



Hellenic Open University

Master in Business Administration (MBA)

Postgraduate Dissertation

The impact of remote work on employee productivity and
satisfaction in the Greek labour market

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Patras, Greece, September 2026

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the impacts of telecommuting on employee productivity and job satisfaction in the Greek labour market. Using an interpretivist qualitative research methodology, the current study draws on ten semi-structured interviews conducted with employees undertaking either full-time telework, hybrid telework, or part-time telework across industries such as information technology, financial services, public sector administration, marketing, higher education, customer service, human resources management, graphic design, insurance, and consulting. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. Findings suggest that telecommuting has a positive impact on productivity because it improves focus, saves time for transportation, allows more control over the environment, and facilitates matching of tasks with job requirements. On the other hand, telecommuting is hindered by excessive meetings, scattered communications, mental exhaustion, digital presence pressure, and continuous availability expectation. Moreover, telecommuting leads to higher job satisfaction because of increased autonomy, comfort, and flexibility, and its drawbacks involve loneliness, lack of informal identification, and separation problems. In conclusion, telecommuting is a negotiated mode of employment where its consequences depend on task-technology compatibility, digital infrastructure accessibility, managers' trust, objective performance evaluation, communication norms, and organisational acceptance of work-life balance.

Keywords

Remote work; employee productivity; job satisfaction; Greek labour market; hybrid work; thematic analysis.

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία διερευνά πώς η εξ αποστάσεως εργασία επηρεάζει την παραγωγικότητα και την εργασιακή ικανοποίηση των εργαζομένων στην ελληνική αγορά εργασίας. Ακολουθήθηκε ποιοτικός ερμηνευτικός σχεδιασμός, με δέκα ημιδομημένες συνεντεύξεις εργαζομένων που είχαν εμπειρία πλήρους, υβριδικής ή περιστασιακής εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας στην Ελλάδα. Τα δεδομένα αναλύθηκαν με αναστοχαστική θεματική ανάλυση. Τα ευρήματα δείχνουν ότι η εξ αποστάσεως εργασία ενισχύει την παραγωγικότητα όταν προστατεύει τη συγκέντρωση, μειώνει την κόπωση της μετακίνησης, ενισχύει την αυτονομία και ταιριάζει με το είδος του έργου. Ωστόσο, τα οφέλη περιορίζονται από υπερβολικές διαδικτυακές συναντήσεις, ψηφιακή κόπωση, αποσπασματική επικοινωνία και προσδοκίες συνεχούς διαθεσιμότητας. Η εργασιακή ικανοποίηση βελτιώνεται μέσω ευελιξίας, άνεσης και ελέγχου του ημερήσιου ρυθμού, αλλά περιορίζεται από απομόνωση, αδύναμη άτυπη σύνδεση και δυσκολία αποσύνδεσης. Συμπερασματικά, η εξ αποστάσεως εργασία εξαρτάται από τον σχεδιασμό του έργου, την εμπιστοσύνη, τη δίκαιη αξιολόγηση και την προστασία των εργασιακών ορίων.

Λέξεις – Κλειδιά

Εξ αποστάσεως εργασία; παραγωγικότητα εργαζομένων; εργασιακή ικανοποίηση; ελληνική αγορά εργασίας; υβριδική εργασία; θεματική ανάλυση.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Περίληψη	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	xv
List of Tables	xvi
List of Abbreviations & Acronyms	xvii
Chapter 1: Introduction	2
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review	7
2.1 Models and Forms of Remote Work	7
2.1.1 Traditional Telecommuting and Hybrid Models	7
2.1.2 Flexible and Digital Platform Based Remote Work	8
2.1.3 Organisational Structures and Management Approaches	9
2.2 Evolution of Remote Work: Global and Greek Perspectives	10
2.2.1 Evolution of Remote Work	10
2.2.2 Historical Development and Pre Pandemic Adoption	12
2.2.3 Remote Work Acceleration during COVID 19	13
2.2.4 Post Pandemic Adaptation and Regulatory Trends in Greece	13
2.3 Remote Work and Employee Productivity	14
2.3.1 Theoretical and Empirical Evidence of Productivity Changes	14
2.3.2 Determinants of Productivity in Remote Settings	15
2.3.3 Measuring and Managing Productivity Remotely	16
2.4 Remote Work and Employee Satisfaction	17
2.4.1 Job Satisfaction, Work life Balance, and Psychological Wellbeing	17
2.4.2 Motivation, Engagement, and Organisational Commitment	18
2.4.3 Factors Influencing Satisfaction in Remote Work: Support, Culture, and Communication	19
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	21
3.1 Research Philosophy and Design	21
3.2 Sampling Strategy and Participants	22

3.3 Data Collection Procedures	23
3.4 Development of the Interview Protocol and Link to Literature.....	24
3.5 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis	25
3.6 Trustworthiness and Rigour	25
3.7 Ethical Considerations	26
Chapter 4: Analysis of Findings	27
4.1 Introduction.....	27
4.2 Analytic Approach: From Coding to Theme Development	27
4.3 Theme 1: Remote Work as Structured and Task-Specific Flexibility	37
4.3.1 Autonomy, routine and the discipline required to make flexibility productive .	37
4.3.2 Task fit: remote work as complement, not universal substitute	38
4.4 Theme 2: Productivity Gains with Hidden Organisational and Cognitive Costs. 39	
4.4.1 Concentration, commuting relief and the productivity of protected attention .	40
4.4.2 Coordination delays, meeting inflation and cognitive overload	40
4.4.3 Work intensification and emotional compression	41
4.5 Theme 3: Visibility, Trust and the Contested Fairness of Remote Evaluation.....	42
4.5.1 Deliverables, metrics and their limits.....	43
4.5.2 Responsiveness and performative visibility	43
4.5.3 Managerial support, control and leadership quality.....	44
4.6 Theme 4: Work-Life Boundaries, Belonging and the Relocation of Job Satisfaction.....	46
4.6.1 Practical balance versus psychological spillover	46
4.6.2 Isolation, reduced belonging and the shift from organisational identity to task identity	47
4.6.3 Boundary management as individual practice and organisational culture	47
4.7 Comparative Synthesis Across the Interviews	49
4.8 Direct Answers to the Research Questions	51
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research ..	54
5.1 Introduction.....	54
5.2 Conclusions in Relation to Productivity.....	55
5.3 Conclusions in Relation to Job Satisfaction.....	56

5.4 Practical Recommendations	58
5.5 Limitations of the Study	59
5.6 Recommendations for Future Research	60
Bibliography	62
Appendix	69
Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide.....	69
Introductory Letter to Participants.....	69
Interview Guide	70
Appendix B: Interview Questions and Supporting Literature	71
Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet (Information Sheet).....	72
Appendix D: Participant Consent Form (Consent Form)	73
Appendix E: Answers.....	74
Participant 1 (P1).....	74
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	74
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	75
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	76
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	77
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	77
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work–life balance?	78
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	78
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	79
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	79
Q10. How do you manage work–life boundaries and the right to disconnect? ..	79
Participant 2 (P2).....	80

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	80
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	80
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	81
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	81
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	82
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work–life balance?	82
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	82
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	83
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	83
Q10. How do you manage work–life boundaries and the right to disconnect? ..	83
Participant 3 (P3).....	83
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	84
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	84
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	84
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	85
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	85
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work–life balance?	86
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	86

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	86
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	86
Q10. How do you manage work–life boundaries and the right to disconnect? ..	86
Participant 4 (P4).....	87
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	87
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	87
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	88
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	89
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	89
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?	90
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	90
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	90
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	91
Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect? ...	91
Participant 5 (P5).....	91
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	92
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	92
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	93
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	93

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	93
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?	94
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	94
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	94
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	95
Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect? ...	95
Participant 6 (P6).....	95
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	95
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	96
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	96
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	97
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	97
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?	97
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	98
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	98
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	98
Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect? ...	98
Participant 7 (P7).....	99
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	99

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	99
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	100
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	100
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	100
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?	101
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	101
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	101
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	101
Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect? .	102
Participant 8 (P8).....	102
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	102
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	102
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	103
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	103
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	103
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?	104
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	104
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	104

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	105
Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect? .	105
Participant 9 (P9).....	105
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	105
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	106
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	106
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	106
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	106
Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?	107
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	107
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	107
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	107
Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect? .	108
Participant 10 (P10)	108
Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.....	108
Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?	108
Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?	109
Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?	109
Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?	109

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?	110
Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?	110
Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?	110
Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?	110
Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect? .	111
Appendix F: Coding Framework and Thematic Development	113

List of Figures

Figure 4.1. Final thematic map showing the relationship between themes and code clusters

List of Tables

Table 4.1. Participant profile and analytic relevance

Table 4.2. Application of Braun and Clarke's six phase reflexive thematic analysis

Table 4.3. Excerpt of the coding trail from extracts to themes

Table 4.4. Final thematic framework

Table 4.5. Cross case evidence for Theme 1

Table 4.6. Productivity mechanisms and counter mechanisms across interviews

Table 4.7. Evaluation and managerial support across cases

Table 4.8. Job satisfaction, belonging and boundary management patterns

Table 4.9. Comparative synthesis of convergence and divergence

Table 4.10. Findings synthesised by research question

Table 5.1. Synthesis of conclusions by research question

Table F1. Detailed codebook and theme development matrix

Table F2. Participant by theme matrix

Table F3. Development from candidate themes to final themes

List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

COVID 19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EU	European Union
EURES	European Employment Services
HOU	Hellenic Open University
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
JD R	Job Demands Resources model
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MBA	Master in Business Administration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
P1–P10	Participant identifiers used in the interview analysis
RQ	Research Question
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprise

Chapter 1: Introduction

The nature and manner of work have been reconfigured in recent decades with the spread of digital technology, the growth of knowledge-based service work, and a greater emphasis on flexibility in employment relations (Cascio, 2000; Felstead & Henseke, 2017). In the context of these developments, remote work has become a prominent and normalised form of work organisation. Remote work is defined as the conduct of work outside the employer's premises with the support of information and communication technologies, facilitating coordination, supervision, and the production of work outcomes (International Labour Organization, 2020). While remote work is not a new phenomenon, with its existence predating the onset of the pandemic, the pandemic acted as an exogenous shock, prompting a rapid and extensive shift to home-based work arrangements across sectors, transforming remote work from a selective to a mainstream work arrangement (Kniffin et al., 2021; Sostero et al., 2020). While many organisations have not fully returned to pre-pandemic work arrangements following the relaxation of emergency measures, instead opting for a hybrid model of office-based and remote work, remote work has become a permanent and not a temporary phenomenon, with many characteristics of a normalised and mainstream work arrangement (Eurofound, 2022; OECD, 2020a).

In spite of its prevalence, the effects of remote work remain debatable from both theoretical and empirical viewpoints, especially in relation to employee productivity and job satisfaction. For example, studies indicate that remote work can increase productivity due to the saving of commuting time and the opportunity to concentrate more on tasks (Bloom et al., 2015; OECD, 2020a). On the other hand, productivity can be threatened if there is communication friction in teams, restricted access to tacit knowledge, and limitations in the innovation process (Gibbs et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). In relation to job satisfaction, remote work is often linked to positive outcomes due to flexibility and autonomy. However, it can also be associated with negative outcomes in terms of intensified work boundaries and social isolation (Eurofound, 2022; Oakman et al., 2020). In both cases, it is evident that the outcomes of remote work cannot be generalised and may be subject to organisational and individual variations (Allen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2021).

Within this context of international discourse on work and technology, the Greek labour market emerges as a particularly prominent case that warrants investigation. Greek businesses are marked by a high proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises, a high concentration of service businesses including tourism and trade and a tradition of valuing physical presence and direct supervision (European Commission, 2024; Eurofound, 2008). These factors have historically constrained the development of telework in Greece until recently, since a large proportion of jobs are not teleworkable and there are stratified levels of readiness to work remotely depending on occupational and sectoral characteristics (Dingel & Neiman, 2020; Sostero et al., 2020). However, Greek businesses have rapidly adopted remote work arrangements during the pandemic period with minimal preparation in terms of work design, technology readiness, and managerial preparedness. Research on Greek businesses during the pandemic period indicates that there was a rapid shift to remote work arrangements that was characterised by varied outcomes in terms of positive and negative consequences for Greek employees (Charalambous et al., 2022; Kniffin et al., 2021; Oakman et al., 2020).

At the same time, there have been developments in Greek law that clarify employer and employee rights and responsibilities in terms of working time expectations and disconnection from work communications (Hellenic Republic, 2021). In terms of empirical research on Greek businesses in the post-pandemic period, it remains to be determined whether or not there are positive or negative consequences of remote work on Greek employees.

The dissertation aims to address the uncertainty associated with the outcomes of remote work in Greece and the scarcity of context-specific and qualitative research findings that provide insight into how employees perceive and experience remote work in organisational settings. Much of the research conducted has focused on quantitative studies using survey research and meta-analytic studies using aggregate data from different countries and labour market structures (Allen et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Although this research is vital in understanding the overall regularities associated with remote work outcomes, it may not provide sufficient insight into the mechanisms through which remote work influences productivity and job satisfaction in particular contexts. In this regard, qualitative research can be instrumental in understanding the meanings and perceptions associated with

remote work and how it influences organisational outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The dissertation is based on this understanding and premise that remote work is not only a technological tool but also a social and organisational phenomenon that is subject to negotiation and interpretation in organisational settings.

The objective of the study is to explore the perceived effects of remote work on the productivity and job satisfaction of employees, focusing on the mechanisms and conditions that govern these effects within the Greek labour market. Productivity will be conceptualised as a multidimensional construct that may include perceived efficiency, quality, achievement of goals, and the ability to perform without an intensification that harms performance (OECD, 2020a; Wang et al., 2021). Job satisfaction will be conceptualised as an all-encompassing evaluative attitude that includes work-life balance, motivation, engagement, and well-being, taking into account that these factors may be influenced by factors such as autonomy, organisational support, and boundaries (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Eurofound, 2022). From an insider's perspective, the dissertation aims to explore how remote work influences the ways in which employees organise their work, understand their tasks and expectations, experience collaboration and communication, and perceive the legitimacy of procedures for evaluating productivity.

Although the subject of remote work has been examined at the international level, the literature base is characterised by certain gaps, specifically with regard to the mechanisms of the impact of remote work on productivity and job satisfaction, with the outcome associations being the focus of the majority of the studies, which do not provide significant insight, at the level of mechanisms, regarding the ways in which the outcomes are associated with the implementation of remote work in everyday life (Allen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2021). Moreover, the literature base regarding the impact of remote work is characterised by the insufficient and limited presence of studies examining the perceptions of employees in the Greek labour market, where the sectoral structure, the predominance of SMEs, and the managerial culture, which emphasizes the physical presence of the manager, might shape the perceptions and the impact of remote work in a different way compared to the perceptions and impact of remote work in other labour markets (European Commission, 2024; Eurofound, 2008). Hence, it is not sufficiently clear the perceptions of employees in the Greek labour market regarding the impact of remote work and the ways in which, in the

post-pandemic period, productivity and job satisfaction are facilitated or hindered by certain mechanisms.

In light of this identified research gap in existing literature, this current dissertation is informed by two primary research questions, which are outlined below:

RQ1: How do employees perceive the effects of remote work on their productivity, and through what mechanisms do these effects occur?

RQ2: How does remote work affect employee job satisfaction in the Greek labour market? And what organisational factors modulate this effect?

The aim of this research is to investigate the perceived effects of remote work on employee productivity and job satisfaction, with particular emphasis on the mechanisms through which these effects occur, within the Greek labour market.

Concerning the objectives, this study aims to

- investigate how Greek employees structure their remote work, including any hybrid elements, within their existing work routines.
- examine perceived effects of remote work on productivity, including any mechanisms through which these effects occur, including autonomy, coordination, technology, and time management.
- evaluate perceived effects of remote work on job satisfaction, including any sub-factors, including work-life balance and well-being.
- investigate organisational factors, including management, which may modulate perceived effects of remote work on productivity and job satisfaction.

The present study holds dual importance, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the present study contributes to the existing literature on remote work, offering a qualitative perspective from a context where the diffusion of remote work is shaped by sectoral composition and organisational capacity, thereby enriching the external validity of prevailing approaches, which were often developed in other contexts (Dingel & Neiman,

2020; European Commission, 2024). The present study also offers importance by revealing mechanisms, not merely outcomes, such as how productivity and job satisfaction are created, which aligns with contemporary approaches to work design (Wang et al., 2021). Practically, the present study holds importance for managers and human resource professionals who need guidance on how to create a remote work context that ensures employee well-being while delivering performance, which is a consistent theme in evidence-based approaches for managing remote work (Allen et al., 2015; OECD, 2020a). At the policy level, the present study holds significance since the regulation of remote work is not merely intended for flexibility but also for managing risks associated with work intensification and the invisibility of working time, which have become prominent in digitally mediated work (Eurofound, 2022; Hellenic Republic, 2021).

In light of the exploratory nature of the research questions, as well as the lack of context-specific research findings, qualitative research design was considered more appropriate. The qualitative approach is useful in examining employees' perceptions, understanding, and experiences. It is useful in identifying mechanisms and factors that could be missed with standardised questionnaires. The present study uses a Semi-Structured interview approach with purposively sampled employees who work remotely or in hybrid arrangements.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter One identifies the research problem, objectives, research questions, significance, and scope. The theoretical framework and literature review will be discussed in Chapter Two, which will include the concepts, models, and existing literature on the impact of remote work on productivity and job satisfaction, especially in Greece, in the context of the institutional developments in Europe (European Commission, 2024; Eurofound, 2022). In Chapter Three, the qualitative methodology will be described, including the research design and sampling strategy, which will follow the guidelines on qualitative research methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In Chapter Four, the findings will be discussed and presented, which will include the thematic analysis of the findings from the qualitative study, highlighting the employee and organisational aspects. In the final Chapter Five, the conclusion will be drawn, along with the implications and recommendations relating the findings to the existing literature. The dissertation aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the concept of remote work and its effect on productivity and job satisfaction in Greece.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Models and Forms of Remote Work

2.1.1 Traditional Telecommuting and Hybrid Models

The traditional paradigm of telework, the most common form of remote work, has been described in the literature as classic telecommuting, whereby employees are remunerated for regular work performed from a non-employer-controlled location, usually home, while remaining in a regular employment relationship with their client organisation (Allen et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Initially, studies considered teleworking an occasional alternative to commuting to the workplace, sometimes bargained for individually and for the most part in knowledge-intensive occupations. The paradigm assumes fixed patterns of workplace activities, predictable coordination patterns, and basic ICT support enabling communications, tracking, and task delivery (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016). Teleworking has gradually evolved from the periphery of flexibility benefits for management and employees to the mainstream design alternative for professional and administrative activities whose deliverables can be measured in terms of tangible outputs rather than physical attendance.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, hybrid work has become a prevalent form of organisational arrangement across various fields of activity. Hybrid models combine office days with telework, trying to bridge the need for dedicated, individual work conducted remotely with collaborative, socialising, and learning activities conducted in the office (Eurofound, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Findings suggest that hybrid work practices can provide a gain in performance by promoting flexibility when more telework hours increase autonomy and concentration, while in-office hours promote coordination and knowledge sharing (Choudhury et al., 2022). On the other hand, hybrid work raises managerial challenges by implying spatiotemporally dispersed teams, thus risking inequities of visibility and knowledge, coordination difficulties, or bottlenecks of communication, which can be mitigated by redesigning routines along explicit communication expectations (Contreras et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

2.1.2 Flexible and Digital Platform Based Remote Work

In addition to teleworking and hybrid forms, the concept of remote work has come to include more flexible and platform-based arrangements that serve the relationship between work and a single employer and, in some cases, employment itself (International Labour Organization, 2020; Wood et al., 2019). Digital labour platforms link clients and workers for the completion of projects or for on-demand services, and they coordinate work activity according to platform-based logic, algorithms, and reputation systems, as opposed to traditional managerial structures (International Labour Organization, 2021; Wood et al., 2019). Underlying this kind of situation, remote work not only involves the selection of working location within the bounds of the work contract; it also may represent a kind of market-mediated allocation of labour, as workers become categorically self-employed, freelance, or micro-entrepreneurs, and, most often, transnationally so (International Labour Organization, 2021).

