



WHAT DO FLEXIBLE WORKERS WANT FROM MANAGERS?

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Abstract: This paper contributes to an emerging literature on the new style of management whose working process constitutes a hybrid affair that combines a physical office with a more flexible working style. Although teleworkers and the factors that affect them have been studied to some extent, many articles have focused on the experience of managers working remotely. This study aims to answer questions about what remote employees expect from managers, how they want to be managed, and what managers need to know when working with remote employees. After overview of the relevant literature on remote working, research method will be outlined, data will be presented and the study's findings will be discussed and implications will be presented.

Key words: remote working, flexible working, work-life balance, isolation, workplace flexibility, recognition, promotion, work efficiency, work engagement, knowledge sharing.

Аннотация: Эта статья дополняет появляющуюся литературу о новом стиле управления, рабочий процесс в котором представляет собой гибридное предприятие, сочетающее в себе физический офис и более гибкий стиль работы. Хотя удаленные работники и факторы, влияющие на них, были в некоторой степени изучены, многие статьи были посвящены опыту менеджеров, работающих удаленно. Цель этого исследования - ответить на вопросы о том, чего удаленные сотрудники ожидают от менеджеров, как они хотят, чтобы ими управляли, и что менеджерам необходимо знать при работе с удаленными сотрудниками. После обзора соответствующей литературы по удаленной работе будет изложен метод исследования, представлены данные, обсуждены результаты исследования и представлены их последствия.

Ключевые слова: Удаленная работа, гибкий график работы, баланс между работой и личной жизнью, изоляция, гибкость рабочего места,



признание, продвижение по службе, эффективность работы, вовлеченность в работу, обмен знаниями.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola yangi boshqaruv uslubi haqidagi paydo bo'layotgan adabiyotlarni to'ldiradi, unda ish jarayoni jismoniy ofis va yanada moslashuvchan ish uslubini birlashtirgan gibrid korxonalar hisoblanadi. Masofaviy ishchilar va ularga ta'sir etuvchi omillar ma'lum darajada o'rganilgan bo'lsa-da, ko'plab maqolalar masofadan turib ishlaydigan menejerlarning tajribasiga bag'ishlangan. Ushbu tadqiqotning maqsadi masofaviy xodimlar menejerlardan nimani kutishlari, ularni qanday boshqarishni xohlashlari va masofaviy xodimlar bilan ishlashda menejerlar nimani bilishlari kerakligi haqidagi savollarga javob berishdir. Masofaviy ish bo'yicha tegishli adabiyotlarni ko'rib chiqqandan so'ng, tadqiqot usuli bayon qilinadi, ma'lumotlar taqdim etiladi, tadqiqot natijalari muhokama qilinadi va ularning oqibatlarini taqdim etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: masofadan ishlash, moslashuvchan ish vaqti, ish va hayot muvozanati, izolyatsiya, ish joyining moslashuvchanligi, tan olish, lavozimga ko'tarilish, ish samaradorligi, ishga jalb qilish, bilim almashish.

1. Literature review

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the face of office work forever and “remote work” is now simply “work”. There is no question that the current emerging topic in management related research is COVID-related, especially with regard to remote work known as work-at-home, telework, virtual work, and telecommuting. It is down to fact that the widespread use of telecommuting has shown that there are social, mental, emotional, and physical problems that workers face, and that there is a need to study them. Prodanova (2022) has discussed allowing employees the freedom to organize their work, increasing the balance between work and personal life, and boosting overall quality of life. Coordination and communication via virtual meetings and socialisation are pointed out as main cues, sharing colleagues' experience and success stories. Sharma (2021) has questioned importance of work-life balance and ways to attain work-life balance. Allowing and managing flexible working preferences, supporting smart working practices, encouraging scheduled breaks through self-discipline, and emphasizing leadership responsibilities and expectations are all important for enhancing remote working, according to Adekoya (2022). Shirmohammadi (2022) synthesized the post-pandemic literature that has



examined work-life balance and remote work and compare it with the findings of pre-pandemic reviews and pointed out three milestones to develop a more nuanced understanding of the contingencies of remote work in the context of crisis. They are to offer remote work as an option, prepare to support transition and remote work, and provide ongoing support to sustain remote work.

Yang *et al.*, (2022) indicate that the shift to firm-wide remote work caused synchronous communication to decrease and asynchronous communication to increase. It leads to make it harder for employees to acquire and share new information across the network.

Impact of Covid-19 on genders are discussed by Alon et al. (2020), Malkov (2020), Hupkau and Petrongolo (2020), Avdiu and Nayyar (2020). Feasibility of working at home for all occupations is discussed by (Dingel and Neiman, 2020; Alon et al., 2020; Malkov 2020; Béland et al., 2020). Feelings of loneliness or isolation and lack of motivation, lack of motivation, returning to a workplace is surveyed by IBM Institute for Business Value (2020). Since motives and scale of appliance of remote working are different, current situation differs from pre-Covid world and research is needed to find to what extent efficiency gap differs in different sectors. Moreover, demography has indeed has an effect on overall well-being of workers.

According to survey among 6,000 Australian workers (including 1,400 managers) who enforced to work from home because of Covid-19 pandemic during June and July of 2020, over one third of managers valued their teams as higher productive than in traditional office atmosphere, while for over 50% managers productivity remains the same. Teams are perceived as less productive by only 8.4% of managers (Colley and Williamson, 2020). Research is needed to find to what extent efficiency gap differs within married couples, single parents, and childless workers who work remotely with cross-sector insight. Is productivity and self-rated performance the same?

Global Workplace Analytics (2020) satisfaction with work activity performance differs at the Pre-covid office and remote working during quarantine. For 72% of remote respondents are satisfied with being able to deal with managing distractions and interruptions. While in pre-Covid office only 40% of respondents could manage distractions and interruptions. 80% of remote workers note that they are able to gather their attention longer period of time for particular task. While in pre-Covid office only 51% of respondents could focus on extended periods of time.



Remote working has an advantage over office work on thinking creatively and innovatively and confidential work conversations. 8 out of 10 remote workers note that remote working enables them atmosphere of private work or conversations and innovative thinking. While in pre-Covid office slightly over 60% of respondents could think in creative ways and have confidential work conversations. Compared to pre-Covid office, current remote workers are less satisfied with level of reaching colleagues; getting timely information, answers, decisions; being aware of team priorities and goals; access to work files and materials. The level of satisfaction is about 10% lower remote workers to pre-covid office. Level of contentment further goes down when it comes to collaboration and being aware of what is goin on in the organization. In pre-covid office over 80 % of employees were satisfied with the level of collaboration and awareness. While this number constitutes under 60% for home workers in regards to the level of collaboration and awareness. Satisfaction level gap between current remote workers and pre-Covid office workers from coaching and mentoring constitutes 30 %. 8 out of 10 pre-Covid office workers were content with the level of coaching and mentoring. While this number is 5 out of 10 for those who work form home(Global Workplace Analytics 2020). Research is needed to find to what extent efficiency gap; managing distractions and interruptions; level of reaching colleagues; getting timely information; collaboration with colleagues; coaching and mentoring; differs within different sectors.

Moreover, Microsoft 365's trillions of productivity signs measure the precise level of digital fatigue experienced by employees. The total number of meetings and conversations has gradually risen since last year, suggesting that the digital intensity of employees' days has increased considerably. This deluge of details is unstructured and largely unplanned, with 62% of Staff calls and meetings being unscheduled or impromptu. Despite meeting and chat overload, 50% of people respond to Teams talks in five minutes or less, a response time that hasn't improved year over year. This demonstrates that the intensity of our workday has risen dramatically, as has the level of expectation placed on workers during this period (Microsoft 2021). Research is needed to find the level of digital overload and exhaustion in different sectors.

