



IMPACT OF CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK ON QUALITY OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The ongoing digitalization is affecting not only how work is organized, but also the health of employees. A safe and healthy working environment is vital for overall sustainability, as it affects opportunities for economic and social development.

Material and methods. A subjective study was conducted, and mixed groups comprising 499 people from the following professions were surveyed: administrative student staff, groups of employers, occupational health services, computer technology professionals, insurers, and pharmacists. A sociological method was used—a questionnaire. The results of the study are presented using descriptive statistics, the Chi-square test, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the Mann-Whitney test to compare two groups and check the normality of the distribution of quantitative data.

Results. The gender distribution of participants is as follows: 228 participants are men and 271 are women, according to the percentage distribution - 45.7% men and 54.3% women. Employees who work from home visit the office as follows: 54.7% once a month, and 45.3% more than once a month. The results show that most of the respondents did not receive assistance in relocating their workplace during the pandemic. 78.4% of them answered negatively, while 21.6% received assistance in organizing the work process.

Conclusion. This study examines the impact of work organization on quality of life in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Further studies are needed to better characterize how the organization of work—such as job tasks, workflows, and potential overlaps between occupational and community exposures.

Keywords: Remote Working, Flexible Workplace, Hybrid Working, Employee Health,

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of changes in work organization on quality of life. In recent years, working from home has become common practice. The COVID pandemic has forced many employers to change their work organization in order to maintain their operations by assigning work duties to be performed from home. [1] The lifestyles of 40–60% of people living in the European Union are largely sedentary, which is why it is necessary to encourage people to shift from a sedentary lifestyle to a healthier and more active one. [2]

In Bulgaria, working from home is regulated by the Law on Measures and Actions during a State of Emergency and the Labor Code. The Labor Code regulates certain obligations for employers related to protecting the health of workers, even before the Law on Healthy and Safe Working Conditions [3]. On the one hand, these obligations have independent significance, but on the other hand, they are part of the general policy on health and safety implemented by the employer. Clarity is also needed regarding the preparation of the risk assessment, which must be based on a detailed analysis of workplace hazards in home-based work environments, in order to assess the risks to workers' health and safety and to propose appropriate measures for their elimination or reduction. [4,5]

An interesting fact is that the code has contained regulations on remote working since 2011, but with the widespread use of this form of work organization, it has been found that working from home can lead to many benefits, such as reduced costs for renting and maintaining premises, better management of work processes, easier accountability for work performed, and others. To take advantage of these benefits, employers must carefully consider the organization of work and comply with legal requirements.

Risk assessment is a final outcome that determines whether a risk is acceptable and whether measures need to be implemented to prevent, reduce, or mitigate it. [6] When working remotely, the employer is not required to provide the employee with materials necessary to perform the work. This stems from the fact that remote work does not involve the production of a final product, but rather the performance of work via a telecommunications connection. [7]

Employers and employees have the same rights and obligations as they do when performing work on the employer's premises, but there are some important specifics in this section. Before introducing work from home, it is mandatory for the employer to consider the overall organization of work processes and to draw up the necessary documents for this purpose. [8] Two key issues deserve attention: the changing nature of work and the organizational environment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the transformation of the nature of home and social life. There is a need for greater engagement on the part of the employer, as well as a requirement for greater engagement on the part of the family. In this regard, the concept of the "right to disconnect" specifically refers to the employee's right to refuse communication with the employer outside of working hours. [9]

Working conditions directly affect the health of workers and employees. Requirements for healthy and safe working conditions, with a view to preventing occupational diseases and accidents at work, preserve the physical and mental health of workers. A safe and healthy working environment is vital for overall sustainability, as it affects opportunities for economic and social development. Digital technologies provide essential services and solutions in all sectors of the economy and society. Their introduction is completely changing the forms of work we have known so far, as well as the future of work. [10]

