Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master Thesis Economics and Business – Marketing

The Impact of Enforced Work from Home During the Pandemics Covid-19

on Employee Perception of Happiness, Productivity and Work-life balance:

Shell Mobility Netherlands

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I am passionate about this topic, and this thesis was part of my journey of reflection during the pandemics. After two years of working from home in Jakarta, Indonesia, I have decided to take a career break to pursue a master's education at Erasmus University Rotterdam. To some extent, the pandemics and enforced working from home affect the decision. The question of happiness, engagement, teamwork, productivity and work delivery always offers an opportunity to study for the organisation and an academician.

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the impact of enforced work from home during the pandemics Covid-19 on employee perception of happiness, productivity and work-life balance in the organisation. Qualitative research of enforced working from home in Shell Mobility Netherlands based on 15 employee interviews within Shell Mobility Netherlands from varied functions and roles. At the individual level, employees prefer a hybrid working set-up that will make them happy and better work-life balance, affecting their performance. At the same time, working from home can impact the quality of work, teamwork, collaboration and performance. Organisations need to have a clear policy towards working from home, focusing on performance set-up and employee expectations. Before the pandemics, the concept of the hybrid working set-up applied to some roles within Shell Mobility Netherlands. The research interview was conducted in May to June, 2022 during the transition period after all the COVID-19 regulations in the Netherlands were cancelled. Based on the findings, organisations should have formal hybrid working guidance as part of standard procedures operations for the employee to ensure a standardised practice within the company and the hybrid working work. Organisations may need to redefine the role of the physical office within the hybrid working set-up to promote teamwork and collaboration.

Keywords: Happiness, engagement, teamwork, productivity, work delivery collaboration

Table of Contents

Background

Introduction

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has significantly impacted every aspect of all countries' individuals, communities, and organisations. It affects people's ways of life, including how we communicate and interact. As part of the efforts to reduce the COVID-19 outbreak, most governments implemented social distancing and lockdown with varying restriction levels depending on the country. It has disruptive lives through losing family members, job uncertainty, mental health and personal well-being at stake.

There has been a massive change in working at the organisational level as most of the employees need to work from home. Due to the sudden change, there was a varied response from the people. 73% of people had a positive sentiment towards work from home, while 27% had a negative view of work from home. 60% of the people tweeted with the emotion of trust, anticipation and joy and the other 40% shared their fear, sadness, anger and disgust (Dubey and Tripathi, 2020).

The organisation's response was varied, depending on the organisation's capabilities and experience. While it might look similar to the pre-COVID working from home or virtual work set-up, COVID-19 is different because it is enforced on all industries and organisations without adequate planning time (Waizenegger et al., 2020). Collaboration becomes the most challenging matter for the organisation when working from home, especially innovating and developing ideas through spontaneous collaboration (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). This challenge is also associated with technology as the virtual platform does not support cooperation with internal and external stakeholders (Esme et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

There is three primary observed behaviour that needs to research further as problem statement starting points, which are the following:

- Working from home during pandemics has a different dimension from working from home before the pandemics to employee's well-being mentally and physically,

- Pressure on family health concerns as well as work pressure might change the employee concept of happiness concept both at work and at home,

- It provides the employee with the dilemma, they are happier when working from home, but it seems they are disconnected from an office colleague,

- The impression exists that perceived workload has increased during the pandemic, and employee resilience is negatively impacted. As leaders have less visibility of the team's situation and well-being, this is hard to manage.

Expected Results from The Research

The research questions were based on the researcher's discussion and Shell Mobility Netherlands. From Shell's point of view, there are four key expected outputs from the research, which are the following:

1. Understanding the concept of happiness, before and after the pandemics, how will it differ from one to another?
2. How will it impact their work productivity and work-life balance?
3. What company can do to support the employees with the new concept of happiness? The research result will be used for Shell Mobility Netherlands as inputs for the internal organisational improvement related to working policy.

Research Question

Based on that expected output, the research questions will focus on the dimensions of the employee challenges during working from home due to the pandemics. There are three research questions for the research as follows:

(1) How does enforced work from home effects the concept of happiness, and what are missing moments working from the office?

(2) How does non-face-to-face communication affect the employee quality of productivity and work-life balance?

(3) How does enforced working from home affect the employee expectation of the working format concerning FOMO (Fears Of Missing Out) and social connection?

Literature Overview

Covid -19 Lockdown and the challenges

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has significantly impacted every aspect of all countries' individuals, communities, and organisations. It affects people's ways of life, including how we communicate and interact. As part of the efforts to reduce the COVID-19 outbreak, most governments implemented social distancing and lockdown with varying restriction levels depending on the country. It has disruptive lives through losing family members, job uncertainty, mental health and personal well-being at stake. There has been a massive change in working at the organisational level as most of the employees need to work from home. Due to the sudden change, there was a varied response from the people. 73% of people had a positive sentiment towards work from home, while 27% had a negative view of work from home. 60% of the people tweeted with the emotion of trust, anticipation and joy and the other 40% shared their Fear, sadness, anger and disgust (Dubey and Tripathi, 2020). Working from home has a positive impact in terms of economics and productivity (Kaushik and Guleria, 2020).

The organisation's response was varied, depending on the organisation's capabilities and experience. While it might look similar to the pre-COVID-19 working from home or virtual work set-up, COVID-19 is different because it is enforced on all industries and organisations without adequate planning time (Waizenegger et al., 2020). Collaboration becomes the most challenging matter for the organisation when working from home, especially innovating and developing ideas through spontaneous collaboration (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). This challenge is also associated with technology, as the virtual platform does not support collaboration with internal and external stakeholders (Esme et al., 2021).

During pandemics, companies need to adapt and survive. A company with a high dependency on internal resources and starts up company with innovation has a better opportunity to stay during this challenging period (Krammer, 2021).

Enforced Working from Home

Working from home during the pandemics differs from the previous concept before COVID-19 pandemics. Key differentiation: All employees must work from home based on the government regulation applied to everyone in the company. At the same time, they are concerned about their personal and family health condition and the unclear barrier between work and family matters because employees work remotely from home (Waizenegger, 2020). Working from home is the most viable option for the company to survive during the pandemics due to the fears, viruses, and uncertainty. From the employee's point of view, there are four aspects of life impacted by current pandemics: the working environment, the work, personal and relationships (Franken et al., 2021).

During pandemics, COVID-19 related stress impacts the negotiation outcomes as employees tend to give up the value to their counterparts (J. Mell et al., 2021). It severely impacts employees with soft skills wages (Kramer and Kramer, 2020).

Non-Face-to-Face Communication

Scholars have discussed non-face-to-face communication using various visual communication platforms such as video conferences for business activities in the company, for example, negotiation. Negotiation via video conferencing is a negotiation between two or more people when they are not present at the same place or meeting room. They use the communication medium to enable them to see and hear each other simultaneously (Ebner, 2017). In other studies, the technical quality of sounds or audio will impact the evaluation of recipients (Newman and Schwarz, 2018).

Due to Covid-19 pandemics, most governments enforced working from home, bringing back the concept of digital transformation as the primary focus for the organisation. For many organisations, ideas of telecommuting, teleworking, working from home, working

remotely, virtual work, e-work, and flexible workplace are alternative working methods. (Savić, 2020). There is no more ad-hoc conversation within the team and replaced by video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft team. It is becoming a critical communication platform for team collaboration (Waizenegger, 2020).

However, expecting virtual working using communication mediums like video conferencing to get a similar impact to meeting in person is something not real. (Ebner, 2017). During the videoconference, our brain received different variations of confusion and disruption as it received many non-verbal cues and other in-person Communication, which is different (Ebner and Greenberg, 2020).

Non-Verbal Communication

The usage of videoconference platforms (such as Zoom) during pandemics has become the norm for most employees worldwide. It poses a question about how we can manage our team collaboration and trust without direct Communication. Zoom is the new video conference technology during pandemics. The richer the medium, the more signs of social presence it conveys, enhancing perceived social presence and reducing perceived social distance (Ebner, 2017).

Social contact with other people can develop an emotion of trust. The initial trust formation model explains factors and processes before the communication or interactions as the definition of 'trust' or beliefs (McKnights et al.,1998). Trust, visibility, presence and availability is still important during telework (Sewell and Taskin, 2015). Suggest seeing the trust concept in the different settings of international and cross-culture contexts (Mayer, Schoorman, & Mayer, 2007).

Frequent communication among the team members shows early trust and collaboration. However, at a certain point of high communication frequency, it will negatively impact trust as team members feel monitored and lack trust (Jarvenpaa, Shaw, and Staples, 2004). Trust and collaboration within the team result from a positive team environment, regular communication, and learning and personal development (Holton, 2001). There are

four dimensions to measure team trust: propensity to trust, perceived trustworthiness, cooperative behaviours, and monitoring behaviours (Costa and Anderson, 2011).

Employee Happiness

Employee happiness has shown consistency over the period and is significantly related to organisational commitment, performance, turnovers and counterproductive work behaviours. Based on their research, happiness contributes up to 15% of the organisational capability to achieve its fundamental objectives, such as employee retention (Thompson & Lee, 2019).

The research proves that happiness positively impacts almost all organisations by increasing sales by 37%, productivity by 31% and the quality of the task by 19%, as well as improving employee health and quality of life (Achor, 2011). Employees with high perceived organisational support and psychological capital effects are highly engaged in their work and happy with their careers. They have a greater sense of well-being in their lives (Joo & Lee, 2015).

Flexible Working Arrangement & Happiness

From an organisational perspective, there are three distinct concepts of flexibility: contractual flexibility, time flexibility and locational flexibility. Contractual flexibility focuses on staff employment such as contracts or outsourced. Time flexibility allows the employee to work at a time agreed by the employer and employee. In contrast, locational flexibility allows the employee to work in the most prefered location, including at home and other non-office environments (Gibson, 2003). In this thesis research, flexible working set-up refers to time and locational flexibility.

It is suggested having formal flexibility working instead of informal flexibility for the organisation, which tends to be associated with women employees (Atkinson and Hall, 2009). Formal flexible practices are critical in supporting employees in getting the optimum benefits of time flexibility for the organisation. As part of promoting happiness, flexible working positively impacts the desired performance outcomes in the organisation and it is an

essential factor that affects the attitude of employee happiness, and happiness could be one of the factors to have a deeper understanding of which organisation practices influence employee attitudes (Atkinson and Hall, 2011).

A flexible working arrangement positively affects employee-reported satisfaction as it provides more choices for the employee, both men and women, on the job (Wheatley, 2017).

Employee Work-life Balance and Well-being

Seppälä and Cameron (2015) shared when the organisation provides benefits of flexible working and the opportunity to work from home for their employee, it shows that employees prefer workplace well-being over material offers. The employees working blue-collar jobs experience lower overall happiness in most countries. At the same time, professional workers and managers evaluate their quality of life more. They experience more positive and fewer negative feelings such as worry, stress, sadness and anger (De Neve and Ward, 2017).

Social Connection & FOMO (Fears of Missing Out)

Social connection is an overall concept that defines the human being as physically, behaviourally, cognitively, and emotionally connected to others. It has a significant impact on health, well-being, economy and business (Lunstad, 2018).

Technology affects the quality of social connections. There is a positive connection between well-being and the usage of the social network internet site to the benefit of increased connection, including social support (Clark et al., 2018). J. Walter Thompson (2012) shared FOMO as 'the uneasy and sometimes all-consuming feeling that you are missing out – that your peers are doing, in the know about, or possession of more or something better than you. In their study, Zhang et al., (2018) shared that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has two personal and social dimensions. Personal FOMO represents the level of the FOMO correlated to the individual, while Social FOMO involves the level of FOMO on experiences that others are enjoying. On the study conducted by Beyens (2016) FOMO in adolescents is impacted by their constant connection to the mobile media environment and

continuous connection with others. It also increases people's use of social media and may further increase their level of FOMO. Adolescents' FOMO will affect their stress level as they do not have any goods similar to their peers on social media.

Based on the literature review, the studies provided understanding of employee happiness related to non-face-to-face communication within the organisation. Most studies conducted before the pandemics COVID-19 stated the importance of non-verbal communication during the non face to face communication and the effects of technology. The studies also shared the findings on happiness, social connection and the interaction between the individuals within the organisation. It also provided the effects on the organisation's performance. At the same time, the studies during the pandemics shared the effects of enforced working from home on the employee in general. The reviewed literature indicated that the organisation implemented a different approach to minimize the impact depending on the capabilities and experiences.

To sum up, the findings of this literature showed the concept of employee happiness, non-face-to-face communication, teamwork, collaboration and initial challenges before and during the pandemics. This literature review provided areas for this research to study further on the effects of the pandemics on happiness, productivity and work-life balance in the organisation, which they already started non-face-to-face communication even before the pandemic COVID-19.

Methodology

Silverman (2015) the reason why the semi-structured interview was used in the research is to provide natural data to find the motivation (how) from the participants meaning and (what) from their actual actions. Galleta (2013) states that semi-structured interviews are crucial to providing insights into the respondent's experience, allowing the researcher to explore the respondent's experience, and providing a complete story. It provides a repertoire to address the research objectives and allows respondents to offer new knowledge to the

research focus. It also provides versatility in the interview, allowing respondents to engage with the research topics.

Research Design & Planning

The research proposal design was a collaboration between the student, the supervisor and GM Shell Mobility Netherlands. The research result will provide comprehensive feedback from the employee to contribute to the ongoing academic study related to the transition after the COVID-19 pandemics. The result will also provide feedback for Shell Mobility Netherlands on the employee working setup. Before the interview, the researcher sent out the research brief to explain the overall research scope and type of questions, so there will be more cohesive responses from the participants.

Research Implementation

In order to achieve the benefits of the semi-structured interview, it is crucial to have well-managed preparation of the questions for the interview (Galletta 2013). In order to limit potential bias, getting highly knowledgeable informants from the organisation is important. It includes the selection of respondents from different hierarchical levels, functional areas and geographies (Eisenhardt & Graeber, 2007).

Respondent for the research

The respondents for this research were Shell Mobility Netherlands employees, and the selection was based on the research's purpose to have a variety of respondent backgrounds on job roles and responsibilities, gender and functions. Participation was not mandatory for the Shell employees, and it was voluntary. Survey respondents did not receive monetary remuneration. However, they received email recommendations from Shell Netherlands to support the research voluntarily.

The respondents were 15 employees who participated in the research, with 13 respondents preferring to have video audio conferences using Microsoft Teams, one respondent with audio-only and one respondent with a face-to-face interview. The interview

duration was a maximum of 1 hour per respondent—the interviews were conducted from 5 May 2022 to 8 June 2022.

