A Perspective on E-workers’ Preferences and Experiences: A Case Study

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Abstract

The year 2020 transformed the world of work. The authors considered it essential to determine how this form of work operates. The main purpose of this study was to understand the impact of e-work on employees as well as on their preferences and experiences. We aimed to identify the preferences and experiences of e-workers from a number of European Union countries working in a multicultural Greek company. We used an online survey, and 182 employees participated in the study. This paper answers three research questions: Is there a positive or negative relationship in the perception of the e-working model among e-employees (in terms of age, gender, level of education and parental status)? What do e-employees lose or gain when working remotely (in terms of age, gender, level of education and parental status)? And is e-working a blessing or a burden? The results showed there is no one-size-fits-all model, as it is driven by organisational culture and employees’ demands. The data show both positive and negative experiences. Perceived age, gender, education and parental status mediated the relationship between e-work and various variables and sub-variables. The major implication of the findings is that increasing e-work in the workplace may be an efficient way to work, because we collected and analysed data quantitatively to inform experience of the real experiences of e-workers.

Keywords: e-work, preferences and experiences, Greece, case study

1. Introduction

E-work has been a booming trend. Its popularity is demonstrated by figures from the European Union in 2021 showing that the number of e-employees had doubled since 2019, with a small decline in 2022 (Eurofound, 2022). COVID-19 enhanced changes which were already occurring in the workplace pre-pandemic, in terms of the flexibility, the when, how and where (Eversole et al., 2012;
Morgan, 2014) but at a slow rate (Beño, 2021a; Prager et al., 2019).

We were in a massive remote-work experiment driven, of necessity, by trial and error. The traditional view of remote work has changed, for example in big companies (Donati et al., 2021). The work culture has been evolving persistently during industrial revolutions (Beno, 2019a; Sostero et al., 2020). The growth of e-work and the potential divide between those who can and those who cannot work remotely is influenced by various factors (Beño, 2022). In 2020, 65% of employers invested in technical developments and digital solutions to help their workforce to adapt to the new working conditions (Randstad, 2020). This means that the option of remote work arrangements may demonstrate an employer’s willingness to modify the working conditions relating to the workforce’s needs (Shockley and Allen, 2012).

Satisfaction at work is desired. Job satisfaction is a crucial component in the work environment. As stated by Harter et al. (2002, p. 276): “employee satisfaction and engagement are related to meaningful business outcomes at a magnitude that is important to many organizations.” The only possibility of beating the competition is with your people (Robbins and Judge, 2008). Based on Colley and Williamson’s (2020) data, some workers wanted to continue working from home for part of the hours (over two-thirds of respondents agreed). Recent research demonstrates that there is some support for a four-day working week, with a different attitude to a five-day week (Beno et al., 2022).

COVID-19 has drastically changed the workplace, and the outcomes of these changes are still unclear. Assessing the present state of e-work is necessary. COVID-19 has made it clear that remaining aware of the workforce experience is crucial for all businesses. E-work is not a new phenomenon any more. Even with frequently cited pros and cons (Beño, 2021b; Klopotek, 2017; Lentjushenkovaa and Simenenkoa, 2021), there are still many open research questions. Questions remain regarding the short- and long-term effects of e-work, the adoption of flexible approaches, transition, barriers to expansion, new challenges, and innovations in the implementation of e-work. The main purpose of this study was to understand the effect of e-work on employees, as well as their preferences and experiences. To this end, we conducted a state-of-the-art web survey among e-employees. Responses were collected from a total of 182 participants (representative of different ages, genders, levels of education and parental status) who met the condition of being remote workers. The survey was conducted in a multicultural Greek company, with employees from various European Union countries.

The following research questions were asked:
1. Is there a positive or negative relationship in the perception of the e-working model among e-employees (in terms of age, gender, level of education and parental status)?
2. What do e-employees lose or gain when working remotely (in terms of age, gender, level of education and parental status)?
3. Is e-working a blessing or a burden?

Before formulating substantive research questions for this study, a deep understanding of the context business portfolio, potential biases and needs was required. This data provided a clear roadmap for the entire research process.