Organizations' implementation of e-learning is hampered by strict rules, a lack of digital maturity, and organizational difficulties. Switching from being an



information-based company to a knowledge-based company is a huge obstacle for today's businesses. Enterprise employees must work in increasingly intense information and knowledge-oriented environments in order to preserve the productivity of their companies. On the basis of everyday facts and practice, traditional learning methods fail to substantiate learning flow. Humans (e.g., staff, administrators, and civil servants) must be at the forefront of the knowledge and learning flow, and conventional learning must be bridged by experiential, social, and smart learning (Giannakos et al., 2021). Research is needed to find the level of knowledge sharing within company and hybrid workers' favorite business training method. Jay Mulki *et al.* (2009) defined four critical challenges involving remote work that require management attention: (1) finding the right work-life balance, (2) overcoming workplace isolation, (3) compensating for the lack of face-to-face communication, and (4) compensating for the lack of visibility. Main research findings will be categorized according to these four type of challenges that require management attention.

2.1 Finding the Right Work-Life Balance

2.1.1 Reading and replying to work emails at all hours of the day and night, including weekends. Managers need to be aware that the ability to respond quickly, no matter where their employees are, is a double-edged sword. Firm policies should be developed when employees are expected to respond remotely to emails in order to ensure that this technology does not become counterproductive by increasing stress levels (PRASAD, 2021). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H1: there is direct link between checking email outside of regular hours and the level of digital overload and exhaustion

2.1.2 Workplace flexibility. A rational remedy to employee's sensation of being famished for time is workplace flexibility-permitting staff to have flexible work schedules that enable them to better manage work and personal or family life (Chekwa, 2018). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H2: remote staff is allowed to choose their work schedule, including prearranged time blocks for meetings, email-free times, efficiency of remote working will be positively affected.



2.1.3 Clear goals and expectations. The degree to which employees comprehend why the task assigned is important or relevant to the group or department is referred to as goal clarity. Employees recognize the objectives that must be met with a given function and competence, and they arrange their activities accordingly. Workplace satisfaction and individual performance have been linked to goal clarity. Lack of goal clarity, on the other hand, can have negative consequences, such as lower job motivation and lower individual and organizational performance (Shirmohammadi, 2022). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H3: clear goals and expectations set by manager for remote staff, have positive impact on efficiency of remote working.

2.1.4 Social, emotional, physical, mental health and family status. So far research on work–life balance has primarily focused on the work and family domains. However, the current labor force is diverse, and workers may value nonwork domains other than the family (Gragnano, 2020). Many large corporations are beginning to recognize that their employees' productivity is linked to their health and well-being (Olson, 2009). However, physical health has traditionally received more attention than mental, social and emotional health. This research paper aimed to find about the role of other nonworking domains in work–life balance, with a particular emphasis on social, mental, emotional and physical health of remote staff. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H4: social, physical, mental and emotional health of married without children, single parent, single, married with children varies.

2.1.5 Social, emotional, physical, mental health and level of recognition. Recognition is one of the most important characteristics of effective managers and successful organizations. A successful manager's four key areas of leadership include effective goal setting, communication, trust, and accountability. And when recognition is used as the driver, all of these areas are accelerated (Galinsky, 2011). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H5: remote workers` the level of recognition by line/project manager have an impact on their social, mental, physical, emotional health

2.1.6 Social, emotional, physical, mental health and employment. Although it is difficult to quantify the impact of work alone on personal identity, workplace is



one of the key environments that affect our social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing (Olson, 2009). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H6: social, physical, mental, emotional health remote staff is affected by work experience

1.2 Overcoming workplace isolation

2.2.1 Level of contact and social, mental and emotional health of remote staff. Since remote staff are missing the informal social interaction of an office setting, over a longer period of time, isolation can cause any employee to feel alienation from their organization, and can even result in deciding not to stay operating in this company (Larson, 2020). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H7: remote workers` the level of contact with colleagues have an impact on their social, mental, physical, emotional health

2.2.2 Level of contact and efficiency of remote working. Workplace communication is available in variety of ways, including synchronous, asynchronous, verbal, written, electronic, paper, pictorial, graphic, mobile, telephone, webinar, and so on. Each medium enhances our personal syntax as well as our communication etiquette. We are now connected with people over far greater physical distances than our forefathers could have imagined, and we must fine-tune our ability to relate as a result. It is up to each of us to create as pleasant a space as we can even if we are not in the same location (Erickson, 2020). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H8: there is correlation between level of contact among remote workers and efficiency of remote working

2.2.3 Level of contact and internal knowledge sharing. Sharing one's knowledge is a type of communication. Knowledge sharing goes through two central behaviors: (a) knowledge donating which is actively communicating to others what one knows, communicating one's personal intellectual capital to others; and (b) knowledge collecting which is actively consulting others to learn what they know, consulting others to get them to share their intellectual capital (Microsoft, 2021). Empirical findings revealed that overall of sharing knowledge has positive relationships with communicative dimensions (communication satisfaction and



communication style (Harnois, 2000). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H9: Level of contact among remote staff has an impact on knowledge sharing

2.3 Compensating for the lack of face-to-face communication

2.3.1 Biggest challenges of remote staff managers need take into account.

Lack of communication in the organization – lack of communication between peers and subordinates, as well as stakeholders – results in delayed decision making and project overruns. Another important factor influencing an employee's psychological well-being is workplace isolation. The employee will miss out on the fun at the workplace during break, tea, and lunchtimes. This has a negative impact on the employee's well-being because of boredom and a lack of interaction with coworkers. The daily interaction of staff with peers and team members, adherence to policies, and organizational climate all have an impact on remote working (Shirmohammadi, 2022). Do responses of dissatisfied, neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, satisfied with efficiency of remote working compared to traditional office work differ? Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H10: remote workers whose satisfaction level from remote working differ do not have the same challenges that remote workers want their manager take into account

2.3.2 Keeping remote employees productive and engaged. Manager's Legal Bulletin (2016) described four directions that promote teamwork and productivity: a) instilling a sense of purpose; b) opening the lines of communication; c) providing individual attention; d) recognizing their accomplishments. Manager's Legal Bulletin (2021) added four proactive steps that keep remote staff engaged and connected to the organization: a) generating a sense of belonging; b) building a community for working parents; c) offering professional development; d) flexing the schedule. Woolf (2020) noted that to keep remote workers highly involved and committed to their work employers need to: help remote employees feel connected, give meaningful recognition, pave the way for growth.

2.4 Compensating for the lack of visibility



2.4.1 Usual way of receiving congratulations and appreciation and being recognized. Apart from with monthly pay cheque, annual bonuses, and project or sales-related incentives, which are all part of the employment contract and thus considered an obligatory payment, appreciation and recognition outside of the organization via social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn can help the company gain positive traction and build employer branding on a global scale (Nayak *et al.*, 2020).

2.4.2 Social, physical, mental, emotional health and recognition. Organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction, and stress are all influenced by recognition. Organizations can improve employee satisfaction, morale, and self-esteem by recognizing effort and good work, which will have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness (Grawitch *et al.*, 2006). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H11: remote workers` the level of recognition by line/project manager have an impact on their social, mental, emotional health.

2.4.3 Work efficiency and recognition. When people are motivated by the praise they receive from their line/project manager, they become more energetic on their own. Supervisory recognition improves employee retention by identifying outstanding performance, which satisfies their esteem needs and confirms their status as an important part of the organization (Khan *et al.*, 2011). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H12: Level of recognition by line/project manager has direct effect on remote work efficiency of remote staff.

