or rolled out across the entire organisation between June 2021 and January 2022, with the vast majority of these plans being publicised in the fall of 2021. Principles for flexible/hybrid work (Kantega, Blank, 'Fswed,' Kantega); policies, regulations, and instructions for remote work or hybrid work (GFT, CQSE, Tietoevry, 'GlobCo,' Malvacom, and Telenor); examples of corporate strategies (e.g., "Future of the Storebrand," "QualityMinds Company guide," and

"Sbanken post COVID"). Standalone contracts, Word files (4-18 pages long), PowerPoint presentations, and even simple status emails and intranet posts are just some of the many ways in which new regulations can be found.

3.4. Some companies have centralised restrictions for WFH and some do not

In our data set, somewhat more than half of the businesses have limited how much remote workers can vary their schedules. Two firms ('SpanCo' and 'Knor') have a unique policy whereby employees who choose to work remotely are elevated to a special status and then obliged to work remotely (full time in 'SpanCo' and two to three days a week in Knor). Seven businesses imposed limits on how much time workers might spend at the workplace vs at home. In order to comply with Swedish law, the Swedish headquarters of 'GlobCo,' which is located in the United States, allows employees to work remotely from home for up to 50 percent of the year. While Swedish Malvacom restricted WFH to no more than three days per week, Sbanken, KnowIT, and 'Fswed' all capped it at two, and the Chinese version of 'GlobCo' allowed it for only one day per week. Furthermore, Sbanken requires all employees to work one additional day per week. The five companies that have stated that working remotely is not an option and that employees must come into the office at least once a week are Storebrand, Telenor Sweden and Pakistan, SB1 Utvikling, and Kantega. Organizations without such centralised limits and providing their staff with a wide range of possibilities in how they go about their work include QualityMinds, CQSE, GFT, all of the Tietoevry locations, 'InterSoft,' Blank, and Telenor in Norway, Denmark, and Finland.

3.5. Flexible choices are not always fully flexible for individuals

Many people mistakenly believe that having options implies they can choose whether to go into the office or work from home every day. Based on our findings, this is clearly not the situation. In certain businesses, employees aren't given much leeway to choose their own work location on a day-to-day basis since they have to keep in mind the preferences of their coworkers or clients. We found that the majority of organisations in our sample required team members to reach consensus on the frequency and duration of remote work. Each team at Telenor Norway and Telenor Denmark is required to

draught a "Team Manifesto" that outlines the group's consensus on whether a given meeting, task, or function is best accomplished remotely, in a hybrid/mixed mode with some co-located participants and some calling in, or in-person at the office. In addition, workers are urged to have open discussions and achieve consensuses on how to advance the team, sustain the company's spirit and culture, and educate new hires with the help of veterans. In addition, each group decides which days of the week are designated for staff meetings. It's important to remember that team manifestos aren't finished products; rather, they're living documents that evolve and change as teams adjust to the new normal of remote work. Every member of the CQSE team is given the freedom to set his or her own work schedule, including vacation time (e.g., by the team lead). Companies like Telenor Norway and Sweden, Storebrand, SB1 Utvikling, and Sbanken use workgroup decisions without seeking managerial approval, in contrast to the majority of corporations.

Companies often make WFH decisions binding for a longer period of time not just because of the necessity to conform to the norm but also because of the importance placed on retaining talented employees (typically 12 months). InterSoft gives its workers the option of working either primarily in the office (with the exception of one day per week) or primarily from home (with the exception of one day per week) for a set amount of time. Any employee at "SpanCo," "Malvacom," "Knor," or "QualityMinds" who prefers to do the bulk of their work from home may do so by signing a legally binding contract for a specified period of time. Local regulations (such those requiring all businesses to have home-office insurance) can be one reason for these limitations, along with factors like the reliability of an office's location, the accessibility of a dedicated workstation, and the availability of other perks (subsidised lunches, internet, or electricity).