The outline of this paper is as follows: Chapter 2 discusses the relevant literature. The following chapter introduces the methods and data. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the case study conducted from 18 May to 9 June 2022. Chapter 5 provides discussions. The final chapter contains the conclusions.

2. Literature Review

The origin of working from home extends far back into the past (Beño and Ferenčiková, 2019). As social and technological environments and trends change, so does the workplace environment. Today’s workforce has more freedom and flexibility (SHRM, 2008). As stated by Pitt-Catsouphes and Smyer (2006, p. 10): “workplace flexibility is the 21st century response to a one-size-fits-all way of working.”
It is not surprising that the e-work concept has been referred to by various terms and is defined in different ways. A well-rounded definition of e-work refers to a face-to-display workplace where employees work at home full-time/part-time, on a hybrid basis or at a different place or virtually (Beno and Hvorecky, 2021, p. 2). Simply stated, it is: “performing work at a location other than one’s primary office” (Perry et al., 2018) or e-commuting (Beno and Caganova, 2023, p. 136).

Making the workplace sustainable is essential. Job satisfaction is a crucial element. This influences various aspects, such as motivation, productivity, turnover, well-being, health and organisational commitment (Judge et al., 2001; Kumari and Pandey, 2011).

Recent statistics show that 41.7 million employees teleworked across the EU in 2021 (Eurofound, 2022). Barrero et al. (2021) reported a significant change in attitudes toward e-working. Survey data show that both employers and employees believe in a hybrid working model in the future (Beno, 2021; Dahik et al., 2020). A total of 50% of US workers can work remotely (Barrero et al., 2021), and 30% of Australians could work from home (Pennington and Stanford, 2020). According to Beño, M. (2022) GDP and high levels of education and technology influence e-workability. Aniela et al.’s (2021) data show large disparities in telework adaptability, such as poor adaptability (Southern and South-Eastern Europe), medium adaptability (Central Europe), high adaptability (Western and Central Europe) and very high adaptability (Northern and Northwestern Europe). Some researchers found a gendered difference in remote work (Bae and Kim, 2019; Beno, 2019b; Beno and Hvorecky, 2021; Dishman, 2021; Powel and Craig, 2015).

Pre-COVID literature on the experience of working from home identifies some key differences between those who work from home and those who do not. It has been found that in the event of an ideal worker culture based on males, working full-time, on-site, the situation is likely to discourage the workforce from working from home (Lott and Abendroth, 2020; van der Lippe and Lippenyi, 2020).

Van den Meulen et al. (2019) found that knowledge sharing decreased when the workforce works from home, however Coenen and Kok (2014) showed that e-working increased knowledge sharing. Those who have trusting relationships and strong bonds with workmates have greater knowledge sharing compared with e-workers who do not have these relationships (Allen et al., 2015). Increased team virtuality as a result of COVID-19 may also affect helping and pro-social behaviour (Kniffin et al., 2020, p. 4). Another study discovered that working from home can assist work and family integration, but that it can lead to long hours of work, resulting in work/family conflict (Dockery and Bawa, 2014). Female e-workers with children viewed e-working as being extremely important for balancing work and life (Maruyama and Tietze, 2012).

More females than males believe that e-work was detrimental to their careers (Lott and Abendroth, 2020; Nakrošiene et al., 2019). Bloom et al. (2015) found that the incidences of promotion halved in a work-from-home mode. Wang et al. (2020) found that social support correlated positively with lower levels of all e-working challenges.

Large-scale scientific papers claim that working from home resulted in productivity gains (Allen et al., 2015; Beno and Hvorecky, 2021; Chung and van der Horst, 2017; Dockery and Bawa, 2014). Lee and Kim (2018) found in addition that the more often employees teleworked, the greater the work effort. Schall and Chen (2021) identified the key risk factors that promote e-worker safety, health and well-being:

- An unergonomic physical arrangement at home
- Working longer hours due to blurring of work and life
- A lack of communication and face-to-face interaction
- Psychosocial stress related to technostress factors.

3. Methodology

The paper is an attempt to understand the impact of e-work on employees and their preferences and experiences by means of a case study of a multicultural Greek company, with employees from various
European Union countries. As in other countries, the occurrence of COVID-19 has increased significantly among Greek e-employees (Ioannou et al., 2020). The company has been chosen due to cultural diversity and one of the author’s professional connections with this organisation.