2.4.4 Expectation of remote workers from their managers to keep them engaged and maintain high level. Workers who are more engaged perform better and give more optional effort (Lewis, 2011). Baumruk (2006) defined three feature of engaged staff: a) “say-the employee” represents the company to coworkers and refers potential employees and customers; b) “stay-the employee” has a strong desire to remain a member of the organization despite other job opportunities; c) “strive-the employee” goes above and beyond in terms of time, effort, and initiative to contribute to the company's success.

2.4.5 Creating a workplace that is fair and equitable. Managing a team where some employees are co-located in an office and others work from home poses



a number of challenges for managers. There is a proximity bias that leads to the erroneous assumption that "office workers are more productive than those who aren't." Managers must not allow team members to talk about work in the office in such a way that remote colleagues are inadvertently excluded (Knight, 2020). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H13: there is direct link between counteracting incorrect assumption that “the people in the office are more productive than those who are not” and level of contact and knowledge sharing among staff.

It is critical for employers to ensure that all employees are treated equally, regardless of where or how they work, including providing equal notice of any professional opportunities such as promotions, incentive programs, events, and the like to remote employees (Erickson, 2020).

H14: the more manager counteracts incorrect assumption that “the people in the office are more productive than those who are not”, the more employees believe that employees performance is measured on results of work rather than where or how the work is done; future promotions and career advancement opportunities are equally feasible for them as their office colleagues;

2. Research methodology

Research choice of this study is quantitative approach to find proper answer to relational questions of variables within the research and main research question. Under the quantitative method of research where primary data will be used, descriptive analysis will be used in order to examine various forms of practices in flexible working options. Quantitative method has been adopted by using Google Forms in order to survey the data from the structured questionnaire. In order to know managing methods about flexible working options structured questionnaires will be used. Compared to interviews, questionnaires are preferred since it is flexible and can be reached to a large number of people quickly. Remote/hybrid workers are asked to fill questionnaires in order to evaluate the expectations of employees from their managers and new style of management. The questionnaire is undoubtedly the most widely used and abused data collection tool. It's simple to make and administer.



A questionnaire is a form that is developed and circulated to obtain answers to specific inquiries (Pandey, 2015). If responses to many precise questions from many respondents are wanted, then a questionnaire is probably the best way of getting.

Questionnaire research, if done correctly, will provide the data required at a low cost and in a format that allows data from different respondents to be compared (Buglear, 2005).

The survey consisted of 12 multiple-choice questions and 18 questions that were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Two open ended questions, respondents may answer in their own words which answers may not be exactly the same with others, not fixed answers that are proposed by researcher. At the same time, open questions facilitate to search for further response from participants and take needed information. The aim was to conduct the survey with 400 remote/flexible workers on different sectors of European countries. Correlational research is a non-experimental approach of determining a relationship between two variables without the use of any other factors. The direction and/or strength of their link will be reflected in the correlation between the two variables

From 1st of May till 30th of July 2021 respondents were given 5-10 minutes to fill in the survey anonymously, and 406 responded. Because not all surveys were fully completed, 400 survey results were included in the analysis. The acquired data was prepared prior to analysis. Missing data and outliers were checked in the dataset. Outliers were defined as values that were outside the calculated range. The data was then examined with the SPSS 28.0 statistical software.

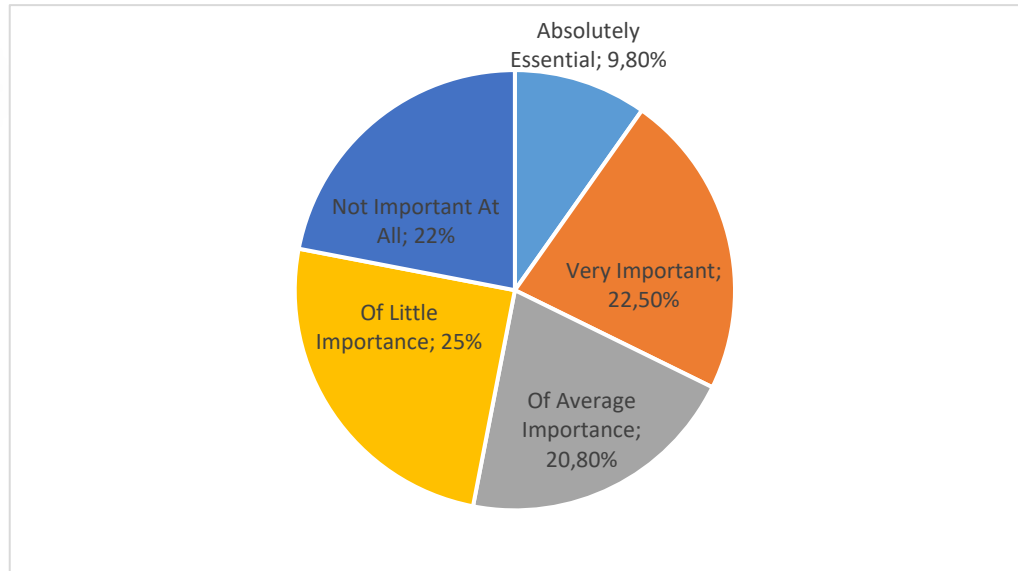
3. Result and Discussion

4.1 Finding the Right Work-Life Balance

4.1.1 Read and reply to work emails at all hours of the day and night, including weekends. 9.8% remote respondents noted that checking work mail outside working hours is absolutely essential. 22.5% and 20.8% of remote staff assessed it as very important and average important respectively. For less than 47% of respondents checking email outside working hours is either of little importance or not important at all, with 25% and 22% respectively.



Fig. 1. Checking email outside of regular hours (Source: Own elaboration)



Groups have been formed according to importance of checking email outside working hours, absolutely essential, very important, of average importance, of little importance, not important at all. The p-value is <0.05 , meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. Level of digital overload of “Absolutely Essential” and “Of Average Importance” have a significant difference. Level of digital overload of “Absolutely Essential” and “Not important at all” have a significant difference. Level of digital overload of “Very Important” and “Not important at all” have a significant difference. Level of digital overload of “Of Average Importance” and “Of Little Importance” have a significant difference. Level of digital overload of “Of Little Importance” and “Not important at all” have a significant difference

One of the aims of this paper is to find whether number of remote days per week has an impact on overload of emails, chats, docs, meeting. The p-value is >0.05 for emails, meetings, chats and docs, meaning that we do not have significant differences between our groups. It means that whether they work one day in a week or 6 days in a week on average do not have difference in number of emails, meetings, chats and docs.

4.1.2 Workplace flexibility. Survey results indicate that quarter of respondents assess the level of flexibility to choose remote workers their work schedule, including prearranged time blocks for meetings, email-free times as moderate. One third of all respondents have found this flexibility as high. Very high level of



flexibility is given for over 26% of remote workers by their managers. Low level of freedom to choose work schedule, including prearranged time blocks for meetings, email-free times is given for just over 10% respondents. Just under 5% of the respondents have assessed this level of as very low.

For comparison of more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test has been used. Groups have been formed according to Likert scale. Those who assessed level of flexibility as “Very weak” is group one, “Weak” is group two, est. The p-value is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. Student`s T test (Independent Samples Test) helps to clarify these differences within groups. There is significant difference between “Moderate” and “Strong”, “Moderate” and “Very strong” on their assessment of efficiency of remote working.

One of the aims of this paper is to find whether if remote worker is let choose his/her work schedule, including prearranged time blocks for meetings, email-free times by line/project manager, the level of digital overload and exhaustion will be lower than those whose manager do not allow employees to choose work schedule. The p-value is >0.05 , meaning that remote worker who is let choose his/her work schedule, including prearranged time blocks for meetings, email-free times by line/project manager, the level of digital overload and exhaustion is not different than those whose manager do not allow employees to choose work schedule.

