# Factors Influencing the Job Satisfaction of Employees during the Pandemic Times: A study for the Administrative Staff of the Private Sector in Kosovo

Master Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the Degree

Master of Science

in Management

Submitted to Prof.Dr. Ivo Ponocny

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Vienna, 15th of December, 2022

# AFFIDAVIT

I hereby affirm that this master's thesis represents my written work and that I have used no resources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or para-phrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

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# ABSTRACT

Human resources represent one of the most important pillars of any organization. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed many work processes in general, and a big challenge has been adapting to major changes in work processes. We have seen a rapid transition in areas where it is possible to move the work practices from the traditional workplace to remote working or home office.

Working away from the traditional workplace has not been a new or unprecedented practice, but the difference from the past lies in the fact that earlier flexible working was based on the free will, while the pandemic has changed these facts, turning remote working into an "obligation" to preserve everyone's health. Since companies are faced with such an organizational change, the important thing is that they face such challenges by reviewing all the possibilities to manage human resources well, with the aim of taking care of how to maintain employees' job satisfaction and work-life balance through a well-recognized organizational culture which is built from smart and actual management practices.

This study aims to evaluate the level of job satisfaction of the employees of the private sector in Kosovo, considering only the working times during the COVID-19 pandemic and the study is restricted for employees who worked remotely during these times. To remain competitive in the market and enhance productivity and efficiency, job satisfaction is one of the pillars to which each enterprise must pay attention. Furthermore, the research will focus on understanding the level of job satisfaction in this sector and investigate the influence of variables such as flexible working mode, management practices, and work-life balance to the job satisfaction. Data have been collected by the questionnaire which has been distributed only in the online form and has reached 211 respondents.

It is important to note that in small countries that are still in economic transition, adapting to new work practices or practicing new practices may take place later, and this depends on various reasons. One of the reasons may be the organizational culture, therefore it is important to conduct such a study regarding job satisfaction under certain conditions (i.e. remote working) and to see how the companies that have practiced remote working during the pandemic have performed regarding job satisfaction. This study will be a good resource in the limited current literature regarding the job satisfaction in Kosovo and hopefully the insights reached through the questionnaire will be beneficial for companies to review the values belonging to the organizational culture and if necessary to reflect in the points where employees expressed dissatisfaction.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof.Dr. Ivo Ponocny who accepted my request to supervise my thesis and supported me throughout the whole time.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their continuous support, without them none of this would be possible.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

# LIST OF TABLES

# LIST OF FIGURES

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MWFH – Mandatory Work from Home

OB – Organizational Behavior

SHRM – Studies on Human Resources Management

WFH – Work from Home

PTO – Paid Time Off

# 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important departments in any organization is Human Resources. The success of any company depends on its management practices of Human Resources. If employees are highly satisfied with the job, it will affect their productivity or efficiency which is linked directly to their well and the organization's well-being. Covid-19 pandemic is both a global health crisis and an economic threat, especially in the beginning when countries applied shutdown measures to curb the spread of the virus. These measures impacted employees through changing working practices from working from their traditional workplace to work from home (WFH) or remote working.

In today's competitive environment is essential to understand what impacts job satisfaction. In less developed countries, job satisfaction may be less interesting topic of study because of the 'old school management practices' application.

Job satisfaction plays a crucial role in daily life and the well-being of employees. Therefore, this study investigates job satisfaction in Kosovo's private sector. The focus of interest is determined to be only the employees who had the opportunity to be flexible in terms of the working mode during the pandemic. There have been a few studies in Kosovo that investigate job satisfaction deriving from many factors, however, the impact of flexible working mode is a recent subject of interest and remarkably interesting to study.

Therefore, I consider that this study will be beneficial for the private sector in Kosovo because business managers or owners and employees will have one more literature source based on domestic data regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and remote working during the global health crisis and what impacted it the most.

Focusing the study only on the period during the Covid-19 pandemic is considered relevant because it is important to understand that a new era of working practices has started (the era of flexible working mode) therefore businesses in Kosovo will have a better understanding of its importance and consider reshaping the working practices in line with the developed countries.

## 1.1   Research aims and objectives (and hypotheses if applicable)

The main purpose of this study addresses the relationship between job satisfaction and remote working during the Covid-19 pandemic through two variables such as work-life balance and management practices. The targeted group of interest is the employees with the advantage of a flexible working model.

There are several methods of measuring the job satisfaction of employees such as surveys, interviewing employees, or monitoring their performance. To conduct this study a survey is chosen because it can assess satisfaction in different areas, and it is not that sensitive from the perspective of employees because conducting personal interviews is considered by my side challenging as the trust of employees in the organization or even the interviewer must be considered.

The main objective is to get an understanding of the most impactful variable regarding job satisfaction during the pandemic for the employees of the private sector in Kosovo.

Based on the purpose of the study the following specific objectives have been set.

- To identify the level of job satisfaction for the targeted group of interest in the private sector during the pandemic.
- To analyze the influence of the variables such as flexible working model, work-life balance, and management practices.
- To develop useful recommendations for the private sector in Kosovo in terms of flexible working mode and better managing of human resources.

In line with the above objectives, the following research questions have been made and the study aims to provide answers.

*RQ1. What is the level of job satisfaction for the targeted group of employees during the pandemic times?*

*RQ2. What is the main factor influencing job satisfaction while working remotely?*

*RQ3. Are there any differences between genders in terms of the job satisfaction influencers?*

*RQ4. Is Job Satisfaction, Management Practices and Work - Life Balance perceived differently among employees who responded to have children at home and others that did not have children at home?*

Figure 1. presents the proposed theoretical framework of the questions that are examined in the current study.
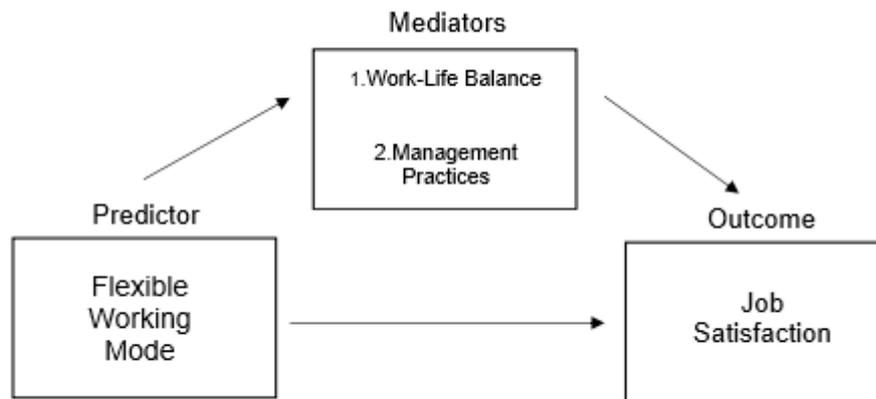


FIGURE 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLEXIBLE WORKING MODE AND JOB SATISFACTION WITH MEDIATORS

## 1.1.1 Definition of Terms

The following terms have been considered and determined relevant for the aim of this study and their meaning is defined below.

**Job satisfaction**: the literature provides many definitions regarding job satisfaction. One of the definitions that summarize mostly all the definitions is from Griffin and Bateman (1986) that states that job satisfaction may be defined as a group of positive and negative dispositions which are acquired through experience, a group of negative and positive attitudes which are a result of genetic inheritance, colleagues and supervisor's evaluation in terms of experience and mutuality, and the employee attitude towards giving efforts to fit in into position's requirements.

**Remote working/worker – flexible working mode:** it stands for employees who perform their regular tasks outside of their traditional workspace (Smith, et.al., 2018). For this study, remote working is considered when an employee spends at least one-day performing job tasks outside of the traditional work environment.

## 1.2   Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters with different headings and subtopics. Chapter 1 gives the introduction to the research. The research purpose explained through different research questions can be found in this chapter.

Chapter two focuses on the literature review about the job satisfaction theories, factors influencing job satisfaction, literature review on pre-and post-pandemic times organizational' culture and how the undertaken measures in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted it, gender differences regarding job satisfaction during the pandemic times, Human Resources Management and overall literature review about organizational culture.

Chapter three presents the methodology which has been chosen to obtain results to answer the research questions. In this chapter, the research approach, data collection, tools, coding in the Likert scale, and explanations of how the data was analyzed will be given.

Chapter four provides the results obtained based on methodical analysis. In this chapter the data retrieved from the questionnaire is analyzed through the methods explained in chapter three.

Finally, the thesis ends with chapter five which is dedicated to the conclusion of the research, answers the research questions, and provides more information for possible future changes concerning employees' job satisfaction mostly based on the recommendations proposed from the respondents. This chapter includes the limitations of the study and the free room for future areas of research.

## 2  LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1  Job Satisfaction

In the recent literature, the interest in analyzing job satisfaction has been increasing among the authors. The 1930s is the beginning of job satisfaction treatment as a scientific research concern, primarily in the United States (Brief & Weiss, 2002). As a topic, it took advantage of earlier developments in applying scientific principles for the study of the social phenomenon as well.

Job satisfaction was measured through the effect of different variables. Since this topic belongs to social analysis, it is understandable that the literature does not provide any clear-cut theoretical background, therefore for each group of interest it is more than necessary to conduct investigations to provide such required information for the aim of the study. Due to this openness to more than one interpretation, many empirical studies have been already conducted. However, there are several features commonly agreed upon what influences the level of job satisfaction in the organization such as the attitude towards pay, working environment, co-workers and managers, future career prospects, etc. (Hussain, 2014). Accordingly, job satisfaction should be considered as a measurement of job and work expectations.

Job satisfaction as a concept has multifaced several definitions and theories which could be applied to enhance employee satisfaction. Job satisfaction was defined as ''a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience'' (Locke, 1976, p.1300). Later, according to Griffin and Bateman (1986) job satisfaction may be defined as a group of positive and negative dispositions which are acquired through experience, a group of negative and positive attitudes which are a result of genetic inheritance, colleagues' and supervisors' evaluation in terms of experience and mutuality, and the employee attitude towards giving efforts to fit into the position's requirements.  Moreover, job satisfaction can be defined as the degree to which people enjoy working and fulfilling their tasks (Spector, 1997). Its level depends on many external factors and internal ones such as employee's attitudes towards the work. In general job satisfaction is considered an affective variable, which results from an investigation regarding the job experience (Fritzsche & Parrish, nd). Also, job satisfaction has been defined as 'an affective relationship to one's job that is a function of situational factors' (Smith et al. 2018, p.46).

Working environments impact people's thoughts and feelings, and people's thoughts and feelings impact the organizations in which they work (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Therefore the literature on job satisfaction is included in the area of Organizational Behaviour (OB) which concerns both sorts of influence, in this case the working environment on people and people on the working environments.

There is a general understanding from daily life, as well as from the literature review that the productivity of any organization depends on the efficient and effective performance of the employees (A.B. Shmailan, 2016). In many studies is observed that when an employee is satisfied, the organizational objectives will be fulfilled at the best level (Inayat & Jahanzeb Khan, 2021). Therefore, the fulfillment of the organizational objectives is directly linked to the employees' job satisfaction, motivation to work, and being psychologically balanced (Hussain, 2014). Recently companies used to conduct opinion surveys to understand how employees feel about their job, thus job satisfaction has become a very important factor in the business effectiveness as apart of organizational objectives. It also plays a crucial role for the employee turnover and the organization's goodwill.

Job satisfaction does not have an impact just on the working environment because it is widely believed that employees who experience satisfaction in terms of their job also have better physical and mental health (Spector, 1997). Moreover, if employees are satisfied with the job, most probably they will experience greater satisfaction in other life pillars as well (Spector, 1997). Hence, job satisfaction includes many reasons why it should be a topic of concern and study.

In the 1990s, job satisfaction was the widest field of interest in organizational behavior research (Spector, 1997) and according to Brief and Weiss (2002) the work done back in those years on the study of job satisfaction impact on the workplace is referred to as ''The Hot 1990s''.

## 2.2   Job Satisfaction Theories

According to the job satisfaction definitions, it can be clearly stated that it is most generally conceptualized based on the simplicity of how content an employee is with the job. It is simply and clearly stated that the attributes and feelings regarding the work refer to job satisfaction. Positive attitudes toward the job are considered a job satisfaction indicator. In contrast, negative attitudes towards the job are taken as a job dissatisfaction indicator (Armstrong, 2003). The literature on Organizational Behavior offers many theories of job satisfaction that are easily traceable to employee performance within the organization.

### 2.2.1   Two-factor theory

The theory of worker motivation is formulated by Herzberg (1959), which separates factors that influence employee job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. This theory emphasizes the motivator-hygiene factors which attempt to explain satisfaction and motivation in the organization (Hussain, 2014). According to its findings, there are certain aspects of the job which cause satisfaction and motivation, but also certain aspects of the job which cause consequently job dissatisfaction. Through his theory, Herzberg (1959) explained that the factors that lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction are different. He stated that 'the opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction but, rather no satisfaction, and the opposite of job dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction but no satisfaction' (Herzberg, 2003, p.91).

This theory states that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are a result of motivation and hygiene factors. In the group of motivational factors are included factors that are considered as an inner force for individuals such as a sense of personal achievement, status, recognition, responsibility, the opportunity for advancement, promotion, growth, etc, which contribute to achieving personal and organizational goals (Hussain, 2014). These factors are represented by the aspects of the job that make people happily want to perform and spread satisfaction feelings to people. Aspects of the working environment such as working conditions, organizational policies, interpersonal matters, etc. belong to the hygiene factors (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

## 2.2.2 Affective Event Theory

According to the Affective Event Theory there is a relationship between internal emotions of the employees and the way how they react to different situations in the workplace. This reaction impacts their performance, long-term job satisfaction, and job commitment (Lombardo, 2013). The theory was developed by the organizational psychologists Weiss and Cropanzano (Lombardo, 2013). According to this theory, six main emotions are caused from specific events on the job (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2. SIX EMOTIONS THAT ARE AFFECTED BY EVENTS AT WORK (WEISS & CROPANZANO, 1996)

These six emotion families include the following subcategories; fear, joy, surprise, love, sadness, and anger, hence it has implications in the prediction of the behavior. An employee can be sad, but his/her behavior is difficult to be predicted as sadness includes different emotion states (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The same applies for all emotion categories that are shown in Table 1.

This theory can be used when working on the organizational culture through recognizing different factors that cause employees' emotional reactions and the impact of those reaction to the job performance. Therefore the management practices could be build up in a way that would help to enhance positive emotions and decrease the stress level.

TABLE 1. SCEMATIC ORGANIZATION OF EMOTIONS ((ADOPTED FROM KIRSON ET.AL 1987) - WEISS & CROPANZANO, 1996)

| Anger | Fear | Joy | Love | Sadness | Surprise |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disgust | Alarm | Cheerfulness | Affection | Disappointment | No sub-cluster identified |
| Envy | Anxiety | Contentment | Longing | Neglect | |
| Exasperation | | Enthrallment | Lust | Sadness | |
| Irritation | | Optimism | | Shame | |
| Rage | | Pride | | Suffering | |
| Torment | | Relief | | Sympathy | |
| | | Zest | | | |

Affective Event Theory differs from the other theories because it focuses on the structure of work, cause and consequences of affective experiences at work (Figure 3).
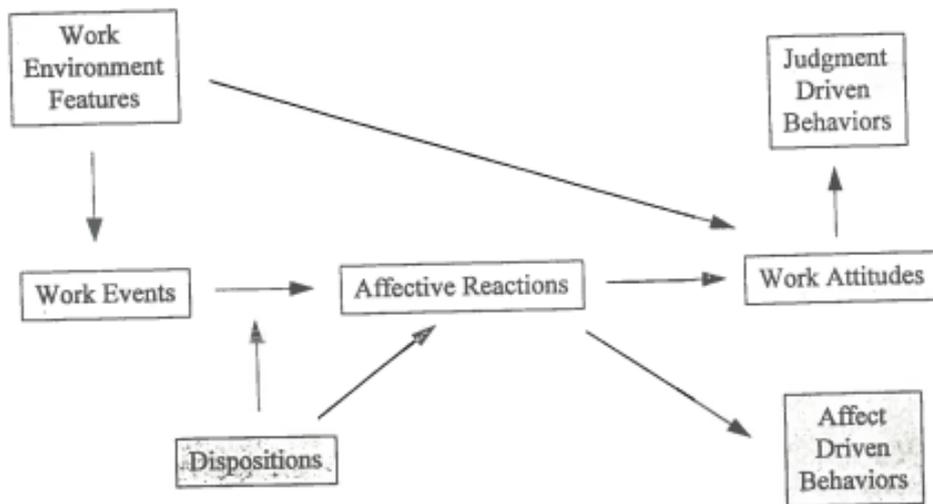


FIGURE 3. MACRO STRUCTURE OF THE AFFECTIVE EVENTS THEORY (WEISS & CROPANZANO, 1996)

### 2.2.3 Equity theory

Equity Theory is developed in the 1960s by workplace and behavioral psychologist John Stacey Adams (1965). According to Adams (1965), the assessment of job involves a continuous assessment on how much the employee and employer put value to each other. The basic of this model is that job satisfaction and motivation result from a fair balance of inputs such as hard work, skill and knowledge level, motivation for the job, support within the team, etc. and common outputs such as financial compensation, recognition and reputation, job security, and other benefits. A good balance between inputs and output increases the level of job satisfaction (Page, 2020).

### 2.2.4 Job characteristics theory

Hackman and Oldham (1976) proposed a model which is known as Job Characteristics Model (JCM). This model focused on conditions under which employees will become internally motivated to perform better in their jobs. Thus, it focuses on the correlation between the psychological internal state of the employees, job characteristics that impact the psychological state of the employees, and internal characteristics of the employees which determine how the employee might react to challenges (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Through their model, they concluded that autonomy plays a crucial role in the positive relationship between job satisfaction and remote working. This model further specifies the importance and existence of moderator variables such as growth-need strength, pay satisfaction, security satisfaction, co-worker satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, and knowledge and skill (Boonzaier, 2001). Knowledge and skill in this model cannot be defined as they are specific for each work setting.

