

# Hybrid Remote Work Models in Project-Organized Small and Medium-Sized IT Companies

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## Abstract

Remote work used to be more of an exception until today, mainly used around the world, especially in the field of ICT. In Slovenia there was not so much practice and discussion about this way of working until recently. Unintentionally, this way of working has spread due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has not only changed the characteristics of workplaces, but also the attitude of employees towards this way of working. The employees tried their hand at working remotely, and many of them perceived the potential and the desire to continue doing so. Namely, many advantages were shown, among which the flexibility of time and, of course, the long-desired balance between professional and private life stand out. Businesses have also seen many benefits, such as a reduction in overall operating costs, a way to reduce turnover and a way to increase productivity. Among other things, project management is also reflected through methodological diversity, which in our study is reflected through an empirical perspective, since in the research we used a triangulation approach between qualitative and quantitative data. A survey was conducted among 100 respondents with the help of a questionnaire, with which we gained insight into the positive and negative experiences of remote work in small and medium-oriented (SMITCs) IT companies. The obtained results were subsequently analyzed with the help of decision trees, and based on these results these questions were pre-debated by the focus group. The research showed that employees have mostly positive experiences when working remotely, which affects their motivation, satisfaction and, of course, productivity. Considering that in this case it was remote work that was not originally planned, the company will definitely need some improvements for this type of work. The question however remains if the ICT sector will further support remote work gained in recent period or will use a hybrid model. Currently, the hybrid model provides the opportunity to choose the best advantages of remote work and the classic way of working and achieve a rhythm that will satisfy both the management and the employees. What the future of work in the field of ICT will be, however, is still impossible to accurately predict at the moment, despite the prospects.

**Key Words:** Hybrid model, telecommuting, productivity, IT companies.

## 1 Introduction

Working remotely is not a new way of working. The beginnings of trying to do so began at the early part of the 21st century. At that time, remote work represented an alternative form of work, which only here and there supplemented work in the classic way due to additional needs. Later telecommuting took place only sporadically, mainly to support work-life balance and thus support flexibility for employees to balance their role at work and outside of it (Afrianty, Artatanaya, and Burgess) [1]. However, this changed when communication technology (hereafter ICT) began to rapidly develop. The greater the progress of ICT, the more telecommuting was available, or it became more acceptable in the organizational context and employers chose this way of working more often. In those days, it was rarely intended for an employee to telecommute full-time (Peek) [7].

Remote work has started to become more common in certain fields world-wide. It was also becoming more and more acceptable, but still, many did not think of trying this way of working. Technology certainly made it possible to do some work both from the office where the company is located, as well as from anywhere in the world, especially in the field of work where a service can be performed or provided online (Arruda) [2]. When the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread around the world and the measures became more and more strict, employees were actually forced to work from home. Employers began to seriously think about eliminating physical workplaces. Moreover, as Dayaram and Burgess [5] explain, there has been another noticeable change, namely the introduction of remote work among professions, where this was not possible previously or they did not even think about it. While reporting on how employers and employees find themselves during remote work, we were able to get some insights about how some employers are thinking about the complete digitization of work. Employees noticed benefits with work that the employees would perform solely and only as remote work, while the company would not have any physical premises at all (Shaner) [8].

Barrero, Bloom and Davis [3] state that COVID-19 has launched a massive social experiment. The data is an excellent indicator for such a claim. In 2020, from April to December, Americans worked about half of their paid work hours from home. Before the pandemic, these hours were by an average of five percent. Despite the fact that some are completely against remote work because they are worried about the lack of personal relationships, others are convinced that the adjustment has been incredible and that more work will be done from home in the future, a kind of intermediate