Materials for Research Stimulus

The content of the interviews was structured as follows: Interviewer information, Participant Information Sheet, description of the research and its objectives and questions. The questions consist of 4 sections happiness, non-face-to-face communication, productivity and working set-up. Interviews were conducted using the semi-structured interviewing approach. Questions were designed to facilitate understanding the effects of enforced working from home on happiness, productivity and work-life balance.

The questions have been prepared in the presentation mode to the respondents. The interview was recorded using Microsoft Teams. Researcher used Microsoft team recording and back up audio recorder, to minimise any mistakes during the interview transcription.

Data Analysis

All interviews were taped, recorded, and then transcribed for analysis using Microsoft Teams. After the interview transcript was ready, each respondent received it, and they could review the content. It was done to minimise any possible bias or mistakes during the transcription. Analysis was undertaken by closely reading transcripts and using manual identification to find and explore themes across the respondent statements to find the commonalities and underlying insights. The interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach to data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

Result

Section 1. Working from home experience during the pandemics

What makes the respondent happy with working from home?

Less commuting time. An estimated 80% of people reported fewer activities outside in May – April 2020. Employees experienced working from home and remote meetings and shared a positive experience with the new way of working (Haas & et al., 2020). The findings were similar to what was shared by the respondents during the interview. The respondents had to cope with massive changes to their working environment, shifting from the office with being surrounded by colleagues to home. The respondent can shift their travelling time to more personal well-being in terms of emotional and work life balance (quality time with family, more energy) and monetary as a result of savings from their travel cost.

As one respondent explained, *"I think, summarising their happy with your home is. I think with kids with sports, I think there is just a lot easier and no commuting"*. Different from prior pandemics, most of the respondents benefit from saving time and also save their energy. One of the respondents said, *"I'm losing my travelling time, so my travelling time is restricted to 10 seconds coming from the downstairs from the kitchen, up the stairs, into my office, and just start working. So of course, that is saves me so much time and travelling time and therefore also energy."*

The benefits are not only in the form of emotional but also in terms of money, as the respondent can save their travel spending. One respondent noted: *"So, I saved much money in that respect. So, I think those are the things that made me happy."*

Quality time with family. Setting a new expectation in terms of usage timing as the result of travelling time, respondents have more space to create a greater balance between work and personal well-being, making it greater happiness. *"And I found that not having that commute opened up a lot of time during the week, for me to do other things, for example going to the gym or meeting with family and friends, or do house activities".* For some, it helps them free

up their time and increase their availability to their loved ones. *"I think it's a support of the family. So, you have a better availability. I think it's better if availability shows more connections with your loved ones".*

Flexibility & Freedom. Most of the respondents mentioned that working from home, they have greater freedom in terms of managing their timing while delivering the work. Respondents mentioned that the ability to do in-between activities within the daily work office tasks makes them happier*: "the ability to do some chores in between work and operational stuff but sometimes it helps. I think a very predictable social life, and not sure if it's always making you happy, but at least it was. It was predictable, and not many disruptions. And easier to combine physical activity with work and it's easier to take calls. Basically, while walking outside and doing your steps".*

The ability to do the activities between the daily tasks is perceived as a time break for the respondent and makes them feel much better of work life balance as they can complete work and home tasks. Exercises and completing home chores were common activities to create a swift transition between personal and work time. The respondents mentioned starting physical activities such as walking, running, yoga, laundry, and groceries.

Regarding the flexibility, the respondent also shared the freedom: *"I have the freedom to do what I need to do at every moment. So, for me it was really positive".* Furthermore, the other respondent mentioned this flexibility and freedom improve their day: "*That is one thing that I also find that working from home and makes this day life less difficult because you can participate in many tasks while working from home*".

More productive staying at home. The respondents feel more productive and creative while working at home: *"Yeah, I'm being able to focus a lot more. I feel that I can get a lot more productive working from home. I can be a lot more creative".*

Other respondents focus on being able to focus and free from distraction, and the respondent mentioned: *"I'm really happy with is that I get a lot more done on a day working*

because if I need to finish something, I have the time to finish it and nobody standing nearby my desk asking me 100 million questions. So that's something I'm happy with".

When the respondents probed to find one word to represent the one thing they are happy with working at home, the respondent mentioned that their work-life balance is better than before the pandemics lockdown: "*I think we already have a very good balance with before the before the COVID pandemic and even in my experience as I work a lot with people in the Netherlands.*"

One respondent also mentioned the facilities and tools at home that make them have easy accessibility to do their work and connect with the other colleague: "*I'm also someone who can work alone. I mean, if I need to contact someone, I can use all the tools we have to speak to the person, to see the person and we were able to stay quite well connected and work OK from home".*

What makes the respondent not happy with working from home?

Loss of Human Interaction: conversation, engagement. The most significant factor affecting respondents' unhappiness during the pandemics working from home is the inability to connect and interact with office colleagues. Most of their interaction with other colleagues was undertaken by remote meetings using Microsoft Teams. The respondent noted the struggle of disconnecting from others as they never expected the pandemics to last for more than one year.

It is one of the most challenging situations for the respondent; as one respondent explained, "*I think it's very important to have the face-to-face contact with colleagues and working from home just completely and without any contact for being able to have a bit of a chat with colleagues is more difficult."*

Respondents also had to adapt to working without the support they typically receive from their colleagues at the office. Many respondents realised that the psychical absence of their colleagues motivates them to learn and work better. It is also a challenge in terms of collaboration and engagement with the teamwork; one respondent noted, "*And I think it's*

easier to get a bit more engaged with the rest of the departments if you're in the office than working from home, so feeling a bit of part of that company."

One of the team leaders noted the inability to be more helpful to the team member apart from the personal interest: "*I missed the face-to-face connect with my colleagues and especially with my team because I think I had a young team and they all started in their jobs and to coach them and to help them make the next step and also help them with their struggles with working from home. I think it's really important that you have face-to-face.*"

Beyond the individual and team level, most team leaders shared their concerns that the organisation may impact their collaboration and feel as united as one organisation in the long run. Communication and collaboration among the team members with other functions were disrupted due to the non-face-to-face communication during the pandemics. One team leader noted, "*Yeah, I think indeed you miss out on that camaraderie element with your colleagues, right? And it's not just on a personal but also a professional level.*"

Another team leader shared similar concerns, *"Basically, you sense that the good atmosphere and the and the and the sense of unity was falling a bit apart people were losing contact and even though there was room for. Yeah, it's not. You go to the office to see people, and even if you're all working from home, you can still have a contact there."*

Many respondents struggled with the interaction using non-face-to-face communication as they felt it was not a natural interaction. They felt obliged to have it instead of natural interaction happened the office interaction. One respondent noted the interaction is too functional: "*Because now all the calls you had were really functional. I called you because I needed answers about something or we need to fix something*"

Mental health. Many respondents found it challenging to work from home with limited interaction with their colleagues, and others made them feel isolated and detached from the social interactions. It makes a burden for the employee and impacts their work productivity as well as their well-being in the long run: *"But mentally that I did not take the ferry well cause everywhere I was, every time I was in my living room, my, my, my office setup was there. So, I could not just in my head. I was always feeling that I was at least mentally involved with work"*.

Some participants experienced like burned out due to the ongoing back-to-back telecon during the day, especially in the first six months of the pandemics: "*And then the only thing you see during the whole day is your screen. You don't see anything else. That is it starts to become boring, and you lose your concentration, you lose your focus"*. Other respondents shared: "*a sense of not being able to do what you want, so, sort of a constrained feeling and you know you need to be at home that that, that messaging is something that constrained my sense of freedom"*.

As the employee coped with demands during the pandemics, there was a tendency for the team leader to try to ensure their team member's mental health conditions but based on the respondent, the team lead should find a better way on this matter. Some respondents shared their reluctance and perceived their team leaders' initiatives were ineffective: "*manager will check-in, then the boss will check-in, then the bosses' boss will check-in, and you would have five calls on a day on how you were feeling, which I think for me, didn't help because you I think in order to feel happy; you just need a bit of continuation and routine*".

Uninterrupted workload and pressure. Some of the respondents had difficulties segregating between personal life and work, and they shared that they lacked adequate time to complete the tasks, which impacted their focus and productivity*: "Another thing is that because you have your calendar open and everyone is sitting behind your desk, it's quite easy to go from call to call. It feels like you need to be always available while in the office you don't feel that pressure". "We had many telcos coming from everywhere. It was*

sometimes difficult to manage even during the lunch ... and that was not always easy to manage, sometimes we only get 15 minutes to eat something during the lunch".

On the other hand, respondents experienced excessive workload, putting additional pressure as the pandemics disrupted businesses. "*Yeah, it's the reality that we have more work and worked more. And was the pressure was bigger. So, we have many urgencies to manage, so I think many people feel that everyone was under pressure.*

The other downside of working from home, two respondents shared their frustration of having almost minor items require a meeting or call: "*We started calling about every little thing. I felt like your projectivity level was a little bit less because you're constantly going from call to call and my inbox was exploding".*

Free from family's distraction*.* Distraction from being at home for almost the time, male respondents shared their concerns about the lack of transition between work and personal life. A thin line between personal life and work-related items makes them create their workspace, focusing on their daily work tasks and creating a daily pattern. So, their family, especially the kids, will not disrupt while they are at work. Female respondents never express this feedback as they are happy about being closer to their family. One male respondent noted, "*And one of the things that I was really struggling with is, I was actually how close the family is, and so there's no boundary between the family and your work activity or work-related processes".*

Other male respondents also shared similar concerns on how the family affects their work focus*. "But if that's if that gets even closer, right, it's really just, you know, stepping outside the door, and you have your family coming in and the whole switching between private and work in your mind. That was very, very tiring and exhaustive."*

What are the things that most respondents missed from the office?

"The Coffee Moment". All respondents mentioned one thing as their first item missing from the office is that all the moments related to coffee have multi aspects of engagement within the employee. The moment provides a learning avenue for the employee and exchanging their experience and ideas. *"The Informal sort of coffee corner. Connect where you don't have a meeting with someone, but you hear people telling stories, and they impact you somehow, and then you learn a lot more than you would just be at home behind your desk*".

A coffee moment serves as an occasion to engage and discuss with the colleague. It is the most preferred moment by the respondents, and they missed it a lot during the pandemics one of the respondents noted, *"I will say is that you can get things done quicker in the office than at home",* and another respondent mentioned: "*You can always in the office, you could just catch up with the coffee corner and talk things out and talk things through very quickly, right".* The moment provides an engaging platform to share new ideas, both personal and business. "*Yeah, I think running into colleagues at the coffee machine and just sharing ideas and getting a feel for the business and where we're going*".

Lack of interaction impacting negatively to the quality of work relationships*.* During the pandemics, creating a network in the company from home is more challenging: *"It's very important to be able to network at the office is easier than networking via virtually".* Others mentioned that the conversation is not merely work-related. However, the ability to connect and engage on the non-work-related makes the engagement in the office better: *"You miss the informal things also from let's say non-working stuff, but also from working stuff and especially when you're new to the company's quite good to you know you meet up in the hallway with people".*

Respondent also mentioned that interpersonal connections built up during the interaction impact the quality of business interaction in the organisation. "*The interpersonal connections with colleagues, something I miss in terms of just connecting to other human*

beings, but also the richness of the business, so it took much quality out of business interactions to all be working from the office".

Respondent believes working from home is much better than working from the office; however, it is challenging to build good relationships by staying at home and connecting virtually: *"Sometimes a one-minute conversation, right, just that you see someone and you can ask her how is it or if you know that someone else, I don't know had a newborn or a did it was on holidays or show. Then if you see someone you will directly ask, how are you and how was a holiday or yeah and that is. Working from your computer? Yeah. You're not going to kind of reach out to someone like that"*.

Section 2. Non-Face to-Face Communication

The respondent shared their experience of non-face-to-face office communication in the past two years, both upside and downside, including pain points during or hurdles those experiences? How do they cope with the challenges?

Upside feedback on non-face-to-face communication

Most respondents shared two positive sides of non-face-to-face communication during the enforced working from home, which are accessibility (easy to connect with a colleague) and efficiency from well-structured meetings as well as new ways of working.

Easy to connect, Accessibility and Flexibility. One of the challenges to have on the meeting set up in the office is meeting room availability. With the limited number of rooms available, it is easier to have a meeting room without booking in advance. For instance, *"it's easier to connect with a group of every virtual because there are no meeting rooms, chairs."* For meetings or workshops with a bigger audience, the non-face to face communication provides better accessibility to set up. One respondent mentioned: *"What I also like about the non-face face communication is that it's a lot easier to have a good discussion because it's easier to pull in everyone in the big call, and you have the option for breakout sessions are even the collaborative sessions are now easier to facilitate in a non-face to face manner almost more than a face-to-face manner"*.

It also applies to meetings and discussions with colleagues from outside the country and impacts the quality of productivity. One respondent who oversees a few markets outside the Netherlands shared: "*So, you didn't have to fly over or do all of that before you saw someone to connect quickly. So, I like the agility of it. So, it was quick".* Most respondents also mention they can set up a quick call with new ideas. It is easy to set up the meeting as everyone is online "*everyone is available behind their desk, so it's easy to connect quickly in between meetings".*

Efficiency from more well-structured meetings*.* Several respondents benefit from face-to-face communication, both internal and external. It is easier to focus and navigate the discussion by sharing the shared screen during the discussion: *"I think meetings can be a lot more structured, and I'm able to make notes more easily and share screen more easily".*

When meeting with the external stakeholder, the respondent mentioned they have a more productive meeting with them as they are more focused on the discussion points instead of having a preliminary conversation like before. During face-to-face communication, they need longer time allocation for the meeting as they need to have an introduction meeting before the main discussion. "*I think meetings can be a lot more structured, and I'm*

able to make notes more easily and share screen more easily" Another respondent

mentioned, "*It feels like it's you get a bit sooner to the point with the virtual meetings*".

Downside feedback on non-face-to-face communication

Lack of engagement. Most respondents raised concerns that their engagement with

colleagues and stakeholders in the company is their most prominent downside of non-face-

to-face communication. Even though the current communication platform has evolved, the

respondent still faces difficulties engaging with the counterpart. One respondent mentioned

the difficulties of capturing human conversation using non-face-to-face communication". One

respondent noted*, "It's still difficult to read someone via the computer versus face to face. I*

guess to measure that level of genuity".

Not everyone is at ease using a camera during a conversation. One of the most discomforts

of having non-face-to-face communication happens if the meeting partner is not activating

their camera. One of the respondents said, "*not all colleagues are at ease with being on*

camera then. It makes it a lot more difficult to have good communication because you miss a

lot of cues because you can't see them".

Notification overload. Another discomfort for the respondent is overload notification during

the day, and managing it is challenging as every notification asks for their prioritisation*." So,*

there's an increased number of notifications, and I need to manage it because it's too much.