## 2.3   Models of Job Satisfaction Determinants

Factors that influence job satisfaction can differ from one to the other proposed model of job satisfaction determinants. According to Seashore and Tobor (1975), the factors which determine job satisfaction could be divided into environmental and individual factors. In their model, the environmental factors are considered the organization's internal environment, and political, industrial, and economic environment. The demographic characteristics, attitudes, perceptions, etc. belong to the individual determinants. According to this proposed model, job satisfaction is in the middle as the outcomes are specified as well. This model is shown in detail in Figure 4.
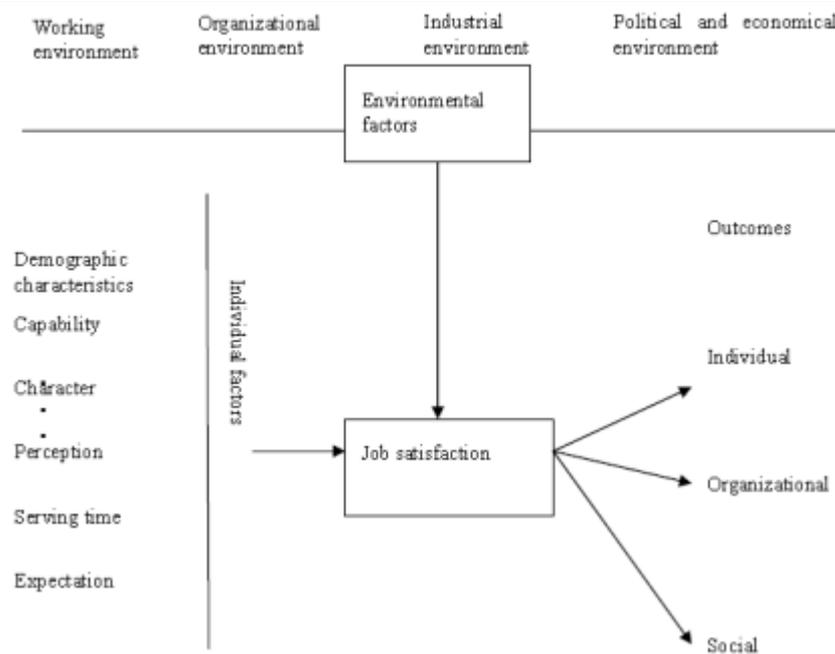
FIGURE 4. THE MODEL OF SEASHORE AND TOBOR (ZHU, 2013)

As is shown in Figure 4. job satisfaction affects three pillars, i.e., the individual impressions of the employees, organizational reflection, and the social reflection (Zhu, 2013).

The other well-known job satisfaction determinants model is proposed by Wexley and Yulk (1977). This model distinguishes between the expected working environment and the actual working environment (Zhu, 2013). The expected working environment includes factors of two different perspectives; personal features, needs, values, and comparison, the influence of contemporary society ty, and previous working experience (Zhu, 2013). Moreover, the actual working environment is a result of compensation, management style, job, job safety, colleagues, and promotion (Zhu, 2013). Job satisfaction is determined by the above-mentioned factors shown as follows in Figure 5. as well.
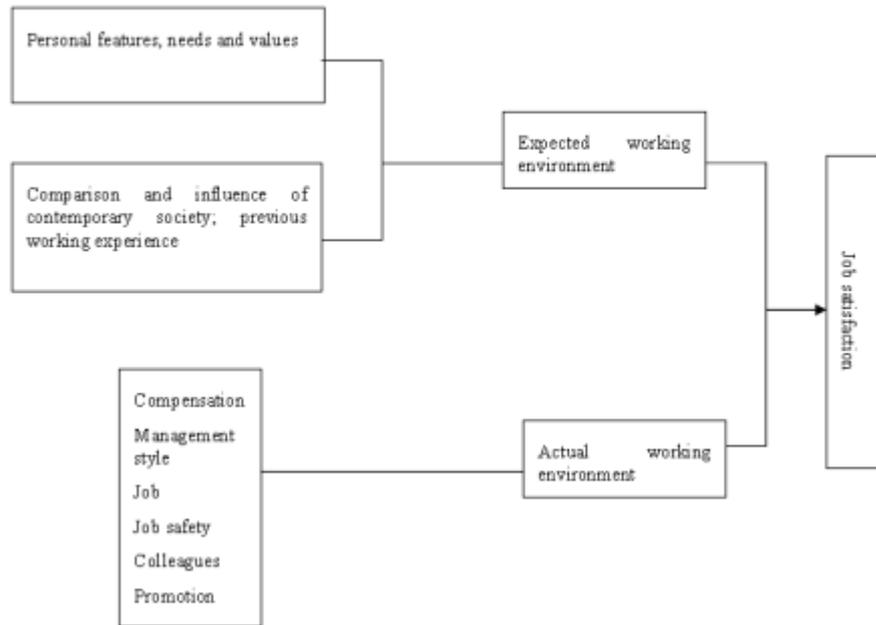
FIGURE 5. THE MODEL BY WEXLEY & YULK (ZHU, 2013)

According to Armstrong (2003), job satisfaction is impacted by psychological, individual, and environmental factors. Communication, employee recognition, etc. belong to the environmental factors (Krayer & Westbrook, 1986). Factors that are related to the individual are emotions, personality, and genetics (Cote & Mogan, 2002). According to Wright and Cropanzano (2002), factors such as personal life, family, and community represent psychological job satisfaction influencers.

Among all factors mentioned above, research indicates that the level of job satisfaction is highly determined (influenced) by individual perspectives (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). According to Smith et.al (2018), these factors include the organization's culture and environment, human resources components, the type of personality, personal characteristics, and psychological attributes.

### 2.3.1 The most common job satisfaction determinants

Even though the field of study which focuses on job satisfaction is considered quite new, nevertheless it is considered rich with definitions, models, and different studies to measure it through different factors of interest.

According to Page (2020), the factors proven to impact job satisfaction could be clustered into six categories and include mostly all the factors mentioned in the models of job satisfaction determinants.

**2.3.1.1 Engaging Work**

Engaging work environment allows employees to express their strengths and capitalize on their skillset (Page, 2020). Therefore, focusing on an engaged work culture is crucial for employees' job satisfaction and performance. The level of engagement is measured through different elements such as opportunities for development, clarity of tasks/expectations, and the opportunity to express ideas and thoughts which are valued and counted in the workspace (Harter, 2021). According to Gallup findings (2021), 70% of the variance in team engagement is determined by the manager and it should be considered a primary responsibility. A happy employer represents a valuable and loyal employee for the organization. Therefore, employee turnover is highly dependent on the employees' job satisfaction (Stephanou, 2020). Also, in a study of Bersin (2015), companies that perform high recognition for their employees have 31% lower employee turnover compared to companies with poor recognition cultures.

A high employee turnover includes the effect of the lack of employee engagement, which is usually a consequence of low salaries and lack of recognition (rewards), poor company communication, poor communication of values, mission, vision, goals of the company, and lack of collaboration (Stephanou, 2020). Also, the theory of the job characteristics model points out factors that make the work engaging such as the autonomy of work style and schedule, clear communication of tasks, and regular feedback on the performance of the employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

**2.3.1.2 A meaningful work**

As mentioned above, job satisfaction is not highly dependent on the salary as there are other significant factors as well. According to a study by Todd (2014), it is identified that work that is meaningful in terms of entailing help or kindness can be an influencer in higher job satisfaction. The most important factors that matter the most for experiencing work meaningfulness are considered the relatedness, autonomy, country of residence, career advancement, industry, competence, job insecurity, etc. (Cnossen & Nikolova, 2020).

**2.3.1.3 Level of relatedness**

In a working paper of Cnossen & Nikolova (2020), the causes and consequences of meaningful work perceptions are analyzed. Their study is based on nationally representative survey data for workers living in 30 European countries for the period between

2005 and 2015. Their analysis shows that relatedness is the most important determinant of work meaningfulness. It represents relationships at work and workers feel related if the relationship with bosses and colleagues is that good so it can be returned (Cnossen & Nikolova, 2020). Relatedness could apply to different aspects, such as the feeling of being trusted by others, or whether employees feel to be involved in processes that make an impact. The impact could have the aim of being e.g. environmentally or socially sustainable.

### 2.3.1.4   Workplace culture

All the characteristics belonging to the Organizational Culture contribute to the unique social and psychological environment within the organization. Workplace culture is directly linked with the most important job satisfaction influencers such as work-life balance, autonomy, and communication factors.

According to an article published by the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) (2017), the organizational culture derives from basic assumptions regarding the human nature – concluding the beliefs regarding the interaction between employees, customers and suppliers. Not just interaction between them matters, also having an idea on how they should be managed is very crucial. The second assumption is the organization's relationship to the environment in which it operates. The third assumptions derives from the appropriate emotions that should be encouraged to be expressed or suppressed. The last but not least assumption, derives from the effectiveness – which key performance indicators show the best if the goals of the organization and individuals are being fulfilled. For more elaboration on this topic please see chapter 2.4.1 Organization Culture.

## 2.4 Covid-19 and Changes in Working Practices

The impact of Covid-19 on employees and working environments has been dramatic. The pandemic which started at the beginning of the year 2020 caused an acceleration of working practices that were not completely new such as online or virtual working environments. The major difference is that before the pandemic, working from home (WFH) was dependent on the employee or employer preferences, but COVID-19 changed this from preference to a Mandatory Work from Home (MWFH).

A survey by Gartney (2020) revealed that the future of working practices will be different as at least 41% of employees prefer to work remotely for at least some of their working time after the coronavirus pandemic. The same study revealed that nearly 50% of organizations have reported around 80% of their employees worked remotely during the pandemic. Hence, the new working practice will be probably the most common one, remote work, as it represents a broader category and not only necessarily working from home.

Remote working itself, pushes forward changes in the organizational culture in general. As the pandemic has caused shifts in overall, organizations as well had to continue to manage the shift in working practices. The shift in the way of working in a virtual world or hybrid mode raised many concerns about organization's culture and its maintenance. For HR and leaders one of the concerns was in regards of how to maintain cultural ideals while employees do not share the same working space or the so-called the traditional working space (Baker & Turner, 2022)

### 2.4.1 Organizational Culture

The culture of the company places a crucial role to the well-being of employees and of the organization in general. In business literature, other terms are often used as synonyms of the Organizational Culture such as "Corporate Culture", "Business Culture", and "Workplace Culture".

According to Lute (2021), the culture of the company summarizes behaviors, values, formal and informal systems, that all together create the image of the company to employees and customers. Moreover, it includes organization's experiences, philosophy, current and future expectations, etc. (Cancialosi, 2004). Diving deeper into the definition of the Organization Culture, it also includes systems, symbols, language and habits (Needle, 2004). The simplest definition comes from Deal and Kennedy (2000), as 'the way things are done over here'.

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A value-based organization defines and lives in a daily basics its cultural identities to the current and prospective new hires (SHRM, 2017). The most successful companies share a common denominator which is a strong culture that contributes to the employees' engagement, lower human resources turnover, rich and valuable customer relations, and higher profit (SHRM, 2017). Consequently, all the benefits of a strong culture bring other benefits such as more-efficient decision-making process, enhance team work and trust, etc.

Among all the factors that shape on Organization's Culture, such as values, degree of hierarchy, degree of urgency, people orientation or process orientation, organizational subcultures, etc., - values and the degree of hierarchy represent the most important factors. The common shared values include the orientation of the company towards emphasizing achievements and results, insisting on strength characteristics such as fairness and respect for the team members and individuals in general, emphasizing team work and paying attention to collaborations' rewards, how important is for the company to be precise and approach problems analytically, how much is the company pro risk-taking, etc. (SHRM, 2017). On the other hand, the degree of hierarchy represents the extent to which the organization values its traditional hierarchy of decision taking. It is proven that an organization with high level of hierarchy (in case the organizational structure is well defined and should be properly followed) tends to advance slower compared to organizations with a low level of hierarchy (in case the organizational structure is not well defined and employees are emphasized to challenge the authority) (SHRM, 2017).

According to a research of ORAU (n.d) there should be five basic conditions fulfilled in order to have a positive employee' perception and attitudes (Figure 6).
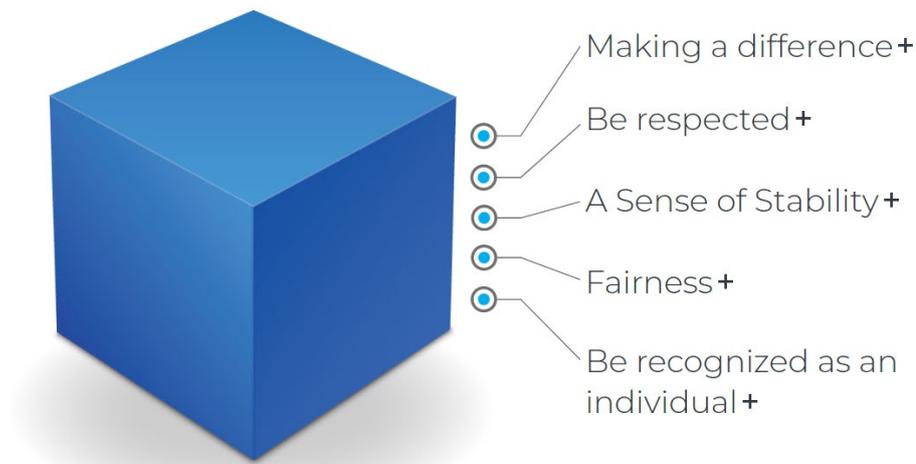


FIGURE 6. FIVE CONDITIONS FOR A WELL-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE (ORAU, N.D.)

Moreover, Covid-19 raised the need to work more for a better organizational culture that includes better management practices that will make the difference for employees working from the traditional working space and the others remotely. The difference in terms of taking into consideration that organizational culture remains with the same principles but remote working required thinking from the perspective of remote working as well. Moreover, Figure 6 presents the principles of a good organizational culture for both working practices, work performed from the traditional working space or remotely.

### 2.4.1.1 Organizational Culture during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Even though there is a saying that the organizational culture takes plenty of time to develop and move forward, this hypothesis is valid under the assumption that there is not any catalytic event. Organizations of different kind faced with the situation on how they will plan the working practices in the future, will home-office be a standard in the future, how will that impact productivity, innovation, or facilities.

As Jeff Miller, a senior vice president of ORAU Government Services stated *"the total organizational stress is equal to the workforce stress plus economic stress, or in other words, take the stress that the individual people in your workforce are experiencing then add to that the economic stress that your entire organization is experiencing. That's why this is an important topic because we really have to understand the total stress that our organizations are experiencing and then adapt in order to survive that."* (ORAU, n.d.). The adaptation that organizations needed and still getting to adapt in response to the Covid-19 impacts the culture of the organization in the long term. This long term impact occurs for the fact that people have long memories for the changes happening into their workplace and their impact to their well-being (ORAU, n.d.).

Other observations about the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic's response measures include mostly the impact of working from home. The new working practice of being flexible impacts remarkably the organization's culture as it has to deal with the fact that the culture of the company is mostly communicated and learned from the distance and not as it is used to be communicated traditionally. Therefore the challenge stands to the point that nowadays employees have experienced different working practices – from the traditional working space, full home time, or flexible (in the industries when this option is possible) and from the organization's point of view, this had an impact on how to 'update' the organizational culture that fits the best and commonly to all of the employees.

According to Miller (ORAU, n.d.) *"People in the office are going to be able to congregate and have sidebar conversations that those working from home won't be privy to. Effective leaders will have to navigate the next normal and not inadvertently create subcultures that did not exist before. As leaders, it's our responsibility to keep all employees focused on the overarching mission of the organization, no matter where they work. That's imperative"*.

An ongoing analysis that collects data from 1.4 million employee-written reviews analysis the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to the employees' perceptions of the organizational

culture (Sull & Sull, 2020). This study collects the reviews for Culture 500[1] companies in a monthly basis. Interestingly, Culture 500 companies experienced a sharp increase in organizational's culture satisfation from March to April 2020, a period which is characterized with a widespread covid measures, lockdowns, change in working practices, shifts to hybrid or home-office, etc. This increase in corporate culture satisfaction is achieved through positive feedback in regards of communication, integrity and other variables. The authors of this study Sull & Sull (2020) collected data on how employees discussed certain topics in the companies' reviews within 12 last months before the start of the pandemic and the discussion of the same topics during the pandemic. Most of the topics did not have major differences in the pre-covid and during the pandemic, but one important topic stood out during the pandemic which is the quality of communication by leaders. Hence, the first reason why companies achieved higher rank in terms of corporate culture is because employees have higher marks to their corporate leaders for their honesty and transparensy in communication comparing to the preceding year.

Moreover, employees were satisfied with the level of communication but this is not the case when it comes to the agility during Covid-19. Employees were not satisfied with the ability of companies to respond to the changes occured by the Covid-19. Figure 7 includes most of the agility topics discussed negatively during the Covid-19 pandemic. As shown there the top 3 themes discussed negativily were the level of bureaucracy, stability of priorities, and the amount of red tape[2] (Sull & Sull, 2020).

The same study of Sull & Sull (2022) analysed which topics were the most likely mentioned during the first months of the pandemic compared to the preceding year. Hence, the most mentioned topics were recession, mental well-being, transparency of leaders, health and safety in the workplace and general, the communication, diversity and inclusivity, and racial equity. This is a very beneficial outcome for companies to rethink their corporate values and culture in general, and if neccessary to take measures towards including in it was it considered important nowadays from the employees.

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[1] Culture 500 – MITSloan Management Review (Glassdoor) URL: https://sloanreview.mit.edu/culture500 Retrieved on 22nd of October, 2022.
[2] Official routine or procedure marked by excessive complexity which results in delays or inaction. URL: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/red%20tape Retrieved on 22nd of 2022.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number and quality of meetings | -7% |
| Organizational agility | -7% |
| Entrepreneurial approach | -8% |
| Cost-cutting measures | -9% |
| Strategic consistency | -12% |
| Big-company feel | -15% |
| Speed of responding to changes | -15% |
| Ability to manage risk | -17% |
| Complex processess | -27% |
| Amount of red tape | -34% |
| Stability of priorities | -36% |
| Level of bureaucracy | -39% |

Legend: ■ Agility topics  ■ Other topics

FIGURE 7. EMPLOYEES' LOW MARKS FOR AGILITY TOPICS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (SULL & SULL, 2020)

Figure 8 summarizes the main areas where companies gained positive and negative reviews during the pandemic. Communication, employee welfare, and agility were the most positively reviewed areas and therefore take an important place to the culture of the company to the culture of the company.

Mentioned more negatively by bottom 50 companies during COVID-19 → Mentioned more positively by top 50 companies during COVID-19

**Communication**

| | Negative | Positive |
|---|---|---|
| Effectiveness of top team communication | -1% | 49% |
| Transparency of leaders | -17% | 43% |
| Organizational transparency | -3% | 33% |
| Clarity of strategy | -21% | 30% |

**Employee Welfare**

| | Negative | Positive |
|---|---|---|
| Employee health and safety | -18% | 36% |
| Employee mental well-being | -16% | 31% |
| Family-friendly policies | -39% | 17% |

**Agility**

| | Negative | Positive |
|---|---|---|
| Focus on external environment | -8% | 45% |
| Experimentation with new ways of working | -9% | 41% |
| Strategy execution | -11% | 28% |
| Flexibility of processes | -19% | 20% |

FIGURE 8. THE MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS BELONGING TO CORPORATE CULTURE DURING THE PANDEMIC (SULL & SULL, 20)

## 2.5 Remote Working

As mentioned earlier telecommuting did not come up just because of the pandemic. In a study by Mak and Kozlovski (2019), it is observed that before the pandemic virtual teams were growing in amount and importance.

The term itself 'remote working' has been changed throughout history. First, it was referred to as teleworking (Bailey & Kurland, 2002), distributed work (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), telecommuting (Torten, et.al., 2016), and lastly remote working (Felsted & Henseke, 2017).