Eurofound has defined platform work as the process of matching the demand and supply of paid work using an online platform based on algorithms and characterising the platform, the client, and the worker as three different agents (Eurofound, 2018).

There is great diversity in the remote work enabled and organised through digital platforms. It involves high-skilled freelancing jobs like software development, design work, translation services, and consulting. It also involves lower-skilled digital work. The performance level regarding productivity and work satisfaction is highly variable depending on the dimensions of autonomy, income security, skill transferability, and the degree of control exerted by the platform algorithms (Wood et al., 2019). While digital platforms might promote work flexibility and linkages to international markets, they might equally promote precarity via arbitrary changes in rules of the trade, knowledge asymmetries, and constant performance measurement achieved through rating systems (International Labour Organization, 2021; Wood et al., 2019). Such diversity makes necessary the need for a very specific conceptual categorisation in the context of remote work in Greece. Here, remote work arrangements vary from formal telework on a dependent employment contract to the various freelancing strategies of income acquisition outside the services sector.

2.1.3 Organisational Structures and Management Approaches

Remote work arrangements are not only dependent on the location where the work takes place, however. Remote work arrangements are also contingent upon organisational principles regarding the management and governance of different aspects of the organisation. For instance, there is evidence from the literature that to be effective, remote work requires the redesign of the organisation's work system, and this requires the development and use of systems that map the task dependencies, supported by rules and standards to ensure clarity around the rules of response and time (Wang et al., 2021). Studies conducted by Eurofound suggest that the use of flexibility in telework and ICT-enabled mobile work can result in improved autonomy and feelings of performance, although this can also lead to intensification and blurring between the lines, and thus the need to manage the expectations around working time to avoid the negative effects mentioned above (Eurofound, 2020; Eurofound, 2022). Such considerations are also important in the context of the fully connected organisation, as mentioned.

Approaches to management will range from monitoring that is more orientated to presence to performance management that is more output-orientated. Telework evidence indicates that productivity is more likely to occur if managers focus on goals, feedback, and trust rather than trying to monitor office activities from a digital perspective (Allen et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). On the role of leadership as defined by the e-leadership perspective, there is an imperative to adjust to changing environments by creating clarity, comfort, and high-quality communication within teleworking settings while being more equitable about participation and information flow to all participants (Contreras et al., 2020). On policy and organisational capacity issues regarding telework diffusion, OECD research has emphasised that while telework is a complement to productivity and better management practices, it is necessary to make "complementary investments" to strengthen managerial practices, digital literacy, and broadband capacity as well as more favourable organisational cultures that promote collaboration and innovation to materialise the productivity dividend of telework (OECD, 2020a, 2020b). Lastly, telework diffusion remains conditioned by labour market structure, sectoral composition, and occupational structure. Specifically, regarding Greece, European statistics available online reveal that telework remains below the European average fraction of employees teleworking while working from home; this reveals that the sectoral structure problematically conditioned telework diffusion, most

likely within the non-knowledge-intensive sector (European Commission, 2024; Eurostat, 2024).

2.2 Evolution of Remote Work: Global and Greek Perspectives

2.2.1 Evolution of Remote Work

Remote work can be seen as not a new concept in the labour market but rather the final product of a long and dynamic process that has sometimes been intensified when all the pieces fall into place. The concept of telecommuting was first conceptualised in the 1970s when telework was understood to replace physical commuting with telecommunications due to concerns about congestion, energy consumption, and organisational efficiency (Nilles, 1975). In this context, telework was understood as a work redesign concept applicable to certain occupational groups whose work could be organised and coordinated outside a physical workplace through basic information and communication technologies. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, telework was understood as a concept that moved beyond transport-related rationales and was understood as a work arrangement that was organised around three dimensions: organisational design, location outside central premises, and information and communication technologies as a means to deliver and coordinate work (Di Martino & Wirth, 1990).

From the late 1990s onwards, remote work has increasingly been conceptualised in terms of the virtual workplace, in which work processes, supervision, and coordination are arranged through spatial distance using digital technologies, rather than through physical co-presence (Cascio, 2000). In the European context, an important institutional landmark was the 2002 Framework Agreement on Telework, which integrated telework into the standard employment relationship while also clarifying voluntariness, data protection, working conditions, equipment responsibilities, and collective rights as key pillars (European Social Partners, 2002). Nevertheless, the empirical evidence accumulated before the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that we should be careful not to subscribe to an overly linear narrative of inevitable expansion. Indeed, longitudinal analysis suggests that the expansion of remote work was not uniform across sectors and occupations and that trade-offs in effort, work intensity, and work-life balance can be associated with remote working

depending on how control, autonomy, and availability are designed (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

At the same time, the development of remote work was also linked with the emergence of platform-mediated labour, where work allocation occurs through digital platforms and is coordinated through algorithmic processes, which in turn leads to an extension of remote work beyond traditional employment relations and which generates questions around labour protection and regulation (De Stefano, 2015).

The COVID-19 shock has operated as an exogenous accelerator, turning remote work into an emergency measure on a massive scale, while simultaneously revealing the structural limitations of "teleworkability". Comparative research has revealed that only some occupations can be fully executed remotely, with teleworking potential exhibiting occupational, income, and sectoral stratification, thereby producing a new digital divide in the labour market (Dingel & Neiman, 2020; Sostero et al., 2020). In the context of Greece, the expansion of telework has faced limitations related to the high share of customer service occupations, the predominance of small enterprises, and the organisational capacities of businesses to implement formal work design.

From a legal perspective, Greece was among the countries that introduced telework relatively quickly. Law 2639/1998 was enacted, which introduced special forms of employment, providing an initial basis for non-standard forms of work (Hellenic Republic, 1998). The process of aligning with European social partner standards was achieved through collective regulation. Eurofound has reported that the National General Collective Agreement of 2006-2007 adopted the definition and logic of the EU-level definition of the 2002 framework agreement (Eurofound, 2008). In the context of the COVID-19 emergency, Greece has continued to consolidate telework as an operational continuity measure through emergency legislation, such as Law 4722/2020 (Hellenic Republic, 2020). In the post-pandemic context, Greece has continued to align with EU standards on the transparency and predictability of working conditions, incorporating implementation measures related to Directive (EU) 2019/1152 through Law 5053/2023, which is of particular interest to remote work due to its relevance to the clarity of terms, schedules, and employment information in flexible work environments (European Commission, 2022; Zepos & Yannopoulos, 2023).

In conclusion, the evolutionary history of telework regulation in Greece provides the basis for the dissertation's focus on the relationship between productivity and satisfaction in Greece as outcomes that are not only shaped by geographical location but also by work design, organisational governance, and the institutional framework of remote work as an established labour market phenomenon.

2.2.2 Historical Development and Pre Pandemic Adoption

Teleworking was conceived as a managerial and technological potential prior to its extensive uptake in the job marketplace. In these early formulations, telecommuting was envisioned as a solution to transportation costs, traffic in cities, and business efficiency facilitated by advances in telecommunications and later by personal computing (Nilles, 1998). Once ICT costs decreased and their dependability increased, there was experimentation in organisations across several countries regarding work-from-home arrangements in high-skilled occupations that tended towards specifying and digitising work activities that could be assessed in terms of output rather than their physical presence (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Prior to the pandemic, these conditions indicate that the pre-existing reality was patchy because the workability of telework was subject to occupational structure and managerial culture (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016).

The state of the evidence base preceding the pandemic indicated that telecommuting might yield positive changes in attitudes and performance for employees, though these would be linked to certain conditions, as well as entailing potential risks in terms of co-ordination and social connectivity (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Meta-analytic results suggested positive associations for telecommuting with higher levels of job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions and weakly positive performance outcomes, which were mediated by the degree to which telecommuting was applied in moderation rather than in its extremes (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). However, remote working in the pre-pandemic era of 2020 constituted a form of relatively selective practice in the market for labour.

In Greece, telework became part of the legal parlance before its practical implementation. The implementation of law 3846/2010 included telework as a special type of employment, but this did not lead to widespread implementation in the subsequent decade (Hellenic Republic, 2010). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greek economy and the type of

small and medium enterprises dominating its sectoral structure made the implementation of widespread telework less possible, while managerial practices often preferred direct observation rather than remote work. Hence, teleworking remained more evident in multinationals and professional sectors rather than the labour market as a whole.

2.2.3 Remote Work Acceleration during COVID 19

The COVID-19 crisis has been a structural turning point in the global trend towards remote work (Nwankpa & Roumani, 2024). Many organisations had to quickly adapt to telework during the public health crisis with insufficient preparation with respect to technology and work organisation. The Eurofound study about telework during 2020-2021 finds that there has been a strong increase during the Corona crisis and its aftermath in the share of home-based work in European countries, with extended hours, work-life boundaries blurring, and unequal experiences by gender, family composition, and occupation (Eurofound, 2022). OECD research on telework following the COVID-19 crisis finds that the Corona crisis has triggered a mass movement towards more telework, with warnings that investments are still necessary to ensure that increases in productivity and well-being are realised (OECD, 2020).

Within the Greek context, there was an unprecedented move to telework that was occasioned by the outbreak of the pandemic within private and public organisations. Although there are differing sources of data within Greece regarding the prevalence of telework before the outbreak of the pandemic within the country, it is estimated that the proportion of employees within Greece who teleworked increased within 2020 and 2021 compared to 2019, as Greece moved to adopt telework as part of its rapid implementation phase (European Commission, 2024). Such accelerated implementation has also emphasised challenges that are relevant within the current research, including issues of equity and differing preparedness to telework at home.

2.2.4 Post Pandemic Adaptation and Regulatory Trends in Greece

The adoption of telework transitioned from an emergency measure to an organisational choice, including hybrid forms, as the restrictions eased. Eurofound's studies on telework and ICT-enabled mobile work describe the present context following the pandemic as one in which flexibility has increased with normalisation, but the dangers of intensification and boundary dissolution are still present unless properly addressed and organised in governing

the possibilities of working time and availability (Eurofound, 2020). In the case of the situation in Greece, the European labour market report shows that the reduction in working from home has continued from the post-pandemic peak, with levels remaining lower than the average in the European Union by 2023, reflecting the structural barriers and the partial shift back to office-based activities encouraged in the workplace context (European Commission, 2024). Statistical data available from Eurostat for employed people who worked from home can be used as a consistent comparative measure in monitoring each year and for each status category of worker professionals involved (Eurostat, 2024).

Current regulatory dynamics in Greece, having traversed the pandemic, represent a degree of institutionalisation of telework rights and duties in a more overarching manner. The enactment of Law 4808/2021 introduced a robust telework regime, which strongly encompasses the recognition of the worker's rights, including the right to disconnection, and the delineation of the employer's duties in the context of organising telework (Hellenic Republic, 2021). Secondary legislation further refined specific dynamics of this approach, namely the specification of the minimum compensation constituents related to teleworking expenditure. Overall, Greece's alignment in harmonising EU labour regulation continued and intensified, targeting the enhancement of the transparency and predictability of working conditions, which are specifically relevant in contexts of telework, where issues of schedules, dedication, and provision should be clearly and consistently communicated (Zepos & Yannopoulos, 2023). Overall, the post-pandemic period in Greece is associated with a degree of stabilisation in the practice of remote working, combined with an unbalanced dissemination of this practice and a dynamic regulatory context that conceptualises telework as an accepted and managed form of working organisation, instead of a crisis solution.

2.3 Remote Work and Employee Productivity

2.3.1 Theoretical and Empirical Evidence of Productivity Changes

The impact of remote work on employee productivity has been studied theoretically and empirically, with results varying by design and context. Theoretically, remote work can increase the productivity of employees by reducing the time spent commuting, increasing focus, and coordinating working hours with peak periods of cognitive functions, especially

for activities or projects requiring high levels of cognitive focus. However, the effect can be negative if the project requires spontaneous collaboration, tacit knowledge, and rapid problem-solving, as remote work can increase the cost of communication and group problem-solving processes (Wang et al., 2021). Empirical studies have shown positive to mixed results. There was a landmark experiment conducted in the context of call centres that concluded that performance improved among employees who worked from home, partly because they took fewer breaks and worked in quieter environments, although it also highlighted the importance of the self-selection mechanism in ensuring performance improvements are maintained and enhanced among employees who deliberately select and opt to work from home (Bloom et al., 2015).

Meta-analytical studies conducted before the spread of the pandemic and focusing on the effect of telecommuting concluded that the effect was positively trivial for average performance outcomes, with better effects at moderate levels of telecommuting and among employees who retain strong ties with the organisation, as suggested by others, although this effect was affected by the importance of employees spending quality time at the organisation to increase overall performance and productivity at the organisation where they are employed (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Allen et al., 2015). Since the spread of the pandemic, various studies utilising large-scale data sets suggest that most clients and organisations perceived the effect of the pandemic to be either neutral or slightly positively effective, although there were complaints and difficulties regarding spontaneous collaboration, innovation, and training, especially among new employees and those engaged in highly linked and closely connected projects, as suggested by others (Barrero et al., 2021).

2.3.2 Determinants of Productivity in Remote Settings

Such productivity is conditioned by the interplay between technological, individual, and organisational factors. Technology is a basic factor since remote productivity is possible only with assured network security and the availability of hardware as well as tools that support synchronous as well as asynchronous coordination. Technology alone, however, is not sufficient since productivity is more likely with the integration of tools within an overall workflow as well as the employees' digital literacy to manage information overload and communication channels effectively. Another major factor is autonomy. The remote work environment is likely to enhance one's autonomy in task ordering and pacing, which can

lead to increased efficacy and internal motivation, especially when work is results-oriented and when employees have been clearly briefed on their performance expectations and goals by their superiors (Allen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2021). On the other hand, autonomy is likely to result in increased work intensity when one feels obligated to monitor one's availability 24/7 or when the distinction between work and non-work hours is diminished due to the consequent exhaustion that can hinder effective productivity (Shockley et al., 2024).

Supervision and management have considerable effects on the potential for telework to positively influence productivity. High-trust management styles, also called supportive management, have been shown to work better for remote workers than surveillance management, which uses technology to try to make the remote work environment feel like the office (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Wang et al., 2021). Managers who share goal-setting, provide feedback, or implement coordination mechanisms mitigate the complexities associated with remote tasks, allowing workers to better prioritise tasks, while inconsistent communication can contribute to delay, rework, and mental overload. Additionally, team-level variables contribute to remote productivity, including interdependence or communication norms. For tasks where regular collaboration is necessary, productivity is more responsive to the complexity of remote coordination or meeting, documentation, or learning processes. Lastly, the remote working environment affects productivity variables including physical comfort, the extent to which the workplace is free from distraction, caregiving responsibilities, or the presence of a dedicated workspace, accounting for the variations in the effect of telework on productivity for employees within the same corporation (Shockley et al., 2024; Allen et al., 2015).

2.3.3 Measuring and Managing Productivity Remotely

Productivity measurement in remote work environments raises various issues in methodology and in management practice. A great deal of current evidence has been based on self-assessment data that are informative in subjective terms but vulnerable to biases from the desire to validate work arrangements or from lack of visibility into work in a team context (Barrero et al., 2021). Better methods would involve a combination of objective criteria such as quantity of output, response times in services, level of quality, error frequency, and project durations but explicitly recognise that productivity criteria must be

adjusted among occupations and that outcomes in knowledge work can be problematic or reduced to oversimplified measures. Hybrid work systems would carry a further level of increased complexity in measurement insofar as work outcomes depend on combinations between remote work and in-office workdays and coordination systems in a work team.

Therefore, remote productivity management needs to be aligned with work design rather than the intensity of monitoring. Syntheses orientated towards evidence and practice recommend the use of a performance management system which focuses on deliverables, time, and quality requirements along with feedback mechanisms (Shockley et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021). If the focus of the organisation is on understanding goals, roles, and these coordination mechanisms, they will not struggle with the risks associated with remote work, like overlapping work activity, knowledge silos, or the overload problem. It might have the opposite effects on motivation or even performance in the long term if the digital surveillance becomes a problem and adversely affects employee intention towards turnover, which might eventually lower employee productivity (Allen et al., 2015). It is argued that this particular dissertation approaches the concept of employee productivity from a multidimensional perspective that better suits fieldwork related to the experiences of the Greek workforce.

2.4 Remote Work and Employee Satisfaction

2.4.1 Job Satisfaction, Work life Balance, and Psychological Wellbeing

Remote worker satisfaction is generally understood as a latent factor merging job satisfaction, feelings of positive working life quality, and overall psychological well-being. Traditionally, telework research indicates that telework is often accompanied by job satisfaction increases, mainly due to enhanced feelings of autonomy and diminished commuting-related strain, in addition to lower turnover intentions (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Allen et al., 2015). Satisfaction is not solely higher in telework scenarios, as telework is a factor that affects social and psychological conditions in which workers conduct their duties (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Empirical evidence from the COVID-19 experience finds home working to increase job boundaries permeability between professional and personal life, due to which risks of “presenteeism” in addition to “always-on” conditions may develop (Eurofound, 2022). A systematic review examining health effects associated

with telework in the COVID-19 experience finds sedentary behaviour increases, along with higher risks associated with screen use and fatigue, due to which “stress” also increases (Wells et al., 2023).