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view is also expressed. It is recognized that some things actually work very well if they are done virtually only. In their contribution, the mentioned authors explained that they are developing systematic evidence on whether remote work will survive and why. Their research was based on data on the frequency of telecommuting, the possibility of switching to such a way of working and data on the well-being of employees working remotely and the impact of telecommuting on productivity, costs and other related factors. Their conclusions, which can be an introduction to our research, showed that remote work will remain, long after the end of the pandemic. Employees in America are expected to do up to 20 percent of their work from home, which is four times more than before. They also found that the willingness of some employees to telecommute has increased to the point that they are willing to work for much less pay in exchange for the opportunity to telecommute at least two or three days a week. However, another side of the work appears, namely the impact on the economy in terms of challenges for urban areas. By reducing transportation to work, employees will also reduce some other needs, such as less shopping, less personal services, less entertainment, which means a reduction in total consumer spending (Barrero, Bloom, and Davis) [3]. The question that arises here is whether the increase in productivity will be such that other, consequential effects on the economy can be neglected. In fact, the increase in productivity is often possible precisely because of time savings and cost reduction, which may not mean anything for ordinary economic statistics.

The restrictions caused by COVID-19 have contributed to the fact that there is an increasing need for alternative work methods, which include remote work and work defined as a hybrid model. The hybrid work model is not a newly discovered work method, but due to recent events, the need for such a model is increasing. It is therefore a model also known as a mixed system, which usually appears when it is necessary to balance two types of requirements. In the case of this model, we are talking about combining physical work arrangements (work performed at the employer's location, i.e., in the office) and remote work (Cook, Mor, and Santos) [4]. The hybrid work model thus combines remote work, where the essential advantages are flexibility at work, lower labor costs and greater employee satisfaction, and the advantages of the traditional work system, such as personal cooperation and better culture in the work organization. The need for remote work is actually growing faster and faster, which offers researchers the opportunity to more thoroughly investigate one and the other work model (Iqbal, Evgenyevich Barykin, and Khalid) [6].

In our study, we discuss the possibilities of both systems, namely, we studied the advantages of remote work for employees in the IT SMITCs companies, and at the same time we checked whether the use of a hybrid model would be more appropriate in this area. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the employees experienced remote work, this was actually an accelerating factor that now allows us to check what the response was. Changes are needed for the future, based on digitization, which will have to be restructured so that the company does not become obsolete with its way of doing business. As a result, there are more and more opportunities for hybrid work arrangements in many areas. In the first part,

we present the evaluation of the research problem by means of connecting the key theoretical findings of the studied field.

Project management is a complex process that involves many important competencies. Its role in the case of research, however, has changed significantly recently. Sometimes research was based on the assessment of factors and appropriateness of use and contribution to knowledge and expertise. Today, the use of project management in research is based on the integration of qualitative and quantitative studies and thus a comprehensive review of the practical results obtained. The empirical part first presents the analysis of the survey questionnaire in which we obtained the preliminary results for further investigation using the decision trees. This was followed by a presentation of the questions and outputs to the focus group to debate the opinions and positions on the mentioned questions.

### 1.1 Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the study is to expand the insight into remote work and the possibilities of using the hybrid model in the case of IT SMITCs companies. Based on the findings, we evaluated the problem presented and the goals of the research were aimed at:

- to study methods based on project management methodology;
- presentation of the results obtained with the help of a survey questionnaire, where employees in the IT field evaluated the positive and negative aspects of telecommuting factors;
- presentation of employee productivity modeling using decision trees and analysis of obtained results and presentation of priority factors related to employee productivity;
- presentation of the questions asked obtained on the basis of the results of decision trees and the use and analysis of the selected measuring instrument to gather opinions and positions with the help of discussion;
- analyzing the obtained results and their interpretation and
- presentation of an understanding of the advantages of using a standard work system, remote work and hybrid work in the case of IT companies.

With the aforementioned research we determined what kind of work is most suitable for employees in IT SMITCs companies. It has the most advantages, standard work in the office, remote work, based on research in the past almost two years, or for companies in this field in the future, to consider a hybrid model. In the study, we also sought answers to the following hypotheses:

- H1: The perception of remote work depends on the field of work.
- H2: The positive effects of telecommuting in the case of the IT sector can affect productivity, and in the case of the hybrid model, these could increase even more.
- H3 Employees see many advantages in remote work, but the standard form of work is also close to them, which means that the hybrid model could be the most

effective form of work in the IT sector.