The authors carried out a quantitative investigation by means of a state-of-the-art web survey among e-employees. The data from this research were collected using an online Google survey that was distributed by email accompanied by a brief explanation (with a link to the compilation of a Google form approved by the head of the surveyed company) from 18 May to 9 June 2022. Responses were collected from a total of 182 participants (representative of different ages, genders, levels of education and parental status) who met the condition of being remote workers. Each participant went through the same set of survey questions and was given the same amount of information before completing the survey. Respondent data were collected to ensure that the research team could account for the differences in terms of age, gender, level of education, parental status and remote working mode. Along with assessing the current state of working remotely, the survey also focused on examining internal communication as a second part of the survey.

In this case study, purposeful sampling was conducted with the emphasis on selecting an information-rich group of respondents. The study was conducted on the entire target population, which consisted of 182 e-employees (57.7% females, 40.7% males and 1.6% unspecified) with an average age 32, median age of 30, of a global Greek organisation operating in a service sector. This confirms that the service sector is the area with the highest female labour rate (Worldbank, 2021). All respondents worked for a Greek company, but they work in a remote working mode, i.e. they meet the conditions for the research of this work. At the same time, these were respondents from other European countries too, mainly from Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Portugal and Romania.

This research uses the analysis of causality and has the aim of explaining variables in performance (satisfaction) and preferences (work culture). The sampling technique was based on Hair et al.’s (2006) approach with 5-10 data indicators. The instrument indicators of this study used a total of 19 indicators with three variables studied. The investigation used a total of 182 participants.

Questions were modelled specifically for the areas highlighted in this study. The completion time was estimated to be approximately 15 minutes. The questionnaire was pre-tested with three respondents and then amended as necessary. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure satisfaction, positivity or negativity, and a 3-point and a 5-point Likert scales were used to measure agreement. Data from the respondents were filled in on an Excel sheet by investigators. Data generated in the Excel sheet (divided into the three groups of perception, performance, blessings and burdens) were critical for performing a thorough data analysis using SPSS.

4. Results

E-work is not only growing, but also changing. What began as a privilege or alternative has become a normal way of working for many. The purpose of conducting this analysis was to prove the central tendency and variability for each variable based on age, gender, level of education and parental status.

4.1 Perception

All respondents, except one, were aware of key remote workplace principles in the surveyed organisation, which result in healthier communication and operating efficiency with the team. The perception variable was tested with the sub-variables of intensity, satisfaction and enjoyment.

➢ Age

The non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test the effect of age. We performed all tests at a significance level of 0.05, i.e. with a 5% risk of error:

1. How often do you work from home? The value of the test criterion: 18.108, p-value 0.0004
2. How satisfied are you with working from home? The value of the test criterion: 158.290, p-
I enjoy working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 146.208, p-value 0.0000

According to the p-values (<0.05) of the test, we confirm the differences in age according to the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire. Age had a statistically significant effect on responses to these items.

The highest average ranking is for the group of respondents who do not work from home all the time (R: 118.06). They therefore reach the highest age. The lowest average ranking is for the group of respondents who work from home 1-3 days a week (R: 67.063). They therefore reach the lowest age. There is a statistically significant difference in age between respondents who do not work from home all the time and respondents who work from home all the time or work from home 1-3 days a week. People who do not work from home all the time are significantly older than those who work from home all the time or 1-3 days a week. This age difference was not proved for employees who work from home 3-4 days a week. The highest average ranking is for the group of respondents who are very satisfied with working from home (R: 146.93). They therefore reach the highest age. The lowest average ranking is for the group of respondents who are extremely satisfied with working from home (R: 35.643). They therefore reach the lowest age. The youngest employees are the most satisfied with their e-work. The highest average rank is for the group of respondents who slightly agree with the enjoyment of working remotely (R: 175.45). They therefore reach the highest age. The lowest average ranking is for the group of respondents who completely agree with the statement (R: 44.670). They therefore reach the lowest age. It is the group that is extremely satisfied with working from home that differs statistically significantly in age from all the others. The youngest employees are the most satisfied with their e-work. The highest average rank is for the group of respondents who slightly agree with the enjoyment of working remotely (R: 175.45). They therefore reach the highest age. The lowest average ranking is for the group of respondents who completely agree with the statement (R: 44.670). They therefore reach the lowest age. The employees that completely agree with the statement are statistically significantly different in age from the employees who agree less or mostly disagree with the statement. Younger respondents completely agree with the statement significantly more often than older ones.