According to the definition of remote working from the previous authors, it is not clear if the meaning of remote working has changed as well. Firstly, even the names such as teleworking and telecommuting have been used interchangeably but according to Garret and Danziger (2007), teleworking includes more than just remote location, such as information technology, time distribution, diversity of employment, and work location. On the other hand, telecommuting refers to working outside of the traditional workspace to reduce the commuting time (Ellison, 2004). Moreover, according to Bailey and Kurland (2002), teleworking is defined as working outside of the traditional workspace and communicating through telecommunications or any way of computer-based technology. Later, Smith (2018) defined it as a work practice through which employees can perform their tasks outside of their traditional working space periodically, regularly, or exclusively. According to his definition of remote working, the meaning of 'outside of their traditional working space' refers to a home or another remote location that fulfills the needed equipment to perform the work responsibilities.

In general, it is concluded that remote working refers to working outside of the traditional working space at least some days of the week. Overall, companies now most likely use the term 'remote working' instead of the other terms (Parris, 2017)

### 2.5.1 The Impact of Remote Working on Job Satisfaction

Since this topic is yet new and lacks on regards of studies, hence little is known about how Covid-19 has impacted the job satisfaction of employees who switched from traditional working environments to working remotely.

In general, there is always some place for disagreement around the impact of remote working on job performance. Some of the findings suggest that reducing the amount of

time that employees spend in the traditional workspace, increases their productivity due to fewer office distractions, while others argue that it should be seen as less employee productivity due to distractions from the home environment (Fonner & Roloff, 2010).

From a general overview through taking into consideration studies conducted during different periods (not applying any restriction only to the Covid-19 timeline), researches indicate that employers and employees benefit from remote work options (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). According to Smith et al. (2018) remote working increases productivity, and it helps towards increasing the autonomy of employees. Among the literature, autonomy takes an important place as a variable of the relationship between remote working and job satisfaction. Autonomy in most cases is defined as the freedom of employees to control and decide on how to fulfill their position's responsibilities (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Hackman and Oldham (1976) proposed a model which is known as Job Characteristics Model (JCM). This model focused on conditions under which employees will become internally motivated to perform better in their jobs. Thus, it focuses on the correlation between the psychological internal state of the employees, job characteristics that impact the psychological state of the employees, and internal characteristics of the employees which determine how will employee react to challenges (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Through their model, they concluded that autonomy plays a crucial role in the positive relationship between job satisfaction and remote working.

The influence of autonomy on the relationship between job satisfaction and remote working is stressed as well by Gajendran et.al (2014). Their study with data collected from 323 employees and 143 supervisors of different organizations concluded that remote working is positively related to the task and contextual performance through directly or indirectly perceived autonomy (Gajendran, et.al., 2014).

Moreover, employees experience higher job satisfaction, a better work-life balance, and job-related well-being (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

On the other hand, employers benefit from remote working mostly in terms of employees' cost-efficiency, employees' productivity, and a decrease in the cost of working space purchase, building, or maintenance (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

In a survey conducted by Schall (2019) in which participated a total of 185 employees resulted that remote working had a positive relationship with job satisfaction. According to that study, increasing the remote working days influences higher autonomy from employees, better work-life balance, and more telecommuting, which positively influences

their job satisfaction. Also, earlier a study by Dubrin (1991) suggests that employees who work remotely are more likely to be satisfied with their job. In his study (Dubrin, 1991) compared job satisfaction and productivity for 34 in-house employees and 34 telecommuters performing the same task (data-entry and coding). The result of the study is that remote workers are likely to be more productive compared to in-house workers on structured and repetitive tasks.

Another study by Kurland and Cooper (2002) investigates the job satisfaction between remote public and private employees through the impact of remote working on professional isolation. Their study relied on 93 semi-structured interviews with remote and non-remote workers. According to their findings, professional isolation is directly linked to the employee's development activities such as interpersonal networking, informal learning, and mentoring (Kurland & Cooper, 2002). The extent to which remote working impacts job satisfaction is dependent on the importance the company expresses towards personal development activities, therefore public respondents resulted to value these personal development activities less than the employees of the private sector. In this case, there is a positive relationship between remote working and job satisfaction for the employees of the public sector and a negative relationship between remote working and job satisfaction for the employees of the private sector.

In practice, there have been different decisions from companies on regard to remote working. After the company Yahoo implemented remote working practices, in 2013 it was decided that this practice should not be valid anymore and each of the employees must return 100% to the traditional workspace (Arthur, 2013). The CEO of Yahoo Marissa Mayer back in 2013 stated that '"to become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side' (Arthur, 2013).

Recently, there is a disagreement between companies as well. At the beginning of the pandemic, companies were quite optimistic about the transition to remote working. Companies such as Twitter Inc. and Facebook Inc. among many other companies quickly were able to embrace remote working as a long-term solution (Cutter, 2020). But later, seemed that this work practice had its disadvantages for companies as well. Some of the companies' complaints were about projects which take longer if working outside of the office spaces is high, training seems tougher, the connection between younger professionals and managers does not develop at the same rate as when working at the traditional workspace, and so on (Cutter, 2020).

However, the majority of results from studies on the impact of remote working on job satisfaction prove that there is a positive relationship between them, and it is an important factor to be taken into consideration in companies nowadays if their mission and vision are to remain competitive and profitable during and after Covid-19 with flexible working practices and growing technological society.

For many employees the nature of remote work offers the opportunity to avoid the fixed location of working, increasing cost savings, spending less commuting time to the work location, spending less money on transportation, and last but not least, remote working contributes to less time to decide what to wear for the work (Schall, 2017).

### 2.5.2 The Impact of Remote Working on the Work-Life Balance during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic affected many fields of life, especially the relationship between work and life almost everywhere. The switching from the traditional working space to home office working practices or remotely was the most common one. Therefore, the literature provided quite a lot of studies on the impact of remote working on job satisfaction, and there the work-life balance plays a crucial role. According to the studies conducted on the impact of remote working on job satisfaction, most of the studies concluded that there is a positive relationship between remote work and job satisfaction. Although this evidence is not consistent because many studies confirm that there is not a positive relationship between remote working and work-life balance. Hence, Human Resources Management faced the challenge of the drastic changes and the need to develop ways to reduce the negative effects of the new working practices during the pandemic. There have been different factors that contributed to the well-being of employees, such as isolation, working from home, health concerns, etc.

Firstly, work-life balance is formed when a person can allocate the same attention, time or has the same level of priorities on his/her career life and the requirements of personal life (Sanfilippo, 2020). Furthermore, it emphasizes a situation where the conflict between employee's family commitment and professional responsibilities is minimized (Clark, 2000). The research perspective of work-life balance has two approaches; the first one concentrates only on the aspects of improving the family life, and the second one focuses on researches on how to minimize the conflict between family commitment and professional responsibilities (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). A positive work-life balance reflects in work-related and non-work related outcomes (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Organizational benefits of

a positive work-life balance could be considered the lower human resources turnover, organizational engagement, and therefore job satisfaction which is linked directly with the employees' efficiency or productivity (Brougham, et.al, 2020). On the other hand, important non-related work outcomes are considered the increased life satisfaction, improvement of family happiness or satisfaction, and decreased family conflict (Anaton, 2013). According to Bulinska-Stangrecka, et.al, (2021) the conceptual model of work-life balance would include the following factors and outcomes (Table 2).

TABLE 2. THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE (BULINSKA-STANGRECKA, ET.AL, 2021)

| Work-Life Balance Factors | | | Work-Life Balance Outcomes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work Environment | Organizational Factors | Individual Factors | Work-Related Outcomes | Non-Work Related Outcomes |
| Workplace | Supervisor Support | Work Importance | Work Engagement | Life Satisfaction |
| Remote Work | Autonomy | Family Involvement | Performance Increase | Family Satisfaction |
| | | Personality | Job Satisfaction | Decreased Conflict |
| | | | Turnover | |

As a topic, "Work-Life Balance' is not new, but the interest on this study increased significantly from the beginning of the pandemic. This can be proven from the following information provided in Figure 9, which shows a summary of publications concerning work-life balance for the period 2010-2020. In 2019 the number of publications is 158, which expresses an increase of 68% in comparison to the previous year 2018. Moreover, the number of publications regarding work-life balance increased for 8% from the year 2019 to 2020. The information is based on the Scopus Database (Stangrenca, et.al, 2020).
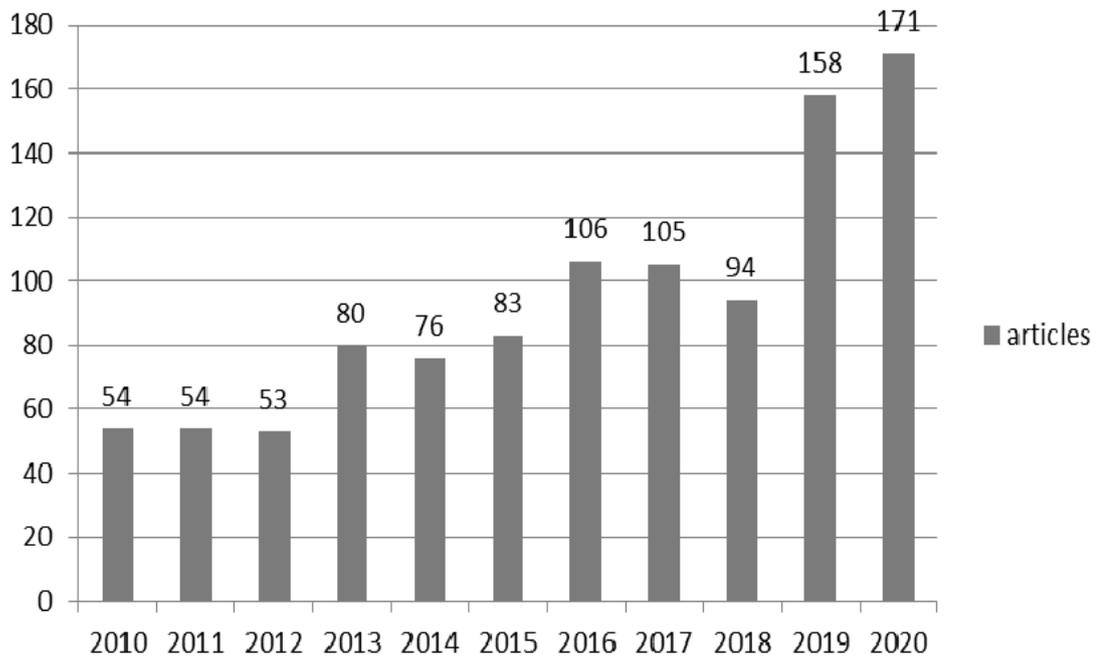
FIGURE 9.  NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS IN THE PERIOD 2010-2020 REGARDING WORK-LIFE BAL-
ANCE (STANGRENCA, ET.AL,  2020)

United States, United Kingdom, India and Australia seem to pay the most attention to this topic and in general according to Scopus Database (), 52 countries have already taken up the topic of work-life balance to study (Stangrenca, et.al, 2020).
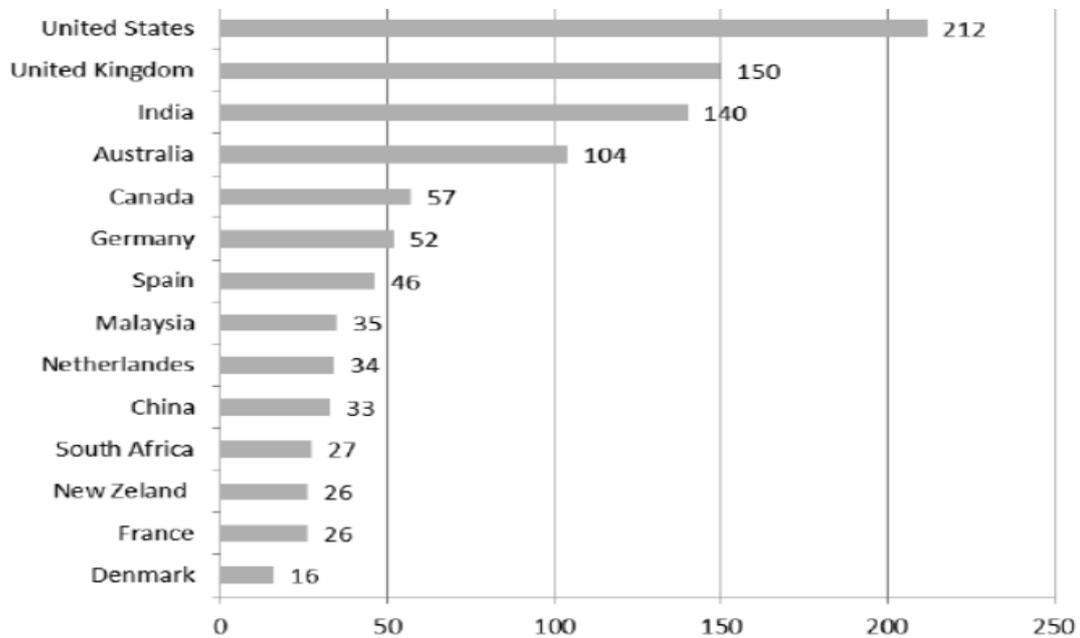


FIGURE 10.  NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE BY COUNTRY (STANGRENCA,
ET.AL, 2020)

Anyhow there is lack Jof consistency in the literature with regard to the studies on the impact of remote working to the work-life balance. A comparison between pre Covid-19

era and during the Covid-19 era literature on the regard of the impact of remote working practice to the work-life balance is not significant due to the fact that before the pandemic the remote working practice was not compulsory as it became during the pandemic. But there are still important aspects to be taken into consideration from previously because the negative or positive relationship between remote working and work-life balance includes the satisfaction with the organizational culture as in the past studies is considered as a negative factor between two variables (remote working and work-life balance) (Bulinska-Stangrecka, et.al, 2021).

A study by Sundoval – Reyes, et.al. (2021), found that remote work during the pandemic increased perceived stress, reduced work-life balance (b = -0,225; p<0,01), and reduced work satisfaction (b = 0,120; p=0,01), increased productivity and engagement. This study found a significant gender difference. While remote working the impact of perceived stress on productivity is higher for men compared to the impact on the productivity of women. Also another study of Del Boca, et al. (2020) came to a conclusion that in Italy is a gender difference in terms of the impact of remote working to the work – life balance. According to his study, the workload for working women with young children increased as a sum of their housework and career responsibilities. Another study on the impact of the remote working to the work-life balance for parents living in the United States, Germany, France, United Kingdom and Italy was conducted by Boston Consulting Group (2020), which revealed that during the Covid-19 pandemic parents allocated more time for education and household tasks, therefore they felt that their productivity at work dropped significantly. Moreover, a study of Chauhan (2020) concluded that in India unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic and the new working practices have increased the gender inequalities and women employment rate. It is obvious that the new working practices have impact both genders' work-life balance, but according to the studies the female gender is the most impacted due to the higher percentage of the household tasks undertaken comparing to men. This conclusion is supported also by another study on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic in the work – life balance of employees in Spain, which is conducted by Farre, et.al (2020). In their study they concluded that in average women allocated more time and efforts in childcare and household tasks almost 17% more comparing to men.

Anyhow there is still place for surveys which concluded that most of the respondents would like to work remotely as it saved on personal spend and it helps for a better work-life balance. A research conducted by NI Firm (MCL Insure Tech) shows that Covid-19 has definitely changed the working practices as 87% of the staff wish to work from home

in post Covid-10 environment (Cartmill, 2020). This survey is conducted to 130 employees of the company and 35% of them said that they would like to work 50% of the time remotely, 19% of them would like to work 75% of the time remotely, 13% of them would like to work a quarter of their time remotely and 12% of them did not like to work from home (Cartmill, 2020). According to the managing director of this company, Gary McClarty, remote working is a game changer and the office sector could face a transformation based on successful working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic (Cartmill, 2020). He added "*There are many positives to working from home including the elimination of the daily commute and financial savings. More importantly, it was also mentioned by 70.88% that they had a better work/life balance, felt less stressed and that it contributed to a healthier lifestyle. Also I was surprised by some of the findings. I always believed that the social aspect of home working would be a challenge, but this is offset with a better work life balance, healthier lifestyle and avoiding the dreaded morning and evening commute. I do believe this is a game changer. The future model will be about flexibility and it will be a win/win for all parties. Businesses will save on accommodation costs and benefit from a healthier, happier and more productive workforce*" (Cartmill, 2020).

An article of Beigi, et.al (2022) summarizes the most mentioned positive and negative aspects of remote working. Figure 11 summarizes the four extremes of desirable and undesirable experiences of remote working. This finding is very beneficial for human reSOURCEs department and the organizational culture in general, because according to these extremes, an organizational culture which contributed to a better remote working experience, hence to enhance the work-life balance, could be build up.
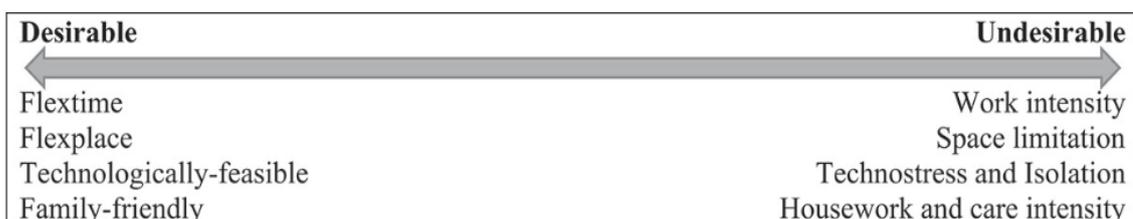


FIGURE 11. DESIRABLE & UNDESIRABLE ASPECTS OF REMOTE WORKING (BEIGI, ET.AL, 2022)

One of the advantages of remote working is mentioned the flexibility in the scheduled working time. According to Alley & Shockley (2009), flexibility in the timing of work increases the employee's feeling of autonomy, which is linked directly with an increase in the work-life balance, hence an increase in job satisfaction as well.

On the other hand, work intensification is a characteristic of remote working. This negative extreme for work-life balance is realized also in empirical studies conducted during the pandemic (Del Boca, et.al, 2020). This extreme mostly occurs due to the fact that

employers expect employees to be online all the time and to respond quickly to work requirements (Bin, et.al, 2021). Also another adjustment that contributes to a better work-life balance and remote working experience is the adequate workspace characterized by enough space, good equipment and being free from distraction/noise (Carillo, et.al. 2021). The advance in technology makes the remote working easier and possible to be available virtually from anywhere. Apart from the advantages of the technologies, the feeling of loneliness and professional isolation increases due to the lack of low quality social interactions between peers (Bin, et.al, 2021).

Practical suggestions for management responsible employees would be to offer remote working as an option, to prepare and support employees in the transition to remote working, and continuously to offer support to sustain remote working practice (Beigi et.al, 2021) (Table 3).

TABLE 3. SUGGESTIONS TO SUPPORT REMOTE WORKING AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE (BEIGI, 2021)

| OFFER REMOTE WORK AS AN OPTION | PREPARE TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO REMOTE WORK | PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN REMOTE WORKING |
|---|---|---|
| BY PROVIDING A BALANCED PREVIEW OF REMOTE WORKING | DEVELOPING SKILLS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO SUPPORT REMOTE WORKERS | LISTENING TO REMOTE WORKERS |
| BY PROVIDING A RANGE OF REMOTE WORK WORKING | SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE TRANSITION TO REMOTE WORKING | DEVELOPING DEALS THROUGH DIALOGUES AND FACILITATING ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES |

These studies conducted in the times of Covid-19 pandemic are very beneficial for organizations as now the positive and negative extremes of remote working and their impact to the work-life balance are known and quite consistent in many of the studies.

