

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Psychology



Bachelor Thesis

**Psychological Influence of Distant Work on Business
Processes**

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BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Ruslan Tinkelman

Economics Policy and Administration
Business Administration

Thesis title

Psychological influence of distant work on business processes

Objectives of thesis

To answer questions:

- a. What psychological impact does distant work has on people and business?
- b. How COVID-19 is interconnected with psychology of distant work?
- c. Which business processes and their participants are being influenced the most by distant work?
- d. What is the practice of companies in implementation of distant work processes?
- e. How do companies support employees' psychological state during distant work?

To define psychological factors that can help during COVID 19 situation as well as those that can harm.

Methodology

1. Creating a questionnaire on the basis of existing qualitative data
2. Construction of a research sample
3. Data collection
4. Data analysis, interpretation, discussion

The proposed extent of the thesis

40 pages

Keywords

coronavirus, covid-19, pandemic, business, psychology, distant work, labor, business process, psychological influence, employer, employee, relationships, work psychology

Recommended information sources

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Psychological Influence of Distant Work on Business Processes" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any their person.

In Prague on 30.11.2021

_____Ruslan Tinkelman_____

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Psychological Influence of Distant Work on Business Processes

Abstract:

The aim of this work is to illuminate the urgent problem of the impact of the transition to remote work format caused by the coronavirus pandemic on the quality of work and psychological state of people being forced to get used to the new way of working and adapt to the current changes. Undoubtedly, it was a sudden and abrupt change from familiar to something new and it caused a significant decline in productivity among many people, and, as a consequence, the results and performance of the companies where they work. What people were faced with was the fact that the usual work has become more time-consuming and seemed more difficult at home. The author was also among those who faced it and decided to shed some light on this issue, find its reasons, consider it from a psychological point of view and strive to think of several optimal solutions. The author will do a research, interviewing those who work remotely, and, based on their answers and considering the most popular ones, derive statistics, which will be overwhelmingly helpful in showing all the weaknesses and, obviously, make it easier to come up with some ways to overcome it. Finally, the author will share his own opinion on the current situation and suggest the most effective ways to deal with this problem.

Keywords: Remote work, pandemic, business, psychological influence, isolation, behaviour, employee, communication

Psychologický vliv distanční práce na vnitřní procesy ve společnosti

Abstrakt:

Cílem tohoto výzkumu je prozkoumat vliv přechodu na distanční práce, který stál důsledkem epidemii koronaviru. Autor by chtěl prozkoumat, jestli tento přechod na distanční práce má většinou negativní důsledky na psychologický stav pracovníků, jestli společnosti čelí nějakou negativní změnu efektivity po době distanční práce i jestli ty věci jsou spojené. Autor se rozhodl o této zkoumání kvůli tomu, že zažil tu dobu distanční práce sám, a měl před sebou spoustu překážek, které byly většinou vytvoření jeho neschopnosti pracovat z domova. Ačkoli, autor zároveň pochopí, že každá osobnost je unikátní – myšlenky a schopnosti různých lidí se můžou právě lišit. Otázka toho, jestli většina pracovníků cítí větší znepokojení, strach a stress, pokud pracují z domova je hlavní otázkou této práci. Odpověď na tuto otázku bude vytvořena pomocí analýzy výsledku průzkumu a následující statistickou analýzou, po kterou se konečně podaří definitivně říct, jestli efektivita business procesů a psychologický stav pracovníků byli pod negativním vlivem přechodu na distanční práce.

Klíčová slova: distanční práce, pandemie, podnikání, psychologický vliv, izolace, chování, pracovník, komunikace

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List of abbreviations

- WHO** = The World Health Organisation
- PPE** = Personal Protective Equipment
- WFH** = Work from Home
- US** = the United States
- IT** = Information Technologies
- JD-R** = Job Demands-Resources
- GDP** = Gross Domestic Product
- ILO** = International Labour Organisation
- SHRM** = Society for Human Resource Management
- CEO** = Chief Executive Officer
- CFO** = Chief Financial Officer

1 Introduction

The global economy is in the recession, millions of people lost their jobs, and those who managed to switch to remote working format are experiencing serious psychological problems. With the outbreak of virus, appeared the concept of so-called “social distancing” and people were forced to comply with quarantine measures and work or study from home. Due to the rapid spread of the infection, everyone was forced to stay at home for longer periods of time due to restrictions imposed on citizens by their governments. The restrictions also included a full curfew, excluding shopping for food or medicine, helping others, going to work, taking short walks and playing sports (Traunmuller, 2020). The relatively slow working speed due to the deterioration in quality had an impact on the working environment. In addition to the bad quality of work, there was a large number of people filling unemployment claims due to the pandemic, which negatively impacted millions of employees (Brynjolfsson, 2020).

Throughout history, epidemics of infectious diseases resulted in a large number of human losses, as they caused many problems, dangerous consequences and situations to which it was urgently necessary to adapt. A pandemic is by definition described as an epidemic that quickly spread across many countries, and several continents, affecting large numbers of people in a short period of time. Such simple pandemic coping strategies as quarantine and self-isolation that are being applied to individuals, communities or even populations are aimed to stopping the spread of the disease and can lead to emotional and psychological stress as many people try to cope with these problems on their own (Usher, 2020).

As industries and organizations around the world were forced to change the way they run business, it deprived workers of the ability to interact with other colleagues on day-to-day activities, that also affected their lives. In addition to the inability to be socially active, a deadly and highly contagious disease that is widely talked about, as well as financial difficulties, an uncertainty, companies were forced to think of psychological consequences for their employees (Meagher, 2020). Negative psychological effects such as loneliness, boredom, frustration, and anger made many people feel the impact of the virus on their mental health and made them feel different at home (Meagher, 2020).

Working from home can be very stressful for workers, as they feel isolated from their managers and colleagues, employees are more likely to benefit from the usual offline

working day in the office (Oakman, 2020). Studies showed that in China, 58,3 % of people experience a decrease in positive feelings and satisfaction due to the pandemic (Sanchez, 2020). Although remote working has some positive benefits such as travel costs, savings in time and energy, organizational resources, and increased employee self-reliance (Spagnoli, 2020). However, these positive results will be achieved by only a small percentage of people, in general, remote working can have very detrimental consequences for workers and their families.

The WHO stated that economically active people spend nearly a third of their time in the workplace, where conditions greatly affect their health, be it emotional, mental or physical and satisfaction with their life (Guerro-Barons, 2020). In Spain, a study carried out on working conditions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and psychosocial risks were one of the causes of occupational accidents and illnesses; in addition, 31 European countries had similar results and have tried to develop effective policies to combat industrial accidents.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The author wants to take an insight into the phenomenon of remote work in order to understand whether the recent pandemic and the subsequent shift of working conditions have any effect on the psychological state of employees of working organisations.

The ultimate goal of the following thesis is testing the hypothesis of whether workers feel more anxious and reluctant to conduct their regular working activities and follow duties while working remotely from home. In case if the given hypothesis turns out to be true, the author wants to additionally reflect upon the possible drawbacks on the quality of internal business processes and performance of organization due to the increased psychological impermanence possibly caused by the recent change in the working environment and inability to adapt to those changes from the employee's side.

2.2 Methodology

In order to eventually succeed in his goals and objectives, the author starts from describing the phenomenon of remote work and the background of its emergence in his literature review. Additionally, possible psychological problems whose effect the author will be testing later on, were characterised and illustrated.

Subsequently, the practical part of the following thesis is based on the combination of various techniques. First, in order to meet the objectives of the work, the author needed to collect fundamental data from respondents who are actively engaged in having a professional career of their own. For this purpose, a survey consisting of questions related to psychological state of workers was created, where respondents were asked questions included in the appendix and infographics of the work. As a consequence, the respondents were given an opportunity to express their inner feelings about the phenomenon of remote work. All in all, one hundred participants were a fundamental condition under which research could be conducted, as long as the higher the sample is, the less unbiased and more accurate research is.

Secondly, the author needed to draw conclusions and see whether the *hypothesis* that the phenomenon of remote work has negative consequences on the psychological state of workers is true or false. For this reason, two statistical tests were performed based on the

sample of 100 observations collected from the previously mentioned survey. The choice of the test is made in favour of a so-called “two z-test” due to its fitness to the existing conditions created in terms of the author’s research.