Gender

The influence of gender was measured using Pearson’s chi-square test of independence, which monitors the relationship between two categorical variables. We performed all tests at a significance level of 0.05, i.e. with a 5% risk of error. In some cases, due to very low frequencies, some response categories had to be combined in order to use this test correctly.

1. How often do you work from home? The value of the test criterion: 15.271, p-value 0.0005
2. How satisfied are you working from home? The value of the test criterion: 175.335, p-value 0.0000
3. I enjoy working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 137.763, p-value 0.0000

According to the p-values of the test, we confirm the differences in the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire according to gender. Gender has a statistically significant effect on the responses to these items.

We demonstrate a statistically significant difference between men and women in the answer: All the time (93.33% female and 75.71% male) and I do not work from home all the time (0.00% female and 11.43% male). Women work from home significantly more often than men. The test detected a statistically significant difference between men and women in the answers: neutral, very satisfied and extremely satisfied. Women are significantly more likely to be extremely satisfied with working from home (66.67%) compared with men (0.00%), and men are significantly more likely to be very satisfied (89.19%). Women significantly more often have a neutral attitude (26.67%) towards working from home. Women are significantly more likely to agree with enjoying working remotely completely (83.81%) than men, and men are significantly more likely to agree with the statement mostly (81.08%).

Education

1. How often do you work from home? The value of the test criterion: 31.052, p-value 0.0000
2. How satisfied are you working from home? The value of the test criterion: 216.429, p-value 0.0000
3. I enjoy working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 142.197, p-value 0.0000
According to the p-values of the test, we confirmed the differences in the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire according to education. Education has a statistically significant effect on the responses to these items.

High-school level employees (100.00%) are statistically significantly more likely to work from home all the time than respondents with a master's degree (68.57%). Bachelor’s level employees are significantly more often extremely satisfied with working from home than employees with other levels of education (88.61%). Master’s level employees are significantly more often very satisfied with working from home than employees with other degrees (100.00%). High-school level workers are significantly more dissatisfied than employees with a university degree. Bachelor’s level employees enjoy working from home significantly more often (100%) than employees with other levels of education.

- **Parental status**
  1. How often do you work from home? The value of the test criterion: 7.841, p-value **0.0200**
  2. How satisfied are you working from home? The value of the test criterion: 68.805, p-value **0.0000**
  3. I enjoy working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 46.288, p-value **0.0000**

According to the p-values of the test, we confirmed the differences in the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire according to parental status. Parental status has a statistically significant effect on the responses to these items.

A statistically significant difference was confirmed between employees with and without children only in the category of employees working from home all the time. Employees working from home at this frequency are significantly more often parents (80.00%). The biggest differences are in the answers extremely satisfied and very satisfied. Parents are extremely satisfied with working from home more often than employees who do not have children. Employees who are parents enjoy working from home most often.

### 4.2 Performance

The experience variable was tested with the sub-variables promotion, job security, efficiency, connectedness, productivity and work-life balance.

- **Age**
  We performed all tests at a significance level of 0.05, i.e. with a 5% risk of error:
  1. I am satisfied with my chances for promotion when working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 158.23, p-value **0.0000**
  2. Do you feel challenged at work on a daily basis? The value of the test criterion: 145.205, p-value **0.0000**
  3. I have a good level of job security. The value of the test criterion: 147.983, p-value **0.0000**
  4. My efficiency in performing tasks. Do you feel that your manager has clearly defined your roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the success of the organisation? The value of the test criterion: 76.994, p-value **0.0000**
  5. My feeling of connectedness with my employer/team members. The value of the test criterion: 155.527, p-value **0.0000**
  6. Has your work productivity changed since you started working remotely? The value of the test criterion: 142.356, p-value **0.0000**
  7. Beyond time and money advantage, did your work-life balance improve? The value of the test criterion: 151.995, p-value **0.0000**

According to the p-values (<0.05) of the test, we confirmed the differences in age according to the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire. Age had a statistically significant effect on responses to these items.