These observations inform us that job satisfaction could be enhanced in telework conditions provided better home-based working conditions are maintained along with efforts to manage job boundaries with the job environment to provide adequate “recovery time” (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

2.4.2 Motivation, Engagement, and Organisational Commitment

Telecommuting intersects job satisfaction via motivational mechanisms. Self-determination theory proposes that satisfaction and motivation are promoted by interactions at work that are perceived as autonomy-supportive, competence-boosting, and relationship-enhancing (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Telecommuting can increase autonomy by allowing workers to control the rate and time of their work, but it may also decrease relatedness if social contacts are reduced. Studies examining work design during the pandemic showed that telecommuting success depends on preserving goal and role clarity, providing social support, and engaging in efficient communication, which are strong predictors of workers' engagement and feelings of competence (Wang et al., 2021). A social exchange approach suggests that workers commit more to their company if they view the company as providing support and fairness in telecommuting arrangements, which reciprocates satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Telecommuting contrary to company expectations and values, monitoring worker activity, and increasing confusion about responsibility can result in disengagement rather than engagement and diminished affective commitment to the company (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Motivation and commitment are not necessarily immediate responses to telecommuting; each outcome has been found to be influenced by telecommuting practices.

2.4.3 Factors Influencing Satisfaction in Remote Work: Support, Culture, and Communication

Several multi-level factors, including organisational support, leadership and culture, and communication quality, drive satisfaction with remote work. Applying the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, remote work might be seen as a resource if it provides flexibility and minimises interruptions or as a demand if it increases mental demands related to cognition, meeting density, and coordination demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The role of organisational support cannot be overemphasised in determining which of the two aspects would prevail. Supportive approaches include providing tools and training, clarifying expectations, and granting opportunities for problem-solving and feedback with managers and coworkers. Communications play a fundamentally important role in remote work settings because of reduced opportunities for informal interactions; without specific organisational routines and patterns of shared information and involvement, employees would feel left alone and uncertain and would suffer in terms of satisfaction (Contreras et al., 2020). By way of culture-related aspects, performance culture impacts satisfaction because of performance-related expectations of organisational responsibility to performance evaluations, and workers would feel valued and pressured rather than valued and empowered (Contreras et al., 2020). Applying the theory of boundaries, workers would feel satisfied with remote work if and to the extent that individual workers and workers themselves have the capacity to manage boundaries related to work and non-work life, and the culture of work acknowledges and respects individual boundaries related to work and non-work aspects of performance and operating (Clark, 2000; Eurofound, 2022). Most applications of remote work would imply, if undertaken within organisational settings, trust-related organisational leadership and equitable organisational opportunities and related communications (Hobfoll, 1989; Wang et al., 2021).

Last but not least, it is evident that the extant literature reveals that remote work produces non-uniform outcomes that are contingent on contextual variables. Moreover, it is evident that productivity and job satisfaction outcomes are not solely dependent on physical work locations but also on organisational and relational mechanisms, such as management practices, communication styles, and team dynamics that influence employee engagement and performance. Concurrently, it is evident that the Greek labour market is understudied

in relation to remote work, especially in qualitative studies that focus on employee experiences in the post-pandemic labour market.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy and Design

The current study followed a qualitative research design, which falls under the category of interpretivist research philosophy. The interpretivist approach is based on the idea that the social world is created and exists only in the perceptions, experiences, and interactions of individuals and not in an objective or independent manner (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since the research questions addressed the perceptions of employees regarding the concept of remote work and the mechanisms by which productivity and job satisfaction are influenced, the qualitative approach was found to be the most appropriate for the current study.

Qualitative research is the most appropriate approach for exploratory studies, which seek to identify and comprehend the complex issues associated with the research subject or context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Unlike quantitative research, which seeks to prove or disprove the research hypothesis, the qualitative approach seeks to explore and understand the perceptions and realities of the research subject or context (Silverman, 2020). In the current dissertation, the aim was not to measure the outcomes of remote work statistically but to explore the mechanisms by which productivity and job satisfaction are experienced and perceived in the Greek context.

The current study followed an exploratory qualitative research design. The exploratory approach is the most appropriate when the literature identifies gaps in the understanding of the context and the mechanisms by which the research subject operates (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). As discussed in the literature, the current study found gaps in the understanding of the perceptions of employees regarding the concept of remote work and its impact on productivity and job satisfaction in the Greek context, where the literature was mainly based on survey and meta-analytic studies, with limited qualitative investigations of the perceptions of employees regarding the concept of remote work in Greece (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2015).

Moreover, the current study followed a cross-sectional approach, where the data was collected at one point. Although the longitudinal approach would have been more

appropriate for the current study, the aim was to explore the perceptions of employees regarding the concept of remote work in the post-pandemic period, when the working context would have been more stable.

3.2 Sampling Strategy and Participants

The sampling method used was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is defined by Palinkas et al. (2015) and Patton (2015) as the sampling method in which the sample is selected based on the characteristics relevant to the research questions. This sampling method was considered the most appropriate for the research, considering the objective was to seek insights from employees with direct experience of remote or hybrid work arrangements.

For the inclusion criteria, the sample was considered to meet the requirements if they satisfied the following conditions: (a) currently employed in the Greek labour market, (b) currently engaged in either fully remote or hybrid work arrangements for a minimum period of six months, and (c) currently employed in occupations for which productivity can be assessed based on expected performance, not necessarily physical presence.

A total sample size of ten was used for the research. When conducting qualitative research, the sample size is not necessarily based on the number but on the richness of the information obtained (Malterud et al., 2016). According to Malterud et al. (2016), the sample size for a qualitative research design, such as the one used for this research, conducting semi-structured interviews, ranges from six to fifteen respondents if the aim is thematic depth (Guest et al., 2006). The sample size was considered adequate for achieving thematic saturation, which is the point beyond which new themes are not obtained (Hennink et al., 2017). The sample comprised respondents from different industries, such as information technology, finance, consulting, public administration, and professional services, providing a wide array of organisational contexts while remaining relevant to teleworkable occupations.

Specifically, purposive sampling was used to select cases that were rich in information from industries in which remote or hybrid working would make practical and analytical sense. This includes, among others, technology, finance, public sector administration, professional

services, teaching, marketing, customer service, human resources, design, insurance, and consulting. These industries and jobs were selected based on the fact that they combine deliverables, digital interaction, interdependent tasks, and managerial control and therefore provided the basis for analysing remote working in different organisational contexts. Consequently, the selection of participants involved jobs where it would be relevant to discuss the effects of remote working without endangering their anonymity.

Recruitment was conducted through professional networks, and the snowball sampling method was used, allowing the initial respondents to refer colleagues who met the inclusion criteria (Noy, 2008). Although this sampling method may not be ideal for obtaining a larger sample, it is regarded as the most effective approach for achieving the desired sample in qualitative research, given that the objective is to seek depth rather than breadth (Bryman, 2016).

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. This method of interview allows for an open dialogue between the interviewee and the interviewer to discuss the interview topics while still being flexible to follow other lines of thought that may emerge during the interview (Kallio et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). As the research questions are exploratory in nature, this method of interview was appropriate.

Interviews were conducted from March 4, 2026 to March 18, 2026. Interviews were conducted from March 4 through March 11, 2026 in six sessions, and from March 12 through March 18, 2026 in another four interviews. The two-week window allowed for consistency of the research process and participant anonymity, as no names or any other identifying information was recorded in this dissertation.

The interview lasted about 45 to 60 minutes each. The interview was conducted online using video conferencing tools to accommodate the geographic dispersion of the interviewees and their remote working arrangements. The interviewees gave their consent to record the interview to ensure that the transcription of the interview was accurate. In cases where the interviewees did not give their consent to record the interview, the interview would have been noted down carefully.

A semi-structured interview was designed to collect data for the research. The interview was divided into two sections. The first section of the interview collected information about the interviewees' backgrounds. The second section of the interview contained open-ended questions that collected information about the interviewees' perceptions of productivity, job satisfaction, managerial support, communication, and boundary management at work.

Open-ended interview questions are used to collect information to enable the interviewee to give detailed responses to the interview questions. The interview was designed to collect information about the interviewees' perceptions of productivity, job satisfaction, managerial support, communication, and boundary management at work. Probing interview questions are used to collect more information about the interviewee's responses to the interview questions.

The interviewer maintained a neutral interview style to collect information without any bias or misrepresentation of the interviewees' responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The interview was transcribed to facilitate an in-depth examination of the interviewees' responses to the interview questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interview was anonymised by replacing the interviewees' names with codes.

3.4 Development of the Interview Protocol and Link to Literature

The interview guide was constructed in line with theory. Although no literature support is mentioned in the participant guide, the question design is informed by the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. Questions on work organisation and role clarity are informed by work design theory and telework literature, which emphasise task structure, coordination, and autonomy (Allen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2021). Questions on productivity mechanisms are informed by empirical studies on autonomy, technological support, communication costs, and time management (Bloom et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Questions on job satisfaction and work-life balance are informed by telework literature on autonomy, well-being, and permeability (Eurofound, 2022; Wells et al., 2023). Questions on managerial support and fairness are informed by social exchange theory and literature on

perceived organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Questions on boundaries are informed by Boundary Theory (Clark, 2000).

As a result, the interview guide is informed by theory without preconceived categories to impose upon the participant. This is in line with theory-informed qualitative research design in which theory informs the design of the inquiry without preconceived discovery (Charmaz, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.5 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

The data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, drawing primarily on Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) approach. This method was appropriate because the study did not seek to count opinions mechanically, but to interpret repeated patterns of meaning across the interview dataset and to relate those patterns to the research questions on productivity, job satisfaction and organisational conditions in remote work.

The analysis was mainly inductive and data-led, while remaining theoretically sensitised by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Coding included semantic codes, which stayed close to participants' explicit statements, and latent codes, which interpreted the underlying meaning of those statements. For example, statements about quick replies and constant online availability were coded semantically as responsiveness expectations and latently as digital visibility as a substitute for trust.

Following the logic of reflexive thematic analysis, the analysis did not treat themes as pre-existing categories waiting to be discovered. Codes were repeatedly reviewed, collapsed and reorganised into themes around central organising concepts. The audit trail of coding and theme development is presented in Appendix F so that the reader can see how participant extracts moved from initial codes to final themes.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Rigour

To ensure that there was methodological rigour, the study followed established guidelines for trustworthiness, which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985); Shenton (2004). Credibility was ensured by prolonged engagement with data and detailed transcription. Informal member

checking was also enabled during data collection by summarising participants' responses and asking for clarification. Transferability was ensured by providing detailed descriptions of data collection and participant characteristics, which enabled readers to evaluate transferability to other contexts. Dependability was ensured by an audit trail that documented all steps taken during data collection and analysis. Confirmability was ensured by being reflexive, recognising one's biases, and focusing on participants' words to interpret the data (Berger, 2015).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations guided the entire research process. The research was conducted with full compliance with the ethics of informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection (Orb et al., 2001; Israel & Hay, 2006).

Before the interview began, the participants were given an information sheet and consent form. The participants were made aware of the aims of the research, their right to withdraw at any stage, and the procedure for data storage.

To ensure anonymity, the participants' identifiable information was removed or coded. The data was stored securely under password protection that only the researcher and supervisor have access to.

The research was of minimal risk because the interview was about professional experiences. The participants, however, were made aware of their right to refuse to answer any of the questions asked.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Findings

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four presents the results from ten semi-structured interviews with employees who have direct experience with remote, hybrid, or episodic remote work within the Greek labor market. In other words, the chapter does not present the interviews individually as it seeks to illustrate the way they collectively produced meaningful insights into remote work, productivity, job satisfaction, managerial support, evaluation, communication, and boundaries. As a result, the analysis moves from individual interviews to cross-case synthesis to answer the research questions of this dissertation.

First of all, remote work was not experienced by the interviewed participants as entirely positive or entirely negative. Overall, remote work could be considered a negotiated work arrangement: It allowed for increased concentration, freedom, and flexibility and minimized commuting; on the other hand, it involved increased self-management, digital presence, and meetings; reduced organizational commitment and identification; and difficulties in maintaining boundaries. In general terms, the respondents generally agreed on the possibility of remote work boosting their productivity, provided that the task at hand suits remote working, the IT system is reliable, and there is managerial trust. Moreover, they generally agreed that job satisfaction increases mostly because of autonomy and flexibility but might also suffer from isolation, emotional exhaustion, and the inability to disengage from work. Chapter Four follows the structure set out by reflexive thematic analysis. Thus, in section 4.2, the coding and theme development process is explained, with particular emphasis on analytical assumptions, as well as six analytical stages. In section 4.3, the participant profiles are presented together with an explanation of what contribution each interview makes to the whole analysis. In sections 4.4 to 4.7, the four resulting themes are described. Finally, section 4.8 provides a comparative analysis of the interviews and answers the research questions posed in this dissertation.

4.2 Analytic Approach: From Coding to Theme Development

Following Braun and Clarke's methodology of reflexive thematic analysis, coding was seen as an interpretive activity rather than a mechanical exercise of putting texts into categories.

Following Byrne's worked example of reflexive thematic analysis, several steps were taken to increase transparency of the analysis-especially when dealing with the documenting of theoretical assumptions, several rounds of coding, generation of possible themes, review of themes, and finally naming and analytic reporting of the themes (Byrne, 2022). It was important to follow these steps because the initial version of the analysis was closer to being a descriptive account of interviewees' answers. Thus, the revised analysis makes the steps from data extracts through coding and code clusters into themes clear.

In terms of qualitative research methods, this particular analysis is located in the interpretivist tradition. The idea was to treat participants' descriptions of remote working practices as meaningful accounts of what makes sense of their personal experiences in terms of working from home in the respective organizational and domestic contexts. At the same time, interpretations of latent meanings such as responsiveness becoming synonymous with efficiency and home being simultaneously comfortable and a place where work bleeds into have also been provided.

Table 4.1. Participant profile and analytic relevance

Participant	Profile	Remote-work arrangement	Analytic relevance for the dataset
P1	Male, 29, software developer	Hybrid	Technical/deep-work perspective; strong evidence on concentration, deliverables, visibility and self-management.
P2	Female, 41, senior accountant, parent of two children	Hybrid	Finance and parenting perspective; strong evidence on accuracy, deadline pressure,

			responsiveness and role transitions at home.
P3	Male, 52, public-sector administrative officer	Occasional remote work	Public administration perspective; highlights infrastructure, process design and limits of remote execution.
P4	Female, 31, digital marketing specialist	Fully remote	Creative/marketing perspective; highlights calendar control, meeting overload, digital presence and isolation.
P5	Female, 38, university programme coordinator	Hybrid	Higher-education administration perspective; highlights invisible labour, student support, community and institutional belonging.
P6	Female, 27, customer support agent	Fully remote	Highly monitored service-work perspective; highlights metrics, emotional labour and digital control.

P7	Male, 49, HR manager	Hybrid	Leadership and HR perspective; highlights culture, trust, relational work and managerial quality.
P8	Female, 33, visual designer	Fully remote	Creative-design perspective; highlights stimulation control, feedback ambiguity and psychological boundaries.
P9	Male, 57, insurance claims officer	Hybrid	Experienced structured-role perspective; highlights routine, formal boundaries and document-based productivity.
P10	Male, 39, consulting project manager	Hybrid/heavily remote	Project-management perspective; highlights meeting inflation, cognitive overload, performative visibility and spillover.

Table 4.2. Application of Braun and Clarke’s six-phase reflexive thematic analysis

Phase	What was done in this study	Output for the findings chapter
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1. Familiarisation	The ten interviews conducted were read and reread several times to make notes. Initially, notes on themes that kept on coming up included concentration, commuting, visibility, evaluation, isolation, boundaries, and task dependence.	Preliminary analytic notes and recurring data items.
2. Initial coding	Interviews were conducted and coded by hand. While semantic codes focused on literal definitions as used by the participants, latent codes included deeper levels of meaning, such as “responsiveness” being synonymous with visibility and the home environment being a porous workspace.	Initial codes such as saved commuting time, fewer interruptions, meeting overload, hidden availability expectations, invisible labour and emotional spillover.
3. Candidate themes	Codes were grouped according to their meaning rather than the order in which the interview questions appeared. For example, codes concerning autonomy, routines, household configuration, and personal management	Candidate themes around structured flexibility, productivity, evaluation/visibility and boundaries/belonging.

	were grouped together as they shed light on how flexibility was attainable.	
4. Reviewing themes	The candidate themes were studied against the backdrop of the whole data set. Some codes were restructured by means of moving, combining, or renaming them. Productivity codes, for instance, were separated from the codes that concerned evaluation because the participants distinguished between workload and visible effort.	A revised thematic map with four internally coherent and externally distinct themes.
5. Defining and naming themes	Each topic was marked out by an overarching idea. Quotes used in the analysis were not only selected for their representational significance but also for their ability to explain the significance of the topic.	Final theme names and subthemes used in Sections 4.4 to 4.7.
6. Producing the report	The final report comprises the collected data, analysis, and case synthesis. The purpose of this document is to elucidate the meaning that the respondents	The present findings chapter and the coding audit trail in Appendix F.

	collectively conveyed and how these responses answer the research questions.	
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Table 4.3. Excerpt of the coding trail from extracts to themes

Data extract	Semantic code	Latent/interpreted code	Final theme
“I can actually get long periods of uninterrupted concentration” (P1).	Uninterrupted concentration at home	Home as a protected space for deep work	Theme 1 / Theme 2
“Higher productivity does not always mean healthier work” (P2).	Higher output with fatigue	Productivity gain as possible work intensification	Theme 2
“The mechanism there is not personal inefficiency; it is structural limitation” (P3).	Productivity depends on process design	Remote work exposes organisational infrastructure gaps	Theme 2
“The formal role is clear... the informal expectations are less clear” (P4).	Informal expectations expand remotely	Remote work stretches role boundaries through digital requests	Theme 1 / Theme 3
“There is a lot of invisible labour in academic administration” (P5).	Invisible relational labour	Performance systems miss care, coordination and prevention	Theme 3

“Everything is measured” (P6).	Metric-based productivity control	Quantification produces clarity but also pressure	Theme 3
“Hybrid work does not hide management quality... it exposes it” (P7).	Remote work reveals leadership quality	Trust and control become visible through management practices	Theme 3
“The boundary is not only about time. It is also about mental separation” (P8).	Psychological boundary difficulty	Work remains cognitively present after formal disconnection	Theme 4
“Remote work helps concentration. Office work helps immediate interaction” (P9).	Concentration versus immediacy	Hybrid work redistributes rather than replaces work modes	Theme 1 / Theme 2
“Remote work improved logistical productivity but complicated cognitive productivity” (P10).	Logistical gain and cognitive overload	Efficiency can conceal saturation and attention depletion	Theme 2