So, it is one of the challenges that it raises, the expectation of your counterpart in

conversation, you know whether you've seen or heard of, you know, read the email"

Difficult to agree. One respondent shared the frustration of having too many online

meetings without any definitive agreement on the solution. Alignment is more complicated

than offline meetings, where the participant can meet up for alignment prior to the meeting. "I

think or conflicting in a more significant meeting sometimes. You can meet each other before

the meeting and having a coffee and then you if you already know that there is conflicting

kind of interests. I think you then agree to disagree".

Limitations on team conversation. Some respondents pointed out that the downside effect of face non-face communication also happened in the team relationship between the team leader and team members. It impacts team performance as one unit within the organisation. *"As a team lead, you should pay attention to everyone. I think, so that's something you can. I think that that should be more or less a bit of a capability of the team".*   One of the team leaders mentioned it*: "I'm building something up as a team, but also together with one team member with the managers is quite difficult, and if you have someone nonperforming, it's quite hard to make those conversations through teams, so that would always be my preference to do those things face to face".*

Impact on productivity, engagement, teamwork and work delivery

In this section, the respondents compared non-face-to-face communication before and during the pandemics in productivity, engagement, teamwork, and work delivery with their colleagues.

Productivity. Most respondents claimed their productivity increased due to the absence of travel time. At the same time, the respondent mentioned that their efficiency is improving as they have more well-structured meetings using communication platforms like Microsoft Teams. The meeting is more efficient in using the time to discuss the key meeting points. " I really like to Microsoft team to have a meeting plan and to respect it, and I think that we are more productive on speaking by phone/teams and not face to face." While others shared about the usage of the time during the meeting: *"I think we may even be a bit more productive because we take less time, like if we sat in a room, we would chat a little bit and get a coffee more maybe".*

Despite the upside of non-face-to-face communication, all respondents agreed that the new ways of working make them spend more time on email instead of discussion. The respondent felt they wasted their time on emails for a simple task: *"They are spending more time emailing, spending more time following up, you're spending more time chasing, which is not very productive, I would say."*

Engagement. Engagement is where all the respondents shared that their most suffered area during working from home during the pandemic impacted their engagement quality. These adverse situations happened in the engagement regarding depth (deeper engagement) and width (ability to capture all the messages during the engagement).

Most respondents faced difficulties creating more profound engagement with their colleagues using video calls. "*I think it's more difficult to have deeper engagements with colleagues if it's not face to face."* Based on the probing on why they had difficulties in the engagement, most respondents had difficulties capturing emotions during their connection with the colleague, which impacts the quality of team engagement. *"Team engagement has been a lot more difficult with non-face-to-face communication because you cannot measure everyone's emotions and hence engagement and act on that, but also because you were not able to arrange fun engagement".*

Respondent shared that face-to-face communication has limits due to audio and video capabilities making it not easy to understand the conversation during the meeting. One respondent mentioned, "*When you are in your room to add a discussion and sometimes when you dive in, you have to listen, and voice recognise who is saying somewhere or something, and it's a lot different. It's more difficult to follow the discussion, but it's also more difficult to interrupt, no discussion".*

Teamwork. All respondents noted the adverse effects on teamwork without any single positive effect as it impacted their teamwork in terms of collaboration, efficiency and work delivery. *"And those are kind of things that are related to the non-face to face communication would also the workloads, but I think they go hand in hand and that is mostly regarding just the teamwork in general but also affecting teamwork, delivery and efficiency".* Most virtual meetings are more transactional than in prior pandemics, which feel like a natural conversation between colleagues. In every call, the respondent feels they need to provide a quick solution to the problem, which puts more pressure on the respondents. "*It's still tough*

to get good teamwork, so the processes take longer. So, we should have stepped into the pitfall of virtual work, and we don't spend enough time on quality connecting.

One respondent shared the hurdles in managing the team: "*I think the virtual the non-face to face, it's still very hard to get good teamwork done, the processes take longer. So, we should have stepped into the pitfall of virtual work, and we don't spend enough time on quality on connecting.*".

The sharing has shown a lack of quality time shared among the team members, and most are under pressure to deliver the work. One respondent noted, "*Everyone does this to protect themselves. But what we see is that many efficiencies from the collaboration are lost.*"

Several respondents were aware that they became more individualistic and focused on their tasks: "*Teamwork it, I think it makes you a bit more individualistic in terms of work delivery or speed".* Others noted: "*Everyone does this to protect themselves. But we see many efficiencies from the collaboration are lost*".

With all the teamwork challenges, every team member needs to make efforts higher than before the pandemics, and it needs an active role both from the team leader and team members. "*I think it's highlighting the negative parts of the relationship, more in the virtual environment. They need to be pulled in to come to the same level, and there is a more active role of the team to do that than before".*

Work Quality Delivery. Respondents noted they had a good speed on work delivery at the individual level but not at the group or team level. It confirmed the other feedback on the quality of teamwork and engagement because individuals focus on their tasks instead of the group to the work quality of the team member. "*The work delivery and the speed that really is increasing but not in the group work. So, you have three or more people then I don't see the quality is there".* Other respondents also noted the distractions from workloads impacting the work delivery. "*So, we have an hour of conversation now, but the mailbox is just pinging,*

pinging, and people are asking things. That impacts the work delivery and the speed we started to manage over time".

Others: Learning, work quality and mental health

Other respondents mentioned the loss of opportunity to learn from their colleagues. *"If you're in the office, you're able to learn a bit more. So, I think that that is different".* Despite the delivery speed, one respondent shared concerns over the work quality as most of the colleague tends to focus on how to ensure this. *"We just focus on getting things done and terms I think of work delivery and speed."*

Other respondents made similar concerns on this quality: "*And of course, I can't see around me that thing work without seeing each other is difficult. We're delivering a speed without seeing each other".*

Most of the respondents raised concerns related to mental health as they experienced by themselves and were observed by other colleagues during the pandemics. "*What we tried to do was so we have many helplines in place, we have an external company psychologist, we have internal persons of trust, we called them persons of confidence. Our Union representatives trained to have difficult line managers and colleagues".* Other respondents shared: *"A really hard time working from home and having quite big mental issues with the situation*".

Section 3: Productivity and Happiness

Working from Home is more productive and effective

When the respondents were asked to compare working from home to working from the office, there was more positive than negative feedback. Respondents correlate their perception of productivity to the number of works completed and better work life balance. As respondents coped with the demands and disruption, they also found that working from home increased their productivity from an individual point of view. *"I was more productive from home, and it's difficult for me to work from here because of the noise*". Office disruption

becomes a concern for most respondents and improves working from home. "*So, it sounds contradictory, but then you don't get everyone coming to your desk and asking you questions or all of that stuff. So, you're able to be fully productive. I think you are productive at home when you don't have the distractions*".

Respondent shared their experience as the enforced working from home changes their perception. Before the working from home experience, it will not be easy to reach the colleague but not in reality: *"working from home is more productive. But I would never have guessed that before because before the pandemic thought, as I said before the pandemic, colleagues were also not reachable while working from home.*

While most respondents claimed their productivity increased during the non-face-to-face communication, they experienced a lack of engagement and social connection from working from home*. "And also, especially when the colleagues around just have the motivation from each other to work a little bit harder and get things done, which is motivating".* One respondent also shared the challenges of having a series of meetings without any break, which impacted their mental health. *"In some cases, this may just be more productive. But I also mentioned we should be cautious about the people who feel they should always be online and make more hours. Yeah, I mean you still should do the 8 hours job, and yeah, I mean I sometimes also work more because this required".*

At least four respondents mentioned the employee mission that will suit each employee best. "*Our work in the best way possible because then the things that we need, if we need to focus on something and finish something, we can choose to work from home. And if we're looking for a bit more social contact, we can do it at the office together if we build things up together".* This personal employee mission will guide and navigate the employee to decide which forms of the working format will deliver the optimum productivity, engagement, and social connection.

One team leader shared the observation on the correlation between team productivity and the number of team members. It provides an insight into different

perspectives of productivity meaning for the Individual, team, team lead and organisation.

"So actually, if you plot it on a linear scale. The more people you have in your organisation, the higher productivity in working from the offices. So, the individual contribution becomes much more productive at the pandemic's beginning. But once you reach the point where that individual needs to connect to another individual and in an organisation to many more different departments, et cetera, right there, I saw the productivity deteriorating, and we are still struggling with."

Working from the office betters the engagement and social connection

Two years of working from home made some realisation for most respondents of the benefits of working from the office, which they tend to take for granted prior to pandemics. The ability to learn and interact with a colleague was one of the moments they missed during their office time. *" Yeah, I'm now thinking there's one thing when I realised it was super good to work from the office because there was another colleague and I didn't fully understand the concept, a technical concept, and we weren't sitting in the office, and I said like, hey, how does this work? And then we just sat for two hours, and he explained everything to me, and I understood everything. "*

The colleague's presence motivates them to compete and work better, especially when the colleagues around have the motivation from each other to work a little bit harder and get things done, which is motivating. *"And also, especially when the colleagues around just have the motivation from each other to work a little bit harder and get things done, which is motivating".* The office and colleagues also provide a sense of unity to strive together as one team. *"if we're looking for a bit more social contact, if we build things up together, then we can do it at the office together".*

At the same time, the office provides segregation between home and office, where some respondents prefer working from the office as it is free from home distractions: *"I am more productive working from the office than working from home. That is, it has to do with*

the distractions at home. I'm at home. I always see things that I need to do laundry. I don't have enough coffee. I need to get groceries".

Productivity perception from individual and organisational view

While the respondent at the individual shared that their productivity and efficiency experienced improvement during the pandemics. One of the team leaders shared this concern. "*So, if you plot it on a linear scale. The more people you have in your organisation, the higher productivity in working from the offices".*

Another team leader has a similar thought: "*once you reach the point where that individual needs to connect to another individual and in an organisation to many more different departments, et cetera, right there, I saw the productivity deteriorating, and we are still struggling with that so*".

It showed the possible underlying problem as the consequences of working from home during the pandemics and could lead to productivity concerns at the level of organisation. There is a required organisational capability to control the transition from working from home to adapting to the current situation. "Now, *we are still dealing with the consequences of behaviours not being processed, not followed or rightly or projects not being set up in the right way, and we're still trying to regain control of the organisation to do the extent that we have.*

Ten respondents experienced higher happiness working from home as well as better work life balance after the adaptation period at the individual level. They scored their happiness rate between 5 (happy), 6 (very happy) or 7 (completely happy). Two factors impacted the respondent's happiness: (1) the ability to focus on what they are working on and (2) having the flexibility to accomplish work as well as balance with family matters. The respondents mentioned they need six months to settle with the new ways of working in a virtual environment.

The respondent who chooses to score 7 represents it*: "Yeah, so I'm completely happy (7) because I can concentrate. I can organise myself as I want. I can start early, stop later, or*

take one hour for my family if needed I can make lunch or do the school work for my children, and I'm starting again, so the flexibility that I have has no price for me. It's really good elements, so I'm completely happy. Other respondent shared their happiness as they have the freedom to manage their own time to deliver the work task. "*I'm completely happy with 6 or 7. I'm happy and completely happy that I have the opportunity to work from home, and I deliver whatever I need to deliver, and I'm free to deliver it in my own time*".

The current situation that the Dutch government already allows the employee to work from the office might influence the respondent's feedback. Most of them started working both from home and the office periodically. There might be a different result if we conduct the research during working from home.

Five respondents share their unhappiness rate below 4 with the following leading cause of the inability to build relationships and learnings from colleagues: I would say 3 *is not happy. A number of things aside from what I mentioned previously, a lack of building relationships with my colleagues. The high workloads because of all the inefficiencie*s. Also, being restricted by external factors out of their control shared by other respondents: *"I say it 3, so not happy and the main reason is for being forced into a framework that I did not choose myself"*. The lack of opportunities to learn from other colleagues was also a source of unhappiness for the respondent. *"It is also about the lack of learning opportunities and reflections. So, I was really. I felt like I was really in my world and doing what I thought I should be, but it didn't have enough touch points to compare and learn from others"*.

Section 4. Preferred working set up post the pandemics

In this section, the respondent shared their views on a hybrid working set-up by allowing the employees to work from the office and home, including any required support from the management to make the hybrid working work.

The upside of a hybrid working set-up

All 15 respondents agreed that a hybrid working set-up over work from the office for two main reasons (1) best of both worlds between home and office, (2) provides the work-life balance, makes happier employees and creates a better company.

Best both worlds. During the lockdown, most respondents faced a dilemma where they perceived themselves as more productive working at home than at the office but also experienced hurdles in team engagement and social connection. Therefore, they preferred to return to a hybrid working set-up when they had a choice. *"I will be fully supportive, hybrid working mode, especially because you're able to pick the best of both models. So, I think it could work very well if it's set up well by the company because you can decide what meetings you would go to the office and for what meetings or activity she would stay at home and do your work from there".*

Work-life balance makes employees happier and a better company. Respondents knew that they could perform better by having a hybrid working set-up that would provide them with the flexibility and choices in working from home or at the office, depending on their employee mission. *"But I've heard it from other people is that you know, you really give them that needed flexibility and remove some of the stress that they have in their daily lives associated with commuting, making it to the office in time, spending that time in traffic and things like that. So, I think for me the hybrid is a solution cause really good, so I enjoy it".*

Many respondents believe happier employees will impact their loyalty to the company and impact a positive contribution to the success of the company. They believed the given flexibility and accountability would affect positively. *"It allows employees to be a driver of their own life and work agenda. It leads to better work-life balance leading to happier employees and therefore better company because I see that people are happier in their roles and can perform better".*

Respondents prefer a hybrid working set-up considering all the benefits for the employee and the company. Most respondents believe this working set-up will provide flexibility, less stress and impact productivity. Respondents expressed their freedom to choose what mission they needed to accomplish for the particular day."*I think hybrid is probably the best setup. That is a significant impact, and I think for many people, such as stress relief, to be flexible with that and they are probably more productive and less stressed if they can match that with working from home*".

Despite the freedom, most respondents are aware of their commitment to the company to deliver what they already promised and are fully accountable for the delivery. One respondent noted, "*I also strongly believe that you can work from home and do other things. But at the end of the week or month or you have to account for what you did. You know you have to show results*".

Based on the respondents, one of the stress factors for them is commuting and having a hybrid working model will reduce their travelling time to the office. "*But I've heard it from other people is that you know, you really give them that needed flexibility and remove some of the stress that they have in their daily lives associated with commuting, making it to the office in time, spending that time in traffic and things like that. So, I think for me the hybrid is a solution cause really good, so I really enjoy it*".