### 1.2 Methods

We conducted the survey on the experience of working remotely when the situation during the pandemic had calmed down to such an extent that employees returned to their jobs in the office. The questionnaire was designed with the help of theoretical knowledge and past research on telework, based on factors related to the impact of telework on productivity. One hundred IT respondents evaluated general claims about telecommuting, positive and negative factors in telecommuting, and factors directly related to productivity in telecommuting. The respondents gave their evaluations using a measurement scale, with grades from 1 to 5 (1-do not agree at all, 5-completely agree), so that they evaluated the individual statements in each group. We also checked demographic data such as: gender, age, completed education, employment status, number of years with the current employer and personality type. We analyzed the obtained data of the survey questionnaire according to the evaluation of the respondents. We then evaluate results with the decision trees method systematically based on all possible outputs. The decision tree method was chosen as a method that allows a symbolic representation of patterns, which we can use and reinterpret. The dependent variable was shifted, for example when stated to telecommuting productivity which was derived from a set of statements in the survey questionnaire, we used other variables such as demographic data etc. as independent variables.

We analyzed the data sets obtained with the help of decision trees and selected the 10 most important findings, which highlight the essential findings of the research and their connection with the positive and negative aspects of remote work. We analyzed, presented and interpreted the collected data accordingly. On the basis of these results, we have posed a meaningful question in light of the findings, which would help us to explain the obtained data more deeply. We

continued with a qualitative research in which we used the focus group method, where 7 participants were informally interviewed in a group. We chose this method in order to obtain general information about the background of the researched topic. We continued with the presentation of the collected results of the focus groups, and for an easier and more in-depth understanding of the results. We also used some quotes from the focus group participants. Our workflow progress is illustrated by Figure 1.

### 2 Research

One hundred respondents rated the statements in the questionnaire as follows:

- The majority of respondents completely agreed (rating 5) with the fact that working remotely saves time (e.g., no driving to work) and consequently also costs, and that such a method of work requires a high level of digital competence or literacy.
- The majority of respondents agreed (rating 4) that: when working remotely, free choice of time or flexibility of working hours is important (to do the work when they think they will be most productive); that they have a better balance between their professional and private lives when working remotely; that telecommuting is a challenge; that they are more creative when working remotely; that when working
- remotely there are no usual distractions that are present when working at a traditional workplace (e.g. distractions from other employees); that telecommuting requires a certain level of responsibility towards work; that their productivity is higher when they work from home; that remote work has more advantages than traditional work in an office; that when working remotely, greater productivity depends on the level of
- motivation and their satisfaction (the higher both factors are, the higher the productivity) and that an additional