4.1.3 Clear goals and expectations. The degree to which employees comprehend why the task assigned is important or relevant to the group or department is referred to as goal clarity. Employees recognize the objectives that must be met with a given function and competence, and they arrange their activities accordingly. Workplace satisfaction and individual performance have been linked to goal clarity. Lack of goal clarity, on the other hand, can have negative consequences, such as lower job motivation and lower individual and organizational performance (Shirmohammadi, 2022). Survey results indicate that 39% and 19.6% of respondents either agree or strongly agree respectively that their manager clarify goals and set clear expectations for them. Only 15% of respondents admit clarity of goals and expectations as weak or very weak while they are working remotely.

For comparison of more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test has been used. Groups have been formed according to Likert scale. Those who assessed clarity of goals and expectation as “Very weak” is group one, “Weak” is group two,



est. The p-value is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. Student's T test (Independent Samples Test) helps to clarify these differences within groups. There is significant difference between "Very weak" and "Strong", "Very weak" and "Very strong" "Weak" and "Strong" "Weak" and "Very strong" "Moderate" and "Very strong" "Strong" and "Very strong" on their assessment of efficiency of remote working.

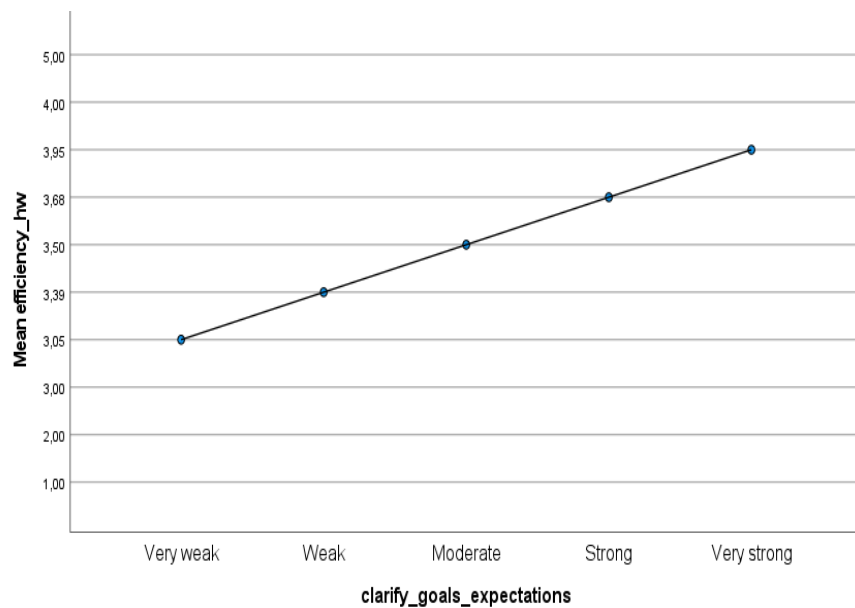


Fig. 2. Research about getting timely information, direction and support and its impact on efficiency of remote working (Source: Own elaboration)

There is correlation between clear goal and expectations and efficiency of remote working. The higher level of clarity of goal and expectations, the higher efficiency in remote working.

One of the aims of this paper is to find whether if remote worker has a clear picture of agenda items for the week ahead, with a step-by-step process for how he/she will deliver, the level of digital overload and exhaustion will be lower or not than those who do not have agenda items for the week ahead. The p-value is >0.05 , meaning that remote worker who has a clear picture of agenda items for the week ahead, with a step-by-step process for how he/she will deliver, the level of digital overload and exhaustion is not different than those who do not have agenda items for the week ahead.

4.1.4 Social, emotional, physical, mental health and family status. The p-value for physical and mental health is >0.05 , meaning that we do not have significant differences between our groups, so we reject alternative hypothesis. The



p-value for social and emotional health is nearly equal to 0.05, meaning that we have significant differences between our groups, so we reject null hypothesis. It has been found that emotional health of “Married, without children” and “Single” have a significant difference. Emotional health of “Married, with children” and “Single” have a significant difference. Emotional health of “Married, with children” and “In relationship” have a significant difference. Social health of “Single” and “In relationship” have a significant difference.

4.1.5 Social, emotional, physical, mental health and level of recognition.

The p-value for physical health is >0.05 , meaning that we do not have significant differences between our groups, so we reject alternative hypothesis for physical health. It means irrespective of the level of recognition by line/project manager groups do not have difference in physical health. The p-value of social, mental and emotional health of respondents is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups.

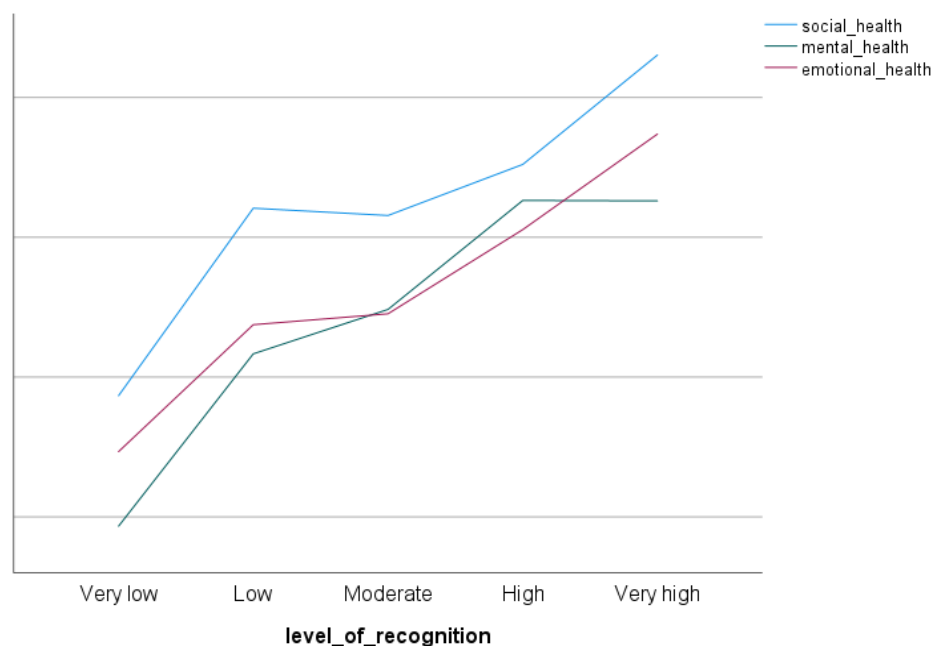


Fig. 3. Research about level of recognition and its impact on social, mental and emotional health (Source: Own elaboration)

It has been found that the higher level of recognition, the higher social, mental, emotional health of staff. Student`s T test (Independent Samples Test) helps to clarify these differences within groups. Social, and mental health of those who assessed level of recognition by line/project manager as “Very low” and “Low” have



significant difference. Social, and mental health of “Very low” and “Moderate” have significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Very low” and “High” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Very low” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Emotional and mental health of “Low” and “High” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Low” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Emotional and mental health of “Moderate” and “High” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Moderate” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Social and Emotional health of “High” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Apart from the theoretical implications, these findings have practical relevance not only for employees, but also for employers.