Chances for career growth when working from home are viewed most positively by the youngest employees. Older employees mostly disagree or only slightly agree with the statement. Older
employees feel challenged at work on a daily basis. Younger people don’t feel that way; according to the Kruskal-Wallis Test H (2, N=180) 145.2048, p=0.000. Younger employees most often fully agree with job security. Mostly older respondents agree slightly or for the most part. Older employees mostly agree with the efficiency in performing their tasks. Younger people disagree with it statistically significantly more often. Connecting with the team is viewed positively by younger employees. Older respondents see the connection with the team significantly more positively. Older workers do not see a change in their productivity. Younger respondents feel the changes. Productivity fell for the youngest respondents, while it rose for somewhat older respondents. Especially the youngest employees completely agree that beyond time and money advantage, their work-life balance improved. The most senior employees agree with this statement only slightly or mostly disagree.

- **Gender**

  We performed all tests at a significance level of 0.05, i.e. with a 5% risk of error:

  1. I am satisfied with my chances for promotion when working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 99.086, p-value **0.0000**

  2. Do you feel challenged at work on a daily basis? The value of the test criterion: 106.644, p-value **0.0000**

  3. I have a good level of job security. The value of the test criterion: 89.150, p-value **0.0000**

  4. My efficiency in performing tasks. Do you feel that your manager has clearly defined your roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the success of the organisation? The value of the test criterion: 26.424, p-value **0.0000**

  5. My feeling of connectedness with my employer/team members. The value of the test criterion: 113.419, p-value **0.0000**

  6. Has your work productivity changed since you started to work remotely? The value of the test criterion: 17.970, p-value **0.0000**

  7. Beyond time and money advantage, did your work-life balance improve? The value of test criterion: 90.270, p-value **0.0000**

According to the p-values (<0.05) of the test, we confirmed the differences in gender according to the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire. Gender had a statistically significant effect on responses to these items.

  Women are significantly more often completely satisfied (44.76%) with the possibility of career growth when working remotely than men are. Men are significantly more often slightly satisfied (47.95%) with the possibility of career growth when working remotely than women are. Men feel challenged at work on a daily basis significantly more often than women are. Women completely agree (61.90%) that they have a good level of job security in remote working mode significantly more often than men do. Men slightly or mostly agree (21.62% and 71.62%) with the statement significantly more often than women do. Men agree with their efficiency in performing tasks significantly more often than women do. Women significantly more often have a positive (59.62%) or neutral (40.38%) view of connection with the collective than men do. Men see connectedness with the collective more often in a positive way (62.16%) than women do. Productivity increased significantly more often (57.14%) for women than for men. Nothing changed significantly more often in men than in women. Women completely agree (57.14%) that beyond time and money advantage, their work-life balance improved significantly more often than men do. Men slightly (25.68%) or mostly agree (64.86%) with the statement significantly more often than women do.

- **Education**

  We performed all tests at a significance level of 0.05, i.e. with a 5% risk of error:

  1. I am satisfied with my chances for promotion when working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 152.430, p-value **0.0000**

  2. Do you feel challenged at work on a daily basis? The value of the test criterion: 150.188, p-value **0.0000**

  3. I have a good level of job security. The value of the test criterion: 127.128, p-value **0.0000**
4. My efficiency in performing tasks. Do you feel that your manager has clearly defined your roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the success of the organisation? The value of the test criterion: 39.85, p-value **0.0000**

5. My feeling of connectedness with my employer/team members. The value of the test criterion: 167.961, p-value **0.0000**

6. Has your work productivity changed since you started to work remotely? The value of the test criterion: 115.07, p-value **0.0000**

7. Beyond time and money advantage, did your work-life balance improve? The value of the test criterion: 111.982, p-value **0.0000**

According to the p-values (<0.05) of the test, we confirmed the differences in education according to the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire. Education had a statistically significant effect on responses to these items.