The concerns over the hybrid working set-up

After more than two years of working from home, the respondents prefer to continue with a hybrid working model as the optimum working set-up. While they prefer to have a hybrid working model, the respondents shared some of their concerns about ensuring seamless implementation of the hybrid working model.

Challenge to synchronise the schedule. While working at home, there were issues with managing the calendar for individual and team appointments, considering everyone was working at home. During the hybrid working set-up, respondents raised concerns on this due to variability of schedule will be based on every employee preference based on their

judgement and condition. The concern is not only for the individual but also within one team and the other team or function. There will be more complications with it. *"The challenges, I think, are matching up your calendar with colleagues or teammates. I think that's can be challenging, but I still see, for example, that people are in the office but still email each other while they're 5 meters apart. These are because it requires really a team effort. Because you have to really sync up calendars".*

Space availability. Many respondents worried about the new office space available to work and accommodate the employee. *"The challenge I have working from the office would only be in a hybrid model. Are you able to ensure that everyone you need to connect with is in the office? I'm not sure if there will be enough desks available to accommodate and if there are not enough desks available.*

How to create motivation for the employee to come over? Many respondents reported having challenges ensuring everyone is in the office simultaneously on certain particular days. Respondents believed it was a very personal decision to decide whether they wanted to work at home or in the office. *"We don't want forcing people, but to be honest, my belief is that if everybody is at least one day a week in the office, it will help our organisation more, I think because you have just a bit more of a connection and I think the other team members also have it think it's a bit harsh if somebody is almost never in the office. So, I think it's good for the team spirit either".*

Another respondent noted, "*It's really hard to tell people*". *Yeah, I find it difficult to advise. What can we do because people make their own decisions anyway? Sometimes it's like a personal decision. Maybe his line manager can make a decision. Then you cannot force somebody to come back to the office".* After the Netherlands government cancelled all the restrictions related to COVID-19 and employees started coming back to the office on certain days in a week, many respondents mentioned that many of their colleagues still stayed at home and never showed their presence in the office. "*Yeah, we already have the*

hybrid work arrangement before the pandemic. But it's now even more common and accepted. I also see many people stay at home, so not everybody turns back completely".

What kind of support does the employee needs? Even though the company already implemented hybrid working for some roles before the pandemics, the post-pandemics situation offers a unique situation as employees have a certain freedom to decide on which working mode they prefer. There are three forms of support from the organisation based on the respondents' sharing:

(1) having a shared platform to manage the calendar, "*Because some people also have different working needs. I think maybe use a platform to see who's going into the office. That would be great. Yeah, that would be actually really perfect. You know, need to have a platform where you can see which teams are coming or who is coming*",

(2) clarity on the hybrid working expectation, *"I think that for me that's the most important rule or guideline in hybrid working setup is by sharing what is expected of employees. So right now, my team is not the working setup is not managed at all".* The organisation needs to have control in navigating a hybrid working set-up for their employee. Otherwise, it will be challenging for the organisation to manage it. One team lead mentioned, *"The main thing is to have a clear and clarity around expectations in terms of, for instance, what days are the ones that you are in the office or that you're not, or are you allowed to make your own choices? Or at least that's clarity on what you can do because otherwise, version a chooses route one and person B chooses route two, for instance, right? And everybody does their own thing, and then the organisation is hard to manage".*

(3) Role of team leaders to facilitate the team arrangement. Many respondents shared their concerns about the team lead supporting the hybrid working set-up: *"Really, having a team lead or a line manager facilitate that discussion. I think that that's added benefit. So, if you because, like I also mentioned, if you leave it up to the individuals, individuals have their scope and their own life to worry about. And I think it's the role of a teammate or line manager to make sure that the team is working effectively to facilitate that discussion".*

Three respondents mentioned the importance of team leaders to create an example, *"It also depends on the manager of your manager, because your manager can be very comfortable with you being at home. But if they receive feedback on that from their manager, it's sort of a trickle-down in that sense"*.

FOMO (Fears Of Missing Out), social connection and impact on career

In this section, respondents shared their experience working from home about FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), social connection and the impact on their career in the organisation.

Most respondents shared their experience of feeling Fear of missing out due to working from home for the past two years. FOMO appears more when the respondents work from home and feel isolated. Three respondents mentioned they did not have FOMO and all claimed they did not have social media accounts. "*I have FOMO. I suffer from this a lot. Yes, I think you probably are left behind, or you're not getting the news you should be getting. FOMO is more relevant than if you're working in a more independent environment. It also matters whether it's applied in a social context or in a working context, so working wise, I don't know how much that will impact me versus social because that makes sense".*

One respondent noted that FOMO correlates with working from home due to a social connection absence: "*So, for FOMO, ID sees it. I think it matters a bit. I don't mind if I don't do those things, then it's fine, and I'm more or less spectrum. But I think that's an impact on social connection as well. So, I think it will impact many careers where they realised, hey, this is a culture I really like and want to invest in, or this is something as I was before when I was really, really always in the office, everybody was doing something* ".

One respondent who shared not experiencing FOMO views that employees will not experience FOMO if they are working at the office and connect with colleagues, "*I think there is a part of FOMO because you're not in the office. Sometimes when you are in the office, your line manager is also in the office. You pick up discussions, and it's easier to know*

what's happening. From my own rules, I don't think I have the feeling of missing out on something".

Unlike FOMO, which most of the respondents shared that it will not impact the employee's career at the office, the concept of social connection will indirectly impact the employee respondent. "*So, I don't think someone will say to me you're never in the office, so you're not going to make that promotion, but they might say I've never seen her before. I don't know who she is. Where? So, I'm not going to give her a good job because I have no idea. I've never talked to her before".*

Respondent mentioned that employees need to make an effort beyond just working from home as it will not support their career, "*I do think working from home makes it more difficult to establish social connections. You need to put more effort into it*". Working from home provides more proximity to the employee, and it will provide benefiting the employee in the exposure and career. "*You have the proximity bias that you're familiar with it, but it says that people that you work closely with or you see, then you are view more positively than people that you don't have a lot of exposure to, and I think that's something that people need to be mindful.*"

Networking was one obvious benefit of having a better social connection in the office. It will contribute positively to the employee's career opportunities: "*My office presence will definitely impact my work or career cause it's a lot easier to ask people for quick coffee catchup. And use those networking opportunities face to face. Then it is virtual cause it feels more forced. It feels like you're asking a lot from a person, especially those you don't know".*

Respondent feedback on new office set up post the pandemics

As part of the hybrid working set-up, respondents know they must go to the office depending on their mission. *But let's say there has to be a balance in there. You can't. You can't do it all online. Sometimes you need to allow people to travel and have a meeting somewhere".*

The main motives for the employee to go to the office are to engage, catch up with the colleague, and collaborate. They will not be able to do it from home, "*Yeah, I think the best setup would be a hybrid setup where we really have an office, and we might have that with the new office. It's really exciting for people. So, it's nice to meet people and enjoy some of the facilities because I have a good screen. I have good coffee. We have a good view, or I can go to a good canteen or do a bit of sport nearby. Let me go to the office instead of sitting at home*".

While they noticed that it is important to go to the office, all respondents shared they have different value propositions. Perception of the office role and the function differs from the enforced working from home. They need a tangible reason to travel to the office instead of staying at home. "*I think the point of working from the office is to create more interaction rather than mandating a hybrid check-up or whatever. We need to think about how do you attract people to the office? how do you convince them that's really beneficial.*"

One respondent shared the expectation of a new office as a space to collaborate and make it attractive for the employee to work from the office, "*Mandating a hybrid check-up or whatever, I think we need to think about how do you attract people to the office? How do you convince them that that's really beneficial? So how do you make it attractive? And how do you spread it across the weeks with sufficient people to run into to create that interaction*".

Conclusion

Discussion

From the research, several opportunities, issues, and learnings from the effects of enforced working from home during the pandemics are impacting the ways of working post the pandemics. While the result is based on a limited sample of the employee from Shell Mobility Netherlands, the research provides initial learnings and inputs for the company in formulating the optimum working set-up.

In this section, we will discuss these findings impacting the employees working during the lockdown and how to turn them into opportunities. The section divides into two sections, how the findings will help improve the working set-up in Shell Mobility Netherlands and the implications for other companies. The research will use the research questions to guide us in this section, as the findings should explain the research question mentioned in the previous chapter.

How does enforced work from home effects the concept of happiness, and what are missing moments working from the office?

From the research, enforced work from home affected the employee concepts of happiness driven by the different nature of work home setting compared to prior pandemics. Based on the interview, most employees had adjusted to their new working environment after six months of working at home.

Despite the initial challenges and frustration, the employee accepted the situation, considering that the pandemic was beyond their control. At the individual level, the employee experienced the positive net benefits from working at home, which made them happier than during the pandemic outbreak. The key driver for the new happiness concept is the new meaning of having more quality time without commuting to the office. Travelling time creates a significant burden to the employee daily. It positively impacts the employee's work-life balance as they can convert their daily travelling time to a series of meaningful personal activities for the loved one, both kids or partners.

Besides the absence of travelling time, the respondent shared that they have more control over their time management and priorities to serve personal and organisational objectives. They feel more empowered than before the pandemics, making them more productive. The statement of being more productive from the respondents is more a claim at the individual level and experienced better work-life balance during the pandemics.

In summary, their concept of happiness for the employee shifted mainly due to two factors related to time, (1) the absence of personal daily commuting activities provides

additional hours for personal and family usage, and (2) the ability to manage the in-between home activities within the office work-related. It allows employees to use their time better for the family, themselves, and the organisation simultaneously. This flexibility, to some extent, was not available before the pandemics, even when they had a flexible working set-up.

Despite the happiness, concepts shifted, and most employees have a downside from the enforced working from home on human interaction. Lost human interaction in terms of engagement and conversation with a colleague at the office was the primary source of unhappiness for all the respondents and impacted their mental health. Therefore, the enforced working from home gives the employee and the company a dilemma they must solve after the pandemics.

As part of the human interaction, the respondent was aware they missed the office to some extent, mainly in the informal collaboration with the office colleague. The research gathered new learning that coffee moments served as primary interaction among the employee. It is the occasion for collaboration, ideas changes and learning. The respondent uses the coffee moment as a mini get away from their daily work routine, and they can meet up with colleagues. It serves more than a coffee break; it is more about reflection time off for the employees.

How does non-face-to-face communication affect the employee quality of engagement, productivity, teamwork and work delivery?

Engagement. The non-face-to-face communication restrained the employee from having more engaging conversations with the colleague. Engagement is one of the most impacted areas affected by new working methods during pandemics. From this research, the employee experienced difficulties capturing emotions or non-verbal communication from the colleague during the communication. It impacts the engagement quality lower than before the pandemics.

Productivity. There is a gap in productivity from team leaders and team members' perspectives. From individual perspectives, the employee claimed that their productivity

increased based on their experience managing higher workloads in terms of number. They felt they could deliver it even within the time constraint. It is contradictory to what team leaders observed when it comes to collaboration between individuals within the team; there was a productivity deterioration, impacting the team performance as a whole.

Teamwork. Similar to the findings on engagement, teamwork is the most mentioned pain point for the employee working under enforced working from home. The employee has enormous challenges in communicating and collaborating within the team. It affects teamwork delivery, quality and efficiency in the company. Employees tend to focus on their responsibilities and lose sight of team members or other department responsibilities.

Work quality delivery. The employee shared their ability to adapt to the new ways of working under the pandemics restriction as they have delivered the assigned tasks even faster than before the pandemics. Unfortunately, they are also aware that the quality of teamwork and engagement with other colleagues is lower prior to the pandemics. There is a tendency for the employee tends to focus on the number of works delivered instead of quality, considering the increased number of assigned tasks.

How does enforced working from home affect the employee expectation of the working format?

Employee expectation. During the pandemics, the employee experienced the dilemma where they perceived themselves as more productive working at home. However, their mental health is impacted by lacking engagement and social connection with their colleague. Therefore, the employee expects the company to apply a hybrid working set-up for all the roles and functions that will allow employees to have a combined home and office, which some roles already had prior to the pandemics. At the same time, they raised concerns about the space availability, synchronising the schedule within the team and how to motivate the employee coming over to the office.

How does enforced working from home affect the employee expectation of the

working format concerning FOMO (Fears Of Missing Out) and social connection?

Fears Of Missing Out, most respondents experienced it due to working from home and

being unable to present at the office regularly. The level of FOMO varies depending on the

individual characteristics and, to some extent, impacts the person's mental health.

The social connection was one of the most mentioned words during the research as most

employees suffered from having a good social connection. Based on this research, social

connection is a primary type of relationship that every employee needs. There is no direct

relationship between social connection and career advancement in the organisation.

However, the employee believes that having a good connection will open up more

opportunities in the company, including career advancement.

Research Limitation

This research has limitations that might be impacting the research result, which is the

following:

(1) the respondents have limited to 15 employees at Shell Mobility Netherlands. Some of

them had face-to-face communication experienced even prior to the pandemics.

While the experience varies depending on the job role, it might not represent the

organisation's general nature outside Shell.

(2) the interview was conducted when the Dutch government had already cancelled all

the COVID-19 restrictions, meaning the result might be different if the study

happened during the restriction,

(3) the structure of the questions developed to answer some specifics questions relevant

to Shell Mobility Netherlands and when the readers of this study should be aware of it

Academic Implication

Based on this research, the result aligned with what Joo & Lee (2015) studied that

employees with high perceived organisational support and psychological capital effects are

highly engaged in their work and happy with their careers. They have a greater sense of well-being in their lives. Time flexibility allows the employee to work at a time agreed by the employer and employee. In contrast, locational flexibility allows the employee to work in the most prefered location, including at home and other non-office environments (Gibson, 2003). Future studies should focus on measuring employee claims on their increased happiness and engagement at work versus what the company perceived based on the tangible measurement.

The challenges to capturing the non-verbal communication during the respondent face to face communication are aligned with previous study by Ebner (2017) reported that expecting virtual working using communication mediums like video conferencing to get a similar impact to meeting in person is something not real. Human brain received different variations of confusion and disruption as it received many non-verbal cues and other in-person communication, which is different and relevant to this research (Ebner and Greenberg, 2020).

The findings convinced the previous study that collaboration becomes the most challenging matter for the organisation when working from home, especially innovating and developing ideas through spontaneous collaboration (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). This research study shows collaboration and teamwork become the most challenging matters during pandemics. There is an area for further work on working from home positively impacting economics and productivity for the organisation.

The findings from the study related to the employee preferred working set-up aligned to the previous study that from the employee's point of view, there are four aspects of life impacted by current pandemics: the working environment, the work, personal and relationships (Franken et al.,2021). When the organisation provides benefits of flexible working and the opportunity to work from home for their employee, employees prefer workplace well-being over material offers (Seppälä and Cameron, 2015).