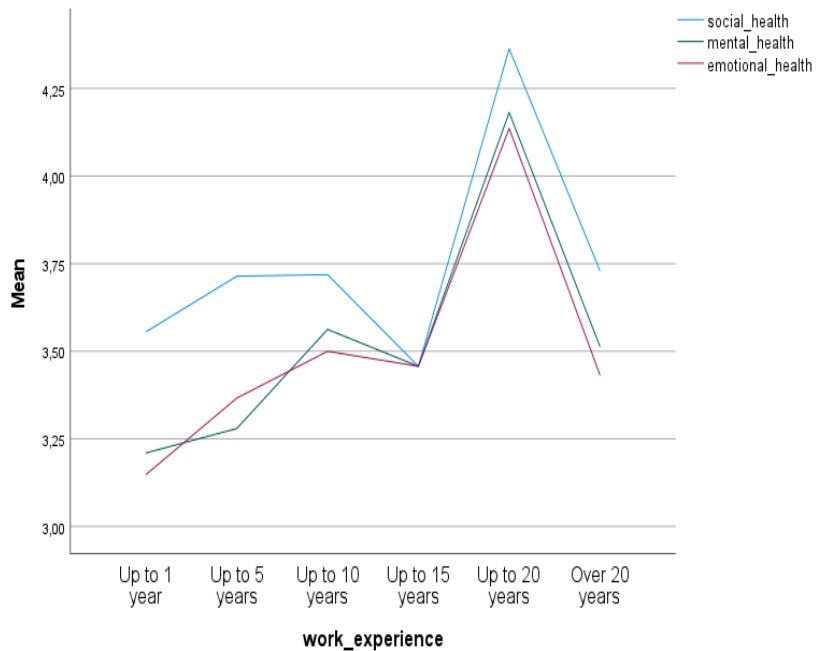
4.1.6 Social, emotional, physical, mental health and employment.

For comparison of more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test has been used. Groups have been formed according to years of work experience. The p-value for physical health is >0.05 , meaning that we do not have significant differences between our groups, **so we reject alternative hypothesis for physical health**. It means irrespective of the work experience groups do not have difference in physical health. The p-value of social, mental and emotional health of respondents is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. **So we reject null hypothesis**.

Emotional and mental health of “Up to 1 year” and “Up to 10 years” have a significant difference. Social, emotional and mental health of “Up to 1 year” and “Up to 20 years” have a significant difference. Social, emotional and mental health of “Up to 5 years” and “Up to 20 years” have a significant difference. Emotional and mental health of “Up to 10 years” and “Up to 20 years” have a significant difference. Social, emotional and mental health of “Up to 15 years” and “Up to 20 years” have a significant difference. Social, emotional and mental health of “Up to 20 years” and “Over 20 years” have a significant difference.



Fig. 4. Research about employment and social, mental, physical, emotional health (Source: Own elaboration)



The more work experience person has, the higher his/her social, emotional, mental health is. Social, emotional, mental health peaks around 40-45 years, when one has 20 years of work experience.

4.2 Overcoming workplace isolation

4.2.1 Level of contact and social, mental and emotional health of remote staff.

Groups have been formed according to level of contact with colleagues, very low, low, average, high, very high. The p-value of social, mental and emotional health of respondents is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. Emotional and mental health of those who assessed their level of contact with remote colleagues as “Very low” and “Moderate” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Very low” and “High” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Very low” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Emotional and mental health of “Low” and “Moderate” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Low” and “High” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Low” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Moderate” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Social health of “High” and “Very high” have a significant difference

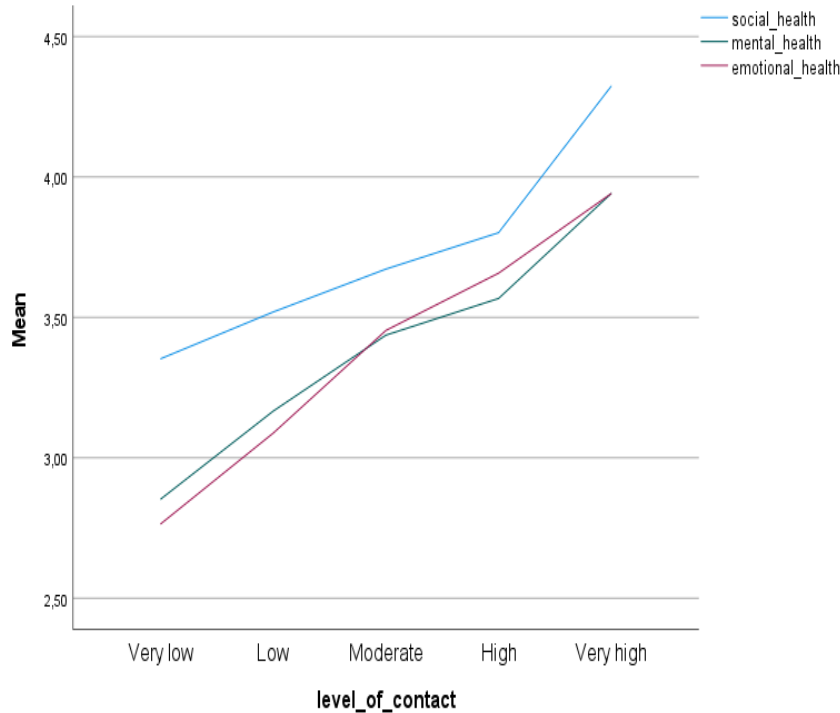


Fig. 5. Research about level of contact and its impact on social, mental and emotional health (Source: Own elaboration)

The higher level of contact person has, the higher his/her social, emotional, mental health is.

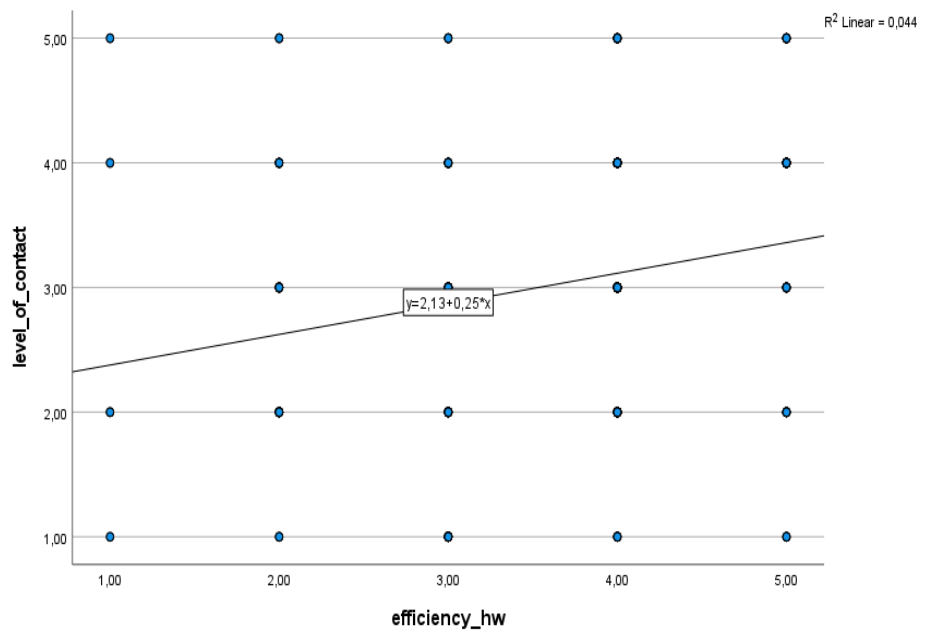
4.2.2 Level of contact and efficiency of remote working.

Remote workers whose level of contact “Very low” and “Moderate” have a significant difference on their assessment on efficiency of remote working. Remote workers whose level of contact “Very low” and “High” have a significant difference on their assessment on efficiency of remote working. Remote workers whose level of contact “Very low” and “Very high” have a significant difference on their assessment on efficiency of remote working. Remote workers whose level of contact “Low” and “Moderate” have a significant difference on their assessment on efficiency of remote working. Remote workers whose level of contact “Low” and “High” have a significant difference on their assessment on efficiency of remote working. Remote workers whose level of contact “Low” and “Very high” have a significant difference on their assessment on efficiency of remote working. Remote



workers whose level of contact “Moderate” and “High” have a significant difference on their assessment on efficiency of remote working

Fig. 6. Research about correlation between level of contact among remote workers and efficiency of remote working (Source: Own elaboration)



There is correlation between home working and level of contact with co-workers. The higher level of contact, the higher efficiency in home working.