Most often, Bachelor’s level workers completely agree (59.49%) with chances for promotion. High-school level workers agree (95.96%) with this statement significantly more often than employees with higher education. High-school level employees and master’s level employees feel challenged at work on a daily basis significantly more often than Bachelor’s level works do. With job security, Bachelor’s level workers completely agree (82.82%) significantly more often than employees with other levels of education. Master’s level and secondary-school level employees agree with their efficiency in performing tasks statistically significantly more often than Bachelor’s level workers do. Connection with the team is positively felt significantly more often by Bachelor’s level workers (46.15%) and high-school level employees (93.28%) than by master’s level workers. Master’s level workers see the connection with the collective most often rather positively (69.72%). Bachelor’s level workers (83.54%) and employees with high-school education (52.17%) most often increased their productivity. Master’s level workers do not feel the change. Bachelor’s level workers most often completely agree (75.95%) that beyond time and money advantage, their work-life balance improved. High-school level employees and master’s level employees agree with the statement slightly or for the most part.

➢ **Parental status**

We performed all tests at a significance level of 0.05, i.e. with a 5% risk of error:

1. I am satisfied with my chances for promotion when working remotely. The value of the test criterion: 121.430, p-value **0.0000**

2. Do you feel challenged at work on a daily basis? The value of the test criterion: 169.650, p-value **0.0000**

3. I have a good level of job security. The value of the test criterion: 78.000, p-value **0.0000**

4. My efficiency in performing tasks. Do you feel that your manager has clearly defined your roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the success of the organisation? The value of the test criterion: 155.149, p-value **0.0000**

5. My feeling of connectedness with my employer/team members. The value of the test criterion: 137.730, p-value **0.0000**

6. Has your work productivity changed since you started to work remotely? The value of the test criterion: 74.985, p-value **0.0000**

7. Beyond time and money advantage, did your work-life balance improve? The value of the test criterion: 88.111, p-value **0.0000**

According to the p-values (<0.05) of the test, we confirmed the differences in parental status according to the answers to the monitored items of the questionnaire. Parental status had a statistically significant effect on responses to these items.

Parents are significantly more likely to agree completely with given chances for promotion than employees who do not have children. Parents often do not know if they feel challenged at work on a daily basis. Employees who are not parents feel challenged at work on a daily basis significantly more often than parents (95.92%) do. Parents completely agree with having a good level of job security significantly more often. Employees who are not yet parents agree with their efficiency in performing
tasks significantly more often than employees who are parents do. Connections with the team are viewed positively significantly more often by employees without children (56.85%). Productivity increased significantly more often among employee-parents (62.86%) than among employees without children. Employees who are parents completely agree that beyond time and money advantage, their work-life balance improved statistically significantly more often than employees without children do.

4.3 Blessing or burden?

According to data from this study, work-life balance improved mostly (47.80%) and completely (32.97%) for respondents. Employees are extremely satisfied (60.99%) with their relationship among team members. Participants said that there were not enough hours in the working week to finish their tasks (35.71% slightly agree and 22.53% mostly agree). This also confirmed the next statement, namely that more hours led to more burnout (21.98% slightly agree, 38.46% mostly agree and 26.37% completely agree). Always-on culture seems to be a problem which means being always on the clock, a need to disconnect is required (30.77% slightly agree and 37.36% mostly agree).

5. Discussion

There have been speculations about whether e-work will become the new norm. The findings of this study contribute to the evidence that e-work will be a lasting feature of the working environment.

Our analysis shows that the workforce that does not work from home all the time is significantly older than that which does work from home all the time or for 1-3 days a week. This is in line with Chomątowska and Janiak-Rejno’s (2022, p. 652) findings which stated that “the pandemic experiences of young employees from remote work will affect their current and future decisions regarding the choice of work organization mode.” Generally, the findings obtained confirm Hoornweg et al.’s (2016) statement that the consequences for productivity are contingent on telework intensity. Gajendran and Harrison (2007) demonstrated a positive relation between teleworking and job satisfaction, comparable with our data. But, in contrast, our findings are not in line with Cooper and Kurland (2002), who state that because of less interaction with colleagues, e-work reduces job satisfaction. Moreover, some workers still see the cubicle as their home and enjoy going there every day and spending the workday there (Pyöriä, 2011). In addition, the inputs imply that the use of private space and private resources for work-related intentions are part of workers’ enjoyment of working remotely. The poor, young people without qualifications and women face a higher risk in terms of job security when employees are required to work remotely (Brussevich et al., 2020). As also shown in this study, some trends are already emerging because women, suitably qualified young and well-educated employees prefer e-work more than men do. This is in agreement with Beno’s (2021, p. 81) qualitative study finding that “roles and expectations changed when all the family members were present in the home day in and day out.”