## 2.6 The impact of management practices in the relationship between remote working and work-life balance during the Covid-19 pandemic

There is a direct link between organizational culture and the well-being of employees who work remotely at least a few days per week. The link occurs for the fact that it all depends on the management practices of the company and how well is remote working organized. After that its employees' responsibility to organize their days in a way to enhance the work-life balance with remote working.

Work-life balance was in general considered as an individual concept. In the early stages of analyzing this concept, the whole interest was towards demographic characteristics, and personal attributes. Later on, the work-related stressors and family-related stressors were emphasized. Management practices have a crucial role when it comes to the relationship between remote working and work-life balance. Leadership faced many challenges to adapt to the new working practices and remaining efficient and competitive required to put a lot of efforts to ensure a smooth transition to working remotely. It is highly suggested that the level of stress and difficulties to balance work and life (conflict) arise from the misfit on an employee and the environment. According to Voydanoff (2005), the stress and interfere with the work-life balance is linked with the mismatch of the experience and work expectations. Also this relationship of experience and environment impacts the level of job satisfaction. Hence, this explains the role of management practices to the fit between employee's expectations and their work experiences. Gallup researchers examined their databases (n.d.) and found that there are three criteria that optimize remote work roles and the relationship between employee's expectations and work experience while working in a position that is remote work capable. The first criteria is about evaluating if the remote role is capable of being well performed outside of the traditional working spaces. The second criteria is about well defining the tasks and processes that are included in a specific role. This involves the well organization of timelines, performance targets or expectations, and evaluation of the performance. The last criteria and very important is to analyze if the role can be performed dependently – in such cases the synchronized input from multiple colleagues is not highly required to perform the tasks and move projects forward.

Another aspect, apart from the three criteria of Gallup findings, each organization requires its unique management practices while working remotely, practices that work better for people and the organization in general.

Working from home and from the traditional working space in general may seem that does not involve many differences. As an example of the same management practices required for a better job satisfaction could be **the good communication** as part of an effective management. This practice of good communication has faced the only change of moving online. Anyways, working remotely, especially under the Covid-19 pandemic, does involve other differences. First of all, a few of virtual work characteristics are the extra need for social support, job autonomy, planning of proper monitoring, and organizing the workload. Moreover, among many challenges of remote working, the most common one that characterize many studies are the procrastination, ineffective communication, work-home interference and loneliness. In between of virtual work characteristics that could be impacted by the management practices and remote work challenges, the individual factors are very important. Apart of the impact of management practices to the work-life balance, the self-discipline factor is also a huge determinant of a high level satisfaction towards work-life balance. At the end, the remote worker outcomes are the performance, job satisfaction and well-being.

A study of Gallup (The Gallup-Heathway Well-Being Index, 2021) has developed a meaning of well-being that includes 5 essential elements. The first element includes the feeling of being satisfied with the daily life and being motivated to achieve the goals. The second element includes the social aspects of life such as having a supportive relationship. The third element is about the personal finances management, hence reducing stress and decreasing the future financial uncertainties.

Among all characteristics of remote working, managers should understand that the individual characteristic should be taken into account while working on applying better management practices. This is because not every management practice fits to all. Accounting for individual personality traits could influence how employees handle hybrid working and through well-planned management practices their life could be less challenging while working remotely. Thomas' Personality assessment (2020) points out the three personality traits that should be adapted in the management practices in order the remote working to be handled in the best way possible (Table 4). The traits do not represent negative personality characteristics of employees, but they make a difference if kept in mind when planning management practices for hybrid worker performance.

TABLE 4. THE THREE PERSONALITY TRAITS (THOMAS'S PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT, 2020)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conscientiousness** | Within a team, one part of the colleagues may be characterized by a high self-motivation and driven by the energy to keep deadlines, both skills that can be helpful while working remotely. But this group of employees does not represent the whole team, as the other part of colleagues may need support and greater oversight. |
| **Adjustment** | Flexibility is very important to handle stress and emotions. It is very important to monitor the team members on how they are dealing to adapt with their new working environment and the change is not increasing the stress level. |
| **Curiosity** | The colleagues with low curiosity level will need more support to adjust to the new working environment that required adopting new tools and technologies comparing to the other colleagues that are characterized with high level of curiosity and adjustment. |

CultureX, Bersin and MIT Sloan Management Review (2020) conducted a survey on the topic of how organizations can help employees to work remotely. They realized six topics that were considered the most meaningful ones that the organizations where more than 350 Human Resources Leaders work have undertaken to support the transition to remote working during the Covid-19 health crisis. This survey included the open-ended question "What is the most impactful thing your organization has done to support employees' transition to remote work?" and the results are analyzed through using a natural language processing platform. A few of this study findings are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5. HOW ORGANIZATIONS CAN HELP EMPLOYEES TRANSITION TO REMOTE WORK? (CULTUREX, BERSIN, & MIT, 2020)

| |
|---|
| **47% - Communicate frequently and well** |
| 23% - High quality communication |
| 12% - Frequent communication |
| 5%   - Solicit input from employees |
| 3%   - Provide clear guidance on policies |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2% - Transparent communication | |
| 2% - Central repository of COVID-19 related information | |
| **45% - Provide technology for remote work** | |
| 25% - Provide or subsidize technology for remote work | |
| 12% - Provide or subsidize collaboration platforms | |
| 6% - Provide or subsidize home Wi-Fi | |
| 1% - Provide furniture for home office | |
| **29% - Provide emotional & social support** | |
| 11% - Check in on employees | |
| 6% - Support employee mental well-being | |
| 5% - Provide emotional support | |
| 4% - Organize virtual social activities | |
| 2% - Senior leaders support employees | |
| **18% - Promote work-life balance** | |
| 10% - Allow for flexibility in schedule | |
| 4% - Support working parents | |
| 2% - Extend time-off policies | |
| 2% - Help employees manage their workloads | |
| **15% - Ensure well-being** | |
| 11% - Promote physical well-being | |
| 2% - Extend health benefits | |
| 2% - Ensure onsite employees safety | |

Moreover, management practices that help work-life balance include the flexibility to work throughout the day, support parents through encouraging to take time off during the day to allow for taking care of children, offering an extra PTO (paid time off) day to promote rest and relaxation, etc.

# 3 METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and the research methodology. The purpose of the research is to determine the factors which influenced the job satisfaction of employees during the pandemic times. The study is restricted to the employees of the private sector in Kosovo, who worked remotely during the pandemic. Referring once again to the introduction of this thesis (see chapter 1) the predictor of this study is the flexible working mode through work-life balance and management practices as mediators aiming to assess the outcome which is job satisfaction. So, the assessment of the job satisfaction for this group of interest is conducted through job satisfaction, work-life balance and management practices. In order to identify the level of job satisfaction for the targeted group of interest in the private sector during the pandemic, to analyze the influence of the variables such as flexible working model, work-life balance, and management practices; and to develop useful recommendations for the private sector in Kosovo in terms of flexible working mode and better managing of human resources a questionnaire is conducted (see chapter 3.6 Discussing the questionnaire).

Important to point out is the fact that apart of the three mediators such as job satisfaction, work-life balance and management practices, the questionnaire includes personal questions as well (see chapter 3.6.1), so it can fulfill the requirements to answer the research questions (see chapter 3.3).

## 3.2 Phases of the research

The research on the topic consists of different phases, in which certain measures are implemented. All the steps of the study guarantee the truth and objectivity of collecting facts and formulating scientific conclusions.

The scientific research includes six main steps.

1. To define the subject of the research and formulate the research question.
2. To develop a research plan for the study.
3. Reviewing the literature (see chapter 2).
4. To collect data and define the limitations in the field of the study.
5. To analyze the collected data.
6. To formulate conclusions and further topics for research.

## 3.3  The Research Questions

The study aims to answer four research questions. The basic one is to determine the level of job satisfaction while working remotely **(RQ1)**. Moreover, the level of job satisfaction is assessed through two other variables, management practices and work-life balance. These two variables are considered to have the most impact to the job satisfaction, hence a very valuable output would be to understand which one is the most impactful one for the employees of the private sector in Kosovo **(RQ2)**. Gender differences are a very actual topic, hence these differences are taken into consideration in this study too.The third **(RQ3**) and fourth **(RQ4)** research questions will assess whether there are any differences for this study in terms of differences in the level of job satisfaction influencers and the impact of having children at home to the level of job satisfaction.

The study aims to answer the questions:

*RQ1. What is the level of job satisfaction for the targeted group of employees during the pandemic times?*

*RQ2.  What is the main factor influencing job satisfaction while working remotely?*

*RQ3. Are there any differences between genders in terms of the job satisfaction influencers?*

*RQ4. Is Job Satisfaction, Management Practices and Work - Life Balance perceived differently among employees who responded to have children at home and others that did not have children at home?*

## 3.4   Discussing the chosen methodology

Data have been analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Firstly, factor analysis and reliability are the methods used for data reduction. Factor analysis will reveal how much the observed variables are strongly correlated and should be grouped together. On the other hand through reliability analysis will be understood how well the grouped variables go together. In regards of factor analysis, eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained will be used to determine how many factors should be retained. Factor analysis may reveal new patterns comparing to how the variables

are grouped in the questionnaire, but the decision is also influenced by the interpretation of the factors (statements).

After determining how many factors should be retained, based on the factor analysis and self-interpretation of the factors (statements), the reliability analysis will determine the item-total correlations. The statistics that results from reliability analysis is the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. This coefficient has a maximum value of 1.0 and in general when the grouped factors have a Cronbach's Alpha .70 or larger, the scale is considered to have an internal consistency or in other words to be sufficiently reliable.

Due to the data being not normally distributed and having three variables in the study; Job Satisfaction, Management Practices and Work-Life Balance, the Friedman test has been used to test for differences between three sets of variables measured in ordinal scales and to get a conclusion what is the main factor influencing job satisfaction while working remotely. The Friedman test will test the null hypothesis (H0) that states that the location of the three variables is equal and afterwards a Bonferroni Correction will be applied for crosschecking regarding pairwise comparison. The new significance level is 0.017 as the usual 0.05 level of confidence is divided by the number of variables, in this case by three. The Wilcoxon test will be applied to identify further the similarities of the variables.

The third research question of the study investigates the possible differences between genders in terms of satisfaction level with the factors of the study – job satisfaction, management practices and work-life balance. To identify if there is any difference among three groups of genders – female, male and no-answer group, the Kruskal-Wallis test is applied. Kruskal-Wallis is used to test the null hypothesis which states that the sample's median is the same or identical with the population from where it has been drawn. The same method is followed in order to answer the last research question of the study as well (chapter 4.6 – RQ 4; *Are Management Practices and Work - Life Balance perceived differently among employees who responded to have children at home and others that did not have children at home?*)

## 3.5  Data collection

The target group of the study were employees of the private sector working in Kosovo and the company in which they worked must have applied the flexible working mode during the pandemic. Data have been collected by the questionnaire (see the following topic: 3.6. discussing the questionnaire).

The questionnaire has been distributed only in the online form and has reached 211 respondents. The questionnaire was posted in social media (LinkedIn), as it is considered the most convenient way to reach out to professionals that mostly use this platform to share achievements, ideas and most important for this study is the sharing of concerns that most of the users use to share in this platform that connect professionals from all around the world.

In this group are included employees of different positions, which are distinguished in general as managerial and administrative positions, their gender, their age group belonging, their parental status, and their educational level.

## 3.6  Discussing the questionnaire

To analyze this topic a questionnaire is conducted. The questionnaire is a mix of close-ended questions, statements, and a question with an open-end.

### 3.6.1  Part I. The first part of the questionnaire included personal questions such as:

1. Your age group:
    a) ≤ less than 24
    b) 25 – 34
    c) 35 – 44
    d) 45 – 54
    e) < 55

2. Gender:
    a) Male
    b) Female
    c) Other

3. Educational Background:
    a) High School
    b) Bachelor

c) Masters
d) PhD
e) Other

4. What is your job position:
   a) Managerial position
   b) Administrative Staff

5. How many days per week did you work remotely:
   (Answer restricted to values 1 – 5)

6. Does the company still apply the flexible working mode:
   a) Yes
   b) No

### 3.6.2 Part II - Job Satisfaction

The second part of the questionnaire includes statements that are related to the Job Satisfaction. The five statements are related with the aspect of the job satisfaction in general, but in this study it is specified to keep the mind only for the period when the respondents worked remotely.

The culture of the company places a crucial role to the job satisfaction. According to Lute (2021), the culture of the company summarizes behaviors, values, formal and informal systems, that all together create the image of the company to employees and customers. Hence, through the first statement of this study will be given a try to understand the level of satisfaction of employees in Kosovo with the culture of the company where they work. It is very important for the companies everywhere (but specifically in Kosovo as the study is determined for there) to understand and pay attention to the importance of the organizational culture.

The statements of this second part of the questionnaire are somehow all related with the culture of the company, here an exception could be the second statement as it states "The meaningfulness of my job" as it is more subjective rather than objective (related to the organizational culture).

An explanation why most of the statements under the second part of the questionnaire derive from the organizational culture could be that the most important variables of the organizational culture are how the employees communicate with each other, how the decisions are made, how employees get recognized and promoted, and how is the work

celebrated in the company (Lute, 2021). Hence, the assessment of the job satisfaction in a Likert Scale from strongly dissatisfied to strongly satisfy is conducted through the following statements:

a) The culture of the company
b) The meaningfulness of my job
c) The salary I was paid
d) The value of my feedback to the management
e) The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job


### 3.6.3 Part III – Management Practices during Flexible Working Mode

Management practices play a crucial role in the daily business operations. As all fields of the life, also management practices had to adapt with the pandemic circumstances. Flexible management practices are extremely important in dealing with the increase of uncertainty and challenges during the pandemic (Schneebacher, et.al. 2021). One of the hugest challenges in any organization remains the transition to remote working practices. According to Gurchiek (2020), a management practice could be referred as an effective one if it fulfills many 'requirements' such as setting guidelines, expectations and bounderies often, being organized and flexible, adapting the lenght of the meetings, organizing a work schedule, emphasize communication within the team, remember to listen, be available for support, try to avoid micromanaging, recognize achievements, etc.

E.g. the main reason why the statement "The lunch break was respected" is included in the study is because in many studies is pointed out that flexibility in the scheduled working time and work intensification are two extremes of remote working. Flexibility in the scheduled working time increases the employees' feeling of autonomy which is linked directly with an increase in the work-life balance, hence an increase in job satisfaction as well (Alley & Shockley, 2009). On the other hand, work intensification is a characteristic of remote working. This negative extreme for work-life balance is realized also in empirical studies conducted during the pandemic (Del Boca, et.al, 2020). This extreme mostly occurs due to the fact that employers expect employees to be online all the time and to respond quickly to work requirements (Bin, et.al, 2021). Management practices that pay attention to these boundaries are perceived a very important aspect that contributes to job satisfaction while working remotely.

Moreover, one of the concerns during the pandemic was keeping the team connected. According to a study of Cutter (2020), the connection between younger professionals and managers faces challenges and does not develop at the same rate as when working from the traditional workspace (please refer to chapter 2.5 – Remote Working). Therefore this aspect is assessed through the statement "While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as If I were in the office".

Communicating effectively during homeworking included itself the point that leaders should get used with the fact that face-to-face communicating cannot be translated by teleworking and it takes other practices to establish norms around team and in general for the organization to make sure that employees are productive, efficient, and happy regardless of the working space or location (Establishing Norms During Sustained Remote Work , n.d.). This aspect of remote working was taken into consideration for this study as well and it is assessed through the statement "The norms of team interaction were set".

Therefore, the assessment of management practices during the flexible working practice in Kosovo in a Likert Scale from strongly dissatisfied to strongly satisfied is conducted through the following mentioned statements which all together summarize the most impactful aspects of management practices during remote working.

a) While homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as if I were in the office
b) While homeworking I could connect with my colleagues as well as if I were in the office
c) I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking
d) My lunch break was respected
e) The manager was very supportive
f) The tasks were well communicated
g) The urgent tasks were appropriately determined
h) The feedback was appropriately provided
i) The norms of team interaction were set
j) The team was kept connected
k) The rewards were distributed rightfully
l) The job responsibilities were clearly defined
m) The company provided the tools and technologies that are required to perform the job while working remotely

n)  I felt valued for my contribution

o)  The personal milestones were celebrated (even virtually)

### 3.6.4  Part IV – Work-Life Balance while on Flexible Working Mode

Work-life balance gained in importance especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, because it takes time to adapt with new working practices under very difficult circumstances. Many studies are conducted and analysed the impact of management practices to work-life balance while working remotely and most of the findings have the same patterns with the statements chosen to assess work-life balance in this study.

Please indicate the level of agreement/disagreement with the work-life balance during the flexible working mode by choosing strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

p)  I managed to balance work and personal life effectively

q)  I was more productive due to the company's policy on telecommuting

r)  I carved out a working space

s)  I put the work away at the end of the day

t)  Emotionally I felt better

u)  I effectively set and followed the working hours

v)  I turned the status 'Offline' on time

w)  I managed effectively to fulfil my responsibilities

x)  I avoided multitasking

y)  I was happy to have face-to-face communication with my peers on a few days during the week

z)  I travelled more while working remotely.

**Open question:**

*What would be your recommendation for future changes – improvements that would increase job satisfaction while working remotely?*

This question is a good opportunity for respondents to freely recommend future changes or required improvements that would contribute to increasing the satisfaction with management practices that are applied in the organizations, improvements or recommendations for any change that would contribute to a higher work-life balance satisfaction, that

both are related to the job satisfaction. Moreover, this open question may raise up any other factor that might impact the level of job satisfaction which is not taken into consideration. This may contribute to other areas for future investigation and research.

## 3.7 Coding

The responds of the Likert scale statements grouped in the factors of the study; job satisfaction, management practices and work-life balance are coded in a psychometric method where respondents could easily state their level of agreement in five points. The 5-point Likert scale consists of the points – (1) Strongly Dissatisfied; (2) Dissatisfied; (3) Neutral; (4) Satisfied; (5) strongly satisfied. The reason why the most important part of the study is chosen to be conducted in a Likert scale is because this method is easily understandable and through providing different options to choose most probability increases the response rate.

# 4  RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the research methods description, this chapter will cover the research findings of the study. The research questions which will be answered through the conducted questionnaire that includes statements from three perspectives; job satisfaction, work-life balance and management practices during the Covid-19 pandemic for remote workers of the private sector in the Republic of Kosova (See chapter 3.6 – Discussing the questionnaire).

The initial research questions of the study are as follows:

*RQ1. What is the level of job satisfaction for the targeted group of employees during the pandemic times?*

*RQ2.  What is the main factor influencing job satisfaction while working remotely?*

*RQ3. Are there any differences between genders in terms of the job satisfaction influencers?*

*RQ4. Is Job Satisfaction, Management Practices and Work - Life Balance perceived differently among employees who responded to have children at home and others that did not have children at home?*

## 4.1  Descriptive analysis

One of the advantages of this study is that the share among genders is quite the same as 52.13% are represented by female respondents and 41.7% by male respondents (Table 6).