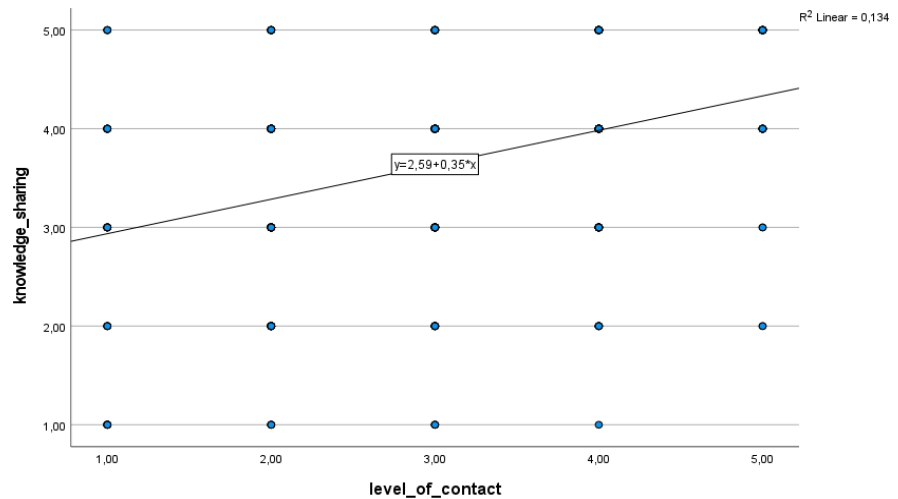
4.2.3 Level of contact and internal knowledge sharing.

The p-value of level of contact of respondents is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. Remote workers whose level of contact “Very low” and “Moderate” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff. Remote workers whose level of contact “Very low” and “High” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff. Remote workers whose level of contact “Very low” and “Very high” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff. Remote workers whose level of contact “Low” and “High” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff. Remote workers whose level of contact “Low” and “Very high” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff. Remote workers whose level of contact “Moderate” and “High” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff. Remote workers whose level of contact “Moderate”



and “Very high” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff. Remote workers whose level of contact “High” and “Very high” have a significant difference on knowledge sharing among remote working staff.

Fig. 7. Research about level of contact and internal knowledge sharing (Source: Own elaboration)



There is correlation

between level of

contact and internal knowledge sharing among remote colleagues. The higher level of contact, the higher knowledge sharing among remote colleagues.

8.9% and 25.8% of respondents assessed level of contact with co-workers as very low and low respectively. There is direct correlation between level of contact and ways of connecting and bringing playfulness into workday. Those who assessed their level of contact with colleagues as “Very low” or “Low” tend to avoid socializing with the majority of the team, define bringing playfulness into workday as not the most important part of their job, keep things formal, can't enjoy connecting

when they work remotely.

Compensating for the lack of face-to-face communication

4.2.1 Biggest challenges of remote staff managers need take into account.

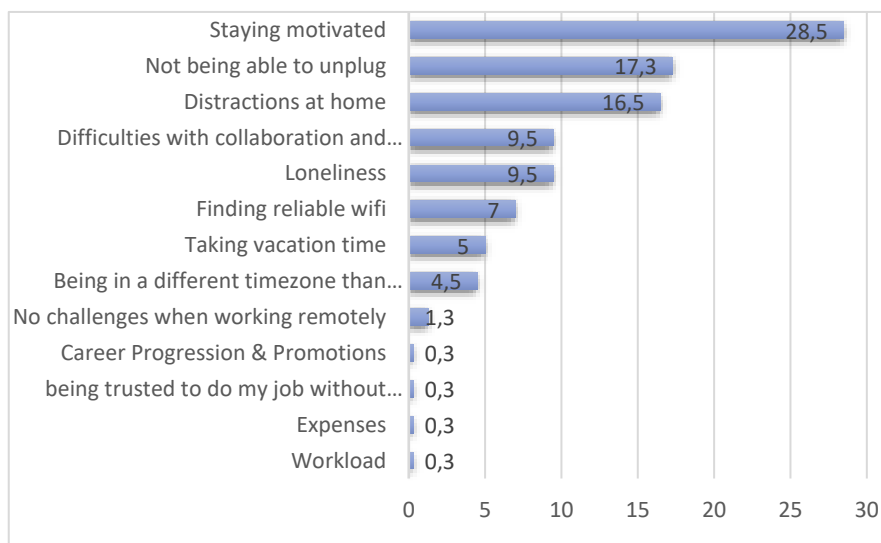




Fig. 8. Remote employee challenges that managers should pay attention to (Source: Own elaboration)

The p-value is <0.05 , meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. Remote workers whose satisfaction level from remote working differ do not have the same challenges that remote workers want their manager take into account. In general, those who are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with efficiency of remote working compared to traditional office work, have found not being able to unplug as the biggest challenge. For neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, satisfied and very satisfied with efficiency of remote working compared to traditional office have found staying motivated as the biggest challenge managers need to take into account.

4.3.2 Keeping remote employees productive and engaged. Current research adds more value by finding about employee point view that keep them engaged and maintain high level while working remotely. Showing faith in remote employees and giving them some space are leading factor among remote staff. It is followed by regular informal check-in. Providing remote working tools is the third biggest factor that enables remote staff to keep them engaged and maintain high level. Organizing virtual team building activities comes close behind. Extending innovation incentives and offering health club membership are next biggest contributors keep remote staff engaged and maintain high level.

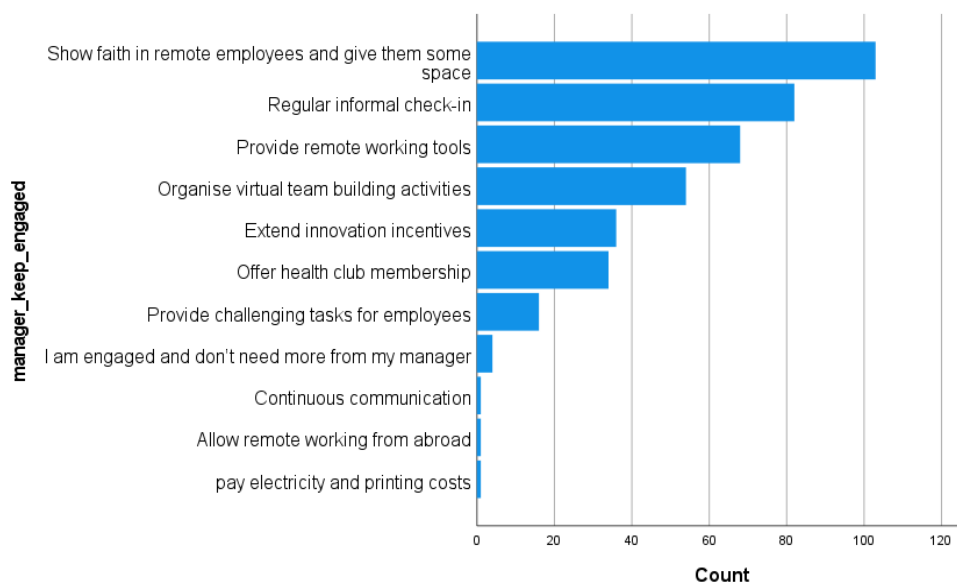


Fig. 9. Research about expectation of remote workers from their managers to keep them engaged and maintain high level (Source: Own elaboration)