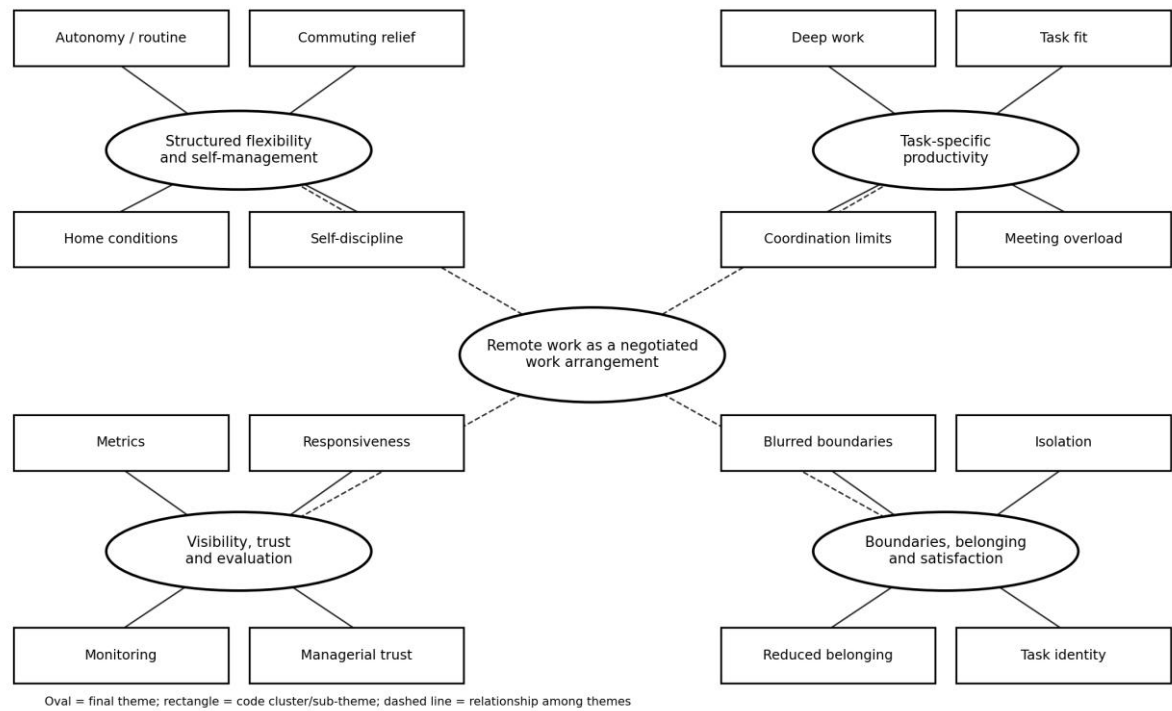


Figure 4.1. Final thematic map showing the relationship between themes and code clusters

Table 4.4. Final thematic framework

Final theme	Central organising concept	Subthemes/code clusters	Participants contributing evidence
Theme 1. Remote work as structured and task-specific flexibility	Remote work becomes beneficial when autonomy is supported by routine, role clarity, suitable tasks and a workable home/digital environment.	Autonomy; routine; self-management; commuting relief; task fit; role clarity versus informal expectations; home workspace.	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10

Theme 2. Productivity gains with hidden organisational and cognitive costs	Participants associated remote work with greater output for focused tasks, but also with coordination delays, meeting inflation, emotional compression and cognitive overload.	Concentration; fewer interruptions; digital access; communication latency; meeting overload; feedback loops; emotional fatigue; cognitive saturation.	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
Theme 3. Visibility, trust and the contested fairness of remote evaluation	Remote evaluation depends on outputs and metrics, but participants argued that responsiveness and digital visibility can be mistaken for genuine contribution.	Deliverables; metrics; responsiveness; performative visibility; invisible labour; managerial trust; monitoring; leadership quality.	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
Theme 4. Work-life boundaries, belonging and the relocation of job satisfaction	Remote work improves satisfaction through convenience and autonomy, but weakens informal belonging and requires deliberate boundary management.	Practical balance; psychological spillover; isolation; emotional residue; reduced organisational attachment; task identity; right to disconnect.	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10

4.3 Theme 1: Remote Work as Structured and Task-Specific Flexibility

Theme one shows a commonality across all of the interviews regarding remote work as something the participants appreciated in terms of the control that could be exercised with regard to time, space, and rhythm; but in the case of this particular type of control, the participants did not view it as a problem-free freedom. Flexibility, when it came to remote working conditions, always seemed to come with the necessity for some level of organisation within such conditions, and this meant organisation through routines, reliable systems, prioritising, and distinguishing tasks done at remote sites from those that involved immediate interactions. In this regard, remote work was not seen by the interviewees as just a simple copy of office work, but rather as its separate and distinctive variant.

4.3.1 Autonomy, routine and the discipline required to make flexibility productive

A variety of participants from a range of different professions cited flexibility through increased autonomy as the chief benefit of working remotely. Yet, simultaneously, it becomes clear that the latter requires organisation. Participant P1 stated that working from home allows one to have a quiet day and engage in concentrated work, but he added that “the day can become blurry.” Similarly, participant P4 pointed out: “I have to structure it, otherwise I feel like I am floating from one notification to the next.” In other words, whereas flexible working conditions seem to imply a lack of any structure or rules, these quotes illustrate the opposite. Namely, flexibility involves some amount of structuring; specifically, it relocates some of the responsibilities to ensure organisation from the office to the worker himself.

Structured jobs, such as those of P2 and P9, seemed to promote remote work because they entailed particular procedures and deadlines on the one hand and a considerable amount of prior experience and familiarity with job requirements on the other hand. However, participants P4 and P8, who engaged in creative, interpretive work, highlighted the need to combine both structure and room for concentration and cognitive flexibility. Finally, P6 presented an interesting approach because, although her role implied flexibility, in her case, customer service was performed according to fixed shifts in the system, which could be considered the opposite of flexibility. The fact that P6 believed she would need the same

level of discipline working remotely is particularly noteworthy because it contradicts the assumption regarding flexibility.

4.3.2 Task fit: remote work as complement, not universal substitute

The first area of agreement pertains to task fit as an important determinant. The respondents constantly made a distinction between individual, focused, document-intensive, or technologically mediated tasks versus relational, creative, procedure-intensive, or collaborative tasks. According to P1, remote work is ideal for tasks requiring intense concentration, but ineffective for brainstorming, orientation, and improvisation. Similarly, P3 highlighted the same difference in public administration, where remote work is productive for reviewing documents but not for procedures requiring signatures, interdepartmental consultations, and digitisation. As P5 pointed out, remote work allows for “islands of concentration” amid a distributed higher education position, while on-campus days become essential for providing services to students and coordinating relationships.

The same division applies to the creative and managerial fields. According to P8, there were highly efficient design tasks performed remotely owing to the ability to control the intensity of stimuli, light, music, and concentration, although the irregularity of feedback may be a barrier. Similarly, according to P10, remote work is advantageous for logistics but does not improve productivity; meetings and messages can occupy the whole day. Likewise, P7 as an HR representative asserted that remote work improves strategy and document-centred activities but reduces informal cues about employee mood, stress, and disengagement. In general, remote work was regarded as a supplement to the office rather than a replacement, as participants shared the perception that productivity depends more on task fit than the physical workplace.

To sum up, despite certain differences, the participants converged on the importance of task fit in remote work productivity.

Table 4.5. Cross-case evidence for Theme 1

Pattern	Participants showing convergence	Important qualification or divergence	Analytic interpretation
Remote work supports autonomy and control over daily rhythm.	P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	P6 experienced remote work as highly controlled because of shift-based customer-support systems.	Autonomy is not inherent in remote work; it depends on job design and control systems.
Focused or document-based tasks fit remote work well.	P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9	P10 argued that coordination-heavy project management can be absorbed by communication overload.	Remote work increases productivity most clearly when tasks require uninterrupted concentration.
Relational, procedural or ambiguous tasks often work better in person.	P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	P4 still valued remote creative work but saw spontaneous idea exchange as weaker online.	Hybrid work appears more appropriate than full substitution for roles requiring nuance, context and informal signals.

4.4 Theme 2: Productivity Gains with Hidden Organisational and Cognitive Costs

Theme two responds to the main research question in the paper. Most people saw remote work as being productive since the workers were not interrupted, they saved time spent on travelling, they enjoyed greater control over the environment, and they had flexibility in terms of schedule. However, these people also problematised the notion of productivity by asking whether increased production meant better work or whether it could be viewed as

intensified work, increased availability, excessive meetings, emotional compression, and loss of natural endpoints.

4.4.1 Concentration, commuting relief and the productivity of protected attention

Protection of attention was the second most frequent positive mechanism. According to Participant 1, in software development “concentration is everything”, and remote work allowed for more time without interruptions from colleagues. Participant 2 made similar comments on accountancy, claiming that interruptions may lead to mistakes. Participants 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 compared tasks involving detailed analysis, writing, planning, or design with those requiring immediate cooperation between humans. Agreement on such a wide range of professions suggests that the effects of remote work are most pronounced in fields where attention becomes the key resource.

Saving commuting time became another common theme. Commuting was seen not only as wasting time but also as energy. According to Participant 1, no commuting allowed for greater psychological energy when starting the day and less depletion when finishing it. Participants 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10 shared similar sentiments about saving time being a factor that contributed to the manageable flow of events throughout the day. This result agrees with other studies, which have shown that time use, autonomy, and recovery are important mechanisms explaining remote work results. However, the benefits of saving time in the context of these interviews were viewed as related to pressure from workload.

4.4.2 Coordination delays, meeting inflation and cognitive overload

However, such efficiency was constrained by communication coordination efforts. In particular, participant P3 emphasised that if a process involved several individuals located remotely and one of the people was unavailable, “everything slowed down”. Participant P5 saw productivity as relational, not individual, and argued that personal productivity was based on responsiveness and information availability across the whole system. Participant P8 agreed that productivity depended on responsiveness, as fragmented information from several sources made feedback cycles less effective. Overall, it seems that remote productivity cannot be considered only an individual phenomenon, since there are also such

factors as processes and information access and other people's responsiveness that need to be accounted for.

Another important issue was that of over-meeting and information overload, leading to cognitive overload. This problem was emphasised by participants P4, P5, and P10, especially. Participant P10 argued that remote working was more productive logistically while being less productive cognitively because of the number of meetings and messages. Participant P4 pointed out that too many online meetings meant that no actual strategic work was done. An implied conclusion that can be drawn from this account is that remote working might look more productive at the organisational level while at the same time reducing time for cognitive activities to be done outside of work time.

4.4.3 Work intensification and emotional compression

Several interviewees challenged the idea that higher productivity is automatically beneficial. According to P2, "increased productivity does not necessarily translate to healthier work since working in remote locations can enable working even through break periods or extending work beyond office hours." P4 explained productivity increases by mentioning "fewer inherent stopping points". Moreover, P6, working in customer support services, offered an especially clear example of emotional compression – more customers were served remotely, but the need to interact emotionally was still present at home and exhausting for her. P10 also mentioned that days could be overly packed and hard to manage.

The importance of the finding lies in the demonstration that employees were evaluating productivity on a broader scale than simply its operational definition. In other words, although they acknowledged productivity improvements as such, they were unwilling to view it from a purely operational perspective. Instead, productivity was seen positively when increased due to better concentration, reduced commute, and task appropriateness. On the contrary, employees viewed productivity negatively when increased at the expense of availability, intensive use of digital communication tools, increased metrics, or lack of breaks. Thus, the response to RQ1 is that employees found remote work productive when certain conditions were met but extractive otherwise.

Table 4.6. Productivity mechanisms and counter-mechanisms across interviews

Mechanism	Participants	Productivity effect	Counter-mechanism
Fewer interruptions and protected focus	P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9	More concentration, accuracy, writing, coding, design and document review.	Less immediate access to colleagues when clarification is needed.
Saved commuting time	P1, P2, P3, P6, P9, P10	More energy and practical manageability of the week.	Loss of transition between work and home.
Digital tools and documentation	P1, P4, P5, P9, P10	Better traceability and easier coordination across locations.	Fragmentation across platforms and message threads.
Metrics and digital workflow	P2, P6, P10	Clear expectations and measurable outputs.	Pressure, emotional compression and blind spots in evaluation.
Meetings and online availability	P4, P5, P7, P10	More frequent coordination.	Meeting inflation, cognitive overload and reduced thinking time.

4.5 Theme 3: Visibility, Trust and the Contested Fairness of Remote Evaluation

The third issue relates to how productivity is evaluated and appreciated in situations where work is facilitated by computerised technology. The unanimous view among all the interviewees was that there needs to be an evaluation process. The main issue that they raised concerned the question of whether remote evaluation was sufficient in capturing the full extent of what an employee contributes. There is an implication here that goes beyond

just assessing performance to how valuable employees feel it to be recognised symbolically through being seen as responsive, attending meetings, appearing available, being documented by computer technology, and even being present in the office during hybrid days.

4.5.1 Deliverables, metrics and their limits

Those occupying positions with higher levels of measurability often described formal evaluation as somewhat fair. P1 talked about the deliverables, deadlines, and functional codes. P2 noted deadlines, correctness, and reporting quality. P6 mentioned queue management, speed, quality audit, and customer rating. Finally, P9 spoke of finished cases, correctness, and time. In general, these quotes seem to demonstrate that the nature of remote work allows evaluation of performance to be transparent in case there are observable, standardised outcomes. System consistency in measuring employees' contributions was pointed out by P6: "The same standards apply to everyone."

At the same time, even people occupying positions that were more measurable had some criticisms. First, P1 explained that helping colleagues, preventing problems, and moral support cannot be quantitatively assessed based on the outputs only. Second, P2 explained that being responsive can become a priority, whereas family obligations can create the illusion of lower productivity. Most importantly, P6 stressed an essential difference between technical fairness and human fairness. Despite the fact that the same measurements were used to assess all customers, their attitude could vary significantly and be considered easy, annoying, or even offensive. Similarly, P8 explained the difficulty of evaluating creative activities, as deadlines and speed do not always coincide with high quality of work.

4.5.2 Responsiveness and performative visibility

The key latent variable found in the data set relates to the notion of digital visibility, viewed here as a proxy for trust. P1 explained that the situation involves a "hidden layer of expectations in terms of immediate feedback and online activity. " P4 argued that a person who is very communicative and immediately responds to anything would be considered more engaged. P10 coined the expression "performative visibility" to refer to the very phenomenon where someone who stays always online is considered productive even if

he/she just performs superficial tasks. On the other hand, P9 gave a slightly different view of engagement, stating that people who are seen more often in person could be considered more engaged.

In other words, all these explanations point to the notion that there is a certain tendency that can be found in remote work practices – namely, that it might result in a new form of presenteeism. In conventional workplaces, physical presence can be interpreted in such a way that it means someone's productivity. However, when it comes to remote work, the idea of immediate feedback and quick responsiveness serves the same purpose. At the same time, it should be noted that this statement is not about rejecting the importance of responsiveness but rather overemphasising it.

4.5.3 Managerial support, control and leadership quality

Managerial style played a role of mediator in terms of remote-work results. For example, participant (P)1 stated that organizational trust leads to sustainability of remote work, while the absence of trust creates conditions of complete control and fatigue. Participant (P)4 emphasized that remote work highlights managerial competencies. Good managers can offer clarity and trust; bad managers arrange more meetings and control. The idea expressed explicitly by P7 was the following: “Hybrid work doesn’t hide quality of management... it reveals it.” Also, P10 differentiated between calm and meaningful leadership and those leaders that create additional meetings to avoid loss of control.

As shown from comparison, participants identified good management through clarity, proper priority setting, emotional intelligence, trust, and consideration of the workload. On the other hand, the control factor was discussed in the context of frequent check-ins, expectations of being online, tracking, and more meetings. As far as RQ2, the mentioned finding should be considered particularly significant. Organizational support affected remote workers' productivity, but also their satisfaction, level of stress, belonging, and possibility to disconnect. Therefore, remote work increases impact of existing leadership culture: when there is trust, it becomes a flexible option, otherwise – monitoring environment.

Table 4.7. Evaluation and managerial support across cases

Evaluation/support issue	Participants	Illustrative pattern	Analytic meaning
Output-based evaluation	P1, P2, P6, P8, P9, P10	Deadlines, deliverables, cases, quality scores, client satisfaction and task completion.	Formal evaluation is clearest where work outputs are measurable.
Invisible or qualitative labour	P1, P5, P6, P7, P8	Helping colleagues, emotional labour, prevention, HR sensitivity, creative exploration and student support.	Remote metrics can miss contributions that are relational, preventive or qualitative.
Responsiveness as proxy for productivity	P1, P2, P4, P5, P9, P10	Fast replies and visible online presence can be read as engagement.	Digital presenteeism replaces physical presenteeism.
Trust-based support	P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	Clarity, realistic priorities and confidence in employees.	Trust moderates productivity and satisfaction.
Control-based management	P2, P4, P6, P7, P10	Activity tracking, frequent follow-ups, over-meeting and constant visibility expectations.	Control increases pressure and may undermine the benefits of remote work.

4.6 Theme 4: Work-Life Boundaries, Belonging and the Relocation of Job Satisfaction

Theme Four examines the effects of telework on satisfaction, work-life balance, motivation, and organisational commitment in relation to the second research question. Most of the participants were found to appreciate telework, emphasising improvements in comfort during workdays, reduction in commuting time, and improved ability to control the work situation. Yet, the increase in satisfaction was partial and often came hand-in-hand with a decrease in informal ties, a shift from the relational orientation in regard to the organisation, and boundary-setting behaviour. Thus, it can be concluded that telework moves the focus of satisfaction from informal belonging and organisational life to autonomy, comfort, and task identity.

4.6.1 Practical balance versus psychological spillover

Most interviewees indicated partial improvement in practical balance. Namely, P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, and P10 cited fewer commutes, more flexibility, or better control over their daily activities. In particular, P2, who works as a parent, mentioned that remote work makes managing the schedule of schooling easier. As an experienced employee, P9 attributed remote working conditions to lower physical fatigue and easier scheduling of weeks. Overall, it can be argued that remote work contributes positively to the practical aspects of organising one's day.

However, many participants drew a line between practical and psychological aspects of work-life balance. P1 claimed that work comes home and "sticks around". For P2, switching between roles of an employee, a mother, and an employee again in the same setting results in an emotional burden. In particular, P4 believed that such work-life balance was an illusion, as fewer commutes and less office fatigue were balanced by increased spillover and disconnection from work. Furthermore, according to P8, a mental split rather than just a time-related separation was necessary for creativity since an unfinished idea stayed in the back of one's mind. Similarly, P10 pointed out that work fills up any available space. Hence, it can be assumed that remote work facilitates logistical work-life balance more than psychological separation.

4.6.2 Isolation, reduced belonging and the shift from organisational identity to task identity

Secondly, the notion of belonging emerged. Some respondents stated that while they were still motivated and responsible, their emotional connection with the organisation was weak. P1 mentioned that his relationship with the company had become functional; P2 highlighted the decrease in social connections; P4 noted a change from motivational aspects associated with the organisation's identity to motivation driven by task identification; P5 claimed that he felt less engaged with the everyday corporate culture at university; P6 viewed his work as more transactional, while P8 became more attached to her creations than to the corporate identity. These results correspond to the studies of remote work and informal communication, where the importance of everyday informal communication for organisational belonging has been emphasised (Fay, 2011).