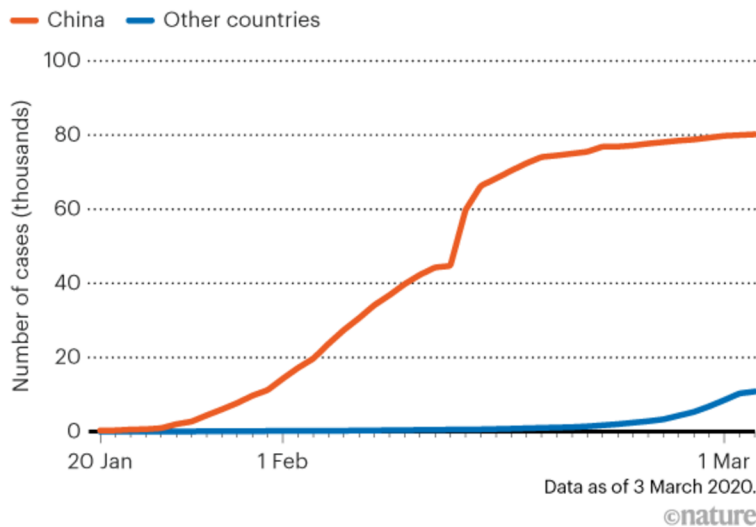
3 Literature Review

3.1 Premises of the problem

It is necessary to go back to the very beginning and understand the reason of the recent transition to remote work in the majority of companies. At the beginning of the last year, the coronavirus pandemic hit the world badly. Coronavirus is a new disease that is a part of the coronavirus family, which is in the group of viruses that caused the SARS outbreak which spread in South-East Asia in the early 2000s, and the MERS in 2012 (Vyas, 2020). The disease has flu-like characteristics such as mild fever, dry cough, sore throat with the addition of loss of smell and even taste (Hayes, 2020). It has a relatively quick transmission rate from person to person as many individuals are even unaware of attaining the virus due to its similarity to a regular flu, i.e., influenza disease. The disease itself ranges from asymptomatic to fatal stages affecting people with fairly weakened immune systems and the elderly population with transmission being through a droplet and airborne transmission rates (Aslan, 2020). The first case of Sars-Covid-2 which is a virus that causes the Covid-19 or, in other words, coronavirus disease, was reported on 31 December 2019 in the seafood market in Wuhan, China; after that time there have been quick outbreaks with the virus rapidly spreading inflicting a global pandemic and affecting every single country around the globe thus eventually placing 3.9 billion people in home confinement by April 2020 (Giorgi, 2020).

By the end of 2020, there were roughly 60 million infections cause and even more than 1.4 million deaths worldwide, what becomes even more dramatic. Despite that, the number is rapidly increasing, and the end is nowhere to be seen yet. The WHO declared a global health emergency starting from the 31 January 2020 (Vyas, 2020). There were many social distancing measures taken in order to reduce the transmission rate of the virus around the world such as “stay-at-home” orders that were forced on many people to be at home resulting in the most simultaneous worldwide shutdowns/lockdowns in the history as many as 90% of the United States population and more than 50% of the global population came to a standstill (Hayes, 2020). Social distancing has been used a lot to reduce the basic reproduction number (R_0) of the virus to minimize the disease spread in addition to using PPE to slow the transmission rate of the virus.

Figure 1, Spread of coronavirus. Source: Nature



While there is a physical aspect that governments and health services must address, there is also a negative emotional aspect that is especially believed to be extremely dangerous for some members of the population, such as old people, people with mental health problems, and healthcare workers, who are subjects to extra tension. The coronavirus pandemic has raised concerns associated with its contagion, which is also a disease-related worry that happens at the time of the outbreak where many forms of violence and deviant behaviour occurs resulting in extreme shortages and prejudice towards people with the Asian background or phenotype, respectively being the region where the disease has come from (Usher, 2020).

So-called protective behaviours were expanding during the pandemic to control the spread of the disease. They were separated into groups such as individual hygienic measures and social distancing practices, in addition to good indoor ventilation, household disinfection, wearable face masks, washing hands, avoiding eating outside the home, proper coughing and sneezing etiquette were all protective rules imposed onto the public to protect the population from coronavirus (Usher, 2020). Studies revealed that enhanced personal hygiene was properly enforced due to the fact that there was a sharp increase in handwashing from an average of 46.6% to 89% with some respondents washing their hands nearly 10 times a day, in addition, there was also an increase in the amount of those who wear face masks as more than 85% of people (Usher, 2020).

There was a positive reaction in communities around the world. More and more people started to follow the rules that have been suggested and later on imposed on them by the local authorities. Rules included avoiding large crowds, restricting religious activities,

postponing or cancelling local and international flights, isolation, cutting back, or eliminating public transport on a daily basis to prevent the farthest spread of the virus. (Usher, 2020).

Some follow-up studies have found a higher level of pandemic awareness, as more people deliberately bought materials or even searched for information about the number of people who recovered, as well as how widespread the virus was in the population at a certain moment. However, there have been cases of behaviour that deviated from social standards during the pandemic, such as refusing to go to hospitals or local general practitioners, buying antiviral drugs, and self-medication to avoid contracting the virus through any form of social contact (Usher, 2020). Despite the incidence of deviant behaviour, it was observed that as the pandemic increased, more people had an increase of their anxiety levels, which directly affect the way how a person feels him or herself.

Psychological factors causing anxiety increased, and the scarcity of necessities triggered fear. A pandemic is more difficult to control when governments and national health services do not fully care for their citizens, as this causes fear of infection, and the supply of medicines is at a low level because no one in the world has ever faced a pandemic of this disease in the history of mankind (Usher, 2020).

Emotions run high as stress and isolation conquer rational feelings as the perceived threat of coronavirus creates irrational thinking among the communities. They challenge lack of supplies, job losses, financial concerns, stress, depression, anger, confusion, and irritability especially when the social connection is restraint (Usher, 2020). Social risk and judgement overcome rational thinking as the coronavirus pandemic has an impact on mental health and can change an individual's behaviour. Fear controls positive emotions and transitions into negative emotions specifically in crowds can add pressure and stress to governments and national health services that are at their max distress (PIETRABISSA, 2020).

3.2 Remote work

Remote work describes a professional environment in which employees can work from home or any other location outside their company's physical headquarter, Sometimes, this involves creating a workplace at home, depending on personal preferences of employee. Remote work is often accessible for businesses and job roles where the bulk of the work can be done online or delivered from a personal computer or other device.

Due to social distancing guidelines, companies had to transfer their workers to a remote work format. Remote work had a major impact on the mental state of those who were forced to work in an isolated space of their own. During the pandemic, many people are forced to work from home with the exception of essential or fundamental workers represented by the domain of healthcare and other fundamental services such as, evidently, healthcare, grocery, mail, and sanitation workers and others that are physically required to be at their job on a everyday basis. The idea of working where one lives has taken over people's livelihood as many individuals are being kept at home every day. Working from home has become more common over the past 40 years as the new concept of "telecommuting" which is the increased access to personal networks through home computers has infiltrated modern-day technology (Hayes, 2020). Telecommuting is defined as alternative work arrangements where employees work on their tasks in a place that is not primarily where it is done originally by using electronic media to communicate with others from inside and outside the organization or business. (Vyas, 2020). As Telecommuting has become a vital part of distance working, becoming an e-worker creates more flexibility in different locations where an organization is moving work to the workers instead of the other way around (Grant, 2013).

Remote working is seen as a positive outcome, with professionals having the flexibility to customize their work schedules, be happy with their work and in their private lives, flexibility in managing family responsibilities, and socializing with other employees who live too far to travel, those are surely the benefits (Hayes, 2020). In addition, other positives include a fewer number of absent workers, improved gender diversity for women and their careers, increased talent retention, reduced turnover, and increased focus on productivity (Vyas, 2020). However, the negatives of remote work are the reduction of quality of the communication with other co-workers and management that build relationships of trust, hardships in managing faraway employees, as well as the reduction in ideas that can generate creativity with other team members (Hayes, 2020).

In addition to the negatives, there is also increased payments for electricity and internet costs, distractions caused by children and family members while work is being done at home, there is also the impact of overworking due to the fact that employees that work from home can have trouble disengaging from their work. The global pandemic has forced many companies and businesses to change the work schedule of their employees, who have little

or no experience of working from home, which has a serious psychological impact over a long period (Vyas, 2020).

The new term of distance working has been now called WFH as studies have shown that in May 2020 that 35.2% of employees worked from home which was increased from 8.2% in February of 2020 in the US. Studies had shown that 71.7% of workers that WFH had an effective way of working, so it allowed businesses and organizations to implement the method on an everyday basis. Before the pandemic, many employees would have always worked from home but with restrictions on an everyday basis, the idea has quickly changed especially due to the challenges of working at home if the home has small space. The concept of work from home was created by Nilles in 1973 and has been a major influence in businesses around the world today (Vyas, 2020).

Working from home has become the highest priority for many governments to adjust to the never-ending pandemic. Another term that is can be similar to work from home is telework. Telework includes geographical dispersion and employees' dependence on technology when communicating with each other or an organization that is run virtually with a collection of geographically distributed, functionally and culturally mixed backgrounds that are linked solely thru electronic forms of communication (Raisiene, 2020).