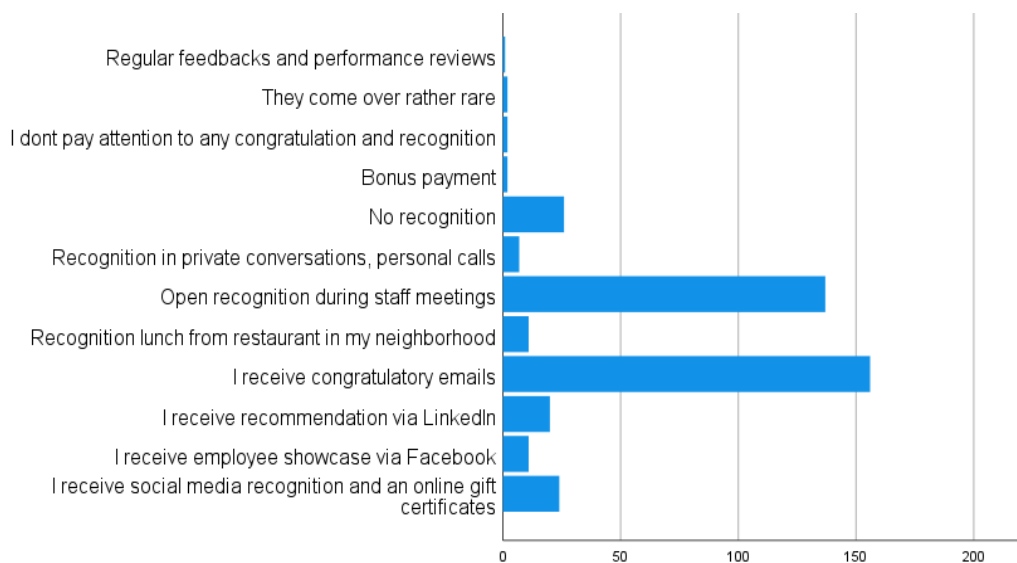


According to survey results, remote staff who assessed level of recognition by line/project manager as very poor wants to be believed and given some space. Remote staff who assessed level of recognition by line/project manager as very high wants regular informal check-in by their managers.

4.3 Compensating for the lack of visibility

4.4.1 Usual way of receiving congratulations and appreciation and being recognized.

Fig. 10. Research about usual way of receiving congratulations and appreciation and being recognized for remote staff (Source: Own elaboration)



Research shows that majority of respondents are congratulated, appreciated and recognized through congratulatory emails and open recognition during staff meetings. Social media recognition and online gift certificates, recommendation via LinkedIn, employee showcase via Facebook and recognition lunch are “outside of company” recognition types are also being applied.

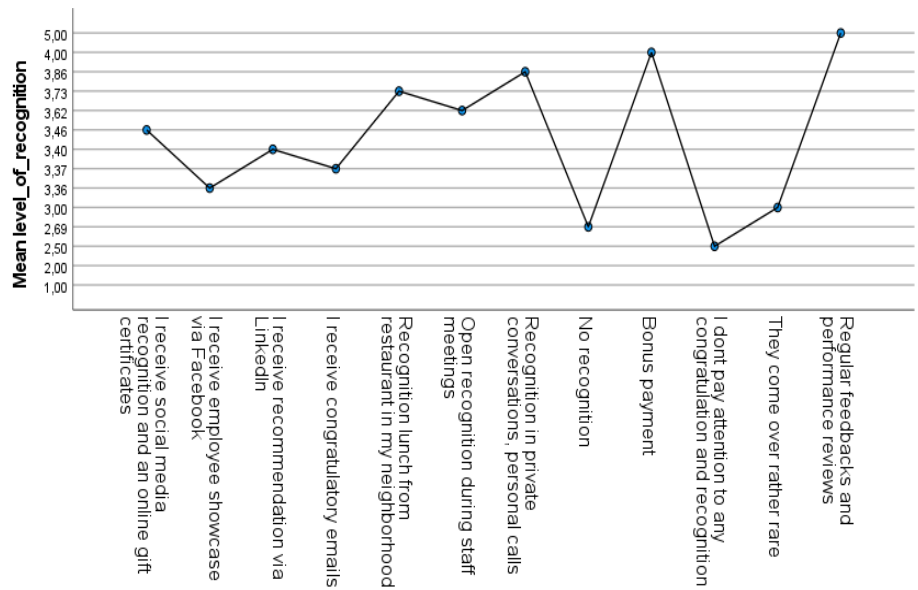


Fig. 11. Research about usual way of receiving congratulations and appreciation and being recognized and assessment of remote staff for their recognition (Source: Own elaboration)

Even though majority of remote respondents are congratulated, appreciated and recognized through congratulatory emails and open recognition during staff meetings, research results indicated that those who get regular feedbacks and performance reviews; bonus payments; recognition in private conversations and personal calls assessed themselves more higher recognized by line/project managers than those who receive social media recognition and online gift certificates, recommendation via LinkedIn, employee showcase via Facebook and recognition lunch.

4.4.2 Social, physical, mental, emotional health and recognition. This research paper aimed to find about the role of recognition on employee wellbeing, with a particular emphasis on social, mental and emotional health of remote staff.

The p-value of social, mental and emotional health of respondents is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. Student's T test (Independent Samples Test) helps to clarify these differences within groups. Social, and mental health of those who assessed the level of recognition by line/project manager as "Very low" and "Low" have significant difference. Social, and mental health of "Very low" and "Moderate" have significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of "Very low" and "High" have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of "Very low" and "Very high" have a significant difference. Emotional and mental health of "Low" and "High" have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of "Low" and "Very



high” have a significant difference. Emotional and mental health of “Moderate” and “High” have a significant difference. Social, Emotional and mental health of “Moderate” and “Very high” have a significant difference. Social and Emotional health of “High” and “Very high” have a significant difference.

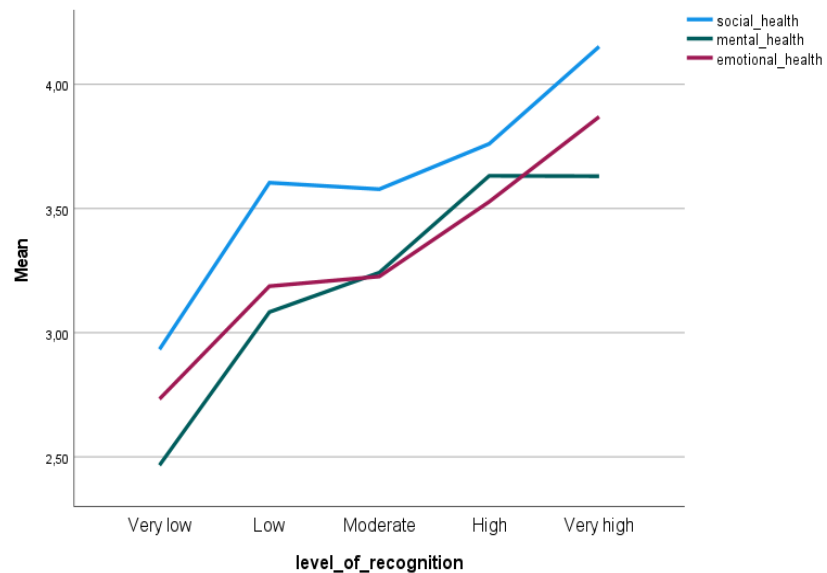


Fig. 12. Research about impact of recognition on employee social, mental, emotional health (Source: Own elaboration)

There is correlation between level of recognition and social, mental, emotional health of remote staff. The higher level of recognition, the higher social, mental, emotional health of remote staff.