Several caveats have to be mentioned. P3 and P9 did not perceive their commitment significantly weakened because of their years of experience and formal status within the organisations, which led to the stability of their commitment level. At the same time, P7, being a manager in the HR department, insisted that belonging would not vanish automatically, instead requiring deliberate work and effort. Thus, this cross-case interpretation does not imply the destruction of commitment by remote work. Instead, remote work leads to a loss of the usual informal factors that contribute to forming commitment. When based on a sense of duty, long-term experience, or personal satisfaction with the job, commitment stays stable.

4.6.3 Boundary management as individual practice and organisational culture

Not only was the concept analysed theoretically but also as a practice among participants. P1 disconnected literally, turning off his computer and leaving the room physically. P2 blocked all kinds of notifications and did not use work-related emails in the evening. P5 formed a set of symbolic conclusions of the day. P6 physically left the workspace and performed physical exercises to relax after work. P8 turned off digital access but still had problems with mental disconnect. P9 maintained stricter boundaries by not carrying work emails in their personal phone. P10 found it challenging to maintain boundaries because of

possible overspilling into personal life and because of the lack of organisational support for this process.

From the above-mentioned findings, it becomes clear that boundary setting presupposes certain actions from both individuals and the organisation. Participants who worked within the formalised framework of working time cultures showed better boundary protection. In contrast, consultants, marketers, creatives, and customer service representatives demonstrated more spillover and emotional carry-over. Therefore, P7's idea that "boundary management is not only an individual issue but also cultural" becomes the centre of the issue. The problem of remote work intensifies the need for individual strategies, but they are effective only if not overridden by the organisational culture of constant availability.

Table 4.8. Job satisfaction, belonging and boundary-management patterns

Pattern	Converging participants	Divergence or qualification	Interpretive conclusion
Practical satisfaction improved through flexibility, comfort and reduced commuting.	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	P6 valued logistics but still found job satisfaction mixed because the work was repetitive and lonely.	Remote work improves the conditions around work more consistently than the emotional experience of work.
Psychological boundaries became more difficult.	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10	P3 and P9 had more protected boundaries due to formal working hours and established routines.	Boundary permeability varies by sector, role and organisational culture.
Organisational belonging weakened or became less automatic.	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10	P3, P7 and P9 described commitment as relatively stable, but	Remote work shifts motivation from organisational identity toward task,

		not necessarily strengthened by remote work.	role or professional identity.
Right to disconnect required deliberate practice.	P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	P10 found individual strategies insufficient when project culture encouraged spillover.	Disconnection is both an individual practice and an organisational responsibility.

4.7 Comparative Synthesis Across the Interviews

As can be seen from the cross-case analysis, the participants of the study did not only identify ten different viewpoints. Instead, they developed a coherent and, at the same time, nuanced narration about remote work. One can describe the latter in the following way: remote work produces productivity and satisfaction in case it protects attention, eliminates unnecessary travel, provides autonomy, and operates based on a trusting managerial approach. Remote work becomes an issue whenever it produces more meetings, maintains availability, decreases informal integration, or evaluates people's performance based on their digital activity rather than productivity.

Firstly, the most consistent theme discussed by the participants is the issue of task dependency. Namely, all of the participants, regardless of their opinion about remote work, made distinctions between the tasks which are possible to accomplish remotely and the ones that cannot. It should be noted that it is crucial to discuss this pattern since it suggests that the participants do not believe in the existence of a one-size-fits-all model of remote work. For example, P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, and P9 all described remote work as the best way to perform focused tasks and not relational or immediate coordination ones. At the same time, P10 noted that the ease of cross-location coordination often produces an excessive amount of communication. Even more, P6 showed that even in case task fit is high, there might be emotional costs and less control.

Secondly, one of the important themes is connected to the matter of evaluation and visibility. While the participants did not have problems with such criteria as deliverable, deadline,

quality measures, or service indicators, they insisted that the last-mentioned ones were not sufficient to evaluate people's performance. It seems that in their narratives, remote work was able to emphasise the discrepancy between doing and not doing work. In other words, the participants believed that remote work allowed for the production of more visible yet less productive work. Notably, such concerns were expressed by participants representing both technical and non-technical fields (academia, customer support, human resources, design, insurance, and consulting).

Finally, the participants' satisfaction with remote work is another consistent topic. Namely, the majority of the interviewed people value remote work and do not want to give up the benefits that it offers. At the same time, it seems that they perceive remote work as creating a trade-off between logistical and psychological convenience. For instance, remote work allows the interviewees to make their lives easier by minimising the necessity to commute. On the other hand, it facilitates the process of extending work and makes it difficult to contain.

Table 4.9. Comparative synthesis of convergence and divergence

Analytic issue	Shared finding	Participants	Divergence or contrasting case
Productivity	Remote work increases productivity mainly for focused, individual, document-based, technical or creative tasks.	P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9	P10 argued that efficiency can conceal cognitive saturation; P6 showed that digital fit can coexist with emotional exhaustion.
Task dependency	Remote work does not replace office work universally; it redistributes work across settings.	P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	P4 and P8 were strongly remote-positive for creative work but still noted weaker

			spontaneity/feedback online.
Evaluation	Outputs and metrics are useful but insufficient for judging remote contribution.	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10	P9 saw evaluation as generally fair because claims work is structured and measurable.
Visibility	Fast responsiveness and online presence can be mistaken for productivity.	P1, P2, P4, P5, P9, P10	P3 focused more on informal evaluation and system readiness than on digital visibility.
Job satisfaction	Satisfaction improves through autonomy, comfort, flexibility and less commuting.	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	P6 described convenience but mixed satisfaction because the role remained repetitive and monitored.
Belonging	Organisational attachment becomes weaker or requires more intentional cultivation.	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10	P3 and P9 reported stable commitment due to long service and professional duty.
Boundaries	Work-life boundaries require conscious practice and organisational support.	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10	P3 and P9 reported stronger boundaries because of more formal working-time cultures.

4.8 Direct Answers to the Research Questions

Table 4.10. Findings synthesised by research question

Research question	Synthesised answer from the thematic analysis	Themes supporting the answer
RQ1. How do employees perceive the effects of remote work on their productivity, and through what mechanisms do these effects occur?	Employees perceived remote work as generally productive when it enabled focused attention, reduced commuting, improved environmental control and supported task autonomy. However, productivity was conditional rather than automatic. It depended on task type, digital infrastructure, communication quality, meeting load and the responsiveness of colleagues. Participants also warned that higher output can reflect work intensification, emotional compression or cognitive overload rather than sustainable productivity.	Themes 1, 2 and 3
RQ2. How does remote work affect employee job satisfaction in the Greek labour market, and what organisational factors modulate this effect?	Remote work improved job satisfaction mainly through autonomy, comfort, reduced commuting and practical flexibility. At the same time, job satisfaction was limited by isolation, weaker informal belonging, blurred	Themes 3 and 4, with support from Theme 1

	boundaries and the pressure to remain visible or responsive. Organisational factors that modulated this effect included managerial trust, clarity of priorities, communication design, fair evaluation, meeting discipline, recognition of invisible labour and a culture that protects the right to disconnect.	
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In response to Research Question 1 (RQ1), the findings show that remote work maximises efficiency, especially where there is a need for concentrated effort and the workers have sufficient control over the surrounding environment and time management. The secret behind remote work lies neither in remote work itself nor in any single factor but rather in the combination of protected focus, preserved energy, matching of the job with the environment, and successful coordination. There are also several negative factors that cannot be overlooked, such as overreliance on meetings, disintegrated communications, technical issues, feedback loop problems, hidden expectations about availability, and the growth of the number of working hours.

Concerning Research Question 2 (RQ2), remote work improves job satisfaction through autonomy, comfort, and absence of commuting needs. This improvement is not perfect since job satisfaction is affected not only by individual-level factors but also by relational and cultural ones. According to the findings, remote work may lower the sense of connection and organisational membership. In addition, motivation may change from organisational identity to professional or task-orientated identity. Therefore, job satisfaction results not only from remote work but also from how remote work is arranged in organisations.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

5.1 Introduction

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter synthesises the insights gained from the research against the background of its objectives and research questions. Moreover, it highlights the constraints inherent in the analysis process as well as identifies the directions for further studies. Based on the reflexive thematic analysis approach discussed in Chapter 4, the conclusions drawn from the data should be seen as analytically interpreted meanings instead of empirically tested hypotheses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022).

The key research goal was to investigate perceptions about the impacts of teleworking on the productivity and job satisfaction of employees working in the Greek labour market under certain conditions. Such a research question is consistent with existing studies, stating that the impact of remote work depends on certain variables such as work design, management, communication, occupation, and boundary management (Allen et al., 2015; Eurofound, 2022; Wang et al., 2021). According to the core conclusion reached during the course of this study, telework cannot be seen as an inherently productive and inherently dysfunctional way of arranging for work. As revealed by the interviews conducted with participants, remote work may prove to be beneficial under conditions when appropriate planning and management are considered with regard to relevant issues, such as the appropriate choice of work tasks; expectations; trustful management style; adequate methods of performance evaluation; and proper separation of work and leisure time. Overall, these results confirm the evidence about the importance of individual, task-related, and organisational aspects underlying telework impacts (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; OECD, 2020a; Wang et al., 2021).

Table 5.1. Synthesis of conclusions by research question

Research question	Main conclusion	Analytic basis in the findings
RQ1: How do employees perceive the effects of remote work on productivity, and through what mechanisms do these effects occur?	Remote working was viewed as increasing productivity in that it protected against distractions, minimised travel-related tiredness, facilitated greater independence, and provided an opportunity for workers to organise difficult assignments based on their peak productivity levels.	Convergence appears to take place between themes 1, 2, and 3 as far as protected attention, time management, task fit, deliverables, and the importance of trust are concerned.
RQ2: How does remote work affect job satisfaction in the Greek labour market, and what organisational factors modulate this effect?	The advantages of telecommuting included more flexibility, comfort, and freedom; nevertheless, it decreased job satisfaction in cases where work interfered with home life, informal bonding declined, and responsiveness replaced trust.	Theme 4 suggests that the job satisfaction of employees depends on certain criteria, such as boundaries, manager culture, communication channels, and the convergence of convenience and psychological distancing.

5.2 Conclusions in Relation to Productivity

In response to RQ1, it can be concluded that employees perceive remote work as productive mostly due to the possibility of focusing and concentrating for longer times as well as due to the avoidance of commuting-related expenses. The obtained results correspond to the prior research findings according to which remote work can boost productivity if employees engage in concentrated tasks with few interruptions and control over the work environment (Bloom et al., 2015; OECD, 2020a; Wang et al., 2021).

However, at the same time, it becomes evident that the productivity boost is far from being obvious and cannot be limited to merely increased output or speed in accomplishing a task. It was stated that participants viewed remote work as highly productive only when the task performed was of an individual character, entailed document management, and had a technical or administrative nature, whereas remote work decreased productivity when employees needed to solve problems collectively, get quick clarification, mentor others, negotiate, and provide creative feedback (Choudhury et al., 2022; Messenger & Gschwind, 2016; Wang et al., 2021).

Another intriguing discovery is the identification of potential hidden costs that remote work can impose on employees and reduce their productivity. For example, such aspects as digital fatigue, meeting proliferation, delayed responses to messages and emails, cognitive overload, and long-time engagement in work are identified as the sources of productivity reduction in remote work (Eurofound, 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Grant et al., 2013). In turn, this finding agrees with the prior research showing that digital work is likely to intensify work effort and increase work-nonwork blending when organisations do not have established norms regarding communication during off-hours (Eurofound, 2022; Grant et al., 2013).

Besides, it is evident that remote work productivity will be perceived by employees positively only when evaluation practices meet certain criteria. It turned out that participants did not see any problem in output evaluation in case it involved such characteristics as deadlines, quality of the accomplishment, deliverable products, and service delivery; however, they expressed dissatisfaction with responsiveness-focused, online presence-focused, and availability-focused evaluation practices (Allen et al., 2015; Nwankpa & Roumani, 2024; Wang et al., 2021).

Accordingly, it can be concluded that remote work boosts productivity when certain conditions are met.

5.3 Conclusions in Relation to Job Satisfaction

As for Research Question 2 (RQ2), there is a possibility of a positive influence of remote working conditions on job satisfaction through greater autonomy, a higher comfort level, shorter commuting, and better regulation of organisational processes. The obtained result is consistent with self-determination theory and teleworking research where the importance of

autonomy and control were stressed as major motivational factors and elements of work satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Allen et al., 2015).

On the other hand, remote work can have a negative influence on job satisfaction because of less contact with co-workers and decreased identification with the organisation. This finding is theoretically significant in that it indicates that job satisfaction in a remote work setting may be determined not only by employee convenience but also by factors related to membership and organisational affiliation, as suggested in the literature (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Fay, 2011; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

At the same time, the study has shown that the home environment has been used as both a place of respite and as a source of work spillover. Participants have emphasised the aspects related to the comfort and flexibility of remote working, but they have simultaneously experienced issues with the closure of work activities, role switching, and ensuring their own privacy. Such findings corroborate work-family border theory and existing findings about the psychological issues connected to remote e-working (Clark, 2000; Grant et al., 2013; Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Management is revealed as an important factor, influencing the link between telecommuting and employee satisfaction. Thus, such features as trust, clearness of expectation setting, priorities, emotional intelligence, and a respectful attitude towards the working schedule of workers positively influence their level of satisfaction, whereas constant monitoring and too many and unrealistic expectations concerning workers' availability result in the opposite outcomes. The obtained results coincide with previous research on the importance of managerial skills and the proper organization of work in telecommuting arrangements (Contreras et al., 2020; Eurofound, 2022; Wang et al., 2021).

It can be said that the obtained conclusions have particular importance for Greece, considering the fact that the shift towards telecommuting happened rapidly in the country characterised by a high level of personal presence, surveillance, and social interaction at the workplace. As a result, telecommuting in Greece is more associated with effective process management rather than with the technical issues related to remote communication and collaboration (European Commission, 2024; Eurofound, 2008; Hellenic Republic, 2021).

5.4 Practical Recommendations

As the first practical recommendation, one could state that companies should adopt a task-sensitive approach to remote/hybrid work. That is, managers are supposed to distinguish among different types of tasks-focused individual tasks, collaborative tasks, client-oriented tasks, and learning-intensive tasks. The productivity of remote work will depend heavily on the match between task requirements and work locations (Choudhury et al., 2022; Dingel & Neiman, 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

Another recommendation would focus on integrating both output-based metrics and measures of contribution to assess remote productivity. While deliverables, deadlines, and measures of service quality can help evaluate productivity, it is vital to note that contributions to the success of teamwork when working remotely include working with others, avoiding problems, coaching, being creative, and difficulty level of tasks. Being productive in remote settings cannot mean being fast at responding and always available online (Allen et al., 2015; OECD, 2020a; Nwankpa & Roumani, 2024).

The next recommended step would be the clarification of expected patterns of communication in organisations. To be able to increase their productivity while remote, employees need to know what type of communication they will be expected to maintain and when exactly. This way, it will be possible to increase remote productivity both through minimising uncertainty and promoting flexibility (Eurofound, 2022; Messenger & Gschwind, 2016; Wang et al., 2021).

The fourth recommendation would be connected to the implementation of the right to disconnect in practice. In particular, it means explaining workers what kind of communication is expected from them after work, as well as encouraging managers to set healthy boundaries, so that remote work would not contribute to informal lengthening of working hours, which could take place due to digital work intensification (Eurofound, 2022; Hellenic Republic, 2021; Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Finally, another relevant recommendation would be about the active encouragement of belonging and informal communication in remote/hybrid teams. Social contact, mentoring opportunities, onboarding processes, and informal discussions could help to avoid feeling isolated and foster organisational identification, especially since informal communication

could be both instrumental and social in nature (Fay, 2011; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

5.5 Limitations of the Study

However, as in any other qualitative research, there are some limitations associated with the results that should be taken into account when analysing the findings of this dissertation. First of all, one should note that the sample size was limited to ten purposively chosen participants, and thus this study can hardly be regarded as statistically representative of the labour market in Greece (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Malterud et al., 2016; Patton, 2015).

Secondly, despite the heterogeneity of the sample with respect to job roles and work conditions, the number of participants working in each of the sectors (tourism, banking, public administration, technology, education, and platform economy) was not large enough to make any conclusions about productivity of different occupational sectors (Dingel & Neiman, 2020; Sostero et al., 2020; European Commission, 2024).

Thirdly, the data obtained during the study related to employees' perceptions and not their actual work productivity, since no objective productivity measure or manager appraisal of productivity was used (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Silverman, 2020). As a result, this study provides insights into employee perceptions but not objective indicators of productivity.

Fourthly, one should mention the limitation related to the cross-sectional nature of the data gathered during the interviews since they provide information about how participants perceive productivity, work satisfaction, boundaries, and sense of belonging at a specific moment of time. This limitation, in turn, does not allow for tracking the changes in these parameters as remote work becomes productivity normalised (Eurofound, 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Wang et al., 2021).

Fifthly, there is also a limitation that concerns the subjective nature of reflexive thematic analysis. In this regard, it should be acknowledged that, although the process of coding and normalised categorising data is quite systematic and rigorous, the codes and themes created as a result of this process are based on the researcher's interpretation of data (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022; Nowell et al., 2017).

Finally, one should acknowledge that the current study only considers employees' perceptions and does not take into account the perceptions, policies, and practices of employers, thus offering valuable employee-centred perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018).

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Firstly, future studies are recommended to adopt a longitudinal approach that will allow tracking of employees and organisations over time as they go through teleworking and hybrid working arrangements to analyse the dynamics of productivity, boundary tension, sense of belongingness, and job satisfaction arising from them (Eurofound, 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Wang et al., 2021).

The next suggestion related to the following stage involves carrying out a mixed methods study including interviews and measuring productivity, performance of the organisation, and well-being of workers using questionnaires. This way, the researcher will be able to compare the objective indicators of productivity with the subjective perceptions of it, using output measures, absenteeism rates, turnover intention, organisational commitment, engagement, or quality of services provided (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018).

The third recommendation is to investigate sector-specific issues concerning teleworking among the Greek workforce. As mentioned above, the conditions for teleworking, including interaction with clients, technical skills, and cultural norms, vary from one sector to another (Dingel & Neiman, 2020; European Commission, 2024; Sostero et al., 2020).

As the fourth recommendation for future research, it is advised to interview managers and team leaders, along with employees. The incorporation of perspectives of management will allow for the analysis of telework policy structures and criteria that managers communicate to workers for evaluating telework performance (Contreras et al., 2020; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Wang et al., 2021).

Fifth, the question of disconnection rights needs to be addressed. It was already mentioned earlier that disconnection rights should be recognised according to the legislative requirement. However, there is still a gap in literature regarding their implementation in organisations (Eurofound, 2022; Hellenic Republic, 2021).