TABLE 6. THE SHARE OF RESPONDENTS REGARDING THE GENDER

| Gender | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 110 | 52,13 | 52,13 | 52,13 |
| Male | 88 | 41,7 | 41,7 | 93.83 |
| No Answer | 13 | 6,16 | 6,16 | 100 |
| Total | 211 | 100 | 100 | |

Regarding the age characteristics, this study includes five age groups, of which 34,6% were less than 24 years old, 36% were between 25 – 34 years old, 15,6% were between 35 – 44 years old, 9% were between 45 – 54 years old, and 0.5% were over 55 years old. These results show that this study is dominated mostly by the first and the second age group which together cumulate 70.8% of the respondents (Figure 12).
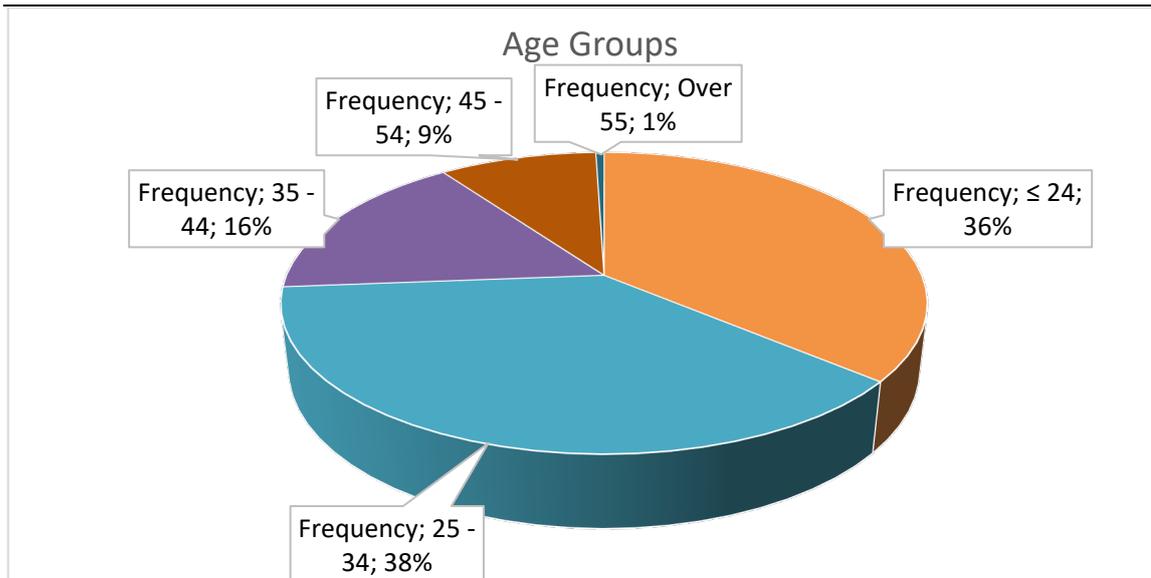
FIGURE 12. FREQUENCY OF AGE GROUPS

To identify further characteristics of the study a cross-tabulation analysis has been used to show the percentage of each gender to the group ages. Therefore, Figure 13 shows that females are dominant in the first and second category of group ages, while males are dominant in the third and fourth category of group ages.

The data regarding the educational background is presented in Figure 14. According to the results, 41% of the respondents hold a master's degree, 28% of them a bachelor's degree, 10% of them a high school certificate, and 11% of the respondents did not specify their educational background.

To offer more in-depth information a cross-tabulation analysis has been run again to understand the differences among genders regarding their educational background. The female gender dominates in terms of high school certificates, bachelor's degrees, and the category of the unspecified degree, while the male gender dominates in terms of masters and Ph.D. Degree.
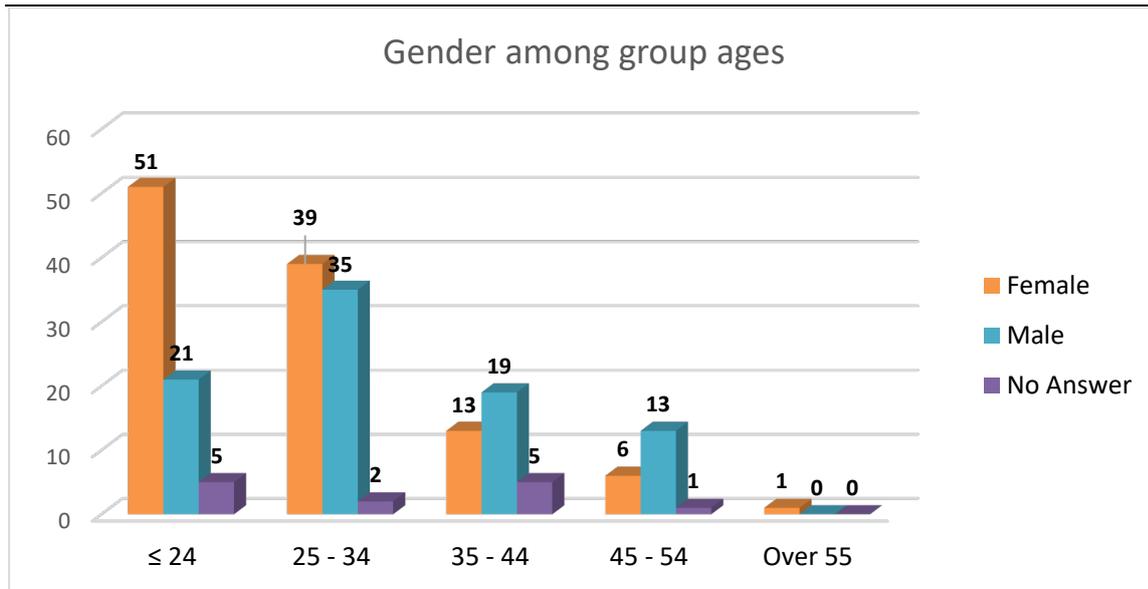
FIGURE 13. GENDER SHARE AMONG GROUP AGES
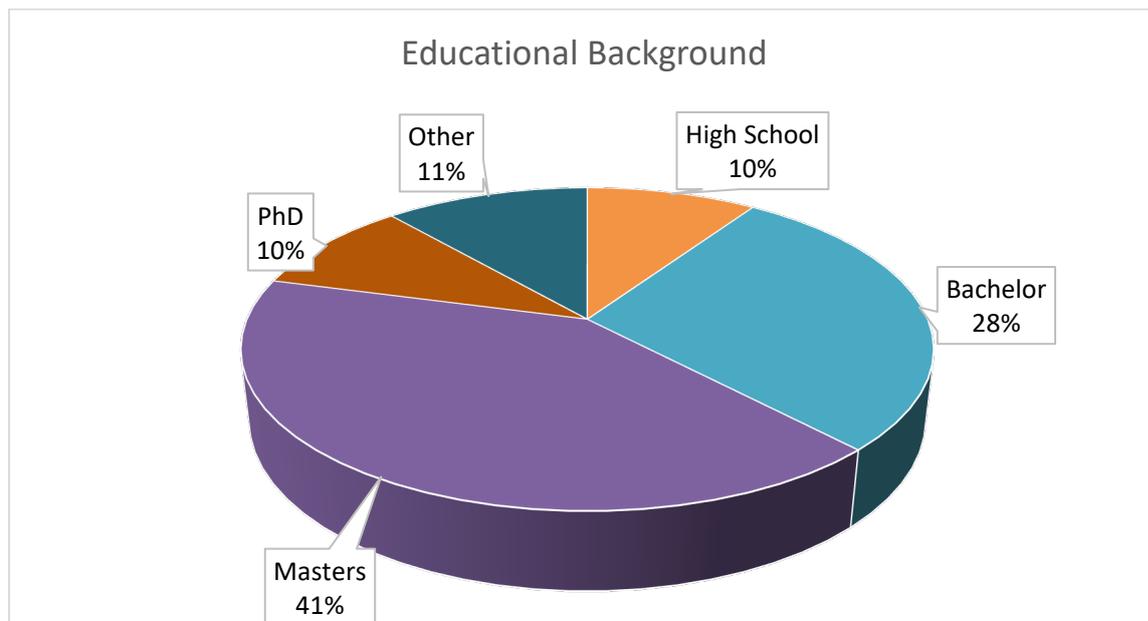


FIGURE 14. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Regarding the job position, 37.44% of respondents reported having had a managerial position during the time of the study, while 62.55% of them had an administrative position. Moreover, 31.8% of females reported to have been working in a managerial position, while 68.18% of them had an administrative position. 38.64% of males reported having been working in a managerial position, while 61.36% of them were in an administrative position. Regarding the group of respondents that did not specify their gender,

76.92% reported a managerial position and 23.07% of them had an administrative posi-
tion. Figure 15 ilustrates the share of the job position among genders.
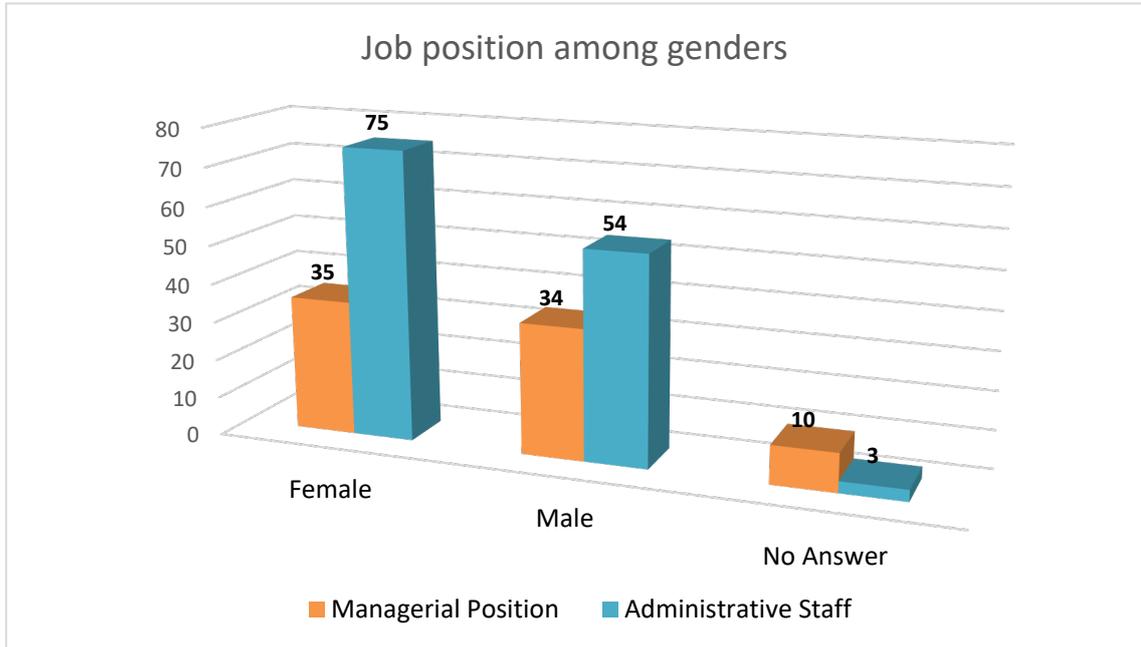


FIGURE 15. JOB POSITION AMONG GENDERS

A very important part of this study is to identify how many days per week did the respond-
ents work remotely during the pandemic. Figure 16 illustrates that 34% of respondents
worked outside of their traditional working space 3 days per week, 23% worked outside
2 days per week, 22% worked outside from their traditional working space 5 days per
week, 12% worked outside 4 days per week and 9% worked outside from their traditional
working space 1 day per week.

**The count of days worked outside of the office**
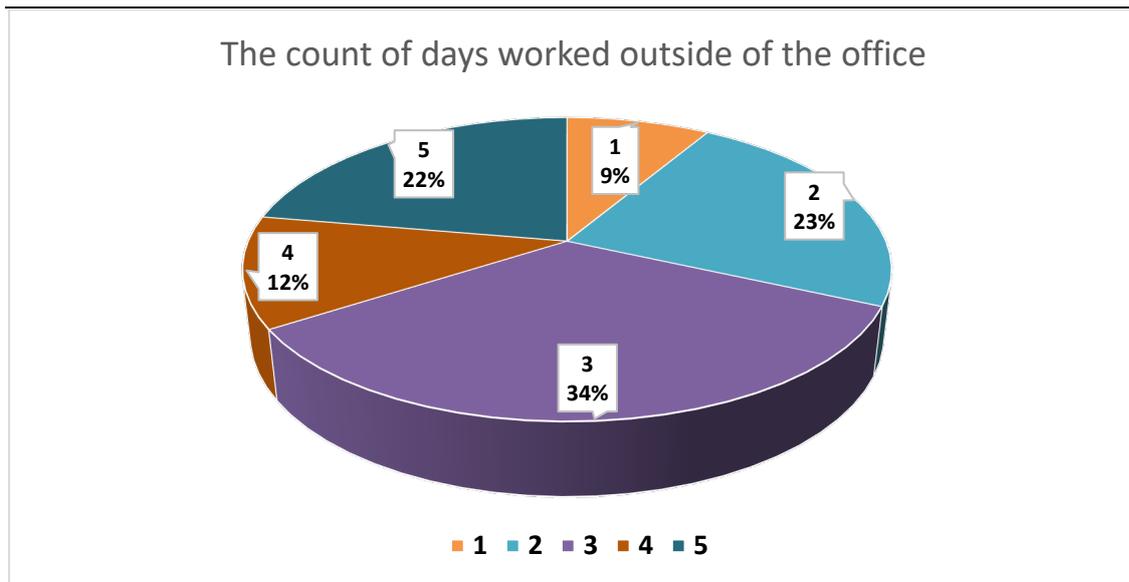
FIGURE 16. THE COUNT OF DAYS WORKED OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE DURING THE PAN-DEMIC

The last research question of the study investigates the differences in the level of satis-faction with the job satisfaction factors among employees who responded to have chil-dren at home and others that did not have children at home. The statistics that are re-quired to answer this question are illustrated in Figure 17.



**Children at home/not any children at home**
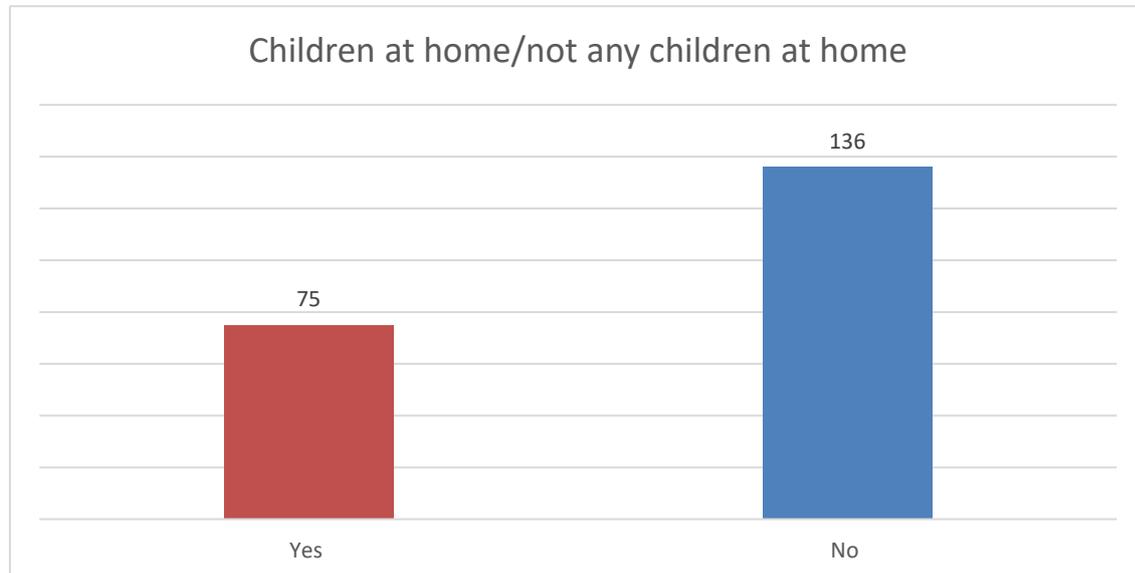
FIGURE 17. CHILDREN AT HOME (YES/NO)

## 4.2   Factor Analysis

To analyze this topic a questionnaire is conducted. The questionnaire is a mix of close-ended questions, statements, and a question with an open-end. The statements belong to three categories and together they count 31 statements. To statistically verify if statements nicely form a set of three variables; job satisfaction, management practices and work-life balance, a factor analysis is run. The **Total** column gives the amount of variance in the original variables accounted for by each component or the so-called Eigenvalue. The **% of Variance** column gives the variance accounted for by each component to the total variance in all the variables, expressed as a percentage. The **Cumulative %** gives the percentage of variance accounted for by the first four components (IBM, n.d.). For the initial solution there are as many components as variables. The results from this analysis conclude that 72.3% of the variance is explained by four components (Table 7).

TABLE 7. TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED - FACTOR ANALYSIS – INITIAL EIGENVALUES

| | **Initial Eigenvalue** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nr. | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 14.56 | 47.0% | **47.0%** |
| 2 | 4.63 | 14.9% | **61.9%** |
| 3 | 2.01 | 6.5% | **68.4%** |
| 4 | 1.20 | 3.9% | **72.3%** |

Another information retrieved from Factor Analysis is the Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings. The extracted components are presented in Table 8. They equal 68.1% of the variability in the original 31 statements. In other words, if the data would be reduced according this information, the complexity would reduce by losing 31.9% of information. The difference between the cumulative variability from the Initial Eigenvalue in Table 7 and the cumulative variability in Table 8 is 4.2%, which means that about 4.2% of the variation explained by the initial solution is lost due to latent factors unique to the original variables and variability that simply cannot be explained by the factor model. In social sciences the level of 60% or above of the Total Variance Explained is acceptable but still there is room for self-interpretation and argumentation of the variables before deleting from the model.

TABLE 8.TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED – FACTOR ANALYSIS – EXTRACTION OF SQUARED LOADINGS

| | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nr. | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 14.25 | 46.0% | **46.0%** |
| 2 | 4.32 | 13.9% | **59.6%** |
| 3 | 1.66 | 5.3% | **65.3%** |
| 4 | 0.87 | 2.8% | **68.1%** |

The third part of information from the Total Variance Explained is The Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings. Table 9 shows the variance explained by the extracted factors after rotation that tries to maximize the variance of each of the factors. In this case the total amount of the variance explained is distributed over the four extracted factors (IBM, n.d.).