WFH involves two main types of factors to consider, organizational factors and individual and family factors. Organizational factors include the quality of employee's performance. Employers or managers should support the requests of their employees when WFH, pay for space and equipment related to WFH, training related to the use of technology and the Internet, and communication within the organization. Workers should permanently be supported by employers, who have to pay extra attention to the well-being of the employees being confused and uncomfortable with the new format, providing IT support from an organization or business if an employee faces any technological problem or issues, build trustful relationships within the organization between managers and colleagues as there is going to be a success in running a telecommunication and e-working (Vyas, 2020).

Working from home also includes individual and family factors since the pandemic forced employees to be around their family members on a daily basis. Factors that should be addressed and resolved are self-discipline, self-organization, self-confidence, self-motivation, the ability to work by one's self, tenacity, time management skills, and computer literacy knowledge (Vyas, 2020). It is possible to increase the number of positive factors for

an employer and an employee if employers and managers create some good conditions for remote work (Grant, 2013).

In addition to the organizational factors and individual and family factors, there are also two domains to consider when working from home, they are work domain and the life domain. Research revealed that the work domain consists of productivity, job satisfaction, flexibility, and work engagement, specifically the productivity of a job was directly correlated to the improvement of adopting telework, the creativity of tasks and e-working. Life domain that includes life satisfaction and family satisfaction has both positive and negative outcomes, work-life balance can be related to work-family interference and balance including how satisfied the employee's family is being in the proximal vicinity to the employee (Vyas, 2020).

The paramount aspect of balancing these factors and domains is to ensure that employees do not overwork themselves, as this would blur the fine lines between work and family, which can present challenges and complicate the. However, working from home has been shown to have a positive effect on family and life happiness, and there has even been a discovery that working from home can increase the happiness of male employees who have no children (Vyas, 2020).

A study was initiated in April 2020 that revealed that 80% of workers had a preference of having partial working from home methods, the most common reason for the high number of preferences is that (72.2% strongly agreed) with having more rest, (63.8% strongly agreed) with decreased work-related stress factors, and improvement in work-life balance (60.7% strongly agreed). Although it seems that there are positives in working from home, the negatives also could be the lack of hardware, the lack of communication with other colleagues, and distractions from family. Working from home for many employees can be beneficial or negative but it depends on the quality of the employee's home life and if there are any other aspects that can interfere with being efficient in their job (Vyas, 2020).

3.3 Stress and Isolation

Stress and isolation are the underlying factors of decreasing the efficiency of work in a long-term setting. JD-R model has shown that there will be health implications with jobs that have an increase in stress and exhaustion which can be a result of working from home

since the resources and tools that are usually needed to complete a task are not available for you at your remote place of work. Transferring a major part of an individual's work from a usual work location to home added even more stress and pressure to many professionals who had to adapt to the new format of working. Stress is defined as the response to fatigue that employees feel when the hardships of work push them past the ability to handle the demands which, in addition to the isolation, can add the feeling of irritation. Some studies have shown that the intense workdays of working in a remote location can increase negative feelings about social isolation and job satisfaction in comparison to if the individual was only working at a remote location a couple of days out of the week (Toscano, 2020).

Anxiety comes with stress, especially among adolescents and children. It can be defined as emotional tension, worrying and disturbing thoughts that negatively impact one's life, and even physical issues like increased blood pressure. The research was done to observe the emotional and behavioural changes in quarantine with symptoms related to difficulty concentrating (76.6%), boredom (52%), irritability (39%), restlessness (38.8%), nervousness (38%), sense of loneliness (31.3%), uneasiness (30.4%), and worries (30.1%) out of the 1,143 individuals that were observed (Saldino, 2020). If there were significant changes in the emotions and behaviour of children and young people, it would be also possible to compare adults who are even more stressed as a result of the negative effects of the pandemic.

With the isolation follows the uncertainty of health and paranoia that have revolved around the pandemic leading to another added level of stress. Isolation is followed by the health insecurity and paranoia that have emerged around the pandemic, leading to another level of stress. Prolonged isolation can affect physical and emotional health, as well as changes in sleep and diet, reduced exercises, or even walking. Humans are not designed to be in isolation or long periods of segregation, the Greek philosopher Aristotle revealed humans as "social animals" that need to be around a group of others to improve their identity and to remind themselves of their existence. Loneliness can lead to isolation as it has been linked to depression, irritability, and negative self-harm as there is a 26% increase in premature death due to isolation, with research suggesting that, it can also lead to cognitive impairment, problems with the immune system as well as the heightened risk of cardiovascular disease such as heart attacks that can ultimately lead to death. There are studies that show that social exclusion is an increasing problem among industrialized countries, where about a third of

the population suffers in some way or form, and one of the twelve people suffering at the most severe level (Pietrabissa, 2020).

The loneliness that comes with isolation is described as feelings of emptiness, sadness, and shame and the inability to connect with others in a social situation that can lead to other mental problems. These feelings of negativity and loss, especially when working remotely, can affect a person's ability to be positive, which reduces their work efficiency and can lead to feelings of vulnerability and control over their own lives, although there are serious consequences due to coronavirus, stress and social isolation has become an invisible influence on the lives of many people. Social isolation and stress are closely related to the risk of depression and anger in many people, which increase the tendency to complain and rely on others instead of relying on themselves, feeling helpless in the face of the pandemic (Pietrabissa, 2020).

The coronavirus has become an important part of human existence as it has a powerful impact on many people with increased stress and anxiety, lack of social interaction skills, which are vital for life and can affect working conditions (Sharma, 2020). Alone and isolated in closed spaces with rare opportunities to go outside, people experience nervous breakdowns that can ultimately lead to constant anxiety, confusion, frustration and rush, causes people to lose faith and trust, and slowly harms their mental health (Sharma, 2020). However, loneliness and isolation can also have a positive effect on people, as social distancing gives people the opportunity to explore and broaden their minds and develop their intelligence and emotional strength. Having enough time to spend on themselves, family and their interests, they can understand what is important for them, choose the path of self-development and devote time and energy to themselves, their desires and what makes sense (Sharma, 2020). Besides stress and isolation, there is a so-called 'burnout syndrome', which is a major risk factor for many people working from home.

3.4 Psychological drawbacks

Undoubtedly, any changes that people face lead them to mental growth, help to get out of their comfort zone and become stronger. Before that, people are faced with a struggle, a struggle over themselves and the acceptance of something new. During the pandemic, people had to abruptly adapt to the new working conditions, it is obvious that

people could not be happy about this, so most of them had very negative feelings. Mostly, this was due to the lack of flexibility in people, the inability to quickly adapt to various circumstances and get used to them. This abrupt jump to new conditions affected the working capacity of people and their desire to do something. This chapter will describe some of the psychological consequences faced by those of the people who found it most difficult to adjust to the new way of life.

3.4.1 Procrastination

While working from home, there are several psychological risks that affect many people on a daily basis. In addition to stress and isolation, there is procrastination that ruined the productivity of many workers due to lack of motivation when employees are at home, since being at home means relaxing. Procrastination is the act of delaying or putting tasks until the last minute, or past their deadlines. Some researchers define procrastination as a form of self-regulation failure characterized by the irrational delay of tasks despite potentially negative consequences. It is estimated that personal activity takes an average of 1.5 to 3 hours during working hours (Metin, 2016).

As there is a transition from office desktops to kitchen tables and the usual office furnishings are replaced by the native walls of a house or apartment during remote work, employees postpone more and more tasks for later, which can negatively affect productivity in performing tasks. If, during remote work, an employee tries to treat his usual home location as a place of work, it will be much easier for him to work at his usual pace and achieve good results. By increasing productivity, the mood of employees, their enthusiasm, zeal, satisfaction rise and a positive attitude towards their work appears (Pattnaik, 2020).

Implementing methods that allow employees to find a positive work-life balance can help eliminate procrastination and raise employee morale and ultimately improve employee spirits, which can help the employee to work well and productively, and therefore make the company he works for, more successful. People who work with information such as programmers, researchers, scientists and others who usually work with laptops, writing computer code, reports, spreadsheets and etc., are more likely to be more satisfied than workers in any other field of activity (Pattnaik, 2020).

A study of 273 remote employees in marketing, accounting, engineering, and sales found that employees were more engaged, motivated, and generally happier when they were deeply involved in their field of work, suggesting that engagement the staff is vital to the psychological state and well-being of the employee. Reports have shown that employees who spend 60% to 80% of their time working from home are most likely to be engaged in the process of work, which is similar to employees in a usual workspace because it creates a certain aspect of personal commitment towards their colleagues, the organization, mission statement, values and ethics. Thus, creating a balance between work and personal life can ensure productivity, despite the fact that remote work is isolated and accompanied by loneliness. Following the right approach and attentive attitude to the main tasks, worker will succeed. If he doesn't put off anything for later, he will be as productive while working from home as he was before remote working. Many researchers also found that mindfulness that promotes job satisfaction can also prevent burnout and emotional exhaustion and, in general, significantly increase the strength of an organization or company (Pattnaik, 2020).