Further research can explore the effects of telework on organisational communication practices and organisational identification among workers. Current findings suggest that productivity increases when employees feel disconnected from their workplace and organisation. This finding raises the issue of informal interactions, mentoring, onboarding practices, and team-building activities at an organisation and the effects of such efforts in remote work contexts (Fay, 2011; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Lastly, future research should focus on household-related concerns, caregiving responsibilities, and the role of gender. It was indicated earlier that home working may lead to role compression; in other words, work-related stress may increase due to the overlap with domestic obligations (Clark, 2000; Eurofound, 2022; Grant et al., 2013).

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Appendix

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Introductory Letter to Participants

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted as part of the Master of Business Administration programme at the Hellenic Open University. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of remote work on employee productivity and job satisfaction within the Greek labour market.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. The interview will last approximately 45–60 minutes and will be conducted anonymously. No personally identifiable information will be collected, and all data will be used solely for academic research purposes in accordance with ethical and data protection standards.

You may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. By agreeing to participate, you confirm that you have read and understood this information and consent to take part in the study.

Thank you for your time and valuable contribution.

Foteini Tagkalou

MBA Candidate

Hellenic Open University

Interview Guide

Section A: Demographic and Occupational Background

What is your age group?

What is your highest completed education level?

What is your employment sector and role (e.g., IT, finance, public sector; job title), and years of experience in your current occupation?

What is your current remote-work arrangement? (fully remote / hybrid / occasionally remote) and for how long have you worked this way?

Section B: Core Interview Questions

Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work–life balance?

How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

How do you manage work–life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

Appendix B: Interview Questions and Supporting Literature

Interview Question	Theoretical Construct	Key Supporting Literature (APA 7th)
Q5–Q6	Work design and autonomy	Allen et al. (2015); Messenger & Gschwind (2016); Wang et al. (2021)
Q7–Q9	Employee productivity	Bloom et al. (2015); Gajendran & Harrison (2007); Barrero et al. (2021)
Q10–Q11	Job satisfaction and wellbeing	Allen et al. (2015); Eurofound (2022); Wells et al. (2023)
Q12	Managerial control and support	Contreras et al. (2020); Wang et al. (2021)
Q13	Communication and collaboration	Eurofound (2020); Choudhury et al. (2022)
Q14	Work–life boundaries and regulation	Clark (2000); Bakirtzi (2022); Hellenic Republic (2021)

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet (Information Sheet)

Title of Study: The impact of remote work on employee productivity and satisfaction in the Greek labour market

Researcher: Foteini Tagkalou, MBA Candidate, Hellenic Open University

Supervisor: Dr. Maria Argiropoulou, Hellenic Open University

1. Invitation and purpose of the study

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted as part of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme at the Hellenic Open University. The purpose of this study is to explore how employees experience remote or hybrid work and how they perceive its impact on productivity and job satisfaction within the Greek labour market.

2. Why you have been invited

You have been invited because you are currently working either remotely or in a hybrid arrangement and have relevant experience to share. Taking part is entirely voluntary.

3. What participation involves

If you agree to participate, you will take part in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately **45–60 minutes**. The interview will focus on your experiences with remote or hybrid work, including factors that support or hinder productivity and job satisfaction. With your permission, the interview will be **audio-recorded** to ensure accuracy. If you do not wish to be recorded, notes will be taken instead.

4. Voluntary participation and right to withdraw

Your participation is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you may withdraw from the study **at any point**, without giving a reason and without any consequences. If you withdraw, any data you have provided will not be used, unless you explicitly agree otherwise.

5. Confidentiality and anonymity

Your identity will remain confidential. No personally identifiable information will be included in the dissertation or any related outputs. Interview data will be anonymised and

referred to using codes (e.g., P1, P2). Any details that could indirectly identify you or your employer will be removed or generalised.

6. Data protection and storage

All collected data will be used solely for academic research purposes. Audio files and transcripts will be stored securely and accessed only by the researcher (and, if required for academic supervision, by the supervisor). Data will be stored in password-protected files and deleted after the completion of the dissertation in accordance with university requirements and applicable data protection standards.

7. Risks and benefits

There are no anticipated risks beyond those of everyday discussion. You may choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. While there is no direct personal benefit, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of remote work practices and employee experiences in Greece.

8. Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researcher. You may also contact the supervisor for academic oversight queries.

Researcher: Foteini Tagkalou (MBA Candidate, Hellenic Open University)

Supervisor: Dr. Maria Argiropoulou (Hellenic Open University)

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form (Consent Form)

Title of Study: The impact of remote work on employee productivity and satisfaction in the Greek labour market

Researcher: Foteini Tagkalou, MBA Candidate, Hellenic Open University

Please read each statement and tick/mark your agreement.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ Agree

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without any consequences.
☐ Agree
3. I understand that I can decline to answer any question during the interview.
☐ Agree
4. I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded.
☐ Agree ☐ I do not agree to audio recording (notes only)
5. I understand that my responses will be anonymised and that no personally identifiable information will be used in the dissertation.
☐ Agree
6. I understand how the data will be stored securely and used for academic purposes only.
☐ Agree
7. I consent to participate in this research study.
☐ Agree

Participant Name (optional): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Researcher Name: Foteini Tagkalou

Researcher Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Appendix E: Answers

Participant 1 (P1)

Male, 29, Software Developer, Hybrid

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

Yeah ...um ...so, right now I'm working in a hybrid arrangement, basically. Three days from home, usually, and two from the office, although, to be honest, that can change a bit depending on the workload or if we have some team meeting or, you know, something more collaborative that makes more sense in person. My role is mostly technical, so a lot of my day is, uh, coding, reviewing pull requests, checking tickets, communicating with the team on Slack, and attending some stand-up meetings.

When I'm at home, my day is much more structured in a way that feels... quieter, I would say. I wake up, make coffee, sit down at my desk, and I kind of enter work mode pretty fast because there's no commuting, no traffic, no transition in that sense. So I usually start by checking what's pending from the previous day, then I look at Jira, see what tasks I need to prioritise, and then I try to block out some time for focused work. That's one of the biggest advantages for me ...that from home I can actually get long periods of uninterrupted concentration. In the office, that's harder. Somebody stops by, someone asks something, there's discussion, noise, movement... so even though office days can be useful, they're not always the most productive for deep technical work.

At the same time, I should say that working from home also requires more self-management. Like, no one is there physically, no one sees whether you're fully concentrated or whether your attention is drifting, so you have to regulate your own day. At first that was a bit difficult, because you think, "Okay, great, I'm home, I can manage my own pace," but then you realise that unless you create your own routine, the day can become blurry. So over time I became more disciplined. I try to keep fixed hours, take breaks at specific times, and avoid mixing domestic things into the workday too much. Not always successfully, but, yeah, that's the general structure.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

I would say they're fairly clear ...not perfectly, but fairly clear. In a technical environment, especially in software development, you usually know what you're expected to deliver because there are systems, deadlines, sprint planning, assigned tasks, and measurable outputs. So it's not vague in the sense of, "What am I supposed to do today?" Usually that

part is obvious. I know which ticket belongs to me, what feature I need to build, what bug I need to solve, what deadline is coming.

But... I think the less clear part is not the work itself ...it's the expectations around presence and responsiveness. Because when you're remote, there's this kind of hidden layer of expectation that is not always openly stated. For example, yes, my tasks are clear, but am I also expected to reply within five minutes all the time? Am I expected to be visibly active online so that people feel reassured I'm working? Am I expected to join every call even if it's not directly relevant? Those things are less formally defined, but they affect how remote work is experienced.

So, um, if you ask me whether responsibilities are clear, I'd say yes. If you ask me whether the broader performance expectations are always transparent, I'd say not completely. There's still an informal culture around visibility. And I think that matters a lot in remote settings because people can start to equate responsiveness with productivity, which is not always true. Someone may be replying instantly all day and producing very little real work, while someone else may be offline for two hours because they're deeply focused and doing excellent work. So clarity exists, but not at every level.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

For me, overall, remote work has increased productivity ...definitely. I don't really have doubts about that. The main reason is concentration. I can focus for longer periods without the interruptions that happen naturally in an office. And in software development, concentration is everything. If you're trying to solve a complex issue or write something that requires logic and attention, even a small interruption can throw you off. Then it takes time to get back into that mental state. At home, I have much more control over that.

The second big mechanism is time saved from commuting. That's not just about physical time, although of course that matters too. It's also about energy. When you remove commuting, especially in a city where traffic can be tiring, you begin the day with more mental energy and you finish it less drained. So that translates into better performance. It's not magical, it's just that you have more capacity left for actual work.

Now, I should also be honest and say that the productivity increase depends on the type of work. For individual, technical, focused tasks, yes, remote work helps a lot. For creative collaboration, brainstorming, onboarding newer colleagues, or solving something very quickly through spontaneous discussion, office presence can still be better. So I wouldn't present it as completely one-sided. But if I compare my own output ...actual deliverables, code quality, concentration ...I'd say remote work has had a positive effect.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

The first one is definitely the quality of the home workspace. I know people sometimes talk about remote work as if it's just one thing, but it really isn't. There's a huge difference between working from a proper desk in a quiet room and trying to work from a kitchen table in a noisy apartment. So environment matters a lot. In my case I'm lucky because I have a stable setup, a good monitor, decent internet, a separate space, and that makes a huge difference.

The second factor is communication. Remote work only functions well if communication is organised and timely. If you're blocked on something and you can't get a response, your productivity can collapse very quickly. In an office you might just turn around and ask. Remotely, if someone doesn't reply, you wait. So team responsiveness matters.

And then there's self-discipline, honestly. I think people don't always like to say that because it sounds individualistic, but it's true. Working remotely gives you autonomy, but autonomy only helps if you can manage it. If you procrastinate easily or if your routine is unstable, remote work can make that worse. So for me the three main things are environment, communication, and self-management.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

Mostly through deliverables. That's the official answer, and to a large extent it's true. We're judged by whether work is completed, whether deadlines are met, whether the code is functional, whether issues are resolved. So in that sense the evaluation is fairly objective compared to some other sectors. There are outputs that can be tracked.

But I don't think that's the whole story. There is still an element of visibility that affects how people are perceived. People who speak more in meetings, who are more confident in online discussions, or who appear in the office more often sometimes get more recognition than quieter people who may be just as productive...or more. So I would say the system is partly fair, but not perfectly fair.

Also, some kinds of contribution are less visible remotely. Helping colleagues, preventing problems before they escalate, supporting team morale ...these things matter, but they're harder to capture through metrics. So if evaluation becomes too output-based, it can miss the broader picture of contribution. I don't think my organisation is doing badly, but I do think there's room for improvement in how fairness is understood.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work-life balance?

Job satisfaction improved, yes. I feel more in control of my day, less tired physically, less stressed by commuting, and more able to work in a way that suits me. Those things matter a lot. Even small details ...having lunch at home, taking a short break without office noise, organising your environment how you want ...they improve daily experience.

As for work-life balance... I'd say it improved in practical terms, but became more complicated in psychological terms. Practically, it's better. I save time, I can handle personal tasks more easily, I have more flexibility. Psychologically, though, work enters the home space and stays there. So although the balance looks better on paper, it can feel less clearly separated. Sometimes the workday ends, but mentally it hasn't ended. So I wouldn't say remote work automatically solves work-life balance. It improves some aspects and worsens others.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

My motivation for the work itself is strong, maybe even stronger, because I can work in conditions that suit me better. But my emotional engagement with the organisation is weaker than before. I feel committed to my tasks, to my team, to doing good work ...yes. But I feel less attached to the company as a social environment. That bond is thinner.

When you're remote, your relationship with the organisation becomes more functional in a way. You log in, you work, you collaborate, you log out. Unless a company makes a strong effort to build connection, people can become a bit detached. Not lazy, not less professional ...just less emotionally invested. So I'd say motivation remains, but organisational attachment is reduced.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

In my team, fairly balanced. My manager is supportive and not overly controlling, which helps a lot. We have regular check-ins, but they don't feel invasive. There's guidance, there's feedback, but also trust. And I think trust is the key factor. If a manager trusts people, remote work is sustainable. If not, it becomes exhausting very quickly.

I've also seen, from friends or previous experiences, that some managers react to remote work by increasing control ...more status checks, more meetings, more need for proof that someone is active. And that usually backfires. People feel watched rather than supported. So managerial style matters enormously.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

It became more formal and more written. That has advantages because things are documented and easier to trace. But it also reduces spontaneity. In the office, collaboration can happen naturally in small moments. Remotely, everything has to be intentional. You schedule it, message it, document it.

So communication may be more efficient in some ways, but less rich. And misunderstandings are easier, especially in written communication. Sometimes something that would be solved in two minutes face-to-face becomes a whole message thread.

Q10. How do you manage work-life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

I try to do it through routine more than anything else. I shut down my laptop at a specific time, I avoid checking messages afterwards unless something is urgent, and I try to

physically leave the room where I work. That physical separation matters. If I stay in the same space, it still feels like I'm "kind of working."

But I'll be honest ...it's not always easy. Remote work makes overworking very convenient. No one tells you to stop. There's always one more task, one more message, one more thing to fix. So boundaries require conscious effort. They don't happen automatically.

Participant 2 (P2)

Female, 41, Senior Accountant, Hybrid, parent of two children

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

Yes, of course. So, I work in accounting, and my arrangement is mostly hybrid. I'm at home four days a week and in the office one day, usually. It changed over time, but this is more or less the current pattern. My work is very deadline-driven, very structured, and also very repetitive at certain points of the month, so I would say my remote routine is organised but also intense.

Because I have children, my day starts quite early. That's one of the realities of remote work that people don't always mention ...yes, you are at home, but home is not always a peaceful place. So I wake up early, I try to get some work done before the house becomes busy, and then after that I move into the normal flow of emails, reconciliations, financial reports, internal communication, and all the little urgent things that suddenly appear.

In practical terms, remote work has given me more flexibility, but not necessarily less pressure. I think that is important. It is easier to organise family responsibilities, yes, but you also feel that the workday stretches more easily because you are already there, already connected, already available. So I would describe my daily organisation as structured but constantly negotiated between professional demands and personal responsibilities.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

The responsibilities themselves are very clear. I know my role, I know my deadlines, I know what is expected in accounting because the work has clear procedures and clear consequences if something is wrong. So there is not much confusion about what my job is.

Where I think the lack of clarity appears is in prioritisation and responsiveness. When you're in the office, it is sometimes easier to understand what is truly urgent because you have context ...you hear things, you see what is happening, you can ask immediately. In remote work, everything arrives digitally, and everything can feel equally urgent. Emails, messages, calls, requests... and unless someone is very clear, the burden of prioritising shifts to the employee.

So I would not say there is confusion about responsibilities, but there is sometimes ambiguity about expectations around immediacy. And that creates stress because you feel that you must always be both productive and instantly available, which are not the same thing.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

It has increased my productivity in terms of volume, yes. I get more done from home. I can say that quite confidently. The main mechanisms are fewer interruptions, more control over time, and the elimination of commuting. In accounting, uninterrupted time is very valuable because concentration affects accuracy. If you are constantly interrupted, mistakes happen.

However, I want to add something important: higher productivity does not always mean healthier work. Sometimes remote work increases productivity because you simply work through breaks, or because you continue later into the evening, or because there is less natural interruption to signal that the day should stop. So yes, the output is higher, but I would not automatically celebrate that. It can come with fatigue.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

Technology is one, definitely. If the systems are slow or there is a problem with access, everything is delayed. Another factor is household reality. I'm saying this because many discussions about remote work are too abstract. In real life, if a child is sick, if something happens at home, if the environment is noisy, productivity drops. It's not theoretical.

The third factor is deadline pressure. In finance and accounting, deadlines structure everything. During busy periods, remote work can be very efficient because you can remain focused. But it can also become overwhelming because the same home space becomes associated with pressure all the time.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

Mainly by deadlines, accuracy, reporting quality, and responsiveness. That is the formal side of it. And in many ways that is fair because accounting work can be evaluated through concrete outputs.

But I do think there is too much importance given to responsiveness. Someone may respond instantly because they are constantly watching the screen, but that does not mean the quality of work is better. Also, people with family responsibilities may not always appear equally available minute by minute, even if they are fully competent and productive overall. So fairness exists to a degree, but there are hidden biases in how responsiveness is interpreted.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work–life balance?

It improved my work–life balance in practical terms. That is true. It made daily life more manageable, especially as a parent. School schedules, appointments, household logistics ...all those things are easier when you are not commuting every day.

At the same time, I feel more tired in a different way. Not physically, but mentally. Because the transition between roles is weaker. You move from employee to mother to employee again within the same physical space, sometimes within the same hour. So the balance is better logistically, but heavier emotionally.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

Motivation for doing my work well is still there. I'm a responsible person and that hasn't changed. Engagement with the organisation itself, though, has weakened. I feel less socially

connected, less involved in the broader atmosphere of the company. There is less informal exchange, less sense of belonging.

So I remain committed professionally, but not as connected emotionally as before. I think that is quite common.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

I would say support exists, but there is also a stronger layer of monitoring than before. Not always in an aggressive way, but in a quiet digital way. Deadlines are tracked, systems show activity, managers rely more on digital indicators. So control has become less visible physically but more embedded in the process.

Support depends a lot on the individual manager. A good manager will clarify priorities and recognise workload. A less effective one will simply increase pressure through more messages and follow-ups.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Communication is more frequent, but also more fragmented. There are too many channels sometimes. Email, Teams, phone, shared documents ...everything is happening at once. Collaboration still works, of course, but it requires more effort and more coordination. Things that used to be solved quickly can now become a sequence of digital exchanges.

Q10. How do you manage work–life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

I try to be disciplined. I turn off notifications in the evening, I avoid keeping work email open after hours, and I try to create a clear ending to the workday. But honestly, remote work makes it very easy for work to continue. The right to disconnect sounds good as a principle, but in practice it depends a lot on culture and workload.

Participant 3 (P3)

Male, 52, Public Sector Administrative Officer, mostly on-site with occasional remote work

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

Well ...in my case, remote work is not the main arrangement. It is more occasional, I would say, and depends on the service needs, approvals, and the nature of the tasks. I work in the public sector, in an administrative role, and many procedures still involve documents, internal approvals, and coordination that historically were designed for physical presence. So, yes, there are remote days, but they do not define the whole role.

When I work from home, I generally try to follow the same schedule as in the office. I start in the morning, log in, review pending matters, process what can be processed digitally, and communicate with colleagues where necessary. However, the main difference is that not all tasks translate equally well to remote conditions. Some things proceed smoothly, especially work that requires concentration or document review. Other things become slower because they depend on access, signatures, informal coordination, or clarification from multiple departments.

So I would say my daily organisation in remote work is based more on adaptation than on a fully integrated remote model. It is not that the work disappears; rather, some parts of it fit remote work and others do not. And that shapes the whole experience.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

The responsibilities are clear because I have many years in the role. I know what my duties are. There is no confusion at that level. But the challenge is not clarity of duty ...it is the compatibility between the duty and the remote infrastructure.