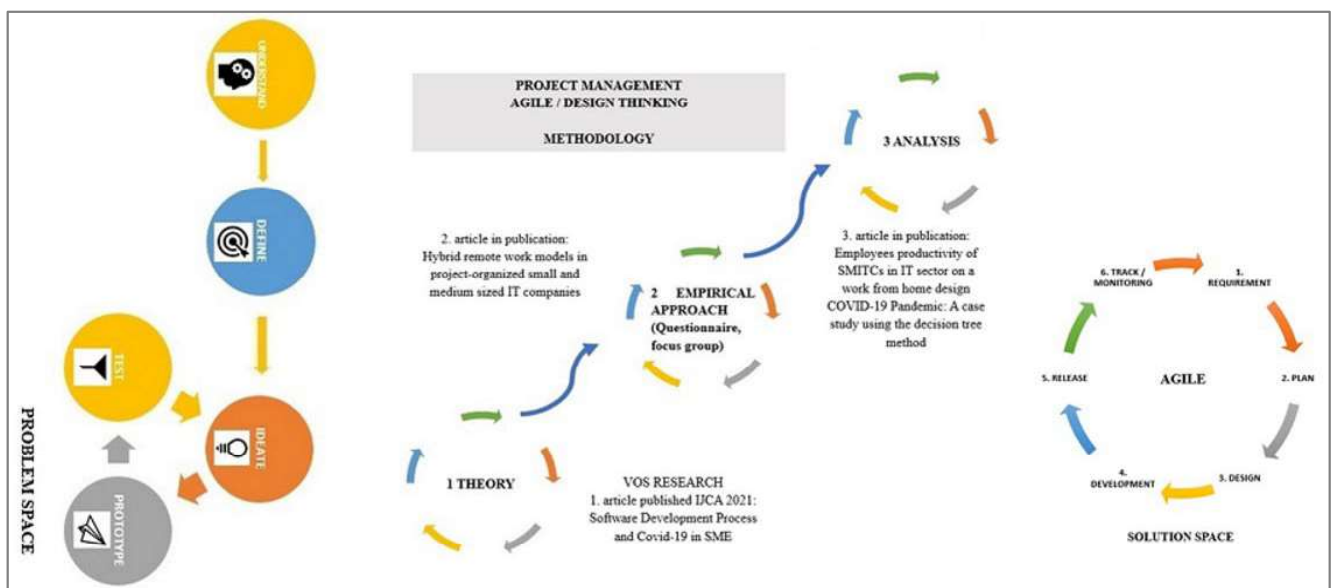


Figure 1: The workflow in our research

- financial incentive would motivate them even more to work remotely.
- The majority of respondents could not accurately evaluate the following statements (a rating of 3 was chosen - neither agree nor disagree): that they miss personal contact with employees and management staff; that when working remotely, the boundaries between professional and private life are blurred; that they are overloaded with information and communication when working remotely; that when working remotely, they face challenges in how to motivate themselves to work; that when working remotely, they face work disruptions from other people in the household; that they are more productive in a classic workplace and that they do more in classic work. Also, the majority did not accurately evaluate the claims that, based on better conditions or additional benefits, they would rather continue working in the office than from home.
- The majority of respondents did not agree (rating 2) with the following statements: that remote work leads to a lack of trust on the part of management staff; that there is a lack of team spirit when working remotely; that they have more communication problems when working remotely; that there is a lack of response from superiors when working remotely; that, when working remotely, they doubt that their finished work is properly assessed; that there are limitations to career possibilities when working remotely; that when working remotely, there is a lack of important information for work and important information regarding the company itself, and that when working remotely, there is a lack of inspiration and challenges at work.

We entered the obtained results into the model and formed the following conclusions with the help of decision trees:

- that digital literacy plays a key role in the very nature of the work of an employee in the IT sector. The obtained results tell us that it is basically a criterion that must be guaranteed so that an employee in such a position can perform his job well;
- that when working remotely, employees can usually have a great deal of control over the performance of tasks or over their schedule. This flexibility can have a positive effect on work itself, as well as on productivity and satisfaction. Namely, their working hours can be adjusted in such a way that they better balance their professional life with their private life;
- that employees are aware of saving time and reducing certain work-related costs, and that these two factors can have a significant impact on employee productivity;
- that employees attribute reduced distractions at work (e.g., conversations and social interaction) as an opportunity for greater productivity;
- that the respondents believe that they are proven to be more productive when working remotely, which is also influenced by self-motivation and job satisfaction;
- that employees are aware of the challenges posed by working remotely, but are not entirely convinced that the additional benefits at the workplace would convince them to return to the classic way of working;

- that employees are aware that their productivity also depends on their capacity and their ability to work remotely and
- that employees have no problems with the lack of contact between employees and management.

The measuring instrument in the continuation of the qualitative research was an unstructured interview. Figure 2 shows the design of our research using a focus group.