4.4.3 Work efficiency and recognition.

The p-value of the test is <0.05 meaning that we have significant differences somewhere between our groups. **So we reject null hypothesis.** Student's T test (Independent Samples Test) helps to clarify these differences within groups. Those who feel the level of recognition as “very low” have a significant difference with those who feel as “moderate” on efficiency of remote working compared to pre-covid office working. Those who feel the level of recognition as “very low” have a significant difference with those who feel as “high” on efficiency of remote working compared to pre-covid office working. Those who feel the level of recognition as “very low” have a significant difference with those who feel as “very high” on efficiency of remote working compared to pre-covid office working. Those who feel the level of recognition as “low” have a significant difference with those who feel



as “high” on efficiency of remote working compared to pre-covid office working. Those who feel the level of recognition as “low” have a significant difference with those who feel as “very high” on efficiency of remote working compared to pre-covid office working. Those who feel the level of recognition as “moderate” have a significant difference with those who feel as “high” on efficiency of remote working compared to pre-covid office working. Those who feel the level of recognition as “moderate” have a significant difference with those who feel as “very high” on efficiency of remote working compared to pre-covid office working

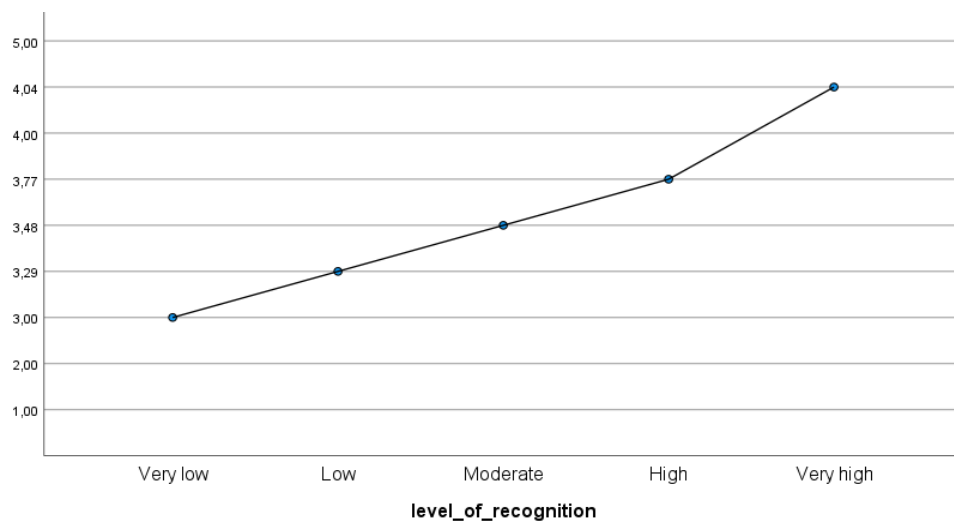


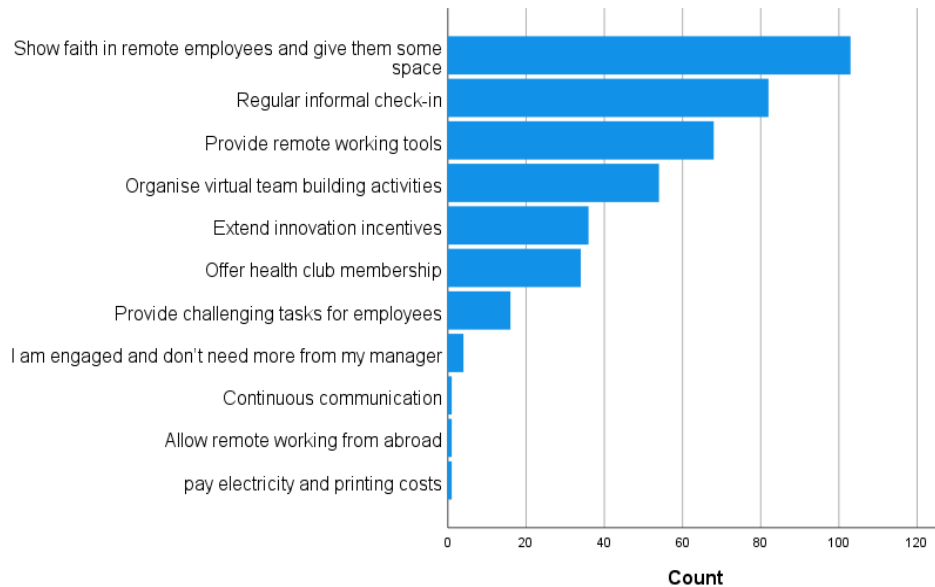
Fig. 13. Research about recognition and its impact on work efficiency (Source: Own elaboration)

There is correlation between level of recognition and work efficiency of remote staff. The higher level of recognition, the higher work efficiency of remote staff.

4.4.4 Expectation of remote workers from their managers to keep them engaged and maintain high level.



Fig. 14. Research about expectation of remote workers from their managers to keep them engaged and maintain high level (Source: Own elaboration)



Current research aims of this paper is to find expectation of remote workers from their managers to keep them engaged and maintain high level. Showing faith in remote employees and giving them some space are leading factor among remote staff. It is followed by regular informal check-in. Providing remote working tools is the third biggest factor that enables remote staff to keep them engaged and maintain high level. Organizing virtual team building activities comes close behind. Extending innovation incentives and offering health club membership are next biggest contributors keep remote staff engaged and maintain high level.

4.4.5 Creating a workplace that is fair and equitable. Research aims to find impact of manager`s effort to counteract incorrect assumption that “the people in the office are more productive than those who are not.” For comparison of more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test has been used. Groups have been formed according to Likert scale, those who assessed emphasis inclusion of every employee to counteract incorrect assumption from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. The p-value is <math><0.05</math> meaning that counteracting incorrect assumption that “the people in the office are more productive than those who are not” has direct positive relationship with level of contact and knowledge sharing among staff.

For comparison of more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test has been used. Groups have been formed according to Likert scale, those who assessed emphasis inclusion of every employee to counteract incorrect assumption from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. The p-value is <math><0.05</math> meaning that



counteracting incorrect assumption that “the people in the office are more productive than those who are not” has direct positive relationship on how employees assess their performance is being measured by managers and whether they have equal promotion and career advancement opportunities or not.

5 Conclusion and implications

The findings presented in this study filled a gap in the literature regarding the workplace engagement of remote workers, biggest challenges and remote worker loyalty. In order to keep staff engaged and maintain high level managers need to extend innovation incentives; explain how employee`s work contribute to the success of company going forward; show faith in remote employees and give them some space; take into account of social, mental, physical, emotional health of staff; offer health club memberships; organize virtual team building activities; provide challenging tasks for employees; give direction and provide support, such as listening and providing rationale; encourage innovation and let people tinker with their idea, rather than finding a fault; regular informal check-in; provide remote working tools; continuous communication; pay electricity and printing costs; encourage higher level of contact within colleagues; allow remote working from another country; meetings held online to be fair to everyone even if some people are in the office, future promotions and career advancement opportunities should be equally feasible for me as office colleagues.

The biggest challenges remote staff want their manager take into account are loneliness; not being able to unplug; staying motivated; being trusted to do job without constant check-ins and micro-managing; take into account of digital overload and exhaustion from email, meeting, docs, calls; finding reliable Wi-Fi; distractions at home; being in a different time zone than teammates; difficulties with collaboration and communication; workload; taking vacation time; let staff choose their work schedule, including prearranged time blocks for meetings, email-free times.

To stay operating next two years remote employees want to have appreciation for their work, such as receiving social media recognition and an online gift certificates; open recognition during staff meetings; receiving congratulatory emails; recognition lunch; offering a stipend to help set up home office, co-working memberships and coffee shop working purchase reimbursements, to have



sympathetic help, such as trust on employees; give workers more incentives, motivation, promotion/growth, such as more effective online support and feedback systems, online training, working conditions, such as fully or hybrid working, presence in the office only for specific meetings; asynchronous communication and work; funds to purchase home office equipment; equal workload with everyone; agenda during meetings to be more effective, virtual attendance, better short term goal setting and planning; better team organization, more involvement of manager with employees; clarify goals and set clear expectations, work flexibility, such as option to choose when and where to work; manage time over the year, flexibility on when to take the days off and annual leave.

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