In other words, I know what I must do, but sometimes the systems or procedures are not equally prepared for remote execution. So the role is clear, but the pathway to performing it remotely is not always equally clear or equally functional. In public administration, process design matters a great deal, and remote work reveals where process design is incomplete.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

For certain tasks, remote work improves productivity. If I need to review documents, work quietly, concentrate, or complete something that requires uninterrupted attention, then yes, home can be more efficient than the office. Offices in the public sector can be busy, noisy, and full of interruptions.

But for tasks that depend on interdepartmental communication or on administrative procedures that have not been fully digitalised, productivity is reduced. The mechanism there is not personal inefficiency; it is structural limitation. If a process depends on three people in different locations and one of them is not immediately reachable, everything slows down. So the effect of remote work on productivity is mixed and highly dependent on the administrative ecosystem.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

Access is the first factor ...access to documents, access to systems, access to colleagues. Without those, remote work becomes partial at best. The second factor is digital preparedness, both of the institution and of the employees. Not everyone has the same familiarity with digital tools, and that affects coordination.

A third factor is the type of task. Remote work is helpful for concentrated administrative work, but less helpful for complex procedural coordination. So productivity is not determined by remote work alone; it is determined by the interaction between remote work and administrative design.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

I would say evaluation is still relatively informal. There is no highly developed or highly sophisticated remote productivity model in our service. In practice, productivity is judged through whether work is completed, whether delays occur, whether problems are reported.

So fairness is difficult to assess because the evaluation framework itself is not fully formalised. I would not say it is obviously unfair, but I also would not say it is especially refined. It is more pragmatic than systematic.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work–life balance?

It has had a modest positive effect. I avoid commuting on remote days, which reduces daily fatigue. That improves the experience of the week. But because remote work is not the dominant mode in my case, I cannot say it transformed my work–life balance entirely. It is more of a practical relief than a deep structural change.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

I do not think it has changed my commitment substantially. I have long service, and commitment in my case is more connected to professional duty and stability than to mode of work. What remote work changes more is the atmosphere of the day. On remote days there is less interruption and less external pressure, and that can support motivation at the level of daily functioning.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

Managers are still adapting. Some are supportive and understand that remote work can function well if it is organised properly. Others remain more attached to physical presence because they associate presence with reliability or control. So there is a transition in mindset.

I would say support exists, but trust in remote systems is not uniform. And that matters, because remote work is not sustained only by technology ...it is also sustained by managerial confidence in non-physical supervision.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Communication is less immediate. In the office, a matter can be clarified quickly in person. Remotely, it depends on response time, platform familiarity, and whether everyone is aligned on the process. So communication is possible, yes, but usually slower and less fluid.

Q10. How do you manage work–life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

In my case, boundaries are relatively protected because the culture of the service is more defined by formal working hours. So after the workday ends, it usually ends. I do not often experience late communication. In that sense, boundary management is easier than in some private-sector environments.

Participant 4 (P4)

Female, 31, Digital Marketing Specialist, fully remote

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

Yes... so, I work fully remote at the moment, and I've been in that arrangement for around two and a half years now. My role is in digital marketing, so my work is a mix of campaign planning, content coordination, reporting, client communication, and sometimes last-minute changes that come from nowhere, to be honest. So even though I do have a schedule, the day does not always go according to plan.

Usually I start around 9 o'clock. I open my laptop, check emails first, then Slack, then my calendar, because the calendar kind of decides the mood of the day. If I have too many meetings, I already know the day will feel fragmented. If I have more open space, then I can actually focus on campaign work or strategy or writing. That is one thing about remote work... it gives flexibility, yes, but it also makes calendar management absolutely central. If you lose control of that, the whole day disappears into calls.

I would say my daily organisation is quite intentional. I have to structure it, otherwise I feel like I am floating from one notification to the next. So I try to divide the day into parts... communication in the morning, execution in the afternoon, reporting or loose ends later on. But in marketing, especially remotely, a lot of things are reactive. A client sends feedback, a campaign underperforms, somebody needs changes immediately... so there is always some instability inside the routine.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

They are clear in some ways and unclear in others. The goals are usually clear because marketing is very target-oriented. There are KPIs, campaign deadlines, engagement goals, conversions, reporting requirements... so in terms of measurable output, yes, clarity exists. I know what success is supposed to look like, at least on paper.

But what is not always clear is where the role ends. I think remote work sometimes creates this silent expansion of responsibilities. Because everything happens online, people send requests very casually, very quickly, and suddenly you are involved in things that are not exactly your task, but also not easy to refuse. So the formal role is clear... the informal expectations are less clear.

And I would also say that in creative and strategic roles, performance is not always fully captured by metrics. You can meet numbers and still do mediocre work, or you can do really thoughtful work that takes longer and is not immediately visible in a spreadsheet. So yes... responsibilities are clear enough, but expectations can stretch in ways that are not always openly discussed.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

I think remote work increased my productivity overall, but I would not say that in a simplistic way. It increased my output because I have more control over my environment, fewer physical interruptions, and more flexibility in how I manage my energy. That matters a lot in marketing because some tasks require analytical focus, while others require creativity, and I perform better when I can choose when to do each.

At the same time... and this is important... remote work also made it easier to overwork. So yes, I produce more, but part of that is because there are fewer natural stopping points. You do not leave the office. You do not have that physical transition that tells your body and mind the day is over. So productivity goes up, but it can happen because the boundaries are weaker, not only because the working conditions are better.

The biggest mechanisms, for me, are autonomy and reduced interruption. But there is another mechanism too... emotional self-management. When you work remotely, no one creates the atmosphere for you. You have to manage your own concentration, your own

motivation, your own rhythm. When that works, productivity is high. When it doesn't, the day can feel very scattered.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

Meeting overload is one of the biggest factors. I know that sounds obvious, but it really changes everything. If I have four or five online meetings in a day, I may technically be working all day, but my real productivity is much lower because there is no uninterrupted time left for strategic thinking or creative execution.

Another factor is the clarity of the brief. In marketing, if the task is unclear, you can waste hours. And remote communication sometimes makes briefs more confusing because things are passed through messages, voice notes, comments in documents, and verbal instructions in meetings. If the brief is clear, I can work very efficiently. If not, the whole process becomes slower.

And, honestly, mood affects productivity more than people admit. Remote work can feel quite isolating. Some days that is fine and even helpful. Other days it affects your energy and the quality of your thinking. So productivity is shaped not only by tools and deadlines, but also by emotional state.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

It is evaluated mostly through numbers and deliverables... campaign results, deadlines, responsiveness, client satisfaction, task completion. That makes sense, of course, because organisations want something measurable. And in a remote setting, metrics become even more attractive because they seem objective.

But I do not think they are fully fair. Not because metrics are useless, but because marketing outcomes are influenced by many variables... budgets, audience behaviour, timing, client decisions, algorithm changes, market conditions. So if you reduce performance to outcomes alone, you can make unfair judgments.

I also think visibility still matters more than people admit. The people who are highly verbal in meetings, who respond instantly, who maintain a very visible digital presence... they are often perceived as more engaged. That may or may not be true. So I would say the system is partly fair, but still shaped by perception.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?

Job satisfaction improved in some respects because I value autonomy very highly. I like being able to organise my environment, work in comfortable conditions, and avoid commuting. That has genuinely improved my daily quality of life.

But work life balance is more complicated. I think remote work gives the illusion of balance because it removes some visible burdens, like travel and office exhaustion. But then it introduces other burdens... mental spillover, difficulty disconnecting, blurred timing, the feeling that work is always near. So I would not say balance automatically becomes better. It becomes different.

Socially, I also feel that something is missing. I do not miss office politics or noise, but I do miss spontaneous energy sometimes. So satisfaction is higher professionally, maybe lower socially, or at least more uneven.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

I feel motivated by the work itself, especially when the projects are interesting. That part has not disappeared. But my emotional connection to the company is weaker. It is harder to feel part of something collective when your relationship with it is mediated through screens, meetings, dashboards, and deadlines.

I think remote work shifts motivation away from organisational identity and more toward task identity. You are motivated to complete the work, to perform well, to be competent... but not necessarily to feel deep loyalty to the employer. At least that is how it feels for me.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

I think remote work reveals management quality very clearly. A good manager in a remote setting communicates clearly, gives trust, checks in without suffocating people, and supports priorities. A poor manager becomes anxious and tries to compensate with more meetings, more monitoring, more demand for proof.

In my current role, I feel reasonably supported. My manager trusts us, which helps enormously. In a previous role, I experienced the opposite... endless updates, constant online availability, and a feeling that you had to be visibly working all the time. So I would say remote work does not create support or control by itself. It amplifies what is already there.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Communication is more constant but not always more meaningful. There is more written interaction, more scheduled calls, more documentation... which can be useful. But it also creates fragmentation. Sometimes one issue is split across six channels.

Collaboration is more deliberate now. It does not happen naturally. You have to schedule it, initiate it, structure it. That can make it efficient, but it can also reduce spontaneity and creativity. Especially in marketing, some of the best ideas come from quick, informal exchange, and that is harder to reproduce online.

Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

With effort... honestly. I am much stricter now than I used to be. I close work apps, I try not to answer after a certain time, and I keep my work phone and personal phone separate as much as possible. But I learned that through trial and error. At the beginning I was always available, and it was exhausting.

The right to disconnect sounds simple, but it is not simple when your work is digital and your whole professional world exists on devices you carry everywhere. So boundaries have to be actively created. They do not just appear.

Participant 5 (P5)

Female, 38, University Programme Coordinator, hybrid

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

Yes... I work in higher education administration, and my arrangement is hybrid, roughly half the week from home and half on campus, although that can vary depending on the academic calendar. My role is quite mixed. It includes student support, programme coordination, communication with faculty, administrative documentation, reporting, and sometimes dealing with unexpected issues that require immediate attention.

So my days are not repetitive in the same way every week. During certain periods, like enrolment or assessment deadlines, the workload becomes very intense and very fragmented. Remote days are usually the days when I try to focus on writing, documentation, administrative follow-up, and all the work that requires sustained attention. Campus days are more relational. They involve meetings, students, spontaneous questions, interruptions, and the social side of the institution.

I would say that remote work helps me create islands of concentration in a role that is otherwise very dispersed. But because the role itself is relational, remote work does not replace the on-site component completely. It complements it.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

The responsibilities are broadly clear, yes, but in universities there is always some fluidity in roles. You often end up doing work that is not strictly written in a job description because institutions function through cooperation, informal support, and problem-solving. That was true before remote work as well, but remote work has made some of those invisible expectations harder to interpret.

When you are on-site, you often understand priorities through context. You see what is happening, who is under pressure, what requires immediate attention. When you are remote, that context is weaker. So even if the formal responsibilities are known, the live hierarchy of priorities can be less obvious.

Also, some contributions in education administration are emotional or relational. Supporting students, calming difficult situations, helping colleagues through informal coordination... these are real responsibilities, but not always clearly recognised in formal performance language. Remote work makes that even more visible.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

It has improved my productivity quite significantly for focused administrative tasks. If I need to write reports, process documentation, prepare materials, or handle detailed email communication, I am much more efficient at home. The mechanism is simple... less interruption and more control over the work environment.

But remote work is less effective for the relational side of my role. Student support, especially when issues are sensitive or complicated, often works better in person. The same applies to nuanced coordination with staff. So I would say remote work increased productivity for individual tasks, but reduced immediacy in relational tasks. It is not a total gain or a total loss. It is a redistribution.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

Task type is probably the most important factor. Some tasks benefit from remote conditions and others do not. Another factor is digital fatigue. In university environments, there are often many meetings, committees, reviews, online sessions... and after several hours of that, concentration decreases sharply.

A third factor is collective responsiveness. My productivity does not depend only on me. If colleagues reply slowly, or if information is dispersed across different systems, then remote work becomes slower. So productivity is a relational issue as well, not just an individual one.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

I would say productivity is not always formally evaluated in a sophisticated way. There is a general sense that if tasks are completed and major problems are avoided, then things are working. But that does not fully capture the role.

There is a lot of invisible labour in academic administration... emotional labour, informal guidance, crisis management, coordination work that prevents problems before they appear. Those things are very important, but they are difficult to quantify. So when productivity is viewed mainly through completed tasks, part of the reality is missed. That makes fairness partial, not absolute.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?

It has improved my work life balance practically, because I save travel time and I can structure my day with more flexibility. That has real value. It has also increased satisfaction in relation to concentrated work, because I can finally complete certain tasks without constant interruption.

However, I have also felt more isolated at times. Universities are communities, not only workplaces, and remote work changes that atmosphere. So the experience is positive in terms of efficiency and personal flexibility, but more ambiguous in terms of belonging.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

My motivation remains strong because I care about the educational purpose of the work. That has not changed. But engagement with the institution as a lived community is lower. I feel less present inside the everyday culture, less aware of informal dynamics, and sometimes less emotionally connected.

Commitment remains, but it is more reflective than immediate now. I still care deeply about the role, but the institutional bond feels less embodied.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

Managerial support is helpful when it includes clarity, realistic expectations, and recognition of workload. In my case, support has been generally positive, but I think there is still some uncertainty in institutions about how to lead remote teams without either becoming too distant or too controlling.

Control is not necessarily strict, but there is still an implicit expectation of visible responsiveness. That can create subtle pressure, especially in roles where people are already carrying a lot of invisible labour.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Communication has become much more documented, which is useful for accountability and continuity. But it has also become more fragmented and more tiring. There is a lot of communication, not always a lot of clarity.

Collaboration works best when processes are very clear. If they are not, remote work magnifies confusion. In institutions, some processes are clearer than others, so the experience varies quite a lot.

Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

I try to create symbolic endings to the day... closing the laptop, leaving the workspace, even changing rooms if possible. That is important because academic and administrative work can continue indefinitely if you let it. There is always another email, another student need, another pending issue.

So boundaries require deliberate practice. I believe in the right to disconnect, but I also think institutions need to actively protect it, not simply mention it as a principle.

Participant 6 (P6)

Female, 27, Customer Support Agent, fully remote

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

So... I work fully remotely for an e-commerce company, and in my case the schedule is actually quite strict. Sometimes people hear “remote work” and imagine flexibility or freedom, but my job is shift-based, so it doesn’t really feel like that. I log in at a specific time, I handle customer chats, emails, sometimes calls, and the pace is monitored very closely.

My day is organised by the system more than by me. I know that sounds a bit harsh, but it’s true. There are queues, targets, tickets, break times, response windows... so the structure is very controlled. The fact that I am at home changes the location, not the level of discipline. If anything, the digital system makes the control even more visible.

Still, being at home does make some things easier. I save commuting time, I can prepare my own environment, and I feel less socially drained than I used to in office-based customer service. But the work itself is intense and constant. There is not much empty space in the day.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

Very clear. Honestly... maybe clearer than I would like. Everything is measured. Response time, customer satisfaction, average handling time, number of cases, quality score... there is no real ambiguity. You know exactly what is expected.

That clarity can be useful because there is no confusion about standards. But it can also feel rigid. There is not much room for interpretation or flexibility. So yes, the expectations are very clear, but they are also quite demanding.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

I would say it has increased productivity in a measurable sense. I process more cases from home than I used to in the office. Partly that is because there are fewer distractions, and partly because the workflow is fully digital anyway, so remote work fits the role quite well.

But I do not think that tells the whole story. Productivity is higher, yes, but emotional exhaustion is also higher sometimes. In customer support, you need patience, emotional

control, and a lot of mental energy. When you do that all day from home, without physical separation, it can become very draining. So the mechanism is efficiency, but also emotional compression, if that makes sense.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

The biggest one is probably mental state. If I am tired, stressed, or emotionally overwhelmed, it affects everything because customer support requires emotional regulation all the time. Another factor is the technology. If the system is slow or there are connection issues, the day becomes much harder immediately.

And isolation is also a factor. Sometimes being alone helps concentration. Sometimes it makes the work feel heavier. In a customer-facing role, you absorb a lot from interactions, and when you are alone, there is less natural release.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

It is evaluated through metrics almost completely. Numbers, queue handling, speed, quality audits, customer ratings... everything is quantified. In one sense that is fair, because the same standards apply to everyone. There is consistency.

But at the same time, metrics do not always capture the difficulty of specific interactions. One customer may be easy, another may be extremely difficult or abusive, and yet the time pressure remains the same. So I would say the evaluation is technically fair, but not always humanly fair.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?

It improved work life balance in practical ways because I save time, I save money, and I am less physically tired. But job satisfaction is more mixed. The convenience is real, but the work can feel repetitive and lonely.

So I appreciate remote work as a format, but I would not say it solved everything. It improved the logistics of life more than the emotional experience of the job.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

I feel less connected to the company, definitely. I still do my work seriously, but I don't feel a strong bond. Motivation comes more from personal responsibility and the need to perform well than from identification with the organisation.

I think remote work can make jobs feel more transactional, especially when the role is highly monitored and highly digital. You do the work, meet the targets, and log out. The emotional attachment is weaker.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

There is support... supervisors answer questions, there are team meetings, there is help when something escalates. But there is definitely a strong sense of control too. Because everything is digital, you are aware that everything is visible. How long you take, when you are active, what your numbers look like... it is all there.

So support exists, but it coexists with constant monitoring. That is just the reality of this role.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Communication is very functional. It is quick, task-based, and mostly about solving immediate issues. Collaboration exists, but it is not very social. You ask for help, you escalate something, you share information... and that is it.

There is less human connection in the communication. It works, but it feels utilitarian.

Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

I try to stop completely when the shift ends. That is very important for me because otherwise the emotional residue of the job stays with me. I usually step away from the room, go outside if I can, and do something physical or ordinary just to reset.

If I don't do that, it feels like I'm still at work even after logging off. So I take boundaries very seriously now.

Participant 7 (P7)

Male, 49, HR Manager, hybrid

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

Yes... I work in human resources, and my arrangement is hybrid. Usually two or three days from home and the rest in the office, depending on the week and what is happening organisationally. HR is an interesting function in this respect because some parts of it adapt very well to remote work and others do not adapt easily at all.

When I am remote, I focus more on policy work, documentation, strategic planning, reporting, interviews that can be done online, and internal meetings. On office days, the work becomes much more relational... employee conversations, sensitive issues, unplanned situations, leadership contact, all the things that require presence, nuance, and sometimes simply being physically available.

So my daily organisation changes according to location. Remote days are more structured and cognitively planned. Office days are more open, more interrupted, and more human in the informal sense.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

The responsibilities are clear, but the scope of HR has expanded significantly over the last few years, and remote work is part of that expansion. HR is now expected not only to manage administrative and organisational matters, but also culture, wellbeing, engagement, digital adaptation, hybrid policy, and all the ambiguities that come with them.

So while my role is clear formally, the lived expectations are broader and more fluid than before. That is not confusion exactly... it is expansion. Remote work did not make HR less clear. It made it more layered.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

It has improved productivity for strategic and document-heavy work quite a lot. At home I can think more clearly, write more effectively, and complete complex tasks without constant interruption. That is a genuine benefit.