Based on this research, the respondent mentioned that social connection was a source of happiness and impacted employee well-being and engagement. These findings aligned with the previous social connection study (Cotofan et al.,2021).

Future studies could focus on quantitative results from the hybrid working set-up toward the organisation's key performance indicator. One improvement from a previous study could be that happiness positively impacts almost all organisations by increasing sales by 37%, productivity by 31% and the quality of the task by 19%, as well as improving employee health and quality of life prior to the pandemics (Achor, 2011). The future study should focus on the perception gap between team members and leaders on engagement, teamwork, productivity and work delivery, including quality.

Management Implication

Based on the study, there are three key management recommendations for further consideration in general and not only apply to Shell Mobility Netherlands.

Formal arrangement on the hybrid working set-up. Organisations need to make a formal arrangement on how to do hybrid work by sharing clear expectations with the employee. During the current transition, organisations need to have control in navigating a hybrid working set-up for their employees and minimise the hybrid working set-up becomes a subjective matter for the employee. The current post pandemics situation should be different to the situation under the pandemic where most of the organisation's response was varied, depending on the organisation's capabilities and experience due to inadequate planning time (Waizenegger et al., 2020). The importance of formal arrangement is critical in supporting employees in getting the optimum benefits of time flexibility for the organisation(Atkinson and Hall, 2011).

New organisation role and responsibility. It needs to be updated based on the current hybrid working set-up, including each employee's role and responsibility, both team leaders and individual contributors. The new arrangement should focus on ensuring high quality of

engagement and teamwork at the organisation level and not only at the individual level. Employees' work-life balance should create high engagement, high productive teamwork and output.

The coffee moment is a critical space and occasion for the employee. The company must consider the office layout centred on the coffee moment to create a space for collaboration and knowledge exchange among employees. It is the most missing occasion mentioned by all the respondents. Social contact with other people can develop an emotion of trust. It aligned with the previous study that trust, visibility, presence and availability are still essential during telework (Sewell and Taskin, 2015).

Redefine the role of the physical office and the employee's *social connection*. The organisation should redefine their office value proposition after the pandemics, considering the space perception for the employee has changed. However, at the same time, the office's role remains essential in building positive team engagement. It is an avenue to collaborate and exchange ideas instead of sitting and working. Lunstad (2018) states that social connection is an overall concept that defines the human being as physically, behaviourally, cognitively, and emotionally connected to others. It is a source of structural, functional and quality support from the human relationship. It has a significant impact on health, well-being, economy and business. Trust and collaboration result from a positive team environment, regular communication, and learning and personal development (Holton, 2001).

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Appendix

Appendix A. List of Participants and Interview Schedule Shell Mobility Netherlands

Madhi Suryanto, 608720 (Master, Marketing)

Erasmus School of Economics

No	Respondent No	Description	Interview Date
1	Respondent 1	Sales, F/ family with kids	5 May, 10.00 AM
2	Respondent 2	HR, F/family with no kids	9 May, 15.00 PM
3	Respondent 3	IT, M/Family with no kids	12 May, 9.00 AM
4	Respondent 4	Marketing, F/No kids	13 May, 10.00 AM
5	Respondent 5	Marketing, M/No kids	16 May, 13.00 PM
6	Respondent 6	Sales, M/family with kids	17 May, 10.00 AM
7	Respondent 7	Sales, M/ family with kids	17 May, PM 15.00 PM
8	Respondent 8	IT, F/family with no kids	20 May, 10.00 AM
9	Respondent 9	Network, F/ single	20 May, 14.00 PM
11	Respondent 11	Operations, M/no kids	23 May, 17.00 PM
12	Respondent 12	Sales, F/family with kids	25 May, 10.00 AM
13	Respondent 13	Marketing, F/family with kids	30 May, 13.00 PM
10	Respondent 10	Operation, F/family with kids	31 May, 13.00 PM
14	Respondent 14	Support, F/ single	1 June, 14.00 AM
15	Respondent 15	Safety, M/ family with kids	7 June, 10.00 AM

Remarks

M: Male

F: Female

Appendix B. Questionnaire guidance for a semi-structured interview

Structured Interview Questions (Final)

Madhi Suryanto (608720) Marketing Master Students, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

INTRODUCTION

First of all, thank you for your time; I appreciate it. My name is Madhi Suryanto. I am a master's student at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam and from Indonesia. I took a career break from my office to pursue my master's education in the Netherlands.

Objectives of the research

The research has three objectives to cover, and it will be our main discussion topic for today:

- Understanding the concept of happiness, before and after the pandemics, how will it differ from one another.
- How will it impact their work productivity and work-life balance? Including the perceived workload and employee well-being
- What are employee expectations, and how can the company support the Employee with the new concept of happiness?

Importance of the interview

The interview is part of my final thesis for my master's study at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. The result will also be shared with the Shell Netherlands leadership team as feedback from the Employee to further any management decision.

Format of the interview

There are four sections of the topics which care (1) work from home, (2) non-face-to-face communication, (3) productivity and (4) working office set-up. You can answer your question based on your own experience and views.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam and Shell own all information shared during the interview, including recorded materials. This research is anonymous, without exposing any actual participants' names and any information to identify specific comments and feedback to participants' names. The result is only for research purposes at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam and inputs to the Shell Netherlands leadership team.

Interview Duration. It will take a maximum of 1 hour for our discussion.

Participants Introduction

First, would you mind introducing yourself:

No Respondent	
Name (Male/Female)	
Age	
How long have you been with the company, and what is your current position	
Team	- Single Contributor - Manager with no team members - Team Lead with …….. members
Family	- Kids - No Kids

Thank you for your introduction, and let's start with the following discussion points.

Section 1. Work from home (10 minutes)

During the covid-19 pandemics, employees in all countries must work from home as part of the government regulation.

a. How do you find yourself experiencing working from home for almost two years?

- What are the things you are happy with working from home, and why?
- What are the things you are not happy with working from home, and why?

b. Anything that you missed working from the office?

Section 2. Non-Face to Face Communication (15 minutes)

During the pandemics, most office communication has been replaced with non-face-to-face communication, such as Zoom or Microsoft Team.

a. Can you share your non-face-to-face office communication experience with me in the past two years?

- What are the things you like the most?
- Any pain points during or hurdles those experiences?
- How do you cope with the challenges?

b. Suppose you compared your face-to-face communication before and during the pandemics. How will it differ based on your quality of engagement with office colleagues?

c. How does this non-face to face communication impact you in the following aspects? (Engagement, Teamwork, Work delivery/speed). With your team member, colleague, and manager? Any different experiences on the relationship quality to each stakeholder?

d. Regarding how non-face to face communication meets your communication expectations at work, if you score your previous face to face communication experience before the pandemics are 10, how will you rate your experience after the pandemics?

Section 3. Productive & happiness (15 minutes)

Now, we are discussing productivity during pandemics. Compared to Work From Office (WFO), work from home (WFH) limits face-to-face communication or interaction with our office colleagues. Based on your experience in the past two years:

a. Compared to WFO, do you think you worked (less, the same or more) productive during WFH?

- Can you share why you believe that WFH is (less, the same or more) productive than WFO?

b. On a scale of 1 to 7, How do you rate your overall happiness at Work during WFH? And why?

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely not happy	Very not happy	Not happy	Neutral	Happy	Very happy	Completely happy

Section 4. Working Office set up (15 minutes)

With the government starting to allow employees to work from the office, more companies allow employees to work from the office.

a. What do you think about 100% work from the office before the pandemics?
   - How do you feel about it? (Happy, anxious, looking forward)
   - What do you like about it?
   - Do you have any concerns about getting back to work from the office?
b. Some companies will apply a hybrid working set-up by allowing their employees to work from the office and home.
   - How do you feel about it?
   - What do you like about a hybrid working arrangement?
   - After more than two years of working from home, do you have any challenges working from the office?
c. From a productivity and happiness point of view, which working set up (hybrid or working from home) will benefit employee well-being/happiness and company interest?
   - Why do you think that way?
   - Do you have any required support from the management? Could you specify why it is important for employees and the company?
   - What are your motives for coming to the offices regarding the hybrid working set-up?
   Only probes when respondents did not mention it.
   - What do you think about FOMO (Fear Of Missing Something)?
   - What do you think about social connection?
   - One last question, do you think your facetime or your office presence will impact your work or career? If yes/no, why do you think that way?

Appendix C. Grouping ideation and insights scooping from the interview

CLUSTERING RESPONSES BASED ON THE INTERVIEW TO GENERATE PATTERNS AND FURTHER INSIGHTS

Section 1. Work from home

Question 1.1 How do you find yourself experiencing working from home for almost two years? What are the things you are happy with working from home, and why?

Commuting/Travelling: savings money, time (6)

- you don't have to commute to the office so it takes me one hour to the office and one hour back so that's what it's 2 hours a day

- I think, summarizing their happy with your home is. I think with kids with sports, I think there's just a lot easier and no commuting

- I'm losing my traveling time, so my traveling time is restricted to 10 seconds coming from coming from the downstairs from the kitchen, up the stairs, into my office, and just start working. So of course, that is saves me so much time and traveling time and therefore also energy.

- So, I saved a lot of saved a lot of money in that respect as well. So, I think those are the things that that made me happy

- For me, I'm very happy with the few reasons, first of all I don't need to commute.

- Things were made me happy. That was that you had no travel time.

  Quality time: Family and Myself (6)

- And I found that not having that commute opened up a lot of time during the week, for me to do other things for example going to the gym or meeting with family and friends, or do house activities.

- Another thing that I was happy with working from home is that I got more time with my partner. So that was a good thing that you have more quality time in that sense than we used to use to have before.

- I kind of was happy about the time that I was gonna be spending with the family, So it's nice to be around them

- I think it's a support of the family. So, you're have a better availability. I think it's better if availability show more connections with your loved ones.

- I was able to walk my dog during lunchtime and it just had more time with my family, which it might be really happy, so I think it's more the contact with the time for family

- working from home gives me more time with my child from home because otherwise I'm commuting about 2 hours a day and now that the commuting time isn't there

Flexibility (5)

- it was also nice that you have some flexibility at home to do OK you need to do your laundry.

- The ability to do some chores in between work and really operational stuff but sometimes it helps. I think a very predictable social life and not sure if it's always making you happy, but at least it was, it was predictable and not many disruptions. And easier to combine physical activity with work and it's easier to take calls. Basically, while walking outside and doing your steps.

- but also, the flexibility and the lack of travel time.

- So, you had a bit more flexibility to work around other activities that you would like to have in in in your day or especially I think with families then then it's probably even more he benefits, I think.

- I had really a lot of flexibility around my days and in terms of making sure that, , he can be that he was a day-care really only as much as he needed to be instead of, you know,

me having to travel to Rotterdam and then travel back from Rotterdam, where I would

lose 2 hours a day commuting

Productive/Efficient/Creative (4)

- Yeah, I'm being able to focus a lot more. I feel that I can get a lot more productive

  working from home.

- Work from home. I'm I can be a lot more creative and have my own

- I had the feeling that I was really productive, especially at the beginning and especially in

  doing your daily jobs. So, I think working from home allows you to be really productive in

  your in your day-to-day job.

- I'm really happy with is that I get a lot more done on a day working because if I need to

  finish something, I have the time to finish it and nobody standing nearby my desk asking

  me 100 million questions. So that's something that I'm happy with.

Work Life Balance (4)

- So, I'm at home with my kids or fixing things from work or doing nice things with my

  husband so it gives me a better work life balance in it and I think those are the two main

  things which make working from home.

- Second, if it helps to have a life balance better so with two kids, she can manage things

  on their own, but my son he still needs a bit of guidance in the morning, so you don't just

  close the door, go to school.

- I think we already have a very good balance with before the before the COVID pandemic

  and even in my experience as I work a lot with people in the Netherlands.

- The third element my role as moves from a local role to a global role which means that

  my contacts people are dealing in India, Canada and London

Feelings - less stress (3)

- I found really positive is that the schools were closed, my children were with me at home and the fact that we were everyone at home. It was really something that I appreciate because it's removed for me from a lot of stress

- I get a lot less stress and the environment are super quiet.

- Acquired morning not too busy and peaceful in some extent. You could go sport a little bit earlier. You could have dinner a little bit earlier and you had a whole evening in front of you because normally yeah, the travel time also took like 45 or an hour if it was busy so.

Feelings – Freedom (2)

- I have the freedom to do what I needed to do for shell at every moment. So, for me it was really positive.

- That's one thing that I also find that working from home and makes this day life less difficult because you can participate in a lot of tasks while working from home.

Tools/Infrastructure (1)

• I'm also someone who can work alone. I mean if I need to contact someone, I can use all the tools that we have to speak to the person, to see the person

Connection with others (1)

• We were able to stay quite well connected and work OK from home while everybody was trying to figure out what do you need in order to work from home properly? What will be a rule, how do you stay safe? How do you engage?

Question 1.2

What are the things you are not happy with working from home, and why?

Loss of Human Interaction – conversation, engagement (17)

- being able to see other people and not being able to interact and also, I found it very difficult to put things in perspective for myself and for other people there is an issue

- Things not happy, probably you missed the conversations between colleagues being at the office because you don't have to schedule a meeting. You can just talk to people you maybe you randomly overhear conversations that are also beneficial

- Walking to the coffee machine, those type of things you really miss. So, I think it becomes very functional and also talking to people.

- And but you really miss especially when you're new to the company's you meet with people and they introduce you to other colleagues. So that part you really miss. So, I was quite happy that when I joined, we could go to the office again.

- So, the aspect of let's say having the real interaction with each other is really hammered

- I need people around me to be able to do my work. And I do really enjoy that. So maybe that's the thing, not so happy working from home

- I am not happy working from home, I think it's very important to have the face-to face contact with colleagues and working from home just completely and without any contact for being able to have a bit of a chat with colleagues is more difficult

- also having the feeling that your part of the team and I think that's just of course I think we did it very well also online, but I think it's much easier if you see each other face to face that you have a bit of a left there also altogether and also just a meeting the persons that are not directly linked to your own scope of work.

- And I think it's easier to get a bit more engaged with the rest of the departments if you're in the office then working from home, so feeling a bit of part of that company

- It's expensive to travel there, but my experience and also from the past is that once you've met somebody once or twice face to face you and then then virtual connect is a lot easier. it's something that It is really important to make sure you also meet people face to face.

- I'm not happy with working from home is that I missed the face to face connect with my colleagues and especially with my own team, because I think I had a really young team and they all started in their jobs and to coach them and to help them make the next step and also help them with their struggles with working from home. I think it's really important that you have face to face cool next and.

- Because now all the calls you had were really functional. I called you because I needed answers about something or we need to fix something.