3.6. WFH is not for everybody

In the future, hybrid work policies may not necessarily apply to every worker. Many organisations, however, reserve the right to restrict or do away with the WFH bonus altogether for particular jobs, responsibilities, or clientele. Workers in support roles are sometimes treated differently from those in other departments. When it comes to working from home, several organisations (including 'Knor, Knowit, and Malvacom) require employees to have their own set of office supplies. Certain

companies (including QualityMinds, CQSE, "SpanCo," "GlobCo," and Telenor Denmark) have the right to revoke workers' ability to work remotely if they fail to meet performance standards or fail to effectively engage with colleagues and clients. Client service representatives and those whose jobs depend on the integrity of vital information systems may be compelled to work on-site or in shifts. At the end of the day, 'GlobCo' China limits remote work for new hires for the first six months on the job. Decisions about hybrid work arrangements tend to be taken at different levels in different companies. It is difficult to meet the varying demands of employees when choices are made at the top by the CEO or executive management team, because those people lack the granular data necessary to do so. But, a perk of this type of organisation is that everyone plays by the same set of rules. Hybrid policy decisions are best decided at the team level, where they may be tailored to the specific requirements of each member and each project. The disparate treatment of teams under such an organisation, however, could foster unhealthy prejudices and be seen as unjust.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Data collection

The most common technique for collecting information from a cross-section of a population is to distribute questionnaires to that population. Using a questionnaire, you can collect data about a large number of cases in a standardised, generally structured format by asking a series of questions to which respondents can provide a variety of replies. Today, questionnaires are used in everything from small-scale classroom experiments to massive, internationally representative polls. The researchers behind each survey have likely developed a specific set of questions in an effort to get at some sort of answer to their research topic or a hypothesis test.

4.2 Questionnaire remote work

In November 2020, the Swedish Transport Administration carried out a survey regarding the working environment in order to investigate the experiences that workers have had during the recent pandemic. The survey was conducted to collect data that may be used to enhance the company's culture, leadership, and work environment. During the pandemic, the poll inquired about all aspects of the working environment, such as productivity, physical and mental health, managerial experiences, and other related topics. Also, the article delves into the managerial mindsets of WFH and the potential they saw for leading during the pandemic. This enabled the organisation obtain knowledge and shine a light on what works effectively now and what might be enhanced in the future. Among the 7128 respondents, 6352 reported having done some remote work in the 12 months before to taking the survey. The survey has several different types of questions.

4.3 Complementary questionnaire

To fully understand the context of this case study and to correctly realise the cost benefit analysis, an additional survey was given to the Stockholm-based East Link Project team members who will be relocating to a new office after the pandemic. By means of this survey, we hope to learn more about the team's perspective on remote work and to compile information on the potential cost and time savings that come with it. There are a total of nine questions in the extra questionnaire; eight of them require specific responses, while the last question is open-ended and solicits semi-structured information.

4.4 Analysis of data

Data from two surveys have been obtained, and analysis will begin as soon as possible, as was originally described. After compiling survey data in Excel, we used visual aids to highlight the most pertinent variables for further examination. The textual analysis and summary of the free-form question were conducted independently. In the "Results" section, we share the information we gathered. The free survey was sent out by email, and it received a response rate of 69%.

5. RESULTS AND STUDY
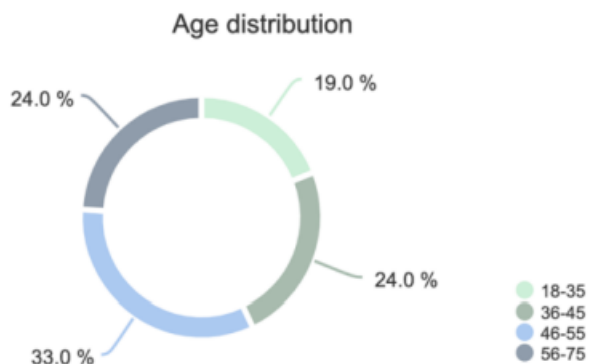

Figure 3. Gender distribution.

Age distribution

Figure 4. Age distribution.