However, remote work has reduced the visibility of informal organisational signals. In HR, that matters enormously. You notice morale, tension, withdrawal, conflict, fatigue... often not through formal channels but through small human cues. Those are harder to perceive remotely. So productivity in a narrow operational sense may improve, but organisational sensitivity may decline.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

Meeting quality is a major factor. Not just the number of meetings, but whether they are purposeful. Poorly structured meetings destroy remote productivity. Another factor is trust. HR work depends heavily on honest communication, and if employees do not feel comfortable speaking openly in remote settings, the quality of the work declines.

A third factor is leadership culture. If leadership is mature and clear, hybrid work functions much better. If leadership is inconsistent, remote work becomes full of ambiguity.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

This is a difficult issue because productivity in HR cannot be reduced to output metrics alone. Some tasks can be measured, of course, but many of the most important contributions are preventive, relational, and qualitative.

I think organisations are still tempted to evaluate what is easy to count rather than what is truly valuable. That creates a fairness problem, because visible activity is not always

equivalent to meaningful HR contribution. So I would say current evaluation approaches are incomplete.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?

It has improved work life balance materially... less commuting, more flexibility, better control over time. That is very valuable. In terms of job satisfaction, I appreciate the autonomy and efficiency, but I also feel the loss of immediate human texture. HR is fundamentally relational work. If too much of it becomes digital, something is diminished.

So my answer would be that remote work improved convenience and some forms of efficiency, but it also flattened part of the human richness of the role.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

My commitment remains high because of the nature of my role and my years of experience. But I do think engagement now has to be cultivated more intentionally. It does not emerge naturally from shared physical presence in the same way.

Remote work has shown that organisational belonging is not automatic. It requires design, leadership, and cultural effort.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

I would say remote work intensifies existing leadership tendencies. Good managers become more intentionally supportive. Poor managers become more anxiously controlling. Hybrid work does not hide management quality... it exposes it.

Support means clarity, trust, emotional intelligence, and realistic priorities. Control, when excessive, often appears through over-meeting, unnecessary checking, and obsession with digital visibility. I have seen both patterns.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Communication is more frequent, but not necessarily deeper. Collaboration can be efficient when systems are clear, but trust-building is slower. Informal culture is weaker. That affects onboarding, cohesion, and employee belonging in ways that many organisations still underestimate.

Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

I try to model healthy behaviour because as an HR leader, what I do sends a message. I avoid unnecessary late communication, and I respect others' boundaries as much as possible. Personally, I set limits, but I also know that many employees still feel implicit pressure to remain available. So boundary management is not only an individual issue. It is a cultural one.

Participant 8 (P8)

Female, 33, Visual Designer, fully remote

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

I work fully remotely for a design agency, and to be honest my day is not very linear. Creative work doesn't always happen in a straight line, so I have structure, but I also need a certain amount of freedom inside that structure. Usually I begin by checking messages, reviewing client feedback, and seeing what revisions or new tasks came in overnight. After that, I try to protect some time for actual design work, because once the day becomes too crowded with communication, creativity drops.

Working remotely helps me manage my environment very carefully. Lighting, music, silence, screen setup, breaks... all of that affects how I work. In an office, I used to feel overstimulated quite often. At home I can build a rhythm that suits the task better. But that doesn't mean it's always easy. There are days when I feel very focused and free, and there are days when the lack of external structure makes everything feel too open.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

The responsibilities are clear in the sense that I know what I need to deliver. But in design, clarity is sometimes limited by the fact that quality is partly subjective. A client says they want something clean, modern, warm, premium... those words can mean many different things. So remote work doesn't create the ambiguity, but it can intensify it, because there is less spontaneous discussion around visual interpretation.

So yes, I know my role, but not every expectation is precise from the beginning. Sometimes the process of feedback is what reveals the true expectation.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

It has improved my productivity for creative work quite a lot. The main mechanism is control over stimulation. In design, concentration is not just about silence. It is about the right kind of mental atmosphere. At home I can create that more easily. I can work in focused bursts, step away when needed, come back with fresh attention, and that improves quality.

At the same time, remote work can also slow things down when feedback loops become messy. If too many people are involved and everything comes through fragmented messages, the process becomes inefficient. So remote work is excellent for creation, but not always for chaotic revision cycles.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

The clarity of feedback is probably the biggest one. A good brief and thoughtful feedback save enormous time. Another factor is mood and mental clarity. Creative work is very sensitive to internal state.

And I would also say loneliness can influence productivity. Some days solitude supports the work. Other days it makes everything feel heavier and more self-contained. So the same condition can help or hinder depending on the day.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

Usually through deadlines, number of tasks completed, client satisfaction, and perceived speed. I understand why those measures are used, but I do not think they fully reflect creative quality. Fast work is not always the best work. And thoughtful design sometimes requires more exploration than systems allow.

So I would say the evaluation is practical, but not entirely fair to the nature of creative labour.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?

I am definitely happier working remotely than I was in office settings. I feel more comfortable, more autonomous, and less socially exhausted. So in that sense job satisfaction is higher.

But balance is still complicated because creative work follows you mentally. Even if I close the laptop, I may still be thinking about the design, the concept, the unfinished revision. So the boundary is not only about time. It is also about mental separation, and that is harder.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

I feel motivated by interesting projects, not so much by the organisation as an institution. Remote work has made that more obvious. My connection is stronger to the work than to the company identity.

I think it makes professional identity more individual. You become attached to what you create, not necessarily where you create it.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

Creative work needs trust. If a manager is constantly checking, asking for updates every hour, or trying to control the process too tightly, the quality suffers. Support means direction, clarity, and enough freedom for the work to breathe.

In my current setting I feel supported, but I have had previous experiences where remote management became almost anxious. That was very draining.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Feedback is much more written now, which can be useful because there is a record. But it also flattens meaning. Visual ideas are often easier to discuss dynamically than through comment threads.

So communication is more documented, but not always richer. Collaboration works, but it needs more effort and more intentionality.

Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

I disconnect digitally quite firmly now. I stop checking messages, I close the programs, and I try to move into something that uses a different part of my mind. But mental disconnection is harder because creative work can continue in the background of thought.

So I manage the formal boundary better than the psychological one.

Participant 9 (P9)

Male, 57, Claims Officer in insurance, hybrid

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

I work in the insurance sector, and my arrangement is hybrid... usually three days in the office and two days at home. My role is structured, and after so many years of experience I have a stable routine. I review claims, process files, communicate with clients and internal departments, and manage deadlines that are fairly predictable.

When I work from home, the day is calmer. There is less interruption, less noise, and generally more continuity. In the office, things move faster in certain respects because coordination is easier, but there are also more distractions. So I would say my daily organisation does not change dramatically between locations, but the tempo and atmosphere do change.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

They are clear. My role is well defined and the tasks are relatively measurable. Experience also helps. At this point I know what is expected, with or without physical presence.

That said, remote work requires more self-direction. Some people are comfortable with that and some are not. In my case it is not a problem, but I can see how it might be for others.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

For document-based work, remote work has improved productivity. The main reason is reduced interruption. When I need to review a file carefully or complete administrative tasks with concentration, home is more efficient.

However, when a case is complex and needs coordination across people or departments, office presence can be faster. So the mechanism is mostly about concentration versus immediacy. Remote work helps concentration. Office work helps immediate interaction.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

Concentration, system reliability, and access to information. If those are in place, productivity is good. If the systems are slow or communication is delayed, the process becomes less efficient.

I would add that habit matters. After many years of working, routine supports productivity. Remote work is easier if you already know how to organise yourself.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

Mostly through completed cases, accuracy, and timeliness. In our sector that is relatively straightforward. So I would say it is generally fair.

Still, I do think visibility sometimes affects perception. Employees who are seen more often in person may still be interpreted as more engaged, even if the actual output is similar. That is subtle, but I believe it exists.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?

It has improved both, mainly because it reduces commuting fatigue. At this stage of life, that matters. I feel less physically tired, and that improves the quality of the week.

I would not say remote work changed the meaning of the job for me, but it made the rhythm more manageable.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

Commitment remains stable. I have long experience and that does not change easily. Motivation may be slightly higher on remote days because the environment is calmer and the work flows more smoothly.

But I would not say remote work increased organisational attachment. It mostly improved comfort and efficiency.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

In my department, managerial behaviour is moderate. There are check-ins, but not excessive interference. I think there was more uncertainty at the beginning of remote work, but over time trust increased as people proved they could work effectively from home.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

Communication is more formal and more digital. That has advantages because there is more written trace. But certain issues are still resolved more quickly face to face.

So communication has become more systematic, but sometimes less immediate.

Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

Quite clearly. I do not keep work email on my personal phone, and when the day ends, I stop. I think that boundary is important, and over the years I have become more disciplined about it.

Remote work can be intrusive if you allow it, so I try not to allow it.

Participant 10 (P10)

Male, 39, Project Manager in consulting, hybrid

Q1. Please describe your current remote-work arrangement and daily work organisation.

Yes... I work in consulting, and my arrangement is hybrid, though in practice it is heavily remote unless there is a client workshop or some meeting that really benefits from physical presence. I have been working like this for around five years now, more or less.

My daily work organisation is quite intense. A lot of coordination, a lot of meetings, project tracking, client communication, internal reporting, team alignment, follow-up actions... it is one of those roles where the day can easily become completely consumed by communication. So I have to actively create space for actual project work, otherwise the day is all management and no thinking.

Remote work helped in some ways because it removed travel and made scheduling easier. But it also created what I would call meeting inflation. Because everyone is available online, meetings multiply. So the organisation of the day has become more efficient on the surface, but sometimes more cognitively exhausting.

Q2. How clear are your job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations when working remotely?

The responsibilities are very clear because project work is deadline-based, client-facing, and outcome-driven. There is little ambiguity about deliverables. What is less clear is the expectation around intensity and availability. Consulting already has a strong performance

culture, and remote work can intensify that because online availability becomes a kind of silent norm.

So yes, the work itself is clear. The boundaries around it are less clear.

Q3. How has remote work affected your productivity, and through which mechanisms?

It has increased efficiency in certain respects... faster scheduling, less travel, easier document collaboration, smoother coordination across locations. Those are real advantages.

But I am not sure it has improved productivity in a deeper sense. It has made work faster, yes, but it has also made it more saturated. Too many meetings, too many messages, too many parallel channels. So while some inefficiencies disappeared, new ones emerged in the form of cognitive overload.

I would say remote work improved logistical productivity but complicated cognitive productivity.

Q4. Which factors most strongly influence your productivity when working remotely?

Meeting volume is the biggest one. If I spend the entire day on calls, the real thinking gets pushed into the evening, which is not sustainable. Another factor is team coordination. If responsibilities are not very clear, remote work magnifies confusion quickly.

Energy management is also important. Remote work can look efficient from the outside while quietly draining attention all day.

Q5. How is productivity evaluated in your organisation under remote work, and how fair do you perceive this process to be?

Mainly through project delivery, client satisfaction, deadlines, responsiveness, and visible coordination. In theory that is fair because project management is closely tied to outcomes.

In practice, however, remote work can reward performative visibility. People who are constantly present online, constantly active in communication, may be perceived as highly

productive even when they are simply highly visible. So the evaluation model has blind spots.

Q6. How has remote work affected your job satisfaction and work life balance?

This is the contradiction for me. I value the flexibility very much and I would not want to return to full office work. That part is clear. But work life balance did not improve as much as people assumed it would, because work expanded to fill the available space.

So satisfaction improved because of autonomy and reduced commuting, but balance remained difficult because work became more diffuse and harder to contain.

Q7. How has remote work influenced your motivation, engagement, and commitment to your organisation?

My motivation is still strong when the projects are meaningful. Engagement with colleagues and with organisational culture, though, requires more effort now. It does not happen naturally through daily proximity.

I think hybrid work also makes people psychologically more mobile. You become aware that work is less tied to place, and that changes the emotional relationship with the employer.

Q8. How would you describe managerial support and control in remote work settings?

Support varies a lot. Some leaders are excellent in remote settings... clear, calm, human, purposeful. Others react by multiplying meetings and check-ins because they fear loss of control. That creates fatigue.

So managerial support in remote work is not only about availability. It is about maturity. Control becomes less physical and more communicative... through calendars, updates, online presence, and response expectations.

Q9. How has communication and collaboration changed under remote or hybrid work?

It has become faster and more frequent, but also more exhausting. Collaboration across places is easier now, which is a major benefit. But trust and relationship depth are slower to build. There is more contact and sometimes less connection.

That is probably the best way I can describe it.

Q10. How do you manage work life boundaries and the right to disconnect?

With difficulty, if I am honest. I try to block time, stop at a reasonable hour, and avoid checking messages late, but project work tends to spill over. Remote work makes that very easy.

So I would say I manage boundaries through conscious effort, but the organisational environment does not always make it easy. The right to disconnect exists more clearly in policy language than in everyday practice.

Appendix F: Coding Framework and Thematic Development

Table F1. Detailed codebook and theme-development matrix

Code cluster	Definition / coding rule	Illustrative participant evidence	Participants	Final theme
Autonomy and time control	Statements about control over schedule, rhythm, environment or pacing of work.	"I feel more in control of my day" (P1); "I value autonomy very highly" (P4).	P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	Theme 1 / Theme 4
Routine and self-management	Statements showing that remote work requires personal discipline, planning or structure.	"Unless you create your own routine, the day can become blurry" (P1); "I have to structure it" (P4).	P1, P4, P6, P8, P9, P10	Theme 1
Commuting relief	Statements linking remote work to reduced travel, energy saving or reduced physical fatigue.	"When you remove commuting... you begin the day with more mental energy" (P1).	P1, P2, P3, P6, P9, P10	Theme 1 / Theme 2 / Theme 4
Home-workspace conditions	Statements about quiet space, equipment, home noise, parenting or domestic conditions.	"There's a huge difference between working from a proper desk... and a kitchen table" (P1).	P1, P2, P4, P6, P8	Theme 1
Task fit	Statements distinguishing tasks suitable for remote work from tasks requiring office presence.	"Remote work increased productivity for individual tasks, but reduced immediacy in relational tasks" (P5).	P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	Theme 1 / Theme 2
Deep work / concentration	Statements about fewer interruptions, careful review, coding, writing, design or focused work.	"Remote work helps concentration. Office work helps immediate interaction" (P9).	P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9	Theme 2
Digital access and infrastructure	Statements about systems, documents, platforms, connection or remote-process readiness.	"Access is the first factor... access to documents, access to systems, access to colleagues" (P3).	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P9	Theme 2
Meeting overload / meeting inflation	Statements about excessive meetings, calls or communication taking over the day.	"Because everyone is available online, meetings multiply" (P10).	P4, P5, P7, P10	Theme 2 / Theme 3
Communication fragmentation	Statements about too many channels, written traces, delayed responses or loss of immediacy.	"Sometimes one issue is split across six channels" (P4).	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, P10	Theme 2
Metrics and deliverables	Statements about deadlines, task completion, cases, quality scores or measurable outputs.	"It is evaluated through metrics almost completely" (P6).	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10	Theme 3
Invisible labour	Statements about work that matters but is not easily measured, such as support, morale, prevention or relational care.	"There is a lot of invisible labour in academic administration" (P5).	P1, P5, P7, P8	Theme 3
Responsiveness as visibility	Statements where quick replies, online presence or physical presence are interpreted as engagement.	"People can start to equate responsiveness with productivity" (P1).	P1, P2, P4, P5, P9, P10	Theme 3
Monitoring and control	Statements about tracking, activity visibility, follow-ups, systems or managerial anxiety.	"Because everything is digital, you are aware that everything is visible" (P6).	P2, P4, P6, P7, P10	Theme 3
Managerial trust and support	Statements about trust, clarity, realistic expectations, emotional intelligence or supportive leadership.	"Support means clarity, trust, emotional intelligence, and realistic priorities" (P7).	P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	Theme 3
Psychological spillover	Statements about work remaining mentally present after the workday or entering the home space.	"Sometimes the workday ends, but mentally it hasn't ended" (P1).	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10	Theme 4
Isolation and reduced informal connection	Statements about loneliness, weaker spontaneity, less social energy or thinner organisational ties.	"There is less informal exchange, less sense of belonging" (P2).	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10	Theme 4
Task identity over organisational identity	Statements indicating motivation remains linked to task, role or project rather than company identity.	"My connection is stronger to the work than to the company identity" (P8).	P1, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10	Theme 4

Boundary strategies / right to disconnect	Statements about shutting devices, leaving the workspace, stopping email, symbolic closure or organisational boundary culture.	“Boundaries require deliberate practice” (P5); “policy language” is clearer than everyday practice (P10).	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	Theme 4
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Table F2. Participant-by-theme matrix

Participant	Theme structured flexibility 1:	Theme productivity mechanisms 2:	Theme evaluation/visibility 3:	Theme satisfaction/belonging/boundaries 4:	Comparative note
P1	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Remote-positive for deep technical work but attentive to visibility and boundaries.
P2	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Shows how parenting and accounting deadlines shape flexibility and fatigue.
P3	Qualified	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Occasional remote worker; highlights public-sector infrastructure and formal boundaries.
P4	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Fully remote creative/marketing case; highlights calendar control, role expansion and isolation.
P5	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Hybrid higher-education case; highlights invisible labour and institutional community.
P6	Qualified	Strong	Strong	Strong	Fully remote monitored service case; shows clarity/control and emotional compression.
P7	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	HR/leadership case; frames trust, culture and belonging as designed conditions.
P8	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Creative design case; highlights stimulation control, feedback ambiguity and mental boundary difficulty.
P9	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Experienced structured-role case; shows routine, concentration and relatively protected boundaries.
P10	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Consulting/project case; highlights meeting inflation, performative visibility and spillover.

Table F3. Development from candidate themes to final themes

Candidate theme / initial cluster	Reason for revision	Final treatment in Chapter 4
Flexibility and autonomy	Too broad as a standalone theme; needed to include routine, discipline and task suitability.	Renamed as Theme 1: Remote work as structured and task-specific flexibility.
Productivity benefits	Initial version risked being too positive and descriptive; participants also discussed hidden costs.	Expanded into Theme 2: Productivity gains with hidden organisational and cognitive costs.
Performance evaluation	Needed to distinguish formal metrics from informal digital visibility and managerial trust.	Developed into Theme 3: Visibility, trust and the contested fairness of remote evaluation.

Work-life balance	Needed to include psychological spillover and not only practical flexibility.	Integrated into Theme 4 alongside boundaries and satisfaction.
Isolation and engagement	Initially separate, but conceptually connected to belonging and task identity.	Integrated into Theme 4: Work-life boundaries, belonging and the relocation of job satisfaction.
Communication and collaboration	Cross-cutting issue rather than one bounded theme; appeared in productivity, evaluation and belonging.	Distributed across Themes 2, 3 and 4 according to analytic function.

Author's Statement:

I hereby declare that, in accordance with article 8 of Law 1599/1986 and article 2.4.6 par. 3 of Law 1256/1982, this thesis/dissertation is solely a product of personal work and does not infringe any intellectual property rights of third parties and is not the product of a partial or total plagiarism, and the sources used are strictly limited to the bibliographic references.