The family-work and work-family conflict has been raised by many researchers as one of the main negative effects of e-working (Burn and Mudholkar, 2020; Flesia et al., 2020; Palumbo, 2020). The findings of this paper rather present the opposite, more balanced view. Evidence from this study differs from Bloom et al. (2015), who find that remote work halved workers’ chances of promotion. Job security constitutes a crucial factor in determining job satisfaction (Nemteanu et al., 2021), which corresponds to the survey data obtained. Generally, respondents reported greater satisfaction, higher performance and increased work-life balance, almost comparable to Baruch’s (2000) results. Kolakowski et al. (2021) point out that negative emotions, health difficulties and loneliness can be avoided by positive social connections. This is in line with the respondents’ statements about connectedness. Additionally, our results are opposed to Barron’s (2007) evidence that those who work from home may feel disconnected from the world. Hvorecký and Beňo (2021, p. 300) stated that “as with education, e-working may not be most appropriate solution for every occupation. It depends on skills, sort of work and who is doing it.” According Beňo (2022), the claim that when the number
of highly educated employees decreases, the number of e-workers decreases, and when the number of workers who have attained a medium level of education increases, e-working decreases could not be confirmed and/or disproved. Data from this study confirmed the outcomes of Beňo (2021b) who found that e-working provides more positive than negative outcomes. But as Thompson et al. (2020) mentioned, parental burnout is still the main issue of well-being, as it is for respondents in this study.

6. Conclusion

This study was conducted in 2022 to identify the true situation regarding e-work practice in an international Greek company. An online survey was conducted to capture the information and gather feedback from the e-workers.

6.1 Is there a positive or negative relationship in the perception of the e-working model among e-employees (in terms of age, gender, level of education and parental status)?

More broadly, the mandate to work remotely was perceived differently: positively and negatively. Data demonstrate that older employees prefer not to work remotely all the time. Young generations like working remotely. Women prefer working from home. Education plays a crucial role in relation to satisfaction and enjoyment. E-work gives workers the chance to work from home and, basically, e-working is perceived differently depending on parental status, gender, level of education and age.

6.2 What do e-employees lose or gain when working remotely (in terms of age, gender, level of education and parental status)?

Whatever the outcomes, this experience has opened various possibilities. Whether e-workers are likely to encounter career growth, promotion bias relies on the working model of the organisation. Younger generations and women experience this more positively. Older workers do not lack in-person interaction, and younger workers do not feel disconnected. Data show that e-work is not a big factor in the rising uncertainty about layoffs in the younger workforce. E-work is good for the young generation. All in all, the descriptive evidence suggests that e-work options are good for well-educated workers with more work experience. Workforce productivity is often an employer’s primary concern with remote work. According to the findings, it is not only the optimal option for parents, but for organisations too.

6.3 Is e-working a blessing or a burden?

As for the pros and cons of e-working, the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. As shown in this study, it is necessary to have the right organisational culture. It is crucial to develop the most optimal model based on many criteria, such as work-life balance, protection requirements and workforce demands.

In summary, engaging in e-work may benefit employees, employers and society by having a more satisfied workforce. Overall, the results of the study may help organisations in various sectors where e-work is possible to decide in the future whether to invest in e-working programmes within their businesses.

The absence of triangulation can be seen as the first limit to credibility of this study. The second limitation was the possible restrictions faced by workers because the language spoken in the surveyed organisation is predominantly English. Additionally, most of the participants were female. Despite these limitations, the findings in this study are accurate and credible. Future research on e-work should consider examining productivity and efficiency as a consequence of e-work. Examining employee engagement should also be considered.
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References