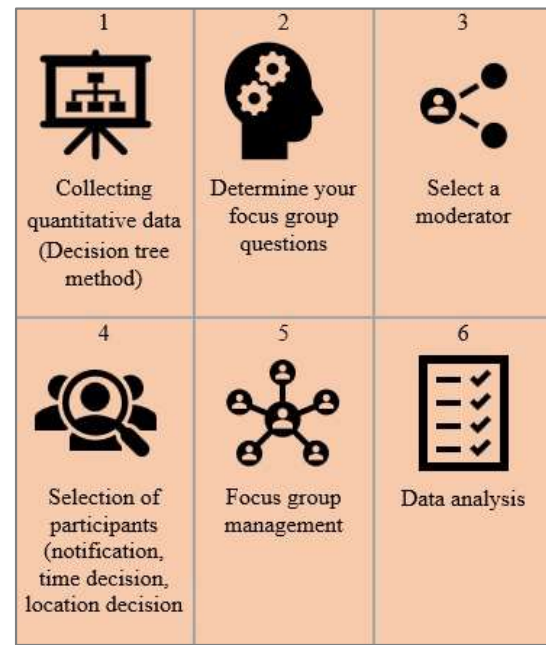


Figure 2: Preparing a design for a focus group

The questions were based on the results obtained using the decision tree method. A focus group with seven ICT company employees chose the MS Team application for a group interview that lasted 1 hour and 10 minutes. The contractor asked pre-formulated questions and sub-questions and encouraged all participants to participate, especially those who were more reluctant, so that everyone in the focus group expressed their opinions and that everyone's opinions were equally represented. Data collection was carried out with the fundamental ethical principles of qualitative research. All participants approached the interview voluntarily, with the possibility of discontinuing participation at any stage of the research. Figure 3 shows the data collection process using a focus group.

Question: **“How important is the level of complexity of digital literacy when working remotely in the IT sector”?** The percentage of participants who considered the level of complexity of digital literacy extremely important is: 71.4%, and the percentage of participants who considered it a rather important factor is: 28.6%. The analysis reveals that the majority of participants (71.4%) believe that the level of complexity of digital literacy is extremely important when working remotely in the IT sector. The rest of the participants (28.6%) consider it quite important. When answering this question, the participants agreed that it is difficult to talk about the importance of digital literacy in their work, which actually

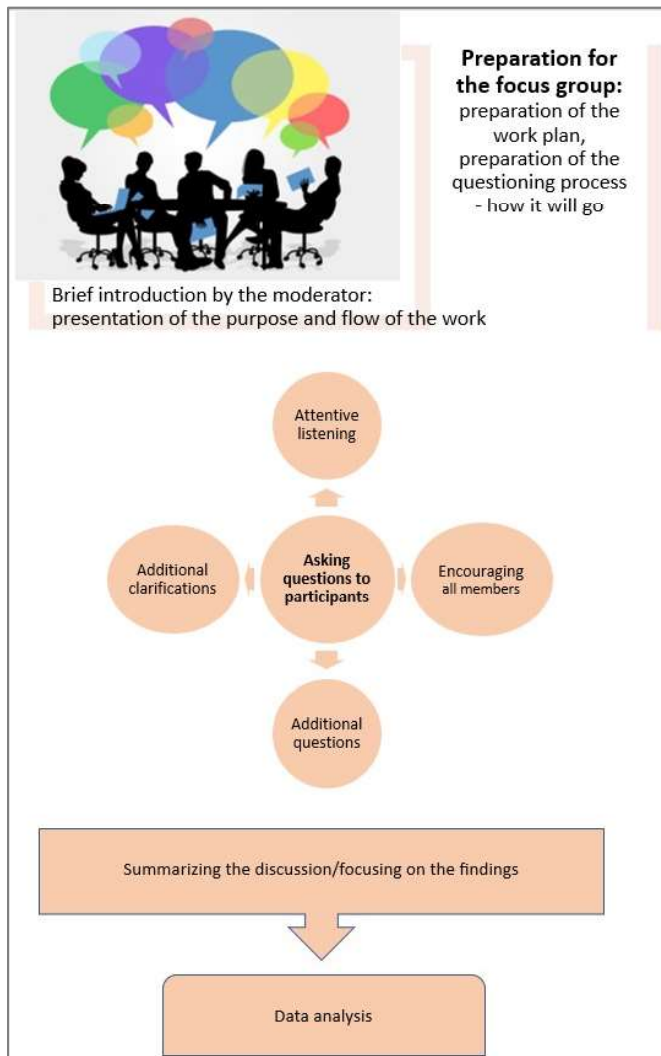


Figure 3: Focus group process and data collection

comes from their ability to work with computers and programs. They added that it is also important that they know how to manage information, which includes understanding, using and transferring it.