METHODS

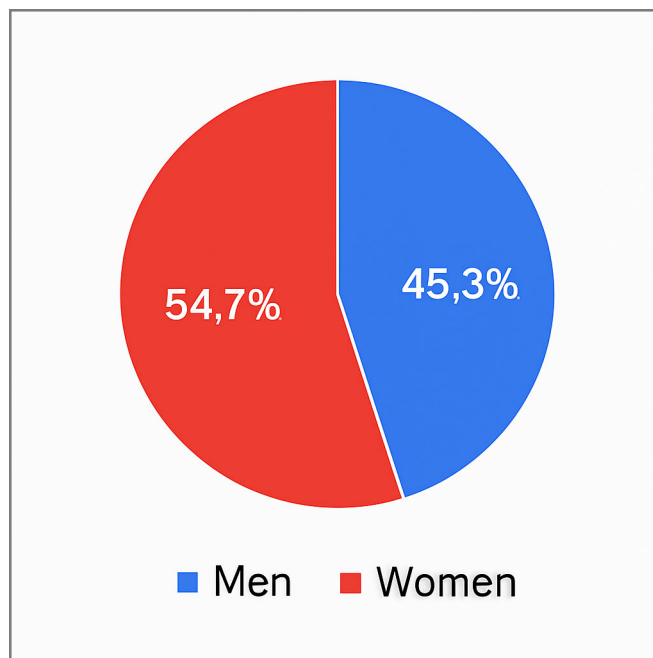
To achieve the study's objectives, an empirical study was conducted in which mixed groups totaling 499 people were surveyed between May 2023 and September 2024. The following professions were surveyed: administrative student staff, groups of employers, occupational health services, computer technology professionals, insurers, and pharmacists. These groups have different working arrangements, i.e., working from home, remotely, from an office, or a hybrid arrangement. A sociological method was used—a questionnaire. The results of the study are presented using descriptive statistics, the Chi-square test, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the Mann-Whitney test to compare two groups to check the normality of the distribution of quantitative data. Participants were surveyed using two instruments covering the pre- and post-pandemic periods. The World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL) Brief Questionnaire was used, to assess quality of life in four main domains (physical health, mental health, social health, and living conditions).

RESULTS

The gender distribution of participants is as follows: 228 participants are men and 271 are women, according to the percentage distribution - 45.7% men and 54.3% women. (Fig. 1) The distribution of employees by age group shows that the majority of employees are in the 25-36 age group, with a smaller proportion in the 40-60

age group. One of the employees did not specify their age and was therefore excluded from the age analysis.

Fig. 1. Distribution by gender of the employees



The distribution of employees by education is as follows: secondary education 27%, bachelor's degree 31.46%, and master's degree 39.87%. Among those employed, 56.91% work in private organizations and 40.39% in state organizations. (Fig. 2) The size of the organizations is divided as follows: up to 50 employees—39%, 51 to 250 employees—28.9%, and over 250 employees—32.1%. Their distribution by type of work is hybrid - 88.3%, and those working from home are 11.7%. (Fig. 3)