3.4.2 **Burnout syndrome**

Burnout syndrome is one of the specific psychological risk factors, it is a three-dimensional syndrome, a response to chronic stress at work. It has particularly affected workers in support or service organizations and has symptoms of high emotional fatigue, depersonalization, and low levels of personal happiness or job satisfaction. This syndrome can also affect people who care for sick people and people with mental disabilities. Such work implies constant emotional stress, frequent lack of support from other colleagues, and much more. These workers have high emotional demands, so they are more exposed to stress than others. All these factors can have an impact on the mentality and emotions of the employee and cause burnout. The WHO has also published information that psychological risk factors such as stress, burnout or violence at work are becoming more prevalent in developed countries as the coronavirus began to take its toll (GuerreroBarona, 2020).

As 81 per cent of the global workforce is fully or partially closed and many employees work from home, the number of daily Zoom users who have used it to collaborate with their employees grew from 10 million to 200 million (Moss, 2021).

Six main causes of global burnout were documented: excessive workload, perceived lack of control, insufficient reward for efforts, lack of supportive community, lack of fairness and some different values and skills (Moss, 2021). There is no real cure for burnout, and many people these days suffer from it desperately. In the Harvard Business Review, there were 1,500 respondents from 46 countries in many fields during the pandemic, 67% worked at or above a seniority level where 89% said their work-life was getting worse, 85% said their well-being has declined, 56% said their job demands have increased dramatically, 62% of the individuals who struggled to manage their workloads had experienced a tremendous amount of burnout often or extremely often, 57% of employees felt that the pandemic had a big effect on or it dominated their work, 55% didn't feel that they work-home life was balanced, 25% felt they were unable to maintain or develop a strong connection with their family, 39% with colleagues, and 50% with friends, only 21% rated their well-being as being good and only a small 2% said it was excellent (Moss, 2021). This shows that many managers in companies and corporations suffered from extreme burnout as pressures at work and at home exceeded their limits and their mentality declined. Millennials were found to have the highest burnout rates, as many had less autonomy at work, lower seniority, and more financial stress.

In addition, workdays became longer as more than 3 million people spend more time online, and work hours increased to 48 minutes. However, working from home with burnout syndrome may not be so useless and destructive if the person is purposeful, hardworking and persistent. There were studies that showed that 25% of people who stubbornly pursued a goal in their work did not experience burnout syndrome as these employees gained confidence and a positive attitude while completing their tasks. Besides being focused on achieving goals, one of the most powerful factors in reducing burnout was the ability to handle a large workload. As for the problems that were controlled, fatigue was one of them. There were many problems with employees who were reluctant to attend meetings unless they were mandatory or significant. It is overwhelmingly important for the employees to feel free to discuss their mental health with others, as more than a half of respondents did not feel comfortable sharing their problem of experiencing burnout syndrome with other people, and almost 65% indicated that they often or always experienced this syndrome (Moss, 2021).

There are several psychological factors that can influence the onset of burnout, for example, satisfaction and success at work, calmness and understanding in the family,

interpersonal relationships with the team at work, or even emotional intelligence. Through research, it was found that of all the mentioned factors, satisfaction is the most significant one, affecting the productivity of the quality of work and the success of an employee, and there was also published a sufficient amount of scientific evidence that burnout syndrome and satisfaction are directly related and this actively demonstrates that dissatisfaction with work can be a prerequisite for burnout syndrome (Guerrero-Barona, 2020).

So, dissatisfaction with their work, high level of stress, a decrease in labour productivity, new conditions that need urgent getting used to, lack of support from colleagues, possible conflicts with family, that is nearby around the clock – all this leads to burnout syndrome. In addition to all the unpleasant consequences and experiences caused by the mentioned factors, burnout syndrome can also directly affect a person's health through psychosomatic symptoms and can be expressed in the termination of emotional self-expression. However, studies showed that if an employee has a high level of emotional intelligence, that is the ability to cognitively perceive, understand, assimilate and regulate their own emotions and understand the emotions and behaviour of others, this can have a beneficial effect on reducing the level of stress, since being able to analyse the happening situations, the person is able to manage emotions and control unpleasant situation that arose at work, looking at it from different points of view, as well as understand social situations with colleagues and find ways out (Guerrero-Barona, 2020).

This can be extremely important during the coronavirus pandemic since there is little or no real-life communication with colleagues, so understanding their point of view on the subject and how it affects their emotions can help to sort out the situation, calm down and come up with the solution for everyone. Workers with high emotional intelligence reduce the negative impact of the so-called 'major factors of burnout', that is emotional exhaustion and cynicism (Guerrero-Barona, 2020).

3.4.3 Domestic uncertainty

The coronavirus pandemic posed new challenges that many employees were not prepared for, childcare options became limited and schools closed, so parents had to educate and entertain their children at home. Children and teenagers who study at schools and universities and working parents had to use the same Wi-Fi connection, which caused

a slowdown in downloading the information each of them needed, and performing more complex and big tasks that required a fast connection added more stress for employees who had to find ways out and do everything they had to, so this caused many negative emotional consequences for many employees of enterprises and corporations (Moss, 2021). Working from home provided a lot of experience for parents who had to adapt to the new problematic conditions of the pandemic, for example, according to the University of Birmingham, only 50% of mothers had a stable length of time to work, while the remaining 50% of mothers struggled to find time and place to work at home around their children during the quarantine, so they had to find new ways to get used to it. In addition, 58% of fathers were able to find a stable length of time to work and were forced to increase their role in caring for children, spending more time with them and more actively participating in their upbringing and development. But of course, due to a significant increase in the time spent in the same space, a negative experience arose, when 2/3 of the interviewed employees had a very blurred border between the boundaries of the workplace and home, as many of them did not have the equipment and a space to work. Women without children especially lacked communication with colleagues, as they were more prone to stress and anxiety than their male colleagues (Chung, 2020).

Mothers ended up moving from work an average of 2.4 hours each evening before the pandemic to 3.7 hours during the coronavirus, making them the largest demographic group that had to extend their evening work hours due to the coronavirus pandemic. Mothers saw the largest reduction in actual working time, as it fell by an average of 6,2 hours compared to women without children, who had only 1 hour less working time. Many women responded to the fact that they were doing much more cooking (55%), cleaning/laundry (54%), childcare (69%), non-routine childcare (68%), children's education (76%) (Chung, 2020).

This shows that even though women were already struggling to achieve work-life balance, stress and pressure were added when they were at their peak. However, it was also pointed out women believed that managing their household chores, childcare and upbringing is a major benefit due to remote working (Grant, 2013).

It was also noted that as fathers' involvement in the upbringing of their children increased, so did their unpaid work as fathers had to skip two weeks of parental leave. The number of conflicts at work and in the family as high as never with more mental health concerns related to the well-being of parents, especially mothers, where 49% felt that

working from home interferes with their family, and 50% indicated that the family does not let them spend time outside the home and their work. The coronavirus pandemic changed the paradigm of the parents' roles who work from home, as many employees asked for more flexible working hours and many of them did not want to work from home, in addition to the fact that many women having to have double/triple shifts of work/care/home-schooling throughout the period of isolation which caused many worries and conflicts. This can lead to more conflicts in many families, when one parent claims to be doing more household chores and the spouse disagrees (Chung, 2020)

3.5 Repercussions

In China, the coronavirus pandemic had a serious impact on small and medium businesses and organizations; by February 2020, 30% of companies experienced a decrease in profits by more than 50% and one-third of all the companies – by 20-50%. This actively demonstrates that the pandemic is a financial burden for companies around the world. Economists estimate that every ten days the loss of jobs in the Chinese economy will reduce the quarterly GDP growth rate from 0.39% to 0.46%, which could have negative consequences for global markets around the world, as China is one of the leading economies on the planet (Sanchez, 2020). The decline in global economic growth from 2.9% to 2.4% is a major concern for businesses and organizations and, over time, can cause an even greater psychological impact on employers and employees (Hamouche, 2020). The pandemic has affected the main economic activities, which led to a significant reduction in incomes in agriculture, manufacturing and services in many countries, which in turn led to losses of jobs and a slowdown in the economy. This threatened to have an impact on the social psychology of the country and can lead to irrational decision-making (Sharma, 2020). However, during the coronavirus pandemic, it was observed that virtual work is becoming more and more popular and has the potential to save many costs. Research showed that remote working has been gaining traction in many countries for many years, and this is also expected to double each year (Raisine, 2020). Over time, many businesses will shift their work from a regular work environment to a more virtual environment, which can help them gain a skill-building advantage in the way they do their business.