TABLE 9. TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED - FACTOR ANALYSIS - ROTATED SUMS OF SQUARED LOADINGS

| | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nr. | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 9.25 | 29.8% | **29.8%** |
| 2 | 7.28 | 23.5% | **53.3%** |
| 3 | 3.62 | 11.7% | **65.0%** |
| 4 | 0.95 | 3.1% | **68.1%** |

Based on the Eigenvalue 1.0, the first component has the value 14.56, the second one 4.63, the third one 2.01 and the last component has the value 1.20 (Figure 18)
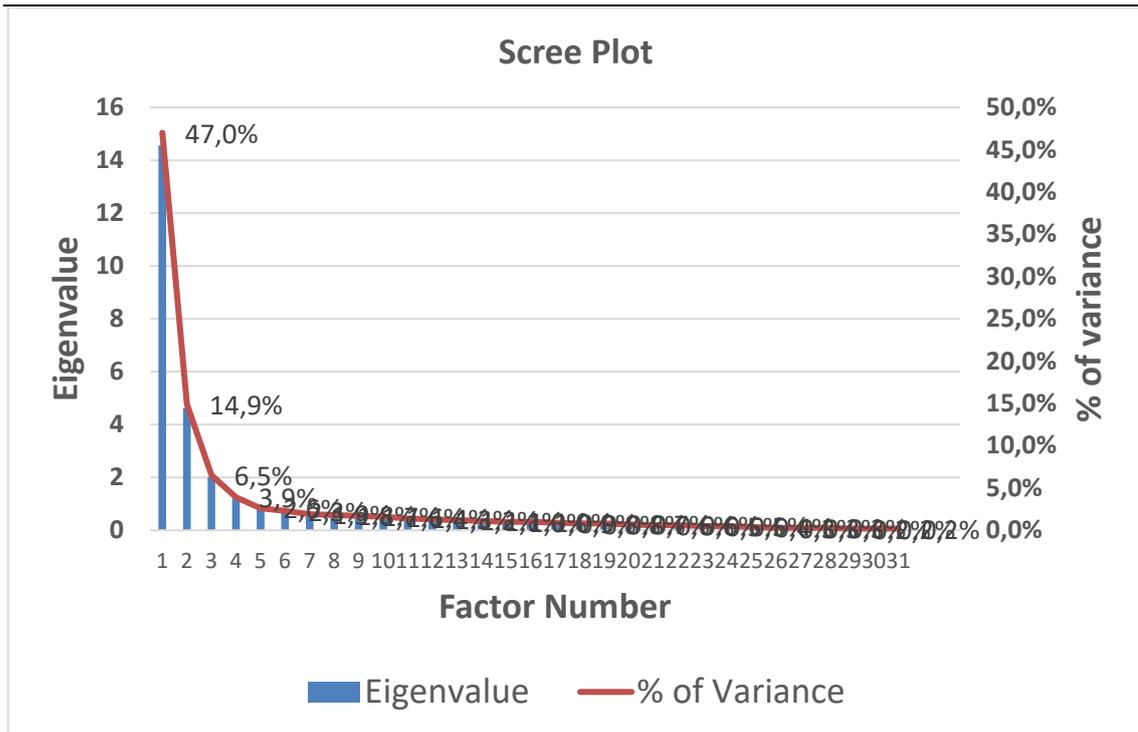
FIGURE 18. SCREE PLOT - FACTOR ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the main factors for each of the components a Rotated Factor Matrix is necessary (Table 10). In Table 10 all the study's variables are presented. Items 1 to 5 belong to the grouped variable named *Job Satisfaction*, items 6 to 20 belong to the grouped variable named *Management Practices* and the items 21 to 31 belong to the grouped variable named *Work – Life Balance* (see chapter 3.6. Discussing the Questionnaire).

The first rotated factor is most highly related with *While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as I f I were in the office, I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking, My lunch break was respected, The manager was very supportive, The tasks were well communicated , The urgent tasks were appropriately determined, The feedback was appropriately provided, The norms of team interaction were set, The team was kept connected, The rewards were distributed rightfully, The job responsibilities were clearly defined, The company provided the tools and technologies that are required to perform the job while working remotely, I felt valued for my contribution,* and *The personal milestones were celebrated (even virtually).* These variables represent the grouped variable named "Management Practices" (see chapter 3.6. Discussing the Questionnaire). The variables *While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as If I were in the office, While homeworking I could connect with my colleagues as well as if I were in the office, I could decide by myself the days on which I*

*switched to homeworking* and *The team was kept connected* are moderately correlated with the third factor that represent the grouped variable named "Job satisfaction". The variable *My lunch break was respected* is moderately correlated with the group of variables named "Work-Life Balance" (Table 10).

The second rotated factor is most highly correlated with the variables *I managed to balance work and personal life effectively, I was more productive due to the company's policy on telecommuting, I carved out a working space, I put the work away at the end of the day, Emotionally I felt better, I effectively set and followed the working hours, I turned the status 'Offline' on time, I managed effectively to fulfil my responsibilities, I avoided multitasking, I was happy to have face-to-face communication with my peers on a few days during the week,* and *I travelled more while working remotely.* These variables form the same group of variables belonging to the grouped variable named "Work-life Balance". These variables are not particularly correlated with the other three factors (Table 10).

The third rotated factor is most highly correlated with *The culture of the company, The meaningfulness of my job, The salary I was paid, The value of my feedback to the management,* and *The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job.* The variable *The culture of the company* is moderately (0.36) correlated with the first factor that represents "Management Practices". Also the variables *The salary I was paid* and *The value of my feedback to the management* are moderately correlated with the first factor that represents the grouped variable named "Management Practices" (Table 10).

The fourth factor isn't correlated with any of the variables. This is explained by the fact that this factor explains only 3.1% of the variance (Table 9).

Due to the fact that the Rotated Factor Matrix of the Factor Analysis groups the variables in the same order as they are grouped in the questionnaire, the next step of the data analysis will be conducted with all variables through measuring the reliability for each of the scales. In this case, the first intention of using Factor Analysis was to reduce the number of variables in the data, but due to the results given in this case it is used to explore the latent structure of the variables in the data set.

TABLE 10. ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX - FACTOR ANALYSIS

| | | Factor | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | The culture of the company | .36 | .14 | .66 | .07 |
| 2 | The meaningfulness of my job | .24 | .22 | .69 | .20 |
| 3 | The salary I was paid | .31 | .06 | .79 | -.13 |
| 4 | The value of my feedback to the management | .36 | .07 | .65 | -.08 |
| 5 | The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job | .24 | .04 | .68 | .02 |
| 6 | While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as If I were in the office | .63 | .23 | .47 | .10 |
| 7 | While homeworking I could connect with my colleagues as well as if I were in the office | .63 | .24 | .39 | .23 |
| 8 | I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking | .67 | .06 | .30 | -.2.1 |
| 9 | My lunch break was respected | .61 | .34 | .24 | .38 |
| 10 | The manager was very supportive | .79 | .22 | .27 | .03 |
| 11 | The tasks were well communicated | .83 | .22 | .21 | .03 |
| 12 | The urgent tasks were appropriately determined | .81 | .19 | .26 | -.08 |
| 13 | The feedback was appropriately provided | .81 | .18 | .20 | -.08 |
| 14 | The norms of team interaction were set | .80 | .19 | .14 | -.01 |
| 15 | The team was kept connected | .71 | .24 | .30 | .13 |
| 16 | The rewards were distributed rightfully | .80 | .20 | .15 | -.17 |
| 17 | The job responsibilities were clearly defined | .71 | .28 | .22 | .22 |
| 18 | The company provided the tools and technologies that are required to perform the job while working remotely | .69 | .19 | .18 | .00 |
| 19 | I felt valued for my contribution | .81 | .22 | .24 | .07 |
| 20 | The personal milestones were celebrated (even virtually) | .82 | .17 | .17 | -.12 |
| 21 | I managed to balance work and personal life effectively | .22 | .75 | .19 | -.14 |
| 22 | I was more productive due to the company's policy on telecommuting | .30 | .73 | .12 | -.05 |
| 23 | I carved out a working space | .09 | .78 | .20 | .32 |
| 24 | I put the work away at the end of the day | .20 | .80 | .08 | .20 |
| 25 | Emotionally I felt better | .24 | .79 | .01 | -.15 |
| 26 | I effectively set and followed the working hours | .17 | .84 | .20 | .13 |
| 27 | I turned the status 'Offline' on time | .16 | .79 | .10 | .09 |
| 28 | I managed effectively to fulfil my responsibilities | .12 | .86 | .06 | .09 |
| 29 | I avoided multitasking | .19 | .74 | .09 | -.09 |
| 30 | I was happy to have face-to-face communication with my peers on a few days during the week | .21 | .74 | -0.1 | -.19 |
| 31 | I travelled more while working remotely | .21 | .60 | -0.2 | -.48 |

## 4.3 Item Statistics

TABLE 11. ITEM STATISTICS

| Research Variables | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction | 211 | 3.56 | 1.02 |
| Management Practices | 211 | 3.45 | 1.05 |
| Work – Life Balance | 211 | 3.27 | 1.15 |

The answers to the questionnaire questions are coded as follows: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). As discussed in the previous chapter (3.6), all the statements are formulated positively. As per information presented in Table 11 the highest mean is presented by the variable named Job Satisfaction 3.56, then the variable named Management Practices at 3.45, and the last one Work-Life Balance variable at 3.27. The highest standard deviation from the mean is represented by the work-life balance variable at 0.77 followed by the variable Job Satisfaction at 0.66, and the Management Practices variable at the lowest value of 0.46.

The mean of the Job Satisfaction at 3.56 (Table 11) is oriented through the positive side but still is the middle as the minimum value is one and maximum is five, therefore the answer for the first research question (**RQ1**. *What is the level of job satisfaction for the targeted group of employees during the pandemic times?)* would be that this group of study based on the sample is neutral and very close to being satisfied regarding their perception on job satisfaction.

## 4.4   Individual Cronbach's α Scales

The Cronbach's α Index for the whole study in general gives an overview for the study. However, in order to deep dive in the questionnaire an individual Cronbach's α is run. As it can be noted, the reliability estimated for the internal consistency of the Job Satisfaction statements is 0.88 therefore it represents validity and high consistence (Table 12).

TABLE 12. RELIABILITY STATISTICS - JOB SATISFACTION

| Cronbach's α | Number of Items |
|---|---|
| .88 | 5 |

According to the information shown in Table 13, the hugest impact to the α Coefficient would occur if the statement "The Salary I was Paid" would be deleted, decreasing it to 0.84.

TABLE 13. CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED FROM THE STUDY

| Statements | Cronbach's α if Item Deleted |
|---|---|
| The Culture of the Company | .85 |
| The meaningfulness of my job | .85 |
| The Salary I was Paid | .84 |
| The value of my feedback to the management | .86 |
| The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job | .85 |

The internal consistency of the scales for the second group of statements belonging to Management Practices is higher comparing to the internal consistency of the scales belonging to Job Satisfaction statements (Table 14).

TABLE 14. RELIABILITY STATISTICS - MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

| Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|---|---|
| .97 | 15 |

Moreover, Table 15 shows the impact of each variable to the α coefficient of Management Practices scales. None of the statements has a noticeable impact to the α Coefficient if it was deleted.

TABLE 15. CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM IS DELETED FROM THE STUDY

| Statements | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
|---|---|
| While homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as If I were in the office | .96 |
| While homeworking I could connect with my colleagues as well as If I were in the office | .96 |
| I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking | .97 |
| My lunch break was respected | .96 |
| The manager was very supportive | .96 |
| The tasks were well communicated | .96 |
| The urgent tasks were appropriately determined | .96 |
| The feedback was appropriately provided | .96 |
| The norms of team interactions were set | .96 |
| The team was kept connected | .96 |
| The rewards were distributed rightfully | .96 |
| The job responsibilities were clearly defined | .96 |
| The company offered the tools and technologies I needed to perform the job while working remotely | .96 |
| I felt valued for my contribution | .96 |
| The personal milestones were celebrated (even virtually) | .96 |

The α coefficient for the third statements belonging to Work-Life balance is also significantly above 0.70 (Table 16).

TABLE 16. RELIABILITY STATISTICS - WORK-LIFE BALANCE SCALES

| Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|---|---|
| .94 | 11 |

The following information explains the α Coefficient change if an item is deleted from the third group of statements belonging to Work-Life Balance (Table 17).

TABLE 17. ALPHA COEFFICIENT IF ITEM DELETED FROM THE STUDY

| Statements | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
|---|---|
| I managed to balance work and personal life effectively | .94 |
| I was more productive due to the company's policy on telecommuting | .94 |
| I carved out a working space | .94 |
| I put the work away at the end of the day | .94 |
| Emotionally I felt better | .94 |
| I effectively set and followed the working hours | .93 |
| I turned the status 'offline' on time | .94 |
| I managed effectively to fulfil my responsibilities | .93 |
| I avoided multitasking | .94 |
| I was happy to have face-to-face communication with my peers in a few days during the week | .94 |
| I travelled more while working remotely | .95 |

Alpha coefficients for Management Practices and Work-life Balance are above 0.70, therefore they indicate an excellent reliability. Moreover, all three variables form nicely three separate factors.

## 4.5 Factors influencing job satisfaction

This chapter is dedicated to understand which the main factor is influencing the relationship between job satisfaction and remote working during the Covid-19 pandemic under the requirement that respondents should have worked remotely during these times in order to fill out the questionnaire. Hence, this section concludes by answering the second research question of this study that is formulated as following;

*RQ2; which variable of the study impacts the most the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Remote working?*

Due to the data being not normally distributed and having three variables in the study, the Friedman test has been used to test for differences between three sets of variables measured in ordinal scales.

TABLE 18. MEAN RANKS – FRIEDMAN TEST

| The Grouped Variables | Mean Rank |
|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction | 2.07 |
| Management Practices | 1.97 |
| Work-Life Balance | 1.97 |

TABLE 19. TEST STATISTICS – FRIEDMAN TEST

| N | 211 |
|---|---|
| Chi – Square | 3.28 |
| Df | 2 |
| Asymp.Sig | .194 |

Table 18 shows the mean rank for each of the three variables and Table 19 presents the test statistics from Friedman test. According to Table 19, there is no a significant difference between variables, as 0.194 is larger comparing to the cut off level of the confidence level at the p-value 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis that states that the location of the three variables is equal is not rejected.

Despite the fact that the Friedman test that the distribution of the three variables is not considered unequal, anyhow a Bonferroni Correction is applied for crosschecking regarding pairwise comparison. The new significance level is 0.017 as the usual 0.05 level of confidence is divided by the number of variables, in this case by three. The Wilcoxon test is applied to identify further the similarities of the variables. So in this case using the job satisfaction, management practices and work-life balance variables, through the Wilcoxon test the null hypothesis that will be tested states that the median of the differences between the job satisfaction, work-life balance and management practices is equal to zero.

The first Wilcoxon test is run for Job Satisfaction and Management Practices. At the beginning of this chapter the descriptive statistics for the three set of variables is provided. According to the data shown in Table 11 (see chapter - Item Statistics) the mean of Job Satisfaction is 3.56 with a standard deviation of 1.02 and the mean of Management Practices variable is 3.46 with a standard deviation of 1.05. Table 20 presents the Wilcoxon non-parametric test for job satisfaction and management practices and it provides the number of participants that have negative ranks, positive ranks and ties. In this study this means that there are 52 cases where the job satisfaction level is lower than the level of satisfaction with the management practices, there are 64 cases where the level of job satisfaction is higher than the level of satisfaction with the management practices and 95 cases (almost 50% of the participants) where the participants evaluated the same level of satisfaction for their job and management practices.

Based in the content of the statements belonging to the Job Satisfaction and Management Practices variables, there is a general agreement among researchers that both of them must have a strong correlation. Is it proven from many studies that good management practices increase job satisfaction levels and vice-versa. Anyways, in this study is also a significant amount of cases where the correlation between job satisfaction and management practices is proven, but also a significant level of cases where this correlation is not that strong.

TABLE 20. WILCOXON TEST WITH JOB SATISFACTION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

|  |  | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction – Management Practices | Negative Ranks | 52 | 50.27 | 2262.00 |
|  | Positive Ranks | 64 | 53.34 | 3094.99 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ties | 95 | | |
| | Total | 211 | | |

According to Friedman test there is no a significant difference between variables, hence the null hypothesis that states that the distribution of the three variables is equal is not rejected. Also the test statistics from Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test prove that we do not have enough evidence to reject H0 hypothesis that states that the data are equal. The significance level from Wilcoxon Test (0.146) is above Bonferroni Correlation Alpha at 0.017 cut off point (Table 21).

TABLE 21. WILXOCON TEST STATISTICS

| | Job Satisfaction – Management Practices |
|---|---|
| Z | -1.45 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .146 |

The second Wilcoxon test is run for both variables, Job Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance. Table 22 presents the Wilcoxon non-parametric test for job satisfaction and work-life balance, hence the number of participants that have negative ranks, positive ranks and ties is provided. In this study this means that there are 46 cases where the job satisfaction level is lower than the level of satisfaction with the work-life balance, there are 75 cases where the level of job satisfaction is higher than the level of satisfaction with the work-life balance and 90 cases (almost 50% of the participants) where the participants evaluated the same level of satisfaction for their job and work-life balance.

TABLE 22. WILCOXON TEST WITH JOB SATISFACTION AND WORK – LIFE BALANCE

| | | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction – Work-Life Balance | Negative Ranks | 46 | 50.43 | 2168.50 |
| | Positive Ranks | 75 | 61.04 | 4272.50 |
| | Ties | 90 | | |
| | Total | 211 | | |

According to Friedman test there is not a significant difference between variables, hence the null hypothesis is retained that states that the distribution of the three variables is equal is not rejected. Anyhow, the third Wilcoxon test is run for the last pair of variables, Management Practices and Work-Life Balance. The test statistics from Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test prove that there is a statistical evidence to reject H0 hypothesis that states that the data have equal size. The significance level from Wilcoxon Test (0.002) is slightly below Bonferroni Correlation Alpha at 0.017 cut off point (Table 23).

TABLE 23. WILXOCON TEST STATISTICS

|  | Job Satisfaction – Work & Life Balance |
|---|---|
| Z | -3.10 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .002 |

Table 24 presents the Wilcoxon non-parametric test for management practices and work-life balance and the information for the number of participants that have negative ranks, positive ranks and ties is provided. In this study this means that there are 49 cases where the level of management practices satisfaction is lower than the level of satisfaction with the work-life balance, there are 63 cases where the level of management practices satisfaction is higher than the level of satisfaction with the work-life balance and 99 cases (almost 50% of the participants) where the participants evaluated the same level of satisfaction for the management practices in the organization and work-life balance.

TABLE 24. WILXOCON TEST WITH MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND WORK - LIFE BALANCE

|  |  | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Management Practices – Work-Life Balance | Negative Ranks | 49 | 41.30 | 1776.00 |
|  | Positive Ranks | 63 | 55.13 | 2977.00 |
|  | Ties | 99 |  |  |
|  | Total | 211 |  |  |

Also the test statistics from Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test prove that we do not have enough evidence to reject H0 hypothesis that states that the data are equal. The significance level from Wilcoxon Test (0.026) is above Bonferroni Correlation Alpha at 0.017 cut off point (Table 25).

TABLE 25. WILXOCON TEST STATISTICS

|  | Job Satisfaction – Work & Life Balance |
|---|---|
| Z | -2.22 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .026 |

The last step in order to answer the second research question that is formulated as following: "*Which variable of the study impacts the most the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Remote working?*" would be Spearman's Correlation Coefficient (Table 26).