Fig. 2. Distribution by education

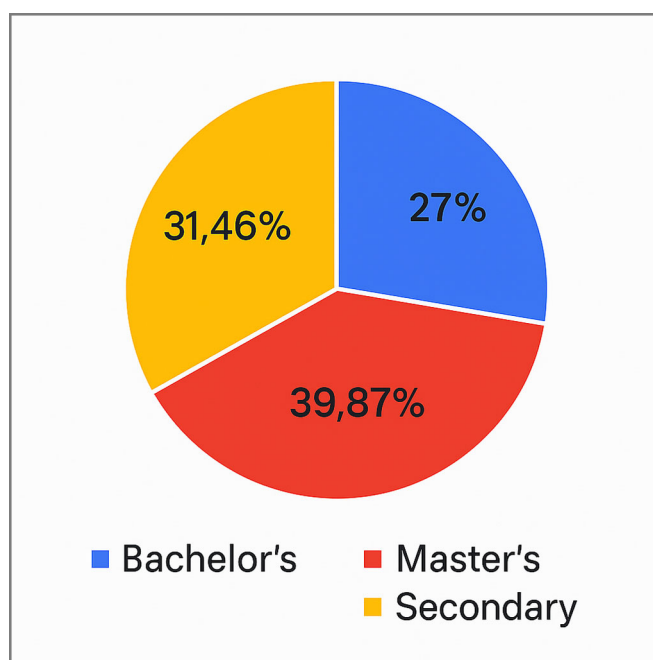
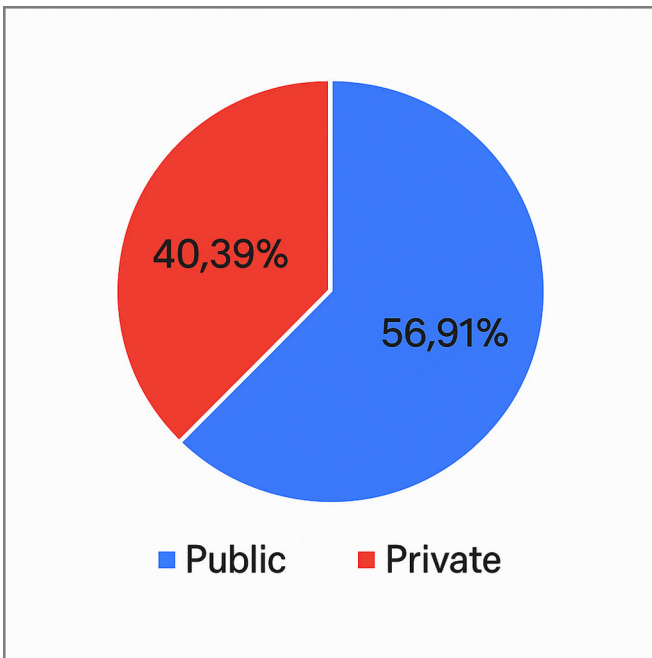


Fig. 3. Distribution by size of the employee's organization



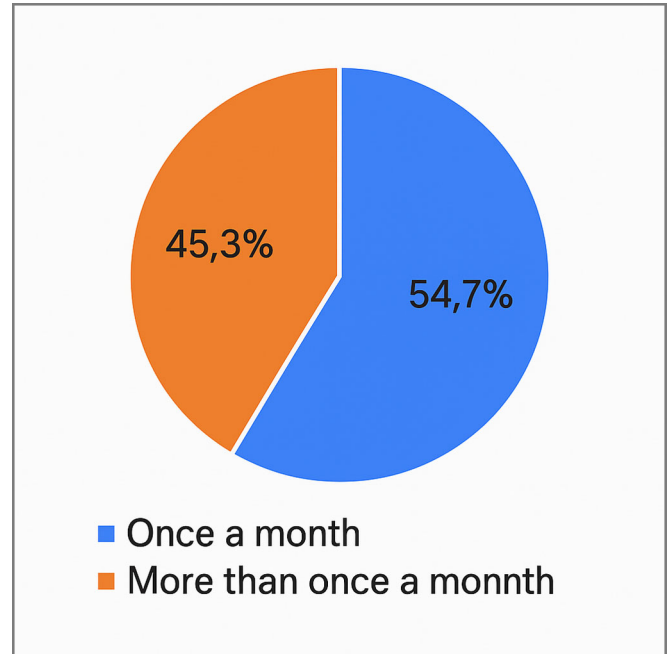
The results show that most of the respondents did not receive assistance in relocating their workplace during the pandemic. 78.4% of them answered negatively, while 21.6% received assistance in organizing their work process. People working from home visit the office as follows: 54.7% once a month, and 45.3% more than once a month. (Fig.4) The connection between these results lies in how support (or lack thereof) in workplace reorganization during the pandemic influenced employees' patterns of returning to the office:

- Lack of support: The fact that 78.4% of respondents did not receive assistance in relocating or reorganizing their work during the pandemic suggests a low level of institutional or managerial involvement in facilitating remote work transitions.

- Infrequent office visits: A majority of those working from home (54.7%) only visit the office once a month, which could reflect either a successful adaptation to remote work or, conversely, a detachment from office infrastructure due to the initial lack of support.