The virus outbreak affected business processes in all aspects. Many companies were recommended to reduce face-to-face contact to help mitigate the impact of

coronavirus, according to the ILO, nearly 68% of the world's workforce, including 81% of employers in countries that have workplaces closed or recommended to be closed, which can lead many companies to feel the need to adapt to the changes. The ILO estimates that about 18% of workers have occupations that allow them to work from home, so it is the employer's responsibility to provide employees with a safe, accessible environment and equipment to work from home to ensure employee's satisfaction and efficiency. In order to equip their place to work comfortably from home, employers have to identify work functions that can be performed outside the enterprise and include high innovation and creativity to increase employee motivation. In addition, employers should arrange regular online meetings for employees, and clearly understand and resolve the issue of the means and technological tools that employees need, such as power supplies and Internet connection. Employers should be aware of the legal requirements, obligations and potential liability in case of problems that may arise due to an unusual situation at the employee's home workplace or lack of the necessary tools; businesses need to assess the safety and comfort of employees' home environments before assigning them tasks. To be successful even when working from home, employers have to be aware of the living conditions of employees and whether they have children or dependents, they need to take care of, or not, in addition to marital problems and possibly worsening health conditions of employees from constant stress (Chang, 2020).

Some companies have already implemented WFH mechanisms, but many more companies need to try and implement these mechanisms. In March 2020, 250 largest companies in Argentina participated in a survey, which showed that 93% of them adapted to remote working only due to the coronavirus pandemic, as well as in India, where 400000 employees from the business industry were interviewed, and this survey demonstrated that 85% of employees worked from home as a result of social distancing. Although most of the companies agreed to move to work from home, it was found that some companies cannot fully adapt to this modern form of work due to the fact that some documents in the company cannot be digitized, and there are concerns about breaches of confidentiality (Chang, 2020).

A study by Mercer's 2020 Global Talent Trends also found that only 22% of companies and businesses were ready for a massive shift to remote work before the coronavirus outbreak, so many companies were severely constrained and forced to adapt at a faster pace than the company expected. While many businesses were not ready to work

from home, the organization and employer still had a responsibility to keep employees safe and satisfied. For example, in the Netherlands, the employer is obliged to monitor the employee and ensure that all legal obligations regarding work from home are met, and in some countries, especially in Chile, a remote working law was passed in March 2020, which provided and defined the rights of both employers and employees, regarding their rights and obligations. In accordance with the laws and regulations adopted in different countries around the world, employers must ensure that the work performed can be done safely at home, and the adjustments made due to the new conditions do not make it complicated and are carried out with the same effort and time as at previous times when people work in their offices, and also requires any necessary tools like checking if any suitable changes were made (Chang, 2020).

While the cost of working from home is generally not reimbursed by national law, in the current pandemic employers are being called upon to reimburse workers who spend most of their time at home working by compensating in whatever way they can.

Businesses and organizations also need to provide all the conditions for employees to be more productive and stay focused on their tasks for a long time, which is quite difficult to achieve in conditions such as their own home, which employees subconsciously perceive as a place of rest from the real world. Companies can measure employee productivity using objective metrics and choosing systems that lead to the most significant and qualitative indicators. There can be a fine line between an employee completing all assigned tasks and not working at full capacity. An employee's performance can best be measured by whether an employee meets measurable criteria or goals if the employer sets clear goals and guidelines for employees who work from home (Chang, 2020).

In order for employees to remain productive, employers must clearly set realistic goals and purposes, as well as increase accountability for their decisions, analyse all the tasks and track the employee's progress using the tasks completed by them. Employers should not track progress based on the time spent by the employees, but on the quantity and quality of tasks performed, and it is also necessary to record achievements and increase employees' confidence in themselves and their success after completing each task (Chang, 2020).

The pandemic brought unexpected hardships to employers and employees. In a recent SHRM survey, 71% of employers struggled to adjust to working from home and 65% of employers found it difficult to maintain employee morale, and more than a third of

all interviewed employers face challenges related to the enterprise culture, employee production and vacation regulations (Chang, 2020). There are many challenges that come from home, so organisations and businesses need true leaders who can improve workplace conditions and help the company cope with all the hardships and challenges that the coronavirus pandemic brought.

The role of leaders in the workplace changed completely, and CEO's and CFO's need to be particularly good at handling leadership during the pandemic that has not yet ended. Successful leaders have been shown to be those who can make expert decisions, providing confidence, combined with optimism and at the same time realism about an uncertain future. Leadership refers to the process by which a person influences others to achieve an ultimate goal (Kniffin, 2020).

Successful leaders are those who have their own objective vision of the process regardless of the present time and who try to fulfil the work plan to the best of the capabilities of the workers. Research showed that the lack of traditional signs of dominance and status of an employer during a virtual conference can really help improve the relationship between the boss and his employees, since some employees may not be so confident in their personal communication with their boss at work offline (Kniffin, 2020).

Leadership effectiveness during the coronavirus means how convincing leaders can be at work and how they assert their values that will move the business forward. They also need to understand and actively listen to the problems and difficulties of the employees, communicate with them in a clear and polite manner, directing their ambitious potential in the direction in which the company wants to develop. Also, a good leader always demonstrates the confidence that the goals he sets for the employees can be achieved by them (Kniffin, 2020).

The skills that can be considered important for a leader during a pandemic are confidence and calmness in difficult times, organizations and businesses can be prepared by investing in the professional development of their employees during a pandemic. Among other things, the relationship between the manager and the employee is extremely important to the success of a business and reveals the true strength of a company over time. Some of the problems that make this relationship difficult can be that it is sometimes difficult for a leader to truly tell their employees which directions they want them to go, due to the fact that the leader cannot truly control the employees in the same way as he could control them while working offline, and it is quite possible that remote work will

become the main format of work. In addition, moving to work from home over time can reduce many opportunities for employees, for example, get the necessary feedback from their managers or supervisors and can reduce the quality of training, which obviously will reduce the degree of employee satisfaction with their work and, ultimately, as a result, will increase the risk of dismissal (Kniffin, 2020). The author believes that despite all the efforts of employees and employers to lower performance in the new format, remote work greatly reduces the productivity of employees and their motivation and will try to show it in the practical part with the help of his research. As already mentioned, the lack of office equipment, the home environment and offline communication with colleagues makes them nervous so it is really hard to maintain the same performance as before while working from home (PIETRABISSA, 2020).

3.6 Addressing the problem

3.6.1 Psychological support

During the coronavirus, there were many problems that affected millions of employees, as well as the psychological problems that arose. Two main mental health factors that can affect employees the most are psychological stress and severe depression as a result of the pandemic, with the psychological stress being the most important indicator of mental health. Psychological stress can become chronic if not handled properly, and it usually stems from the consequences of problems that a person does not deal with in a timely manner, so the biggest challenge for employers is to understand and identify the problems an employee is experiencing. The stressors that prevail during a pandemic are perceptions of safety, threat and risk of infection, in addition to lockdown and isolation, that people faced abruptly (Hamouche, 2020).

In addition, financial loss, job insecurity, and misinformation from untrustworthy sources also affect employee mental health and performance, so it is the job of employers to help mitigate any of the factors that can cause psychological harm to employee health. Providing employers with a safe and appropriate method for dealing with their problems can help companies remain successful.

By giving employees flexible schedules so that they can prioritize their work schedule, and provide technical equipment and maintain communication between

managers and colleagues, they can help significantly reduce employee psychological stress. Social support and persuading them that they will be back offline soon can help them become calmer and more focused on the future (Hamouche, 2020).

Social support at work may be the first way to deal with mental health problems that workers may experience over time. Developing mental health programs and services that employees can use can be critical to prevention; Studies have shown that employers who provide inadequate mental health support increase the risk of employee mental health deterioration over time by maintaining a hostile work environment. Creating mental health services during and after the coronavirus pandemic, developing communications with employees overtime, organizing regular virtual group meetings where employers and employees effectively discuss employee assistance programs for all levels of businesses and organizations, because all people in business can suffer from mental health problems - all of these will have a beneficial effect on the health of employees and the productivity of the entire company. In addition to developing mental health programs, there should also be developed a plan to allow employees to return to their physical workplace on time, which can reduce employee stress levels, employers can create working conditions and gradually return to recruiting workflows.

Employers should also arrange daily check-ins, while managers should take the time to call the employees who are working on a daily basis, this could be a personal call or a group call. managers can have a positive impact on their colleagues, which is the most important feature of their task during a pandemic. When calls become regular and employees get used to them, employers will be able to establish closer contact with them by allowing them to speak about their ideas and objections, or, on the contrary, consult with them on difficult issues. By providing a variety of communication technology options, psychological stress among employees can be reduced, and with video conferencing, employees can see facial expressions and visual cues that can simulate face-to-face interactions. This can make life easier for employees who are struggling with isolation. Video conferencing has many benefits that can foster closer acquaintance and bonding with colleagues, as employees who can see and hear images of colleagues may experience imitation of personal communication that cannot be achieved with a written communication or audio communication. Video conferencing platforms with personalized messaging like Zoom, Slack, Microsoft Teams can help bridge the gap between employers and employees. In addition to video conferencing, it is important to establish a set of rules

agreed by both employer and employee that can set expectations for everyone and help build trust and improve productivity (Larson, 2020).