TABLE 26. CORRELATIONS

|  |  | Job Satisfaction | Management Practices | Work-Life Balance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction | Spearman's Correlation | 1.000 | .557 | .302 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | <.001 | <.001 |
|  | N | 211 | 211 | 211 |
| Management Practices | Spearman's Correlation | .557 | 1.000 | .442 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 |  | <.001 |
|  | N | 211 | 211 | 211 |
| Work – Life Balance | Spearman's Correlation | .302 |  | 1.000 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | <.001 |  |
|  | N | 211 | 211 | 211 |

Table 26 shows that Spearman's correlation between job satisfaction and management practices is .557 and significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed). Generally a correlation around

0.5 to 1.0 is considered a large positive correlation, therefore this indicates that correlation is statistically significant at the $\alpha$=.01 level of confidence and the relationship between job satisfaction and management practices is positively moderate. In other words, with better management practices, job satisfaction level is suspected to increase as well. Anyhow, a weaker relationship is found between job satisfaction and work-life balance. This relationship represents a moderate correlation at the level of 0.302 and is statistically significant at the p=0.01 level of significance. The correlation between management practices and work-life balance is better comparing to the correlation between job satisfaction and work-life balance at the level of 0.442 and is statistically significant at the level p=.01 level of significance.

According to the literature regarding the most important job satisfaction influencers, the two group of variables; management practices and work-life balance, group the most important aspects which impact the level of job satisfaction. However, in this study there is a positively moderate relationship between job satisfaction and management practices applied in the company, also a positive relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance. The last relationship (job satisfaction – work & life balance) represents a weaker correlation comparing to the first relationship (job satisfaction and management practices). The overall level of job satisfaction appears to be moderate.

### 4.5.1 The Kruskal – Wallis H Test & Mann-Whitney Test

The third research question of the study is formulated as following: "*Are there any differences between genders in terms of the job satisfaction influencers?*" In order to answer this question, the Kruskal-Wallis test is used which is a rank-based nonparametric test that can be used to determine if there are statistically significant differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on a continuous or ordinal dependent variable (Laerd Statistics, n.d.).

According to the information shown in Table 27, Job Satisfaction has a non-significant p-value of 0.098. So, there is not any statistically significant difference between genders regarding the level of job satisfaction. However, Management Practices lead to a significant p-value of 0.004. This means that there is a statistically difference between genders in the level of management practices satisfaction. Work-life balance is not perceived differently from respondents belonging to different gender. Its p-value of 0.97 does not represent a significant difference between genders as it exceeds the level of confidence at 0.05.

TABLE 27. KRUSKAL - WALLIS TEST STATISTICS

|  | Job Satisfaction | Management Practices | Work-Life Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square | 4.65 | 10.95 | 0.06 |
| Df | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .098 | .004 | .968 |

According to information provided in Table 27, the variable Management Practices has a significant p-value of 0.004. Therefore, that means that in this sample of the study there is a difference between genders in the level of Management Practices satisfaction. This information is very limited as the difference is generally recognized. In order to determine where specifically the difference is, the Mann – Whitney test is used (Table 28). This method is very compatible for this case as the variables do not have to fulfil a distribution curve and the other assumption fulfilled is that the study must have only two independent random samples with at least ordinal available scaled characteristics. The null hypothesis tested with the Mann Whitney Test states that in the population, the sum of the rankings in the two group does not differ. The p-value 0.002 represents a significant difference in satisfaction with management practices from females and males, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 28. TEST STATISTICS FROM MANN-WHITNEY TEST

|  | Mann-Whitney U | Wilcoxon W | Z | Asymp. Sig. (2 – tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Management Practices | 3518.50 | 7346.50 | -3.07 | .002 |

Table 29 presents the Mean Rank for both genders, female and male. The difference is explained by females having higher level of management practices satisfaction compared to the male gender. The mean rank of females is 108.12, additionally the mean rank of the male gender is 88.44. The answer to the third research question "*Is there any difference between genders in terms of the job satisfaction influencers?,* would be that the female gender perceived better management practices' satisfaction.

TABLE 29. RANKS / MANN WHITNEY TEST

| | | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Management Prac-tices | Female | 110 | 108.12 | 11568.50 |
| | Male | 88 | 84.44 | 7346.50 |
| | Total | 198 | | |

Table 30 and Table 31 show that there is not any difference between the groups in term of Management Practices' satisfaction. So, the group of females and the other group that did not specify their gender do not have any difference in the perception of the management practices in the company and the same patterns are realized between the males the group that did not specify their gender. This is explained by the fact that for both cases the significance level is higher comparing to the p-value of 5%.

TABLE 30. TEST STATISTICS FROM MANN-WHITNEY TEST (FEMALE AND NO ANSWER GROUP)

| | Mann-Whitney U | Wilcoxon W | Z | Asymp. Sig. (2 – tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Management Practices | 119.50 | 129.50 | -1.58 | .114 |

TABLE 31. TEST STATISTICS FROM MANN-WHITNEY TEST (MALE AND NO ANSWER GROUP)

| | Mann-Whitney U | Wilcoxon W | Z | Asymp. Sig. (2 – tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Management Practices | 131.00 | 141.00 | -.87 | .384 |

**4.5.2 Frequencies for statements belonging to Management Practices Variable**

A research from the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), reports that employees are divided about the advantages and disadvantages of remote working, and those perceptions are colored by gender as well (Gurchiek, 2021). Most of the differences are related to the work – life balance, but this current study resulted in different perception regarding the statements grouped to the named variable **Management Practices.**

It is proven that the variable Management Practices is statistically different in comparison to genders (female and male). This variable is a grouped variable of the statements given in Table 32. Here again, the Kruskal-Wallis test is used to determine which statement leads to a significant difference between two groups. Moreover, Table 33 shows the level of significance for each of the statements. The following statements in Table 33 are the statements which do not have any statistical significant difference between two genders – 1) while homeworking I could connect with my colleagues as well as if I were in the office, 2) My lunch break was respected, 3) The manager was very supportive, 4) The tasks were well communicated, 5) The urgent tasks were appropriately determines, 6) The norms of team interaction were set, 7) The team was kept connected, 8) The rewards were distributed rightfully, 9) The job responsibilities were clearly defined, and the statement 10) The company provided the tools and technologies that are required to perform the jo while working remotely.

The other ones accept the alternative hypothesis that states that there is a statistical significant difference between genders in terms of the satisfaction with the respective statements.

TABLE 32. FREQUENCIES / KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

|  |  | Gender | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Female | Male | No Answer |
| While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as If I were in the office | > Median | 23 | 7 | 2 |
|  | ≤ Median | 87 | 81 | 11 |
| While homeworking I could connect with my colleagues as well as if I were in the office | > Median | 24 | 8 | 4 |
|  | ≤ Median | 86 | 80 | 9 |
| I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking | > Median | 62 | 31 | 3 |
|  | ≤ Median | 48 | 57 | 10 |
| My lunch break was respected | > Median | 26 | 27 | 5 |
|  | ≤ Median | 84 | 61 | 8 |
| The manager was very supportive | > Median | 27 | 13 | 4 |
|  | ≤ Median | 83 | 75 | 9 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The tasks were well communicated | > Median | 29 | 15 | 5 |
| | ≤ Median | 81 | 73 | 8 |
| The urgent tasks were appropriately determined | > Median | 27 | 17 | 6 |
| | ≤ Median | 83 | 71 | 7 |
| The feedback was appropriately provided | > Median | 26 | 7 | 3 |
| | ≤ Median | 84 | 81 | 10 |
| The norms of team interaction were set | > Median | 24 | 9 | 4 |
| | ≤ Median | 86 | 79 | 9 |
| The team was kept connected | > Median | 28 | 10 | 5 |
| | ≤ Median | 82 | 78 | 8 |
| The rewards were distributed rightfully | > Median | 25 | 12 | 5 |
| | ≤ Median | 85 | 76 | 8 |
| The job responsibilities were clearly defined | > Median | 26 | 13 | 8 |
| | ≤ Median | 84 | 75 | 5 |
| The company provided the tools and technologies that are required to perform the job while working remotely | > Median | 24 | 19 | 1 |
| | ≤ Median | 86 | 69 | 12 |
| I felt valued for my contribution | > Median | 29 | 9 | 4 |
| | ≤ Median | 81 | 79 | 9 |
| The personal milestones were celebrated (even virtually) | > Median | 23 | 7 | 10 |
| | ≤ Median | 87 | 81 | 3 |

TABLE 33. TEST STATISTICS / KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

| | N | Median | Chi-Square | Df | Asymp.Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as If I were in the office | 211 | 4 | 6.12 | 2 | .047 |
| While homeworking I could connect with my colleagues as well as if I were in the office | 211 | 4 | 5.50 | 2 | .064 |
| I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking | 211 | 3 | 9.73 | 2 | .008 |
| My lunch break was respected | 211 | 4 | 1.40 | 2 | .498 |
| The manager was very supportive | 211 | 4 | 2.22 | 2 | .329 |
| The tasks were well communicated | 211 | 4 | 2.54 | 2 | .281 |
| The urgent tasks were appropriately determined | 211 | 4 | 0.57 | 2 | .753 |
| The feedback was appropriately provided | 211 | 4 | 7.71 | 2 | .021 |
| The norms of team interaction were set | 211 | 4 | 5.08 | 2 | .079 |
| The team was kept connected | 211 | 4 | 5.88 | 2 | .053 |
| The rewards were distributed rightfully | 211 | 4 | 3.32 | 2 | .190 |
| The job responsibilities were clearly defined | 211 | 4 | 2.77 | 2 | .250 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The company provided the tools and technologies that are required to perform the job while working remotely | 211 | 4 | 1.93 | 2 | .381 |
| I felt valued for my contribution | 211 | 4 | 9.39 | 2 | .009 |
| The personal milestones were celebrated (even virtually) | 211 | 4 | 7.65 | 2 | .022 |

As mentioned in chapter 3.6, one of the concerns during the pandemic was keeping the team connected. According to a study of Cutter (2020), the connection between younger professionals and managers faces challenges and does not develop at the same rate as when working from the traditional workspace (please refer to chapter 2.5 – Remote Working). Therefore this aspect is assessed through the statement "While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as if I were in the office". In this study in general the level of satisfaction with management practices regarding how managers maintained connection with other colleagues is high, explained with a median of 4 (Table 33). However, there is a statistical significant difference between genders on how they perceived satisfaction on this regard. According to information given in Table 32, females are slightly more satisfied with the level of connection with the manager while working remotely.

Flexibility in the scheduled working time increases the employees' feeling of autonomy which is linked directly with an increase in the work-life balance, hence an increase in job satisfaction as well (Alley & Shockley, 2009). Hence, a very important aspect is the flexibility on deciding when to switch to homeworking. In general, this statement "I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking" represents an "outlier" among all the other statements as its median it 3, that is linked with the answer "neutral" regarding the level of satisfaction. Females were significantly more satisfied with the flexibility on deciding by themselves when to switch to homeworking (Table 32).

According to Pascual (2021), providing feedback has become challenging in today's remote working environment, anyhow there must be a way to develop a strong feedback culture that helps to foster healthy communication within the team, encourages the professional development and growth of the team members, and helps to refine the systems and work processes. This study identified that in the studied sample there is a difference on the level of the satisfaction regarding how appropriately the feedback was provided. The data given in Table 32 show that females were more satisfied with the appropriateness of the provided feedback compared to men's satisfaction.

Two genders (female & male) did not feel the same regarding their contributions' recognition. The results of this study have similar patterns to the results of a study conducted from the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) (Gurchiek, 2021). The research from SHRM found that men, more than women, have the opinion that working from home will negatively impact their managers' performance evaluations. The data given in Table 32 show that men are less satisfied with the level of the performance evaluation comparing to women' level of satisfaction on that regard.

To summarize the answer for the third research question "*Are there any differences between genders in terms of the job satisfaction influencers?",* the differences among women and men were identified on the level of satisfaction with the connection manager-employee while working remotely, flexibility to decide by themselves whenever they could decide to switch to homeworking, the difference is noticed also on the aspect of how appropriately the feedback was provided, and the feeling of being valued for their contribution. An important fact is that similar patterns are found in other studies as well.

The answer to the third research question is based on the significance value of p=0.05, however the p-values of the statements "*While on homeworking I could connect with my manager as well as If I were in the office*", "*The feedback was appropriately provided*", and "*The personal milestones were celebrated (even virtually)*" would not be significant after Bonferroni-correction. Therefore, the results of these statements can only serve as orientation.

## 4.6 Differences between respondents who reported to have children at home vs. not to children at home

According to many studies regarding the impact of remote working to employees who have children that they must take care of during the day, prove that remote working was a challenge for them. The last research question has the purpose of identifying what are the differences in terms of job satisfaction influencers between employees who have children at home and the others who do not have children at home. The answers of the respondents are coded "0" for not having children at home and "1" for having children at home. To keep the same work flow, the Kruskal-Wallis test has been chosen again to identify in which variable there are differences between employees who have reported to have children at home versus the others who do not. Table 34 shows the test statistics from Kruskal – Wallis test and according to the results, Management Practices variable is the only variable for which its level of satisfaction does not get impacted by the fact of

having or not children at home. Job satisfaction and Work – Life Balance according to the results in Table 34 is suspected to get impacted by the fact of having or not children at home with a significant level of confidence of 0.02 and 0.02 respectively.

TABLE 34. KRUSKAL - WALLIS TEST STATISTICS

|  | Job Satisfaction | Management Practices | Work-Life Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square | 5.32 | .02 | 5.43 |
| Df | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .021 | .878 | .020 |

Table 35 presents the test statistics from Mann-Whitney test for the Job Satisfaction variable. The p-value of 0.02 (Table 35) proves that employees who have children at home are more satisfied with the job comparing to employees who do not have children at home (Table 36). This is expressed by the mean rank of employees who do not have children at home that it is 94.6 and the mean rank of employees who have children at home that is 113.8.

TABLE 35. TEST STATISTICS FROM MANN-WHITNEY TEST (JOB SATISFACTION FOR HAVING OR NOT HAVING A CHILDREN AT HOME)

|  | Mann-Whitney U | Wilcoxon W | Z | Asymp. Sig. (2 – tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction | 3585.00 | 12901.00 | -2.31 | .021 |

TABLE 36. RANKS / MANN WHITNEY TEST (JOB SATISFACTION FOR HAVING OR NOT HAVING A CHILDREN AT HOME)

|  |  | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction | 0 | 136 | 94.86 | 12901.00 |
|  | 1 | 75 | 113.85 | 7400.00 |
|  | Total | 211 |  |  |

Table 37 shows the test statistics from Mann-Whitney test for the Work-Life variable. The p-value of 0.02 (Table 37) proves that employees who have children at home are less

satisfied with the work-life balance comparing to employees who do not have children at home (Table 38). This is explained by the mean rank of employees who do not have children at home that is 103.82 and the mean rank of employees who have children at home that is 84.67.

TABLE 37. TEST STATISTICS FROM MANN-WHITNEY TEST (WORK & LIFE BALANCE FOR HAVING OR NOT HAVING A CHILDREN AT HOME)

|  | Mann-Whitney U | Wilcoxon W | Z | Asymp. Sig. (2 – tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work & Life Balance | 3339.00 | 5419.00 | -2.33 | .020 |

TABLE 38. RANKS / MANN WHITNEY TEST (WORK & LIFE BALANCE FOR HAVING OR NOT HAVING A CHILDREN AT HOME)

|  |  | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work & Life Balance | 0 | 136 | 103.82 | 13496.00 |
|  | 1 | 75 | 84.67 | 5419.00 |
|  | Total | 211 |  |  |

Work-Life balance has an influence on job satisfaction. Working remotely serves a better work-life balance, but still there are many factors to take into consideration when it comes to the remote working practice and its impact to the work – life balance. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, sharing the workspace with children has its own consequences. Therefore, in this study as well, one of the differences is found in the level of work-life balance satisfaction between employees that reported to have children at home and the others that do not.

### 4.6.1 Statistics for statements belonging to Work – Life Balance Variable

It is proven that the variable Work-Life Balance is statistically different in comparison to employees that have children at home and others that do not. This variable is an aggregated variable of the statements included in Table 29. Here again, the Kruskal-Wallis test is used to determine in which statement the significant difference between two

groups lies. Moreover, Table 39 shows the level of significance for each of the state-
ments and the yellow highlighted figures are the statements which do not have any sta-
tistical significant difference between two groups. So, avoiding multitasking and feeling
happy to have face-to-face communication with the colleagues on a few days during the
week are not dependent on the fact of having or not children at home. In both cases, the
majority of respondents reported to be equal or less satisfied comparing to their median.
The median for the statement "I avoided multitasking" is 3 (the state of being neutral with
the level of satisfaction), and the median for the statement "I was happy to have face-to-
face communication with my peers on a few days during the week" is 4 (the state of being
satisfied with the level of satisfaction) (Table 39). Moreover, for these two statements the
null hypothesis (H0) that states that there is no statistical difference between two groups
is rejected. The other statements accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a differ-
ence between two groups in terms of the satisfaction with the respective statements.

TABLE 39. TEST STATISTICS / KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

| | N | Median | Chi-Square | Df | Asymp.Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I managed to balance work and personal life effectively | 211 | 3 | 6.45 | 1 | .011 |
| I was more productive due to the company's policy on telecommuting | 211 | 3 | 12.49 | 1 | .000 |
| I put the work away at the end of the day | 211 | 4 | 4.66 | 1 | .031 |
| Emotionally I felt better | 211 | 4 | 3.83 | 1 | .050 |
| I carved out a working space | 211 | 3 | 5.89 | 1 | .015 |
| I effectively set and followed the working hours | 211 | 4 | 9.54 | 1 | .002 |
| I turned the status "offline" on time | 211 | 3 | 5.34 | 1 | .021 |
| I managed effectively to fulfil my responsibilities | 211 | 4 | 5.46 | 1 | .019 |
| I avoided multitasking | 211 | 3 | 2.84 | 1 | .092 |
| I was happy to have face-to-face communication with my peers on a few days during the week | 211 | 4 | 2.42 | 1 | .120 |
| I travelled more while working remotely | 211 | 3 | 8.26 | 1 | .004 |

The information given in Table 41 shows the frequencies from each of the statements
belonging to Work-Life balance variable. The two analysed groups shared different level
of satisfaction with the management of the balance between work and personal life while
working remotely during the pandemic. Employees that reported of not having children
at home managed to balance work and personal life better comparing to the other group.

Among the respondents, 63 of them have reported a higher level of satisfaction comparing to the median that is 3 (neutral level of satisfaction), and 30 out of 75 respondents admitted to have experienced less or equal level of satisfaction with the management of the balance between job and personal life comparing to the median. The results for this statement are difficult to interpret because also 73 respondents without children at home reported to have experienced lower or equal level of satisfaction with the management of the work and personal life balance while working remotely and 45 respondents with children at home reported to have had higher level of satisfaction with this aspect while working remotely in comparison to the median (Table 41). In general, the fact that employees that reported of not having children at home managed to balance work and personal life better comparing to the other group is furthermore validated through the information provided in Table 41, in which the mean rank for the group of employees that reported of not having children at home is much higher, with a mean rank 107.10, than the other group with a mean rank of 83.81.