Question: **“Could telecommuting productivity be higher simply because employees can set their own time and thus actually spend less time being unproductive?”** The percentage of participants who consider it important to be able to choose their time when working remotely amounts to is: 60%, and the percentage of participants who consider that they are more productive due to adjusting their time and saving time is: 40%. The analysis reveals that the majority of participants (60%) believe that it is important to be able to choose the time when working remotely, that is, to be able to determine when they will carry out some work and that as a result, they are more productive. The rest of the participants (40%) believe that they are more productive due to adjusting their time and saving time that does not have to be used for small things (e.g., commuting, short speeches at the workplace, etc.).

Question: **“Could telecommuting, with its potential benefit of improving work-life balance, contribute to the new normality of doing and accepting telecommuting for**

**jobs not only in IT, but also in other sectors”?** The percentage of participants who think that remote work in the IT sector has other advantages is: 50%, and the percentage of participants who think that in the case of other sectors this might be an advantage they need is: 50%. The analysis reveals that half (50%) of the participants believe that IT has other more important advantages when working remotely, such as saving time, working at home, working in a quiet environment, etc. The remaining participants (50%) believe that remote work has already become normalized in the IT sector and that the stated advantage, i.e., greater balance between work and private life, may be the advantage that will lead to normalization in other sectors as well. All the participants listed the industries in which they believe remote work would also make sense, at least as an additional option: work in the field of finance and banking, medicine and pharmacy, law, the field of art.

Question: **“Does the reduction of mobility have certain disadvantages, as in driving to work having some intrinsic value?”** The percentage of participants who do not miss driving is: 57.1%, and the percentage of participants who miss some aspects of driving is: 42.9%. The analysis reveals that the majority of participants (57.1%) do not miss driving to work, as they can save time and are not stressed, e.g., due to traffic rush hours and the like, which means that the reduction in mobility has no negative consequences for them. The remaining participants (42.9%) think that they miss certain aspects of driving, such as e.g., independence, isolation in one’s own little world, etc.

Question: **“How should an employer in the IT sector maintain greater productivity of employees when working remotely?”** The percentage of participants who consider maintaining connections between employees, regular software updates and relaxed communication to be important is: 100%; the percentage of participants who suggest financial assistance when setting up a home office is: 28.6%; the percentage of participants who mention praise for a job well done as a productivity factor is: 57.1%. The analysis shows that all or almost all participants agree on the importance of maintaining employee connectivity, regular software updates and relaxed communication to maintain productivity when working remotely in the IT sector. In addition, (28.6%) of participants suggest providing financial assistance in setting up a home office, while (57.1%) mention the importance of praise for a job well done. These findings highlight key ideas and perspectives shared by focus group participants.

Question: **“Could employees have less problems with lack of team spirit due to the very nature of the work, where employees with a certain level of personality dominate”?** The percentage of participants who agree that they do not feel a lack of contact when working remotely and that there is no reduced team spirit is: 100%, the percentage of participants who believe that their relationship level is at a high level, as technology allows them to have regular contact, which is just as good, even if they don’t have that much physical contact: 100%, and the percentage of participants who declare that they often communicate when working remotely and have normal, friendly and relaxed conversations: 100%. The analysis of the participants’ answers showed that all participants, regardless of the nature of their work, believe that working remotely does not affect

the lack of team spirit. Also, everyone is of the same opinion that technology makes it possible to maintain a high level of relationships and communication that supports team activities.

Question: **“Which characteristics of remote work could be highlighted as demonstrable advantages for an employee in the IT sector?”** The percentage of participants who highlighted the flexibility of working hours as an advantage of remote work is: 100%, the percentage of participants who highlighted familiarity and greater comfort as an advantage is: 60%; the percentage of participants who highlighted geographical freedom as an advantage is: 50%; the percentage of participants who highlighted fewer distractions and more silence as an advantage is: 50%; the percentage of participants who identified fewer distractions and more silence as an advantage is: 40%; the percentage of participants who highlighted reduced stress from driving as an advantage is: 40%; the percentage of participants who highlighted the ability to achieve a greater balance between professional and private life as an advantage is: 20%. The analysis of the responses of the participants showed that the flexibility of working hours is universally recognized as the most important advantage of telecommuting for employees in the IT sector. In addition, familiarity, comfort, geographical freedom, fewer distractions, greater quietness, lower costs and reduced driving stress are also important benefits mentioned by more than half of the participants.