Employers can also create opportunities for social interaction as well as informal non-work-related conversations by offering non-work items such as food delivered to any employee who works from home to help reduce feelings of isolation and foster a sense of belonging to the organization (Larson, 2020).

It is also important that employers provide emotional support to their workers, understanding the anxiety and concerns of their employees, listening to their problems and concerns, helping to cope with difficulties. Research showed that emotionally intelligent managers and employers while maintaining calmness and confidence in their employees, can also provide sensual peace of mind (Larson, 2020). Employers can provide many opportunities for their employees to feel as they belong to a common thing and reduce psychological stress.

With distance working becoming increasingly popular among companies and businesses, a company should help employees by implementing mindfulness teachings and practices so that they can cope with the negative impact of the pandemic. Large companies like Facebook, Google, Apple, and Amazon prefer their employees to work from home, but many other companies are now moving their employees to full-time work from home (Pattnaik, 2020).

3.6.2 Positive Effect

While the coronavirus pandemic can have serious consequences for the emotions and mental health of employees and employers, for many people, working from home still provides many positives. Individual work can increase the confidence of employees when they are tasked with doing work alone, without distracting them from the competition with colleagues and worries. A study by Fonner and Roloff explained that employees who work from home at least 2.5 days a week have significantly fewer work-life conflicts and higher quality of relationships with colleagues compared to those who worked from home more than 2.5 days a week. This study shows that during a pandemic if businesses can separate employees from their normal office environment, it can benefit employee mentality and

confidence in the long run. The studies also confirmed that employees that worked from home more than 50% of the time had different stressors and motivations to achieve and become successful compared to employees that worked in normal office settings at least 50% of the time (Garg, 2015).

Different stressors are present in every job, and they can have negative effects on individuals, but they can also have the opposite effect, dramatically increasing employee productivity and improving their work-life balance. Instead of looking at the negative, companies could look positively at the positives of telecommuting. The benefits of studying can also include increased productivity, stronger organizational loyalty, increased morale and job satisfaction, more flexibility, more time with family and a more positive work-life balance, in addition to reduced stress, lower monthly costs, and fewer diseases (Garg, 2015).

Working from home with technology can attract many employees who do not want to be tied to a particular place of work, and this can reduce management costs. Some additional benefits are less stress-related communication and work without constant supervision from managers and employers (Raisiene, 2020).

For organizations with new plans to improve efficiency and effectiveness while working remotely, it is critical for businesses to maintain a healthy work environment and exponentially increase productivity by providing employees with the tools they need to thrive in this new world, which is critical for them to maintain healthy mental state. Empowering employees with different benefits, such as different training methods to enable them to develop emotionally, mentally and physically during a pandemic, will be a new beginning for many companies. The Third Annual Future Workforce Report suggests that 73% of all large organizations will be working from home by 2028 to deliver higher productivity at a lower cost. Thus, it becomes imperative for many business models to support and train employees to interact with technology during the coronavirus so that their work-life balance is optimal and can create a supportive environment (Pattnaik, 2020).

4 Practical Part

4.1 Purpose

The author formulated the following hypothesis for the testing: “The populations of those who at first had a feeling of burnout and those who have not – differ significantly with respect to their opinions towards the phenomenon of distant work”

If the following hypothesis is not rejected, it can be fairly assumed that people started to feel more psychologically unstable and anxious due to the emergence of remote work.

In addition to the main hypothesis, a testing of the second hypothesis will show whether there is any negative effect on the working performance of employees while working from home. The second hypothesis is: “The populations of those who started to procrastinate more and those who have not – differ significantly with respect to the way how matters stand in terms of conditions and delivery of distant work specifics”

Evidently, assumptions about possible inconveniences and increased quantity of psychological stress for employees confined in their homes need to be carefully researched and, eventually, tested. All in all, one aspect becomes relatively clear: data from employees who had earlier become subjects of remote work needed to be collected in the first place.

The practical part was performed using quantitative research, which is used to quantify opinions, attitudes, behaviours, and other defined variables with the goal to support or refuse hypotheses about a specific phenomenon, and potentially contextualize the results from the study in a wider population. The very idea of the practical part lies in the percentage of people who feel more anxious during or after working remotely from home. The following percentage will later on be used to perform a statistical test whose result will help stating whether there are any negative effects on workers’ psychological state when working remotely from home, or nothing significantly changes for employees while being locked in their homes and performing the work delivered to them by supervisors.

What is even more important, this data not only had to be collected, but it had to be ensured that sampling bias (reference) will be avoided. In order to avoid possible bias in the practical part of the work, the author engaged people who are not interrelated and whose opinion is not influenced neither by one another nor by their organisation. By interviewing people of different professions and different places of work, the author made sure that everyone would answer the enclosed questions in the way he or she truly believes to be so.

4.2 Choice of participants

When it comes to choosing potential participants of the survey, it is essential to highlight characteristics and traits which participants should share. One hundred participants in total, where 45% of the sample was represented by male participants and 55% female ones respectively. According to the author, the characteristics are:

- a) Being forced to switch to remote work due to the pandemic restrictions
- b) Being currently engaged in a professional career expressed in a working activity underpinned by a labour contract which has a full extent of legal power.
- c) Being above 18 because teenagers are not always legally able to work above a particular number of hours varying from country to country and the amount work given to them is significantly lower (reference).
- d) Being not aware of the ultimate goal of research as long as it helps to avoid possible bias.
- e) Working full-time.

To be more specific and precise, it is also worth mentioning resources and research sample method the author used to collect relevant data and find potential participants. It was snowball sampling, which is a method where existing subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances, thus the sample group grows like a rolling snowball. All in all, the process of engaging people in participating in research was relatively smooth and easy-going as long as the author had various channels of communication within international enterprises located in Prague due to his previous experience of working professionally for those companies. In addition to his former colleagues, the author was able to persuade a few employers to actually encourage their employees to take a part in the author's research.

Clearly, it is quite comprehensive that within the given circumstances created by the level of technologies, collecting data for such research was not merely hard and painful, but rather quick and efficient. The main platform used for collecting responses was Google Forms and participants were asked 15 questions.

4.3 Remarks on the process

As it was mentioned before, for this survey the author used the quantitative research method, which requires many respondents, collects and analyses numerical data based on the questions asked to respondents and expresses it in graphs and tables. One hundred and one male and female participants were asked 15 questions related mostly to the post occupied by respondents and the psychological state of mind that they had while conducting their daily duties.

Participants were asked questions on the subject of their name, occupation and working experience. This information is, undoubtedly, important in the context of the questionnaire because it allows us to see how people with different duties might feel towards their work and how they feel themselves while performing regular professional activities in general. Despite relative importance of personal information for research, questions regarding exposure to burnout syndrome and being prone to procrastination after starting to work remotely are exactly what present the largest significance to the researcher and to this work in total. Almost all of the questions are multiple choice questions, and questions and there are two questions where participants can rate their psychological state while working from home.

By taking a closer look and comparing the way how employees of international organizations had been feeling towards their work before the outbreak of the coronavirus and after working remotely, it is possible to distinguish a particular percentage of people who feel that something changed in their psychological state, and they cannot any longer go on as usual.

Apart from the fundamental questions mentioned just earlier, participants are given an opportunity to describe the aspects of remote work which seem relatively unbearable for each one of them; participants are also being offered an opportunity to suggest some mean of making the entire process of working from home better, and more appealing and, finally, participants are offered to rate the services and channels of communication used in their organisation to ensure that work is performed prudently from homes.

5 Results and discussion

5.1 Infographics

In this chapter, the author takes a closer look at employees' opinion about particular issues related to their organisation's conduct and the way how remote work is organized in general. By briefly coming across the most important questions and distribution of answers, it is expected to understand the conduct of workers and possible reasons behind particular issues. However, the main purpose of this research is to find out whether people have become more likely to experience burnout and procrastinate more often by switching to a remote work format. This purpose will form the basis of two hypotheses, the precise formulation and detailed analysis of which will be in the next chapter. Now, the author suggests to take a closer and more detailed look at their survey.