- So, I think, uh, missing my colleagues.

- Yeah, I think indeed you really miss out on that camaraderie element with your colleagues, right? And it's not just on a personal level, but also on a professional level because you know,

- Basically, you sense that the good atmosphere and the and the and the sense of unity was falling a bit apart people were losing contact and even though that there was room for. Yeah, it's not. You go to the office to see people and even if you're all working from home, you can still have contact there.

- And then from a corporate level and even from a business level, we tried to put incentives in place to bring the people nevertheless together, like virtual web cost and then messages and some, some, some fun team activities. And on Friday, like quizzes and virtual escape rooms. But it was very difficult

- The hurdles are indeed people not wanting to be on camera. So only having two depends on voice, cues, best connection still happens with some colleagues where it makes it more difficult to have non face to face communication

Sense of Freedom, mental health (8)

- You know, there's so many things that are absent right now. So that makes it very, I would say restricted because it's not very personal.

- The other thing is of course and that might be a bit contra dictionary on what I just said. So, I miss out the traveling as well

- And then the only thing you see during the whole day is your screen. You don't see anything else. that's really it starts to become boring and you lose your concentration, you lose your focus

- manager will check in, then the boss will check in, then the bosses' boss will check in and you would have five calls on a day on how you were feeling, which I think for me, didn't really help because you I think in order to feel happy, you just need a bit of continuation and routine

- I did not have a dedicated office in my home, I didn't have room for dedicated office. My office was my kitchen, my dining table, like a lot of people, were doing.

- a sense of not being able to do what you want, so, sort of a constrained feeling and you know you need to be at home that that, that messaging is something that constrained my sense of freedom.

- But mentally that I didn't take the ferry well cause everywhere I was, every time I was in my living room, my, my, my office setup was there. So, I could not just in my head. I was always feeling that I was at least mentally involved with work.

- So, we had to put a lot of focus on mental health at that time. So, a lot of communication to keep somehow the people together even though everybody was working from home. So yeah, so not happy working from home was indeed that

Work Pressure, uninterrupted work and load (6)

- yeah, it's the reality that we have more work and worked more. And was the pressure was bigger... So, we have a lot urgency to manage, so I think that a lot of people you feel it's that everyone was under pressure.

- So, I think if you look workload wise, it feels like we're working more and then we would, when being in the office and also bring some pressure

- I'm working much longer hours. OK. Yeah, that that is, of course. Yeah, it's a gap because even it was busy

- we had a lot of telcon coming from everywhere and it was sometimes difficult to manage even during the lunch ... and that's what that was not always easy to manage, sometimes we only get 15 minutes to eat something during the lunch.

- Another thing is the fact that because you have your calendar open and everyone is sitting behind your desk, it's quite easy to go from call to call. It feels like you need to be available all time while in the office you don't feel that pressure.

- we started calling about every little thing that I felt like your projectivity level was a little bit less because you're constantly going from call to call and my inbox was exploding

Family (3)

- obviously became longer than short term and that's when things started to get more frustrating working at home with your kids

- And one of the things that I was really struggling with is, I was actually how close the family is, and so there's no boundary between the family and your work activity or work-related processes.

- But if that's if that gets even closer, right, it's really just, you know, stepping outside the door and you have your family coming in and the whole switching between private and work in your mind. That was very, very tiring and exhaustive.

Question 1. 3

Anything that you missed working from the office?

Coffee Conversation: the power of coffee (12)

- the Informal sort of coffee corner. Connect where you don't actually have a meeting with someone but you hear people telling stories at the render and they impact you roll somehow and then you learn a lot more than you would just being at home behind your desk

- Yeah, I think running into colleagues at the coffee machine and just really sharing ideas and getting a feel for the business and where we're going.

- I will say is that you can get things done quicker in the office then at home

- Walking to the coffee machine, those type of things you really miss. So, I think it becomes very functional and also talking to people.

- It might sound it might strike you as strange, Madhi. But let's say there's so much conversation being done over a coffee machine. So many arrangements are made over coffee. You know that. Yeah. So that that's what you really miss out.

- let's say the coincidental coffee chit chats that's one I say the brakes are also something that you miss because the whole digital scheduling of the agenda made it quite back-to-back, actually and in the office environment, you have more natural breaks.

- And I don't think that those coffee moments coffee breaks at the coffee machine cannot be one to one.

- No, it's ok and I want to be in the office at least one for every week and just to do to stay productive, even if I still have a lot of bursts

- And what I miss most is maybe the coffee table talks that you're that you just meet someone from another department at the coffee machine and just asks what are you doing? What are you working on?

- The downside is of course that you're not in your office with your colleagues and you don't have nice informal coffee chats, lunches with each other because. Yeah. And because during coffee breaks or lunches, you had informal conversations. At home you just go on and on because you even don't take time to get a break

- You can always in the office, you could just catch up with the coffee corner and talk things out and talk things through very quickly, right. Whereas now you know, everything is well, it's mandated to be virtual and everybody's agenda is very packed

- Because yeah, there was. I mean, you don't go to the if you see each other face to face, then you automatically take the time to go grab a coffee and talk like 5 minutes

Interaction – engagement (10)

- contact with people around the fact that we can't meet each other and that you can have time together.

- I definitely missed colleagues having the talk. it's very important to be able to network networking at the office is easier than networking via virtually.

- connection with, especially a new colleague, but also our colleagues in general.

- conversations between colleagues being at the office because you don't have to schedule a meeting. You can just talk to people you maybe you randomly overhear conversations that are also beneficial

- you really miss the informal things also from let's say non-working stuff, but also from working stuff and especially when you're new to the company's quite good to you know you meet up in the hallway with people

- The interpersonal connections with colleagues, something I really miss in terms of just connecting to other human beings, but also the richness of the business, so it really took a lot of quality out of business interactions to all be working from the office

• I am not happy working from home, I think it's very important to have the face-to face contact with colleagues and working from home just completely and without any contact for being able to have a bit of a chat with colleagues is more difficult

• What I missed was the interaction with colleagues, because the pandemic hated they were

• Uh, so I had colleagues, you know, in, in, in in the UK, in Germany, in Turkey, in Spain. But I wasn't able to build a good working relationship with these people because everything was through teams was very forced

• I think what is really nice also coming back to the office is that you run into the people that you have nice engagements with in the past that you appreciate and you're going to have a nice coffee or laugh with, the fact that you don't work with them on a daily basis or they are not your colleagues, friends

• sometimes a one-minute conversation, right, just that you see someone and you can ask her how is it or if you know that someone else, I don't know had a new born or a did it was on holidays or show. Then if you see someone you will directly ask, how are you and how was holidays or yeah and that's. Working from your computer? Yeah. You're not going to kind of reach out to someone like that

Back to routines (2)

• Just having a routine again for me. I'm very I'm someone that likes to dress up and go out and you know, it's for myself. But I like to feel good. And if you're sitting at home in the same clothes every day, then it doesn't really help you're feeling good about yourself

• I think it's second thing. It's just a routine, just ability of everyday we do this at this time and I have the same routine at home, but I'm not as strict with it and I like the strictness.

Office facilities

- Well, I also appreciate the facilities that you have in the office, so basic office equipment that we don't have at home

SECTION 2

Non-Face to Face Communication

During the pandemics, most office communication has been replaced with non-face to face communication, such as Zoom or Microsoft Team.

Question 2.1

Can you share your non-face to face office communication experience with me in the past two years? What are the things you like the most? Any pain points during or hurdles those experiences? How do you cope with the challenges?

Upside

Easy to connect & flexibility (9)

- the easiness of having the non-face to face conversation because like I said, everyone is available behind their desk so it's easy to have a quick connect in between meetings

- What I also like about the non-face face communication that it's a lot easier to have a good discussion because it's easier to pull in everyone in the big call and you, you also have the option for breakout sessions are even the collaborative sessions are now easier to facilitate in a non-face to face manner almost more than a face-to-face manner.

- Positive. I always like to begin with the positive is that you were able to connect quickly, right? So, you didn't have to fly over or do all of that before you saw someone to connect quickly. So, I like the agility of it. So, it was quick there. Boom.

- Yeah, it's really flexible but we would always communicate within the team. So, when are you in the office just to make sure that when you're in the office also other people are there, but usually we would we would do like Monday, Tuesday, Thursday but also quite flexible just to see you know, what does what does fit in in people's agenda

- My preference is always to be face to face. Of course, we can't do that anymore but that would be my preference. The best thing about the non-face to face office communication is of course it's very accessible. You know it's very it is easy to use.

- I think I meetings itself could be pretty effective with teams also depends of course on how the audience is behaving, but I think. I really like the sharing the screen as well, but also if you're working in Excel and you just do it together, then you can just directly or you can directly change the PowerPoint.

- But It's a lot better than just talking to somebody, you can see somebody to see somebody smiling. The non - observable communication is a lot better. You can talk to each other and you can share screens and so I think that is something that in Shell realized quite soon after the pandemics and the rule of not using camera was abolished.

- The pandemic here we also use video and people have actually their video on because indeed normally the function was there but nobody used it. Yeah, so now everybody uses it. So that is I think, a good yeah thing that's come out of it

- it's easier to connect with a group of every virtual because there's no meeting rooms, chairs, et cetera. So, I think that's good.

More Structured and Efficient (4)

- What I like the most, especially with external parties, is the flexibility and the ability to limit time but also to be able to take notes during the call

- I think meetings can be a lot more structured and I'm able to make notes more easily and share screen more easily, sometimes I forget a bit more things like you still have to write down your actions or like sometimes you can forget a bit more.

- I think meetings are more organized and pain point that I see is I don't really like it if people don't share their camera. So, if a lot of people in a team meeting are sharing their camera and there's just two people that are not doing that. I have the feeling that they're doing something else

- Yeah, it's also and that's also then what you kind of experience maybe a bit more in face to-face communication it feels like it's you get a bit sooner to the point with the virtual meetings,

- Yeah. So, and also actually three members of my team are based in France and Belgium anyway. So, you know it would have had to have been virtual most of the time. So yeah, I think for me it was, it was actually it was OK. It wasn't really a big deal. I think teams was also a nice addition to the whole situation.

Ways of working (2)

- the first meeting we had in team when we needed to open the camera. We were not really happy because it was a little bit changing our way of working. Small details that impact on human on your way of working and effect on your wellbeing

- And you talk about it and you try to agree with your team or with other you know you agree new ways of working but it took some time and also the new tools come also with new features and for instance now that we're using MS Teams.

Downside/Pain points

Engagement (10)

- one of the pain points so if the conversation is not really interesting, or if you feel a bit stressed, or if there are multiple popups coming up, then it's easy to get distracted

- negative. I will say it's still difficult to read someone via the computer versus face to face. I guess to measure that level of Genuity

- What are the pain points experience was that I didn't? I couldn't engage people very well, and I sometimes felt the conversations started off very awkward.

• Couldn't wait for connecting with a colleague. It's difficult because you don't really have a personal catch up every month. chitchat on teams, it's it. It doesn't really work

• And you feel what's going on and you can look in someone's eyes and say, maybe you want to say something, but you're not, comfortable to share your thoughts or whatever.

• So, there's an increased number of notifications, and I really need to manage it because it's too much. So, it is one of the challenges that it raises, the expectation of your counterpart in conversation, you know whether you've seen or heard or, you know, read the email.

• So, we do a lot of fun stuff, but you know, you just book a meeting to do a social talk not everybody is fully on board with that, but you know. Some people need it and other people feel it's a waste of time, and so there's always a bit of a balance

• certain things are lost in translation when you're doing it virtually, especially with without any videos, I felt that it was difficult to like, build that like adjust my communication style, and I felt like.

• I think especially in kind of sessions where your relative where you're also interacting with different stakeholders having a different kind of view or different objectives in a meeting that sometimes it could a bit easier to meet each other face to face and that you can look each other eyes.

• I think or conflicting, so in a bigger meeting, sometimes you can if you have over coffee chat, so in the coffee break or so you can have a quick chat or you can meet each other before at first and having a coffee and then you if you already know that there is conflicting kind of interests. I think you then agree to disagree.

Camera (5)

• I was also feeling like that at the beginning I don't want to show my home to everyone. Sorry yeah and for me I was feeling obliged to open camera and I was not

feeling good about that. Then, we learn that it was possible to remove the background in your room

- That's also a hurdle because not all colleagues are at ease on being on camera then it makes it a lot more difficult to have good communication because you miss a lot of cues because you can't see them.

- not all colleagues are at ease on being on camera then it makes it a lot more difficult to have good communication because you miss a lot of cues because you can't see them

- That's sometimes people do not automatically turn on cameras for whatever reason and I think during the beginning, people were willing to do that. But as the pandemic moved on, show a lot of people not using cameras anymore.

- positive thing what I like, I was able to easily connect with my colleagues around the world. I was really happy when we finally started doing the video thing,

Team work – Engagement – Speed delivery (2)

- as a team lead that you should pay attention to everyone. I think so that's something you can I think that that should be more or less also a bit of a capability of someone working for Shell.

- I'm building something up as a team, but also together with one team member with the managers is quite difficult and if you have someone nonperforming, it's quite hard to do those conversations through teams, so that would always be my preference to do those things a face to face.

Question 2.2

Suppose you compared your face-to-face communication before and during the pandemics. How will it differ based on your quality of engagement with office colleagues?

How does this non-face to face communication impact you in the following aspects? (Engagement, Teamwork, Work delivery/speed). With your team member, colleague, and manager? Any different experiences on the relationship quality to each stakeholder?

Productivity & Efficiency

(+) Upside (4)

- I really like to Microsoft team to have a meeting plan and to respect it, and I think that we are more productive on speaking by phone/teams and not face to face.
- If you need to go to the office in Belgium or in the Netherlands, it's taking a lot of time Sometimes one hour or two away, then going back and It's taking 1/2 of your day (to stay (efficiency)
- I think the quality of the formal meetings is better after the pandemic because you make more conscious decision.
- I think we may even be a bit more productive because we take less time, like if we would sit in a room, we would chat a little bit and get a coffee more maybe.

(-) Downside (1)

- They are spending more time emailing, spending more time following up, you're spending more time chasing which is not very productive, I would say

Engagement

(+) Upside (1)

• I think there's the engagement is deeper, right, so there's more people don't take it for granted anymore. So, they're deeper engagement and that translates into higher quality as

well engagement has gone up as well actually. So, because people are more used to how to dealing with that.

(-) Downside (9)

- I think it's more difficult to have deeper engagements with colleagues, if it's not face to face

- team engagement has been a lot more difficult with non-face to face communication because you are not able to measure everyone's emotions and hence engagement and act on that, but also because you were not able to arrange fun engagement.

- If you look at teamwork, The teamwork has decreased, people are less able to find each other and both within the team, but they think, moreover with other teams because people move and you don't know.