Question: **“How could employers in the IT sector, in the case of the transition of employees to full-time work from home, ensure or be sure that the employees will cooperate enough, that they will be creative enough themselves, or able to do this work for a long time without negative consequences for productivity?”** The percentage of participants who agree that effective communication is key to ensuring cooperation, creativity and productivity of remote employees is: 100%; the percentage of participants who consider it necessary to monitor work, which can be introduced by the employer with a time calendar and recording of work progress, amounts to: 80%; the percentage of participants who believe that the weekly work report is important for good cooperation, creativity and motivation of employees is: 80%; the percentage of participants who believe that live meetings are key to promoting creativity, good work and preventing loneliness and negative effects on mental health is: 60%. The analysis of the participants' responses showed that effective communication is crucial for employers in the IT sector in ensuring the cooperation, creativity, and productivity of remote employees. Work control, weekly reports and live meetings are also important elements to maintain a high level of productivity and creativity and prevent possible negative influences such as loneliness.

Question: **“How should employees in the IT sector motivate themselves when working remotely?” and “How should an employer motivate employees to increase or maintain productivity when working remotely?”**. Percentage of participants who agree that the motivation of employees in the IT sector partly related to the activity of the work itself, which they like to perform, as the work is a kind of hobby for them, amounts to: 100%; the percentage of participants who believe that the employer could additionally

motivate them with an allowance for exceeding the work norm (faster performance of work, flexibility of working hours and customization are the factors that enable exceeding the norm compared to working in an office according to the participants); the percentage of participants who believe that the employer could also motivate them through depreciation of the equipment (by providing the necessary equipment by the employer and reimbursing the costs for wear and tear of the equipment) is: 100%. The analysis of the participants' answers showed that the motivation of employees in the IT sector to work remotely is partly related to the nature of the work they do and it is a kind of hobby for them. In addition, the employer could only motivate them additionally with an allowance for exceeding the work norm and by providing and amortizing the necessary equipment. The participants pointed out only two concrete factors of motivation, which are essential for them, because they are primarily motivated by the fact that they like doing their work.

Question: **“What are the most important challenges faced by employees in the IT sector?”** Percentage of participants who agree that employees in the IT sector face challenges arising from the influence of external factors (they believe that working remotely is more difficult to manage and solve problems and continue working when things go wrong) is: 100%, the percentage of participants who believe that external factors in remote work pose challenges, such as equipment failures, power outages, network outages, etc. (they believe, that these problems are slower or more difficult to resolve at home than in the office) is: 100%; the percentage of participants who agree that taking care of the security of equipment and programs is a challenge when working remotely (they state that employees must pay attention to data protection, their intervention and safety of domestic technology equipment) is: 100%; percentage of participants who find writing reports a challenge (they state that writing meaningful reports that the employer understands is sometimes difficult, as some tasks are self-evident or difficult to explain) amounts to: 57.1%. The analysis of the responses of the participants showed that employees in the IT sector face challenges when working remotely, arising from the influence of external factors. Problems such as equipment failures, power, and network outages present obstacles to smooth operation. In addition, taking care of the security of equipment and programs is also an important challenge. Writing reports is also a challenge, as it is necessary to describe the work in a clear way, despite self-evident or difficult-to-explain tasks.

### 3 Discussion

The attempt to work from home, which was actually not a real test, as employers and employees were forced to make such a decision due to measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, brought many positive effects. Employers and employees alike have gained valuable insights. Some research has even shown that telecommuting employees were so satisfied that more than half of them would rather find another job than continue working exclusively in offices. More than half of the employees based on these still want to work remotely, although the hybrid model is also very attractive to employees. Still they are less interested in the

existing way of work, therefore a return to the classic way of working in the office is not expected (Sokolic) [9].