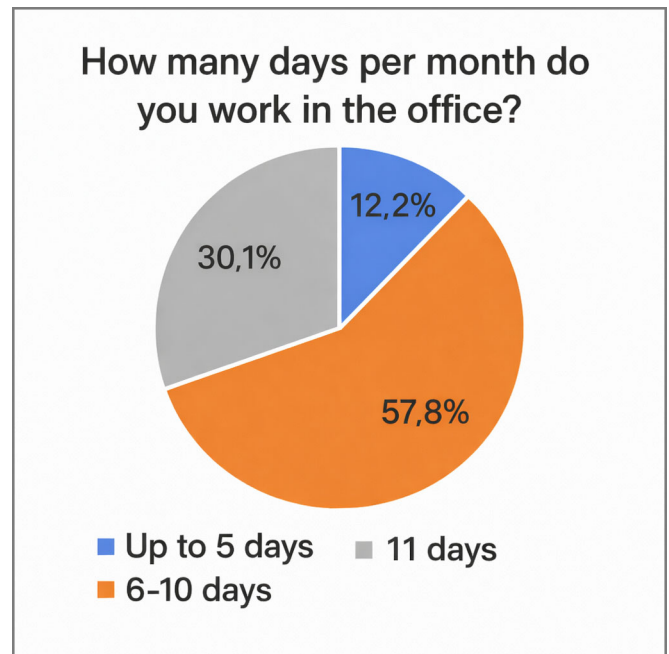
- More frequent visits (45.3%) might indicate either a greater need to access office resources or roles that require closer supervision or collaboration, which may have been harder to adapt remotely—again, potentially due to insufficient organizational help.

Fig. 4. Work mode of the employees



The majority of those working from home claim that their actual working hours are 8 hours (84.8%), followed by 12 hours (7.7%) and 4 hours (7.5%). In comparison, hybrid workers report visiting the office monthly as follows: 6-10 days (57.8%), up to 5 days (12.2%), and more than 11 days (30.1%). (Fig. 5)

Fig. 5. Frequency of visits to the employee's office



The connection between these two sets of results reflects how different work arrangements (fully remote vs hybrid) influence time management and physical presence at the workplace. A large majority of fully remote workers (84.8%) report working exactly 8 hours per day, indi-

cating that, despite being off-site, their work schedules are structured and standardized—likely aligned with organizational expectations, meaning hybrid workers' office visits vary significantly, and it shows greater variability in how often they go to the office. This suggests a more flexible or role-dependent approach to hybrid work, where the number of office days may be influenced by job function, collaboration needs, or personal preference.

DISCUSSION

Our study highlights that the results are connected through the lens of how inadequate support during the transition to remote work may have influenced how often employees need or choose to return to the office. Those without proper setup or guidance may need more frequent in-office presence to compensate for limitations in their home working environment. In recent years, working from home has become a permanent form of employment, prompting numerous studies examining its effects on productivity, well-being, and organizational dynam-

ics. Several empirical studies indicate that the hybrid work model does not lead to significant changes in productivity but contributes to lower turnover and higher employee satisfaction. [11] In a randomized controlled trial at the Chinese company Trip.com found that working from home two days a week maintains productivity levels, while turnover drops by 33%, without compromising workplace promotions or satisfaction. [12]

CONCLUSION

The results highlight how remote work tends to favor schedule consistency, while hybrid work introduces variability in physical attendance, potentially reflecting different demands on presence, communication, or access to resources. Additionally, the standardized 8-hour day among remote workers may point to effective self-management or organizational enforcement of hours, whereas the varying office attendance of hybrid workers could imply a more output- or task-based approach rather than a strict time-based one.

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Please cite this article as: Markova R, Samuneva-Zhelyabova M, Luybomirova K. Impact of changes in the organization of work on quality of life. *J of IMAB*. 2026 Apr-Jun;32(2):6818-6821. [Crossref - <https://doi.org/10.5272/jimab.2026322.6818>]

Received: 12/09/2025; Published online: 20/04/2026



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