To begin with, it is sensible to take a look at the question directly related to the performance rate before and after the coronavirus outbreak. By looking at Figure 2,

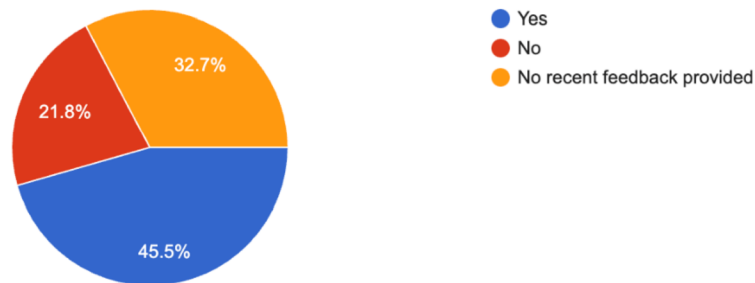


Figure 2, Has your performance got worse after working from home? Source: own research

it comes as quite apparent that the overall level of performance has dramatically decreased after the coronavirus outbreak and, subsequently, after being forced to work from home. Presumably, this might serve as a piece of evidence to underpin the assumption of the author about the decrease in performance, but is fairly too bold to deny the assumption that the recent decrease in performance might be due to the process of transferring people to remote work and rearranging business processes, which might be causing a recent slump in the performance rate due to its time and resource-consuming nature. As it was mentioned earlier, never ever before in the history of mankind, managers and organisations have been facing a drastic and urgent need to rearrange all of the business processes and find a new mean to work, so it is quite understandable that a decrease in the overall performance might occur.

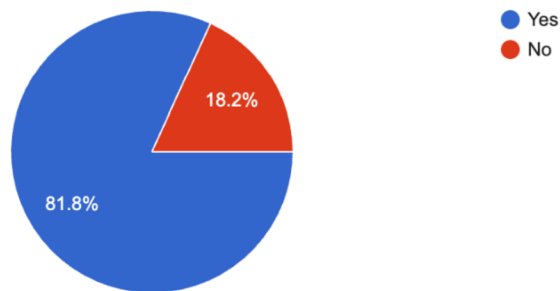


Figure 3, Have you started receiving more assignments and duties after starting working from home?
Source: own research

Obviously, this unexpected transfer to remote working affected and changed employee perception of their usual tasks. As it is shown on Figure 3, the majority of people surveyed had difficulties with completing their tasks while working from home as long as workers were not able to comply with the new environment from which they were working.

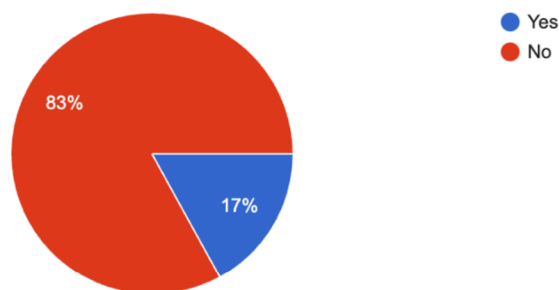


Figure 4, Have you started receiving more assignments and duties after starting working from home?
Source: own research

On Figure 4, it is shown that the majority of participants did not actually start receiving more assignments and duties while working from home. By linking the results of Figures 3 and 4, it becomes clear that it simply became harder for people to complete their tasks and duties not because more work was being offered and distributed to them, but because the new working conditions rather effected and reduced their productivity. There is no reason to complete regular assignments for a longer time and with more difficulties, except if employees feel insecure and confused by an unexpected situation and a need to get

used to it. Constant stress and fear of the unknown, presumably, made them confused and reduced their productivity, which, in turn, frightened them even more and caused them to think about whether they were good at their current job and whether they should choose something else.

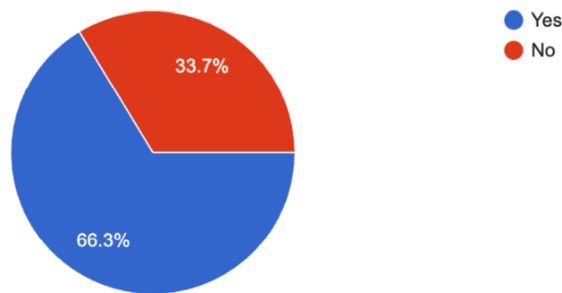


Figure 5, Do you feel yourself reluctant or have you had thoughts about wanting to quit your post after working from home? Source: own research

The results on Figure 5 show that many people began to think about quitting their post after experience of remote working, as a logical consequence drawn from previous reflection. It is quite obvious that they wanted to leave their usual work because of a heightened sense of anxiety that arose after the start of the pandemic and changes in working conditions. It was hard for people to be stressed for so long and, therefore, many of them were keen on quitting a job that brings a lot of negative emotions and feelings. As it is shown on Figure 6,

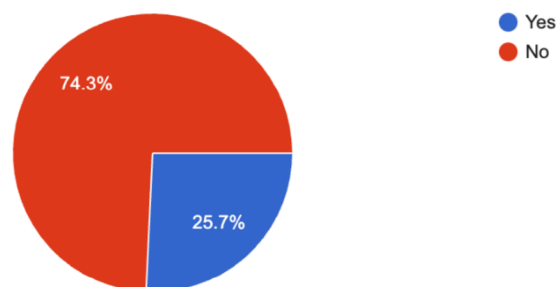


Figure 6, Would you like to continue working from home? Source: own research

people definitely would not like to continue working from home. This is not surprising, since most of them thought that they were doing a poor job and would like to leave it, it means

that they absolutely did not like the new format and conditions of work, that brought them mostly fear and more stress, to just mention a few. In addition to the lack of confidence in their abilities, many other factors could be affecting the overall decline of productivity.

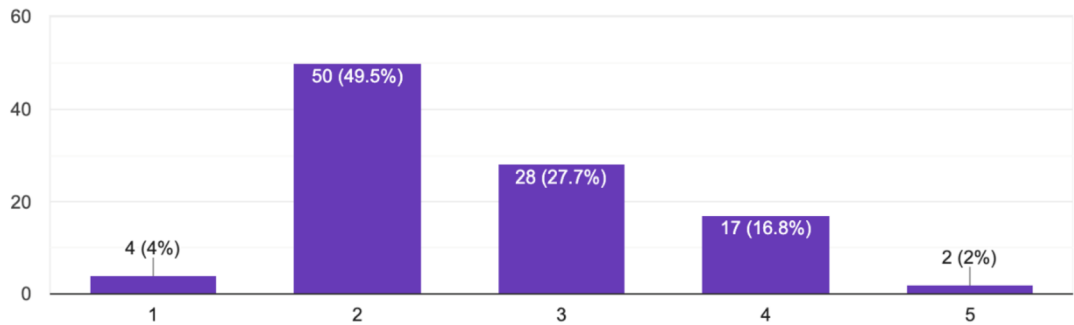


Figure 7, How would you rate the quality of working from home organized by your employer? Source: own research

Figure 7 definitely states it clear that at the current moment, the majority of employees are dissatisfied or even disappointed with the format of organisation of remote work. People are stressed, people need colleagues with whom they can communicate and share problems, get involved in a common cause, people need a place of work that is separate from their home, where they can be distracted, and after which returning to home will be especially pleasant and desirable. Surely, people should continue to study the other reasons for such a negative reaction of workers to new conditions and strive to find optimal solutions to this problem since at the moment it is apparent that the problem and the organization of internal processes are poorly assessed and learned, and this makes the life of workers complicated.

Despite a relative transparency of the results, it is still essential to test the main claim of whether there is a statistical difference between the way how employees had felt themselves before the pandemic started and after.

5.2 Testing

5.2.1 Hypothesis

The entire set of observations has to be split into smaller samples two times.

The first sample are people who have experienced a burnout after getting transferred to work remotely, while contrary to them lie people who have not experiences the same feeling

of anxiety after starting to work from home. Those two samples are characterized and selected based on the responses to the following question enclosed in the survey: “*Have you ever experienced a burnout after you started to work remotely?*”

Then, two additional samples based on the way how participants answered the question “*Have your regular tasks started to take longer than they should while working from home?*” are created. Henceforth, the samples are represented by those participants who have started procrastinating more and those who have not.

5.2.2 Essence of the procedure

Two unique hypotheses for two independent testing procedures should be stated. The first one is null hypothesis, hypothesis of equality, where it is assumed that the proportions of people who have experienced burnout after working remotely and the proportion of those who have not experienced the same feeling are equal. Then, an alternative hypothesis that has to be selected once the null one is rejected has also to be expressed, where it is assumed that the proportion of people who have experienced burnout after working remotely and the proportion of employees who have not, differ significantly. In our case, proof of statistical difference between two samples serves as a piece of evidence that remote work has a significant negative effect on the psychological state of workers.

As for the second testing procedure, the null hypothesis is that the proportion of people who started procrastinating more after being transferred to work remotely is equal to the proportion of people who have not started procrastinating more, and the alternative one is that the proportion of people who started procrastinating more after being transferred to work remotely is not equal to the proportion of people who have not started procrastinating more. Evidently, whenever alternative hypothesis wouldn't be rejected, it means that our assumption about negative influence of remote work will be proven.