Another statement perceived differently is the feeling of being productive due to the company's policy on telecommuting. Regarding this aspect, in total of respondents that have not had children at home compared to the median, 54.4% of respondents reported to be more satisfied with their productivity due to the company's policy on telecommuting and 45.6% of them reported to be less satisfied with that aspect. Moreover, in total of respondents that have had children at home while working remotely in comparison to the median, 40% of them reported higher level of satisfaction with their productivity feeling and 60% of them reported to be less satisfied with that aspect (Table 41). These statistics are furthermore proven though the mean rank. The mean rank for the group of employees that did not have children at home is higher comparing to the other group (Table 41).

The third statement that is perceived differently between two groups states "I put the work away at the end of the day". According to many studies on the impact of remote working to the work – balance, this aspect is pointed out because many results show that employees experience the feeling of being overloaded and over-time working under these circumstances. In this case this aspect of remote working is analysed through the independent variable of having or not children at home. The results show that having children at home makes it difficult to put the work away at the end of day. According to the frequencies (Table 40), only 28.14% of respondents that did not have children at home reported to be more satisfied with this statement comparing to the median, and on the other hand  38.66% of respondents from other group reported to me more satisfied

in this regard. Anyhow, the mean rank for the first group is higher comparing to the second group, and this leads to the conclusion that again the group of respondents that did not have children at home were more satisfied with the aspect of setting boundaries between work and personal life, so putting the work away at the end of the day.

The level of satisfaction with the effectiveness of setting and following the working hours is considerably equal or lower comparing to the median (4) for both groups (Table 41). Only 22.8% of respondents that did not have children at home reported higher level of satisfaction comparing to the median, and also only 14.66% of respondents that had children at home while working remotely reported higher level of satisfaction in comparison to the median (Table 40). This results are difficult to interpret based only in the frequencies because the second comparison is based on frequencies equal or lower to the median. Therefore the mean rank given a clearer overview. In this case also, the mean rank for the respondents that did not have children at home is higher (105.95) comparing to the mean rank of the second group that is 80.33.

Carving out a working space was considered a very important factor to the level of satisfaction with the effectiveness and productivity of employees' while being on remote mode. In the current study, only 22.7% of the respondents that reported to have had children at home while working remotely reported higher level of satisfaction on this regard comparing to the median. The level of satisfaction in this case could be translated as the level of agreement in particular. On the other hand, a low level of "agreement" is reported from the other group of respondents as well. Only 27.7% of respondents without children at home reported to have carved out a working space comparing to the median while working remotely (Table 40). If taking into consideration the mean of this statement, it represents a neutral level of satisfaction. So in general both groups are not satisfied with the carving out space while working remotely. Anyhow, the mean rank for the group of employees' that did not have children at home is higher comparing to the other group (Table 41).

Studies on the impact of remote working to the work-life balance have differences in results regarding to its impact to the emotional state of employees'. This study aims to understand the impact of having children at home to the emotional state of employees. This impact could be negative and positive as well. The negative aspect might include the time that should be dedicated to the children or even possible environment distractions. The positive impact might cover the positive feelings of being close to the children. In the current study, the median is 4, an answer linked to the state of being satisfied on

how they felt while working remotely. In comparison to the median, 42.64% of respondents that haven't had children at home reported higher level of satisfaction and quite similarly, 41.33% of respondents that had children at home while working remotely reported higher level of satisfaction as well. In both cases, the responses corresponding to the equal or smaller level of satisfaction comparing to the median are higher (Table 40). In general, the group of respondents that did not have children at home while working remotely has a higher mean rank of 104.6 comparing to the other group with a mean rank of 83.98 (Table 41).

One of the advantages of remote working is the ability to be flexible in terms of the working space and not fixed to the traditional working space. Therefore, the output of the analysis for the statement "I travelled more while working remotely" for both cases is predictable. The median for this statement is 3, so this means that in general the respondents reported neither a low nor a high level of satisfaction (Table 39). In both cases the percentage of respondents that reported higher level of satisfaction compared to the median is lower than the percentage of satisfaction of lower or equal to the median (Table 40). In general, if the analysis would be based on the mean rank, the group of respondents that did not have children at home travelled more (mean rank 105.41) in comparison to the other group (mean rank 81.43) (Table 41).

The answer for the last research question of this study that states as following "*Is Job Satisfaction, Management Practices and Work - Life Balance perceived differently among employees who responded to have children at home and others that did not have children at home?,* would be that the level of satisfaction with the work-balance while working remotely is one of the variables that is suspected to get influenced by the fact of having or not children at home. In all cases, the group of respondents that had children at home, is suspected to be less satisfied with the aspects that are covered via the statements belonging to the work-life balance in comparison to the group of respondents that are significantly suspected to be more satisfied with the work-life balance when there are no children at home during the remote working mode.

TABLE 40. FREQUENCIES – KLUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

| | | Children at Home | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | No | Yes |
| I managed to balance work and personal life effectively | > Median | 63 | 30 |
| | ≤ Median | 73 | 45 |
| | > Median | 74 | 30 |

| I was more productive due to the company's policy on telecommuting | ≤ Median | 62 | 45 |
|---|---|---|---|
| I put the work away at the end of the day | > Median | 38 | 29 |
| | ≤ Median | 98 | 46 |
| I carved out a working space | > Median | 39 | 17 |
| | ≤ Median | 97 | 58 |
| Emotionally I felt better | > Median | 58 | 31 |
| | ≤ Median | 78 | 44 |
| I effectively set and followed the working hours | > Median | 31 | 11 |
| | ≤ Median | 105 | 64 |
| I turned the status "offline" on time | > Median | 71 | 36 |
| | ≤ Median | 65 | 39 |
| I managed effectively to fulfil my responsibilities | > Median | 34 | 16 |
| | ≤ Median | 102 | 59 |
| I avoided multitasking | > Median | 55 | 33 |
| | ≤ Median | 79 | 42 |
| I was happy to have face-to-face communication with my peers on a few days during the week | > Median | 29 | 18 |
| | ≤ Median | 106 | 57 |
| I travelled more while working remotely | > Median | 59 | 29 |
| | ≤ Median | 77 | 46 |

TABLE 41. RANKS / KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

| Statements | Children at home | N | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| I managed to balance work and personal life effectively | No | 136 | 104.48 |
| | Yes | 75 | 83.31 |
| I was more productive due to company's policy on telecommuting | No | 136 | 107.10 |
| | Yes | 75 | 77.99 |
| I put the work away at the end of the day | No | 136 | 102.83 |
| | Yes | 75 | 86.68 |
| Emotionally I felt better | No | 136 | 104.6 |
| | Yes | 75 | 83.98 |
| I carved out a working space | No | 136 | 103.42 |
| | Yes | 75 | 85.48 |
| I effectively set and followed the working hours | No | 136 | 105.95 |
| | Yes | 75 | 80.33 |
| I turned the status "offline" on time | No | 136 | 103.82 |
| | Yes | 75 | 84.66 |
| I managed effectively to fulfil my responsibilities | No | 136 | 103.86 |
| | Yes | 75 | 84.58 |
| I avoided multitasking | No | 136 | 102.11 |
| | Yes | 75 | 88.14 |
| I was happy to have face-to-face communication with my peers on a few days during the week | No | 136 | 101.72 |
| | Yes | 75 | 88.14 |
| I travelled more while working remotely | No | 136 | 105.41 |
| | Yes | 75 | 81.43 |

## 4.7   Discussion of the respondents' recommendations

The last question of the questionnaire was free room for respondents to recommend future changes or improvements that would contribute to increasing the satisfaction with management practices that are applied in the organizations, improvements or recommendations for any change that would contribute to a higher work-life balance satisfaction, that both are related to the job satisfaction. Moreover, this open question may raise up any other factor that might impact the level of job satisfaction which is not taken into consideration and contribute to other areas for future investigation and studies.

Work-life balance is a very important factor of job satisfaction. It is especially pointed out when employees work remotely. According to one of the respondents, employees who work independently or in remote locations may face difficulties to achieve work-life balance due to making great efforts to achieve goals of better managing projects, taking over more assignments, and to fuel upskilling, that all together contribute to a feeling of overworking. Apart of this comment on remote working, another suggestions states that multitasking should be avoided, work schedule to be reduced, and to have the opportunity to be flexible in terms of choosing by themselves when they would like to work form their traditional workspace or remotely. Flexibility of choosing when to work remotely or from the traditional working space is a topic of interest in the field of Human Resources Management recently, because prior to the pandemic working remotely was an option, and during the pandemic it became mandatory. Moreover, two of the respondents admit that working remotely while being married could be a challenge to perform effectively when remote working due to space, time and concentration concerns.

Moreover, a few of the comments are related with suggestions for better management practices or work – processes' organization such as making responsibilities clear, offering the necessary trainings for the transition to remote working, to offer the technologies that are needed to perform the job, to provide feedback frequently, etc. Communication within the team is considered as a very important factor of job satisfaction and it is pointed out from one of the respondents in the form of an improvement suggestion.

Every industry has its own characteristics, and requirements to perform well. One of the concerns in Kosovo that impacts every sector is the electricity supply. This could be a huge problem for everyone who is working remotely. Moreover, this has another conse-

quence that is internet connection interruptions. Internet connection is crucial in the current digitalised world, especially while working remotely. A good internet connection is pointed out twice in the list of respondents' comments.

The comments of the respondents have similar patterns comparing to the outputs of many studies on the most important factors influencing job satisfaction while working remotely in general, however during the Covid-19 pandemic the studies are conducted specifically to understand the most important influencers of job satisfaction while working remotely through the difficult Covid-19 pandemic. As mentioned during this study, remote working is not a new working practice as many companies began to practice remote working prior to the Covid-19 health crisis, but it is important to point out the prior to the mandatory remote working, this practice whenever and wherever was introduced it was most probably an optional choice.

Table 42 includes all 38 comments of respondents collected through the last open-question of the questionnaire. The comments that are highlighted in grey colour belong in the group of recommendations or suggestions for management practices. To a certain point this explains the findings of this study that results with a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and management practices while working remotely.

TABLE 42. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RESPONDENTS

| Nr. | Recommendations |
|---|---|
| 1. | To be more careful (?) |
| 2. | Employees working independently or in remote locations will face a dilemma — to fuel upskilling and manage better projects, they'll take on more assignments, potentially to a point where they'll feel like they're working around the clock. In response, achieving work-life balance will no longer be enough; employees will strive to emphasize life over work. |
| 3. | To be more productive. |
| 4. | Have the right supplements and an adequate work space and keep in touch with colleagues and managers all the time. |
| 5. | Being allowed to work outside of the country as well, and not being restricted to only within the country's territory to work remotely. This freedom is very important. |
| 6. | Make responsibilities clear. |
| 7. | Encourage staff to socialize. |
| 8. | Train staff for remote working. |

| 9. | To be more organized and to pay more attention to the technologies that we need for our work. |
|-----|-----|
| 10. | I would only recommend remote work to employees who are single due to time, space and concentration constraints. |
| 11. | Among the changes I recommend for remote work are higher salaries and work resources. |
| 12. | In my opinion, there should be more communication and responsibility between employees and management, as well as shorter working hours. |
| 13. | I would prefer to have fewer tasks and more time. |
| 14. | Multitasking must be avoided |
| 15. | Married employees may not be as effective at remote work. |
| 16. | I think the remote work can only Function if we could choose it. |
| 17. | More networking is always the key to success |
| 18. | Good access to Internet, flexible working time, |
| 19. | I thing home is a complicated place of work. |
| 20. | I would prefer to be able to choose between Home Office and presence |
| 21. | In my opinion we need to take more responsibility during remote work |
| 22. | Enough work surface with large window and not disturbing |
| 23. | Maybe shorter job schedule |
| 24. | Management should not work more than 3 days remotely |
| 25. | Living in the city is sometimes a big problem because of noise |
| 26. | My recommendation is to make feedbacks twice per week. |
| 27. | Necessary remote work always include disadvantages. It should be more paid because home is home. |
| 28. | More communication and Feedback is necessary. |
| 29. | Tools and Technology should be offered like in presence |
| 30. | Higher salaries and better technology |
| 31. | I would recommend more Breaks |
| 32. | Technology from Company and offline working |
| 33. | For example: enjoying the job |
| 34. | Consulting with a psychologist who has been working with these situations for years |
| 35. | I would prefer to change the management style - I do not like micromanagers |

| 36. | Managers should be more helpful and in a place like Kosova, salary is a big problem too. Also they should be more open towards the workers being friends and not so against them. |
|-----|---|
| 37. | Everyone's work should be valued and no discrimination should be made |
| 38. | It would be better if there's a good internet connection in my case. |

# 5 CONCLUSION OF THE THESIS

## 5.1 Discussion and Conclusion

According to the findings of many studies that are conducted in the field of Job Satisfaction, it is realized that this important aspect of Human Resources is impacted by different factors. The findings of those studies are presented mostly in the chapter of Literature Review. Among many factors, the most dominant ones include management practices applied in the organizations, work engagement, well-being of employees, flexibility on scheduling the working time, work stress, reward system, etc. These factors have in general the same patterns in the studies conducted in the pre and post Covid-19 health crisis times. A factor that makes the difference here is the adaptation of management practices to the new working practices such as remote or the so-called hybrid working model.

The global health pandemic impacted almost every industry, in one or another way. In the developed countries, the practice of working remotely might not have been completely a new practice but what makes the difference is the fact that prior to the pandemic this practice in most of the cases was not mandatory. Therefore, companies faces many challenges to manage properly human resources and to secure the smooth running of the work processes. Hence, studies on how to maintain employees' satisfaction intensified.

The aim of this study was to analyse the level of job satisfaction for the employees of the private sector in Kosovo during the pandemic times. This study involves a very current topic that is the new working practice of working from home. It is very common that the less developed countries lack behind on adapting new practices comparing to the developed countries. Therefore the study on the relationship between job satisfaction and remote working is a good source for organizations operation in Kosovo. In this study only management practices and work-life balance were considered. Its theoretical framework was structured in a way that the relationship between the predictor - flexible working mode and the outcome -job satisfaction was predicted by two mediators – work & life balance and management practices. The statements belonging to each of the mediator and the outcome are selected according to the findings on the previous studies of the same field of interest and by the choice of the author according to the self-impression on what could be more relevant for the employees working in Kosovo. The internal consistency of the three variables expressed through the Cronbach's α represented validity

and high consistence. This is explained also through the Factor Analysis that in this case was used only to explore the latent structure of the variables in the data set because all the statement are highly correlated in the same ways as they were grouped.

Friedman test has been applied to check whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between the means of three variables and the results show that the distribution of three variables is not considered unequal. However, after applying Bonferroni correction for crosschecking regarding pairwise comparison it is found that variables Management Practices and Work-Life Balance differ from each other in their evaluation.

Findings of this study confirmed that there is moderate positive relationship of job satisfaction with both mediators of the study; management practices and work & life balance. The overall level of Job Satisfaction is positive and appears to be moderate. According to many studies management practices is highly correlated to the job satisfaction and the current study shares the same patterns as the results reveal that Management Practices have the highest influence to the Job Satisfaction. The only slight exception in terms of satisfaction with the statements belonging to Management Practices is realized in the statement that assesses the flexibility on scheduling by themselves the days on which they (employees) choose to work from home. The median for this statement is 3 – neutral regarding the level of satisfaction. The other statements represent a significant level of satisfaction with the management practices. Flexibility on deciding whenever to switch from the traditional working space to the home working makes a huge difference in the job satisfaction according to the studies. Improvement in this aspect might help companies in Kosovo to find themselves more desirable companies that people prefer to work in, more profitable and also that might be a result of the employees' engagement.

Job satisfaction and work & life balance were perceived similarly by both genders, but the difference in perception occurs to the management practices. However, 8 out of 15 statements did not result in any statistical difference among gender perception. Nevertheless, the satisfaction regarding the connection with the manager while homeworking was higher for the females comparing to the males. The median for the statement that assessed this aspect was 4 that represents a good level of satisfaction. Another important aspect while working remotely was the flexibility on deciding whenever the employee would like to switch to homeworking. This aspect was assessed through the statement "I could decide by myself the days on which I switched to homeworking", and it represents an outlier among the statements that represent Management Practices as it

median is 3. This is one of the aspects that can be taken into consideration by the organizations in Kosovo as the flexibility in the scheduled working time is proven to increase employees' feeling of autonomy which has a direct impact to the work-life balance and job satisfaction. In this study, the same patterns as with the previous statements are realized. Females were significantly more satisfied with the flexibility on deciding by themselves when to switch to homeworking. Moreover, females were more satisfied with the way how the feedback was provided. Also this study shares the same patterns with other studies regarding the differences towards contribution's recognition as for example in a study of SHRM (2021) is found that men think that working from home impacts negatively their' performance evaluation.

Another important topic research for this study was to seek for any difference between the group of respondent that reported that they had children at home while working remotely and the others that did not. Among 11 statements grouped in the variable named Work-Balance, only the statement that assessed the avoidance of multitasking and the other one that assessed the happiness as a result of the face-to-face communication on a few days during the week did not result in statistical significant difference in perception. The satisfaction with the topics that were addressed through the statements was higher for the group of the respondents that did not have children at home while working remotely than the other group. These results are very similar to other the results of other studies as having children at home while working remotely is proven to decrease the level of satisfaction for different reasons.

## 5.2 Limitations of the current study

One of the limitations of this study may be considered the sample of the study because this study aims to answer the research questions for the whole employees of the private sector of Kosovo during the pandemic, and one of the requirements that was asked to be fulfilled in order to be eligible of filling out the questionnaire was that those employees had the chance to work remotely during the difficult pandemic times. Considering that working remotely was one of the first options for employees where this working practice is possible, the sample of this research does not represent them and the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, the outcome of this study shares similar patterns with other studies conducted in the similar field of interest.

Another limitation could be considered the language in which the questionnaire is conducted. It was conducted in English and this fact may have reduced the rate of respondents. Younger generations are significantly more familiar with English as a foreign language comparing to older generations. This could be considered as one of the reasons that 70.8% of the respondents are younger than 34 year-old.

Another limitation of the study is related with the ways of how the questionnaire is structured. The most important part of the questionnaire that includes the statements belonging to the factors of the study – job satisfaction, management practices, and work-life balance are coded in a 5-point Likert scale level. This method has its own advantages, but one of the cons of this method could be that the respondents' minds have diverse feelings and responses. Hence, choosing the 5-point Likert scale might have restricted them to only five different options and the accuracy and usefulness of the results would be higher if the 7-point Likert scale would have been chosen.

## 5.3   Areas for further research

In general there is a lack of research in the field of Job Satisfaction in Kosova. Just recently, there is an increase on interest of conducting researches in different aspects that are related to Human Resources. Since remote working represents a shift in working practices, a comparison for the level of job satisfaction among employees who practiced remote working and those that did not would be highly interesting. That output would serve for better companies to understand which working practice might be better welcomed by Human Resources. The factors that are included in the study may not necessarily represent the main ones, hence further investigation on job satisfaction factors is recommended.

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