- I'm also following the reorganization. It's quite unclear.

- I need to do a lot more engagement to establish the same result or delivery is speed. If you look at the work that is repetitive and where you are the only contributor, it's a lot easier.

- I think informal communications was a lot better prior to the pandemic with everyone in the office because even now when so, you still miss a lot of the informal connects during lunch or at the coffee machine prior to the pandemic.

  - I'm definitely not engaged, I guess it's very difficult to tell whether someone's really focused on the conversation or not. Teamwork also is much more difficult to do, the team bonding was also very difficult to do

  - because I joined the company in the midst of COVID. So, I I've never built strong relationship with the team. During the pandemic it was, it was quite difficult, I think it's either everybody online or everybody face to face, but not a mix

  - when you are in your room to add a discussion and sometimes when you dive in, you just have to listen and voice recognize who's saying somewhere or something and it's a

lot different. It's more difficult to follow the discussion, but it's also more difficult to actually interrupted, no discussion.

Team work & Collaboration: all downsides (11)

• Teamwork it I think it's it makes you a bit more individualistic in terms of work delivery or speed

• I definitely have some people that I stayed in touch with and some people that are kind of dropped off the radar

• Teamwork, like I just mentioned, that makes it more difficult and I don't have an own team to work with what I do anyways. It's only three people which we tried to do that and the work delivery speed. Yeah, that is something we need to expand maybe so.

• I think the virtual the non-face to face, it's still very hard to get a good teamwork done so, the processes take longer. So, the pitfall of virtual work, we should have step into it and we don't spend enough time on quality on connecting to each other.

• I think it's highlighting the negative parts of the relationship, more in the virtual environment. They really need to be pulled in to come to the same level and there's a more active role of the team to do that than it was before.

• So, I started with and list of to dos on Monday and I ended up with a longer list on Friday because everything was just piling up and to protect myself and I also saw similar related behaviours in my colleagues. I was really trying to limit my scope so; I was kind of like putting fences around me because I could not handle any more work

• Everyone does this to protect themselves. But what we see is that a lot of efficiencies from the collaboration are lost

• And those are kind of things that are related to the non-face to face communication would also the workloads, but I think they go hand in hand and that is mostly regarding just the teamwork in general but also affecting teamwork, delivery and efficiency.

- In engagement, I think that's more if you're working for a longer period of time from home and I think people tend to get less engaged, right, because it's a certain state you haven't seen colleagues

- For me it's a bit difficult to answer this because I don't have a team. So, when people contact me So, it's very easy to answer and I can go my way. But if you have a team and there is no face-to-face communication and you have a team and you have a large project. I can imagine it's much more difficult. Yeah.

- I can imagine as a team leader and you have a team and you want the team to work together. Then then it's very difficult. I'm single contributor, so yeah, for me, I can manage it.

Work Delivery

(+) Upside (4)

- we just focus to get things done and terms I think of work delivery and speed, I think.

- Speed of delivery, I think well that could improve. So, you can also selectively join meetings race OK, this part is relevant in the other part, maybe to a lesser extent. So, you can already maybe do a few things or if something comes up, you can just directly look into you.

- and there, we saw quite fast after the start of the pandemic that their work to leave the delivery and the speed of working, yeah wasn't so good anymore, mostly because they were really struggling with their selves.

- I don't think so. I think I've seen more of that impact because of the person itself, or the person themselves where they are either delivery orientated or they just are not right. So, I think whether it's a virtual environment or not really is irrelevant in this instance.

(-) Downside (6)

- So, you need to work as well. So, we have an hour conversation now, but the mailbox is just pinging, pinging, pinging and people are asking things. So that's really has an impact on the work delivery and the speed for sure, and that's something that we that we overtime we started to manage better and better.

- But I think so that had an impact on the works delivery and the speed, no doubt about it for me, and that applies for everyone because you hear it everywhere. Everybody had that same challenge.

- the work delivery and the speed that really is increasing but not in the group work. So, you have three or more people then I don't see the quality is there

- It can be quick as an individual but the overall delivery of the team will still be slower than if you were having some face-to-face engagements as well

- not all of the face-to-face communication can be translated into Microsoft Teams meeting, so there are certain things that are lost in translation, which means that team meetings always take longer than if you were to just do the quick alignment at the Office 5 minutes.

- And of course, I can't see around me that thing work without seeing each other is difficult. We're delivering a speed without seeing each other. It's difficult because when you're in the office with each other, I can quickly check with you on that and I can go ahead. Yeah. If we're both from home, I have to take really action to call you. You're probably in another call, but I cannot see that and here I can see how you're available.

Others

Learning

- Yeah, I'm now thinking there's one thing when I realized it was super good to work from office because there was another colleague and if I didn't fully understand the concept, then we just set for two hours, he explained me everything we and I

understood everything, n. But if you're in the office, you're able to really learn a bit more. So, I think that that is different

Mental Health (3)

- working from the same situation remind yourself as well also to take a coffee break when you work from home or stand up or just walk away or take a break. We offer senior help because we are talking about you and I'm not at my desk.

- But on the other hand, we also have a lot of people working in our teams that live alone, in a small house, no outside who were having a really hard time working from home and having quite big issues mentally with the situation there

- What we tried to do was so we have a lot of, we have a lot of help lines so to speak in place, we have an external company psychologist, we have internal persons of trust, we called them persons of confidence. We have our Union representatives who are trained to have like difficult we have line managers we have colleagues.

Question 2.3

Regarding how non-face to face communication meets your communication expectations at work, if you score your previous face to face communication experience before the pandemics are 10, how will you rate your experience after the pandemics?

Below 10

- Lower than 10. I was one of those people. I was very reluctant to put my camera on, like I said in the previous, they both have its benefits and negatives I try to do that at least three days a week and why I like working from home is because then I don't get interrupted.

- it's below expectations (below 10) of course because you miss. So, I tend to be a people person.

it really is Shell is a really good employer and it really takes very good care of their people and they're really cautious on giving the instructions and they're really well thought. But for me personally of course all these restrictions coming in, yeah, that, that that was really challenge

- So, if you would have to compare the non-face to face communication and I think before it was a lot worse because people didn't turn on the camera, they didn't, they only use Skype, there were issues with Skype all the time. So, I would definitely say it's less than 10, maybe like I don't know 8-7 something like that and now it's I think non face to face is a lot better.

- **Below 10**. So, we're talking about communications in pandemic versus before, yeah then I would I would say it's a 6 or 7. Yeah, I think it's a loss in efficiency of communications and the time spent to get your same the same point across.

- So, let's say 7 or so because. Yeah, I do believe you really also need to be at least 50% of the time in the office or 40% at least I think on average in and at the in the end to create that kind of one team atmosphere, but also to inspire people to think a bit about abroad, beyond only the scope of your work

At 10 (par)

- I think before it was 12 and currently it's 10. The reason I think it's lower now is because communication is like a radio frequency. It is if you put it at one frequency then you don't get the signal then it will just give you a noise signal, right? So, it will give you no music. But if you have a broad bandwidth can select different signals.

Above 10

- 11 uh, which is for me is relatively low because what I feel shell were quite strict that people had to work at home, so it's only reason that people could go to the office. But what you do see is that, yeah, people only go to your office very limited and so I would say that that's quite limit the communication. So usually, we say there's like a yeah, say

informal agreement that we at least work at the Office on Tuesdays but that's so if you're if you want to work from home on Tuesday, that's also fine.

• Improved a lot for me, we are now at 13 or something like that because it's really going better. Everyone is found this organization and I think the way the tool that we are also using like OneNote to take some actions, so, I think that really improved.

• **above 10.** Now, the tools for non-face face communication are much better, skype versus Microsoft teams is huge difference and people became a lot more experience with non-face to face communication people know how these tools work and they are a lot more familiar with the different system, and it's easier to have that little face to face and more accepted as well.

• I think it's OK then 15 is the right answer.

• I think it's more than 10, so I have the feeling that it's even on physical face to face communication improved because of the pandemic because as I said, everybody is on the same page and now since they are working from home, they're also better able to manage their life balance.

• now we go to 14, maybe 15, because now I really like it that we face to face, we do the building thing, how are we doing how it's going, but also the main topics and all the smaller stuff we can do online and just a quick chat on how does this work or how are we doing this.

• OK, I have my expression probably of 10 But due to the pandemic I just need to use my Microsoft Teams. Then sometimes people feel that it is above 10 and it is better

• Above 10 for sure based on the previous discussion.

Section 3

Productive & happiness

Now, we are discussing productivity during pandemics. Compared to Work from Office (WFO), work from home (WFH) limits face-to-face communication or interaction with our office colleagues. Based on your experience in the past two years:

Question 3.1

Compared to WFO, do you think you worked (less, the same or more) productive during WFH

Work from Home is more productive, effective and work delivery

- I was really more productive from home and I must say the new opens the doors of the office some weeks ago. Yeah, but it's really difficult for me to work from here because of the noise.

- you can make more efficient use of your time. So instead of those two hours commute, you can now start earlier and work later. You have more hours in the day to work.

- So, it sounds it sounds contradictory, but then you don't get everyone coming to your desk and asking you questions or all of that stuff. So, you're able to be fully productive. I think you are productive at home when you don't have the distractions

- I think I can be I am more effective working from home because I'm not disturbed in any way. So, when I'm in the office and people see me

- Working from home is more productive. But I would never have guessed that before because before the pandemic thought like I said before the pandemic, because also sometimes colleagues were not reachable while working from home.

- And yeah, when it's extremely busy, you are more productive at home than in the office. People come to you, ask you questions, disruptions, and I can do more from

home. That's also taking no breaks. So that's also the downside but I'm more productive but like I said working. It's not only work, it's also your colleague.

- Well, maybe, maybe just to add, I think we all in, in my team, we all have very operational jobs and that require daily presence and daily engagements and that could also be a reason why maybe if the role was more project orientated, maybe it would have been different, but I don't know.

- So, I think you get, you know, you get less distractions, right? You people around you are not talking. You don't have people coming to your desk. I mean, when I'm at home, I'm really focused and I really am able to get the work done. Yeah

One feedback on the downside of working from home:

- I think working from home made us less productive, in some cases this may just be more productive. But I also, mentioned we should be really careful about the people that have the feeling that they should always be online and make more hours. Yeah, I mean you still should do the 8 hours job and yeah, I mean I sometimes also work more because but then this required.

Work From Office betters on the engagement and social connection

- I think for me it's a bit the same, so sometimes it may be easier to sit together in a room and work on something. But then on the other hand, If I would do that virtually right now.

- And I think we may even be a bit more productive because we take less time, like if we would sit in a room, we would chat a little bit and get a coffee more maybe.

- Yeah, I'm now thinking there's one thing when I realized it was super good to work from office because there was another colleague and I didn't fully understand the concept, a technical concept, and we weren't sitting in office and I said like, hey, how

does this work? And then we just set for two hours, he explained me everything we and I understood everything

• I am more productive working from office than working from home. That is, has to do with the distractions at home. I'm at home. I always see things that I need to do laundry, I don't have enough coffee, I need to get groceries.

• And also, especially when the colleagues around just have the motivation from each other to work a little bit harder and get things done, and that is motivating.

• I think if there's a good balance in working from home and working from the office, then it's more productive to work sometimes from home. So, I believe in a 50:50 split. So, I work four days a week, so two days at home, two days from the office and it's flexible if it's needed to be more at the office than I'm there but I really believe that if we combine best of both worlds, we can be the most efficient and do our best.

• Our work in the best way possible because then the things that we need, if we need to just focus on something and just finish something, then we can choose to work from home. And if we're looking for a bit more social contact, if we build things up together, then we can do it at the office together.

Productivity: Individual x organisation point of view

• So actually, if you plot it on a linear scale. The more people you have in your organization the higher productivity in working from the offices.

• So, the individual contribution becomes much more productive and in the beginning of the pandemic.

• But once you reach the point where that individual needs to connect to another individual and in an organization to many more different departments, et cetera, right there, I saw the productivity really deteriorating and actually we are still struggling with that so.

- We are still now dealing with the consequences of behaviours not being process is not followed or rightly or projects not being set up in the right way and we're still trying to regain control of the organization to do the extent that we have.

- but that the main thing is: the more people, the more productive from the office and the other thing is depends also on how many things you need to worry about in a regular basis you need to think about a lot of things

On a scale of 1 to 7, How do you rate your overall happiness at Work during WFH? And why?

Below 4 – lack of learnings and relationship

- I say its 3, so not happy and the main in the main reason is, so, for being forced into framework that I did not choose myself.

- I would say 3 which is not happy. Number of things of aside from what I mentioned previously is the lack of building relationship with my colleagues. The high workloads because of all the inefficiencies.

- It is also about the lack of learning opportunities and reflections. So, I was really. I felt like I was really in my own world and I was doing what I thought I should be doing, but it didn't have that sort of enough touch points to really also compare and learn from others.

At 4 (neutral)

Above 4 - focus, flexibility and accountability

- Yeah, so then for me I'm completely happy (7) because I can concentrate. I can organize myself as I want. I can start early, stop later, or to take one hour for my family if needed I can make the lunch or to make the school work for my children, and I'm starting again so the flexibility that I have has no price for me. It's really good elements, so I'm completely happy.

- So, 6, very happy, I'm not completely happy because I still see a lot of benefit in working from the office, so I would never want to go to a situation where I'm only working from home and I am happy because of the things that I mentioned before, the benefits are more than the downside so.

- OK, I would say 5-6. I really think it's important to add the right balance to work from home not fully working from home and not fully working at the office then I'm and very happy to work from home.

- For me it's 5. If it's a forced environment and there is no option to go to the office, it's probably a bit lower, the ability to not well, let's say receive a package or do a bit of laundry and then go back to a call that is definitely a bonus that I think working from the office, you don't get

- I would say that keeps me from being neutral and indeed, missing like a bigger picture or conversation with company but I can also contribute of, let's say, being at 6.

- Now, it's a 6 right. I'm completely happy with 6 or 7. I'm happy and completely happy that I have the opportunity to work from home like I've been doing for 20 years and I just deliver whatever I need to deliver and I'm free to deliver it in my own time.

- I think I would do 6, but then I would even maybe do 7 if work from home is also combined with work from office because that hybrid working model for me that really works like I don't want to work five days from home

- Yeah, 7 because. Yeah, I do believe you really also need to be at least 50% of the time in the office or 40% at least I think on average in and at the in the end to create that kind of one team atmosphere

- Yeah, it is 6-7 because I already used to working from home and my role is relevant for working from home

- maybe 7, because now it's more in balance. So now that the days that I choose to work from home I'm completely happy because I know on those other days, I can go to the office to have the social and engagement interaction.