After stating both hypotheses, it is obligatory to select a significance level which will be used for the process of calculating Z value (Khalizadeh, 2017). The author decided to use the significance level of 5%, which means that there is only 5% probability to get a type I error, which is the kind of error that occurs whenever a null hypothesis that is true is being rejected (Sato, 1996).

A critical value from the table (respectively to the significance level chosen by the researcher) are compared to the value obtained during the testing procedure. In this case, each of hypothesis stated above fall under the category of one-sample z-tests which is based on the comparison of normal distribution's critical value from the statistical table of critical values of normal distribution, see Table 1. and the value Z obtained during the testing procedure.

α	$1 - \alpha$	u_{α}
0,50	0,50	0,6745
0,3174	0,6826	1,00
0,10	0,90	1,6448
0,05	0,95	1,9600
0,0455	0,9545	2,00
0,01	0,99	2,5758
0,0027	0,9973	3,00
0,02	0,98	2,326

Table 1, critical values of normal distribution. Source: (Randall, 2015)

Once a value Z is found using the formula on Figure 9,

$$\text{Test criterion } u = \frac{f_i - \pi_0}{\sqrt{\frac{\pi_0(1 - \pi_0)}{n}}}$$

Figure 8, formula for calculating test criterion

it is allowed to start comparing the obtained value and a value from the table. Thus, whenever Z is greater than u_{α} (value from the table), it is fair to reject the null hypothesis because Z

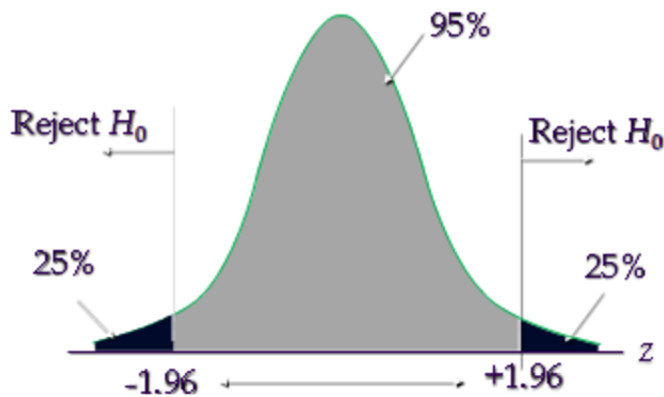


Figure 9, critical region of normal distribution

value is located outside of acceptance area (Randall, 2015), see Figure 10.

Therefore, it is fair to assume that whenever it is possible to observe the opposite, where Z is equal or less than u_{α} , the null hypothesis isn't rejected, and the statement expressed by researcher at the very beginning turns out to be true.

5.2.3 Results of the test

All in all, after explaining the essence of the testing procedure, it is the time to perform the test and decide whether there is any negative effect on the psychological state and performance of a business entity.

The following table contains the entire structure of two tests with calculated z values for both cases.

Table 2, testing process

$H_0: \Pi_0 = \Pi$ (there is no difference in the amount of burnout experienced after working from home)	$H_0: \Pi_0 = \Pi$ (there is no difference in the amount of procrastination before and after working from home)
$H_a: \Pi_0 \neq \Pi$ (there is a significant difference in the amount of burnout experienced after working from home)	$H_a: \Pi_0 \neq \Pi$ (there is a significant difference in the amount of procrastination before and after working from home)
$\alpha = 0,05$	$\alpha = 0,05$
$Z = 18,54$	$Z = 16,91$
Verdict: reject H_0 and there is lack of evidence to reject H_a ; there is a significant difference in the amount of burnout	Verdict: reject H_0 and there is a lack of evidence to reject H_a ; there is a significant difference in the amount of procrastination before and after working from home.

experienced after being transferred to work from home.	
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5.3 Discussion of the results of the testing

Subsequently, the bottom line of the testing procedure is pretty straightforward: the author's assumptions about negative effect for both parties involved (employees and employers) have turned out to be true, according to the results of the test. Also, by taking into account the results of similar studies regarding the issues of anxiety, burnout, procrastination and other psychological consequences, and the percentage of workers who experienced them with the transferring to remote work, which has already been described in the theoretical part, and comparing those results with the results of the author's survey, one can once again be convinced of the correctness of the author's guesses and the negative impact of this fast transfer to remote work to the psychological state of people. However, there is an interesting part that has to be mentioned as alongside the results of the research. Clearly, the results obtained serve as a sufficient proof to conclude that remote work and coronavirus in general have both caused a great psychological trouble for employees, according to the final verdict in the table above. However, it is absolutely essential to mention the fact that the entire testing procedure was made possible by data from survey, which is primarily of empirical nature, i.e., the answers provided reflect solely the way how respondents feel towards the issue; so there is no real way to understand the reason behind responding in one way or another. Despite that, it is still possible to say that the transition to remote work has brought two sad consequences: 1) employees started to feel themselves more anxious and sad, sometimes even experiencing a state of complete burnout, 2) employers have eventually lost a particular degree of productivity and efficiency (yet to be measured) due to the overall increase in the rate of procrastination and poor organisation of communication within the organization.

Indeed, some workers, as the survey shows, are not anyhow effected by the recent shift, but according to the results of the testing, this proportion is almost unnoticeable as long as the overwhelming majority of workers became more anxious and less productive. However, to take a closer look at reasons for such a result and gather in-depth insights, the qualitative research method should be used. It will make it possible by discussing the topic among the interviewed group of people, asking open-ended questions and gathering different opinions.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, it is essential to mention once more the fact that the assumptions expressed in the form of hypothesis have turned out to be true, which basically means that there is a significant statistical effect on the psychological state of workers and efficiency of business processes caused by the shift to remote work. Despite this piece of evidence, it is also fair to conclude that this matter needs additional insights and research performed, because by understanding what exactly makes people anxious, i.e., the mechanics of the process, it would become possible to directly tackle the given problem and resolve it in the future once and for all. As it became obvious from the survey, workers consider the environment around them far from being perfect due to either incapability or reluctance from the part of employers to ensure the highest degree of comfort for workers confined in their homes by offering them the best conditions, devices or services which might drastically decrease the level of anxiety and unacceptance of brand-new professional conditions.

Sadly, it is highly unlikely that the current outbreak will shortly finish, and the society will return to normality. Thus, it is absolutely inevitable for companies and workers not to be distancing from one another even more due to the inability to cope with the changed reality. Therefore, companies should become more engaged in researching and understanding factors that prevent workers from feeling à l'aise and enjoying the future that they are building together with the corporation for which they are currently working.

Undoubtedly, the idea of remote work does not sound bad at all, because it offers something more comfortable and easy for workers who are believed to be given an opportunity to organise whatever they want around them, when it comes to the venue and milieu, but it turns out that the society is not ready to face this kind of change. However, once everyone is able to cope with the anxiety problem, and the concept of remote work is adopted even in a relatively peaceful time without any outbreaks, companies and enterprises might be achieving more as long as office and headquarter expenses will simply become useless.

The bottom line of the author's research is, once again, obvious and pretty comprehensive, but companies should not only be trying to ensure a peaceful transition back to offices, but they better have to find a mean to make the concept of remote work function better for

employees, because it is believed to be the future of information societies – working environment without any physical borders nor offices.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Survey questions

1. **What is your name?**
2. **What is your occupation?**
3. **How long have you been engaged with your current occupation?**
 - Less than a year
 - 1-5 years
 - 6>
4. **Have you been occupying the same post before the coronavirus outbreak?**
 - Yes
 - No
5. **Have you ever been working from home due to the coronavirus outbreak?**
 - Yes
 - No
6. **Have you ever experienced something called ‘burnout’ before working from home? (Burnout is the state when you feel that you cannot go on and conduct your regular activity anymore due to the inner anxiety)**
 - Yes
 - No
7. **Have you ever experienced a burnout after you started to work remotely?**
 - Yes
 - No
8. **Has your performance (according to your manager or supervisor) got worse after working from home?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - No recent feedback provided
9. **Have your regular tasks started to take longer than they should while working from home?**

- Yes
- No

10. Have you started receiving more assignments and duties after starting working from home?

- Yes
- No

11. Do you feel reluctant or have you had thoughts about wanting to quit your post after working from home? (given the fact that you had not felt this way before the outbreak)

- Yes
- No

12. Would you like to continue working from home?

- Yes
- No

13. How would you rate the quality of working from home (internal processes, services and regular online meetings) organized by your employer?

- 1 (Bad)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Appealing)

14. How would you rate your psychological state while working from home?

- 1 (Very anxious)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Content)

- 15. If you were given an option, what would you improve in the overall process of working from home?**
- 16. What is the most important for you in order to feel valued and happy in your workplace?**