Figure 3 represents gender and figure 4 represents age distribution. Pre-pandemic data show that 35% of the workforce almost never or never used remote access to their computers. However, 30% of workers did so occasionally (once a month or less), and 17% did it frequently (once a week or more). Finally, just 3% of the workforce reported working remotely more than 1-2 days a week before the epidemic which is shown in figure 5.
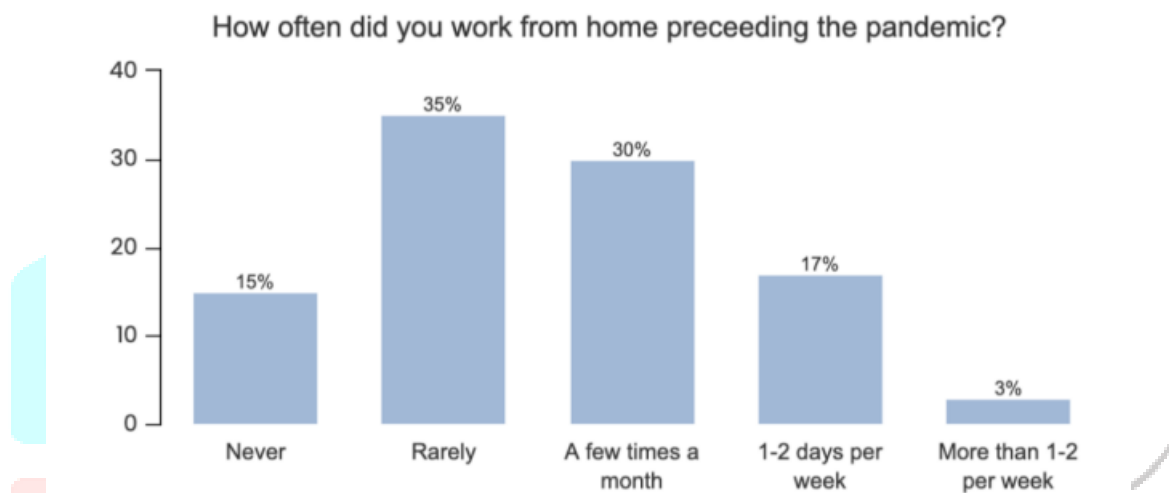
Figure 5. Remote workprepandemic.

Figure 6 shows that 37% of workers believe their work-life balance has improved, 25% believe it has diminished, and 38% consider it is the same as it was before.
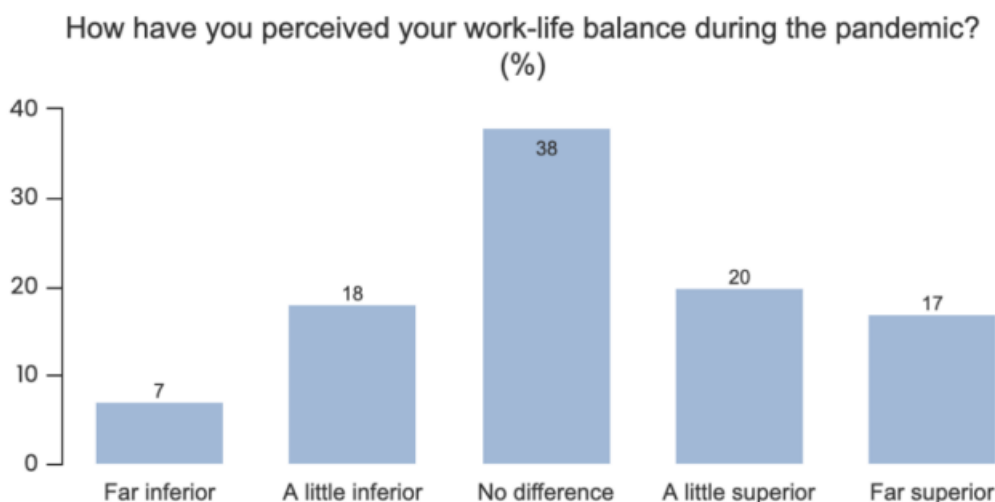
Figure 6: employees perceives their work-life balance

CONCLUSION

The goal of this research was to find out if a hybrid workplace model may threaten the status quo of the conventional office by examining the model from the perspectives of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The future of employment should be an important consideration for any organisation that hopes to succeed where others have failed. Some nations have lifted the lockdown in some of their states, but corporations are still slow to put in place a more secure system of operation. Many are already using a hybrid setup, and others are operating completely remotely. The pandemic has served as a sobering reminder of the importance of being well-

prepared for any emergency at work and of keeping up with technical and management-related developments in order to maintain productivity and growth.

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