- 7 is completely happy. combination working from home and working from the office set and the combination makes me completely happy.

Section 4

Working Office set up

Question 4.1

With the government starting to allow employees to work from the office, more companies allow employees to work from the office.

What do you think about 100% work from the office before the pandemics?

- How do you feel about it? (Happy, anxious, looking forward)
- What do you like about it?
- Do you have any concerns about getting back to work from the office?

From a productivity and happiness point of view, which working set up (hybrid or working from home) will benefit employee well-being/happiness and company interest? Why do you think that way?

The question is to exercise the overall respondents feeling about extreme option of 100% getting back to the office. In reality, Shell Netherlands has a flexi working mode even before the pandemics.

- I never worked 100% from home and office, because my function, I also need to go on the on the on the road visiting stations. So, my office at home just to have more space and I also needed to see people.
- I would absolutely not be happy about it, if it is 100%. I feel going back to 100% working from the office will really be a step back for me. The concerns that I have about getting back to the office, I would primarily focus on the commute, travel, commute that I have

- That if it would be 100% working from the office, probably my career at this company would be a lot shorter because I wouldn't do 100. So that's very clear now for me

- The only thing that's in my mind and it has nothing to do with working from offices, I guess what happens, if the weather drops and you know COVID is not gone, it's still out there. So, what happens if COVID numbers starting to rise again?

- well, before the pandemic we were already quite free to choose where to work. Yeah. So, if we would now go have to go 100% back to the office, it would make me anxious because it's actually again. Something that you are forced to choose basically

- Yeah, going back 100% to office would make me a bit more nervous. I'm also happy to go four days a week to office, but just a day wherein I am able to do more focus on working out all my emails, getting stuff done without any noise because our offices are quite noisy. So being in the office all the time full time would be difficult.

- If we need to go to the office 100% of your time, I would look for another employer because I would never do that back to the 60s, it is.

- It is not relevant to Shell working set up even before the pandemics started.

- I wouldn't be too happy about it, but I wouldn't be to upset about it. I guess I would be in between. Obviously, I like being able to then see my colleagues my routine gets things done quickly.

Question 4. 2

Some companies will apply a hybrid working set-up by allowing their employees to work from the office and home. How do you feel about it? What do you like about a hybrid working arrangement? After more than two years of working from home, do you have any challenges working from the office?

Do you have any required support from the management? Could you specify why it is important for employees and the company?

Best both world

- I will be fully supportive, hybrid working mode, especially because you're able to pick the best of both models. So, I think it could work very well if it's set up well by the company because you can decide what meetings you would go to the office and for what meetings or activity she would stay at home and do your work from there.

Work life balance, happier employee better company

- it allows employees to really be a driver of their own life and their own work agenda. Leading to better work life balance leading to happier employees and therefore better company because what I that I do see is that people are happier in their roles and are able to perform better

- make it a combination that's something I would definitely feel good about. Yes 100% behind that. What would I like about this work hybrid working arrangement? I think one obviously maybe less time in traffic because not everyone will be going at the same time and two, I would like the balance again. So, you know being able to go to the office and see people, but also be able to be productive at home and have all my calls. So, I like that

- I think hybrid is probably the best setup. that's obviously a big impact and I think for many people, such as stress relief, to be able to be flexible with that and they are probably more productive and less stressed if they can match that with working from home.

- Yeah, I think this really fits me because I want to be flexible with the family, I like going to the office or at being outside of home and meeting people so hybrid really works. I can be flexible when I have, I want to private commuting, et cetera. So, then I can be flexible. So, I think that works.

- OK. Yeah, I think at hybrid working setup would be perfect like I think it's the best of both worlds because you're being able to connect with colleagues, but you're also being

able to focus on your own time and maybe we all got a little bit more sensitive to noise
and things around us at various limits.

• So, I think if you have this combination where you're able to meet up with colleagues,
work together, get the most out of and build that relationship, because I think you also
need to have a good working relationship to be able to work together and it's nice to
know that someone has children, for example, like it.

• I think it would be in general for teams who would be very good to have a hybrid
working arrangement. So, you balance the moments that you have for your team in an
office with the personal work time at home

• I would prefer to stay with this model. I think it should be a hybrid model going
forward because I think you know I what I've heard from a lot of colleagues is that you
know it really well and I speak for myself on this one

• But I've heard it from other people is that you know, you really give them that needed
flexibility and remove some of the stress that they have in their daily lives associated with
commuting, making it to the office in time, spending that time in traffic and things like
that. So, I think for me the hybrid is a solution cause really good, so I really enjoy it.

• I also strongly believe in that you can work from home and do other things. But at the
end of the week or month or at you have to, you have to account for what you did. You
know you have to show results.

**New Office – Shell will moving to the new office building by Q4 2022. How to create
appetite and motives for employee to come over to the new office.**

• Yeah, I think the best setup would be a hybrid setup where we really have an office
and we might have that with the new office. It's really exciting for people. So that it's nice
to meet people, really enjoy some of the facilities of I have a good screen. I have good
coffee. We have a good view or I can go to a good canteen or I can even do a bit of a
sports close by. Let me go to the office instead of sit at home.

• And I think if that if we can manage that, then you have everything. You have the flexibility or the interaction and also have the deeper engagement

• There's not much being said about it. So, you can go to the office if you want to. So, I think they should do a little bit more about, you know, going to the office people again. It's good for a productivity definitely

• But let's say there has to be a balance in there. You can't. You can't do it all online. Sometimes you need to allow people to travel and have a meeting somewhere

• I think giving people that they are really working for shell and that they are proud working for shell and where you work for so that that you also want to give all your energy or as much as you have for that company, and to stay connected and get inspired to also perform better than then you've done before, right? So, it will always improve yourself. So, I think, yeah, that's the main reason

• I think it's really up to the team lead. Yeah. And if the team lead asked the team to have small collaboration like there's a new way of working. Yeah, absolutely. People come to the office for that meeting and then go back home. Honestly, I would not come to the office for just one meeting, either. Stay here all day. So, I'm not seeing that yet the new ways of working yet, but yeah, let's see

• if we really want to engage people to come to the office more, we need to invest and make sure that the setup in the office is good It's like If you go to a cafe and you pay for coffee, then you really want the coffee to be better than what you put at all. So, we need to make it better to entice people to come to the office, I think

• I think the point of working from the office is to create more interaction and rather than mandating a hybrid check-up or whatever, I think we need to think about how do you attract people to the office? how do you convince them that that's really beneficial?

• So how do you really make it attractive. And how do you spread it across the weeks with sufficient people to run into, to really create that interaction.

Concerns to be mindful (matching up calendar, connection, office value proposition changes)

Sync up the calendar

- The challenge that I have working from the office would only be in a hybrid model are you able to ensure that you everyone you need to connect with, are there in the office, I 'm not sure if there will be enough desks available to accommodate and if there are not enough desks available

- It's very inefficient to go to the office and we have two-hour commute for two-hour meeting

- The challenges I think are that's matching up your calendar with other with colleagues or teammates. I think that that's can be challenging but I still see, for example, that people be in the office but still emailing each other while they're 5 meters apart. These are because it requires really a team effort. Because you have to really sync up calendars

- I think the biggest difference is that in before the pandemic, everybody would go a few days a week to the office, maybe 50 to 70% and I think there are still people now who don't want to go to the office because they like the working from home

How to create motivation for employee to come over to the office?

- So, I rather choose to just be in the office one or two days a week and I think we miss a connect there sometimes. So, I think it's better for the organization if everybody's in the office one or two days a week, but It's really hard to tell people

- we don't want forcing people, but to be honest, my belief is that if everybody's at least one day a week in the office, it would help our organization more I think because you have just a bit more of a connect and I think the other team members also have it think it's a bit harsh if somebody is almost never in the office. So, I think it's good for the team spirit either

- Yeah, we already have the hybrid work arrangement before pandemic. But it's now even more common and accepted. I also see that a lot of people stay at home still, so not everybody turns back completely

- Yeah, I find it difficult to advise. What can we do because people make their own decisions anyway? Sometimes it's like a personal decision. Maybe his line manager can take a decision. Then you cannot force somebody to come back to the office

- On the other hand, we should show them that there's a team in the office. So yeah, we can only do this together when we're out every now and then we be here face to face. But you cannot force people so, I don't think we can force people to come back to the office. I don't think we can do that. OK.

Support

Platform to facilitate

- I would appreciate a support from the management more oversight on the logistics as you mentioned, so understanding what the hybrid model is based on and how that will work for me, on the day-to-day basis

- Well, I also would appreciate is the managers expectations regarding a hybrid model because that's something that I see not happening is we have so managers that really value being in the office and you have so many years hat value being in the office, you see that the teams also move towards working from the office and I don't necessarily think that's a healthy thing.

- because some people also have different working needs. I think maybe use a platform where they can where you can see who's going into the office. That would be great, yeah, that would be actually really perfect. You know just need to have a platform where you can see which teams coming or who's coming. I wouldn't also put like a fixed dates like this team needs to come only on Tuesdays and Thursdays and this team on

Clarity on the guidelines and expectation to the employee on WFH

• think the main thing is to have a clear and clarity around expectations in terms of, for instance, what days are the ones that you are in the office or that you're not, or are you allowed to make your own choices? Or but at least that's clarity on what you can do, because otherwise version a chooses route one and person B chooses routes two, for instance, right? And everybody does their own thing and then the organization is hard to manage

• I think that for me that's the most important rule or guideline in hybrid working setup is by sharing what is expected of employees. So right now, my team is not the working setup is not managed at all

Role of team lead to create a hybrid working model work

• Really, having a team lead or a line manager facilitate that discussion. I think that that's added benefit. So, if you because like I also mentioned if you leave it up to the individuals, individuals have their own scope and their own life to worry about. And I think it's and it's the role of a teammate or line manager to make sure that the team is working effectively facilitating that discussion

• Yeah. So, I think I would prefer the hybrid set up. Maybe people also the flexibility to work every day from the office, right if they want and if they feel happy about that

• It also depends on the manager of your manager, because your manager can be very comfortable with you being at home. But then if they receive feedback on that from their manager, so it's sort of a trickle down in that sense

Mental Health

• I think the main progress can still be made into because right now it's very hip and trendy to claim that you're working on mental health, shell is really good in in saying a lot of things, but you know just make sure that you that you follow up on it next and that you actually do what you say

- again, I don't blame anybody that they don't because they do have a business to run and they do have both. But yeah, be consequent. You know if you say that you want your people to be in a good mental health. Then actually mean it and make sure that you measure it

- They have to be at home so they can answer me and that's. Yeah, that's not the most positive evolution.

- So that that's not good either. And I don't think that's necessarily related to the COVID pandemic, but it's the periods. It's definitely the period that didn't help, to put more pressure on people

Question 4.3

What do you think about FOMO (Fear of Missing Something)? What do you think about social connection? One last question, do you think your facetime or your office presence will impact your work or career? If yes/no, why do you think that way?

FOMO and social connections effects to career

- I really have FOMO. I suffer from this a lot. Yes, definitely I think I feel like you probably are left behind or you're not getting the news that you should be getting. FOMO is more relevant than if you're working in a more independent environment. It also matters whether it's applied in a social context or in a working context, so working wise I don't know how much that will impact me versus social because that makes sense

- So, for FOMO, ID definitely see it. I think it matters a bit. I don't mind if I don't do those things, then it's fine and I I'm more or less spectrum. But I think that's an impact on social connection as well. So, I think it will impact many careers where they realized, hey, this is a culture I really, really like and I want to invest in or this is something as I was before when I was really, really always in the office, everybody was doing something

- Yeah, I think definitely, I think your career will definitely impact if you're only going to work from home. For me and I also have FOMO. I always go to office. If there's something to do because I don't want to miss out.

- Yeah. I do think that the people that will experience a fear of missing something if they're stay at home. On the other hand, I also think that people in the office will miss something from the people that are staying at home, right, so that they also miss that personal connection and I also going into your second bullet or already but you will not get an optimal social connection if people are structurally either in the office or only at home, and people miss each other, right?

- I experience FOMO more like on a social level, so we have a strong network of young professionals here in the Netherlands. I do experience FOMO with regards to those social events. But in a work wise I don't because we because everyone has to work it working hybrid, non-face to face meetings well and also has a virtual connection

- I really had to fear of missing out. OK, when I work from home but now it has become far less, I must admit, but it is strange because you it is still there a little bit. And also, because you don't see the colleagues not even for two years and then one came back and had a child or you know, missing stuff like personal stuff from colleagues and that's also a pity. So yeah, we don't celebrate birthdays.

Not experiencing FOMO I think there is a part of FOMO because you're not in the office. Sometime when you are in the office, your line manager is also in the office. You pick up discussions and it's a lot easier for you to know what's going on. From my own rules, I don't think I have the feeling of missing out on something. This is very odd and there's no fear of missing out.

Social Connection

- think that that collectively feeling is less, and that will definitely impact their career and also, it's less easy to spot opportunities internally, so you don't hear about Oh well,

be nice to connect. Maybe they have a role in Malaysia. You know, if you're at home, you will miss out on all of that. So, that's definitely a factor

• That's definitely true. I think social connection also. when you're working from the office, I think that definitely and in terms of career wise, yeah, for sure being present helps because it's just a reminder that you're there sometimes.

• So sometimes you, I felt a bit urged to go to the office because otherwise I would miss conversations.

• I do think the social connection is a very important one to consciously manage. It needs to be there to have quality of work and with that, I also think that it will impact your work or career. If you don't, don't usually manage that. I don't think it has to impact it. Yeah. So, any colleague, any employee, everybody has a fair share at the same jobs and career moves

• You need to be there in the player role and not so much in the victim role I guess, yeah.

• My office presence will definitely impact my work or career cause it's a lot easier to ask people for a quick coffee catchup. And use those networking opportunities face to face. Then it is virtual cause it feels more forced. It feels like you're really like asking a lot from a person, especially the people that you don't know.

• So just to ensure you have that we have the connection. And also, we our colleague in Canada or Chennai, we started meeting we discussed not only the work but also about things happened there such as how's the covid situation etc

• you have the proximity bias that you're familiar with it, but it says that people that you work closely with or you see, then you are view more positively than people that you don't have a lot of exposure to and I think that's something that people need to be mindful

• I do think working from home makes it more difficult to establish social connections. You need to put more effort into it.

- but I do believe that being in the office and meeting people and talking to people helps me in my career just because people know you and if people don't know you, they can also can't help you do your career

- I don't think it will hurt my career if I'm not that much in the office, So, I don't think someone will say to me you're never in the office, so you're not going to make that promotion but they might say I've never seen her before. I don't know who she is. Where? So, I'm not going to give her a good job because I have no idea. I've never talked to her before.