In the future, we can therefore expect more remote work, according to promising studies of working from home, however few employees (in sectors where this is possible) will work exclusively in a traditional workplace. Even the hybrid model, which also existed before the pandemic, promises many possibilities, the classic way of working certainly cannot be completely replaced by remote work only. In the long term, along with the advantages of remote work, the negative factors can also become increasingly apparent. Among these are certainly the reduction of social contacts and the emergence of the need for interaction.

The question remains what impact any negative factors will have on the ICT field. At least in the current study, we did not find that any of the negative factors would cause any problems for the employees. The employees had challenges, but they did not agree with the claims about the lack of mutual contacts. They also do not agree with other negative effects, such as a reduction in the connection between them and the management staff. Since in our case it is a sector where many people who have introverted personalities work, it would be very interesting to investigate how remote work would be reflected over a longer period.

In the case of our study, we simultaneously started from theoretical findings, other recent research, and modern approaches, as well as from the results of our research, of which the presented hypotheses were established.

With H1: *The perception of remote work depends on the field of work*, we started from the assumption that in the case of IT companies, it is easier for employees to work from home due to the very nature of the work, which already basically attracts a certain type of personality. According to the results obtained from our research, employees in IT companies want to work remotely because they want more flexibility in their working hours. It is also a workplace where employees are increasingly aware that they do not need to move to a well-paid workplace, because there is no longer any geographical limitation when working remotely. Employees in this position also believe that they are more productive when working remotely and accept their remote work very well. In their work, they did not perceive a lack of personal relationships, problems in communication or a lack of information. According to other studies, where other jobs or areas of work are analyzed, the research also shows good results and maintaining or even increasing productivity, but in certain cases outstanding factors can still be traced. Some employees faced a lack of social connection, which in turn led to stress, problems with psychological well-being, and even depression for some. **From this we can conclude that the experience of remote work depends on the individuality of the employees, their preferences, personality type and perhaps not so much on the field of work itself.**

With H2: *The positive effects of telecommuting in the case of the IT sector can affect productivity, and in the case of a hybrid model these could increase even more*, we started from the assumption that both approaches have their advantages and that combining all advantages can lead to even better results. Despite the fact that employees are convinced that

they are more productive at home, problems can arise with the management itself. Sometimes productivity is not so easy to measure, and this can lead to a lack of transparency and, as a result, less trust from management towards employees. It is true, however, that a highly productive employee is most likely equally effective both in the office and at home. In our research, we found quite a few advantages that employees point out when working remotely, among which the flexibility of working hours stands out in particular. However, the respondents were not so sure that they would much rather work only remotely than in a classic workplace, when we presented them with the possibility of additional benefits in a classic workplace. If remote work offers flexibility of working time and place and other advantages, on the other hand, it also brings challenges, such as facing and solving problems and lack of social interaction. In this case, the hybrid model seems like a solution that can offer the best of both worlds. Greater flexibility when working remotely, a better balance between professional and private life, as a result, can affect higher productivity. Working in an office also has its advantages, it is a more suitable place for collaboration, creating good relationships, etc. In any case, the period during the pandemic made it possible for employees to experience remote work and compare it with the traditional model. More freedom, greater flexibility of work, there is no going back, many are even ready to change their workplace if it only required them to do classic office work. However, it is still only an experience at a certain time and if we look at it more broadly, face-to-face personal communication cannot be recreated virtually, even work relationships and culture are stronger when they are built physically. **Therefore, the hybrid model is something that can have a long life and something that may really increase the positive effects on productivity.**

With H3: *Employees see many advantages in remote work, but the standard form of work is also close to them, which means that the hybrid model could be the most effective form of work in the IT sector*, we started from the assumption that employees in remote work otherwise see many advantages, but they are not entirely sure that they no longer want to work in the classic way as well. The need for freedom, adaptability, geographical restrictedness, but also for personal communication and socializing is something that puts the hybrid model as a solution for companies that want to adapt to the post-pandemic world. It is a model that offers advantages that include employee satisfaction because they can adjust how they will do their work, but at the same time it ensures that there is no lack of personal contacts and successfully discourages employees from possible isolation and deterioration of mental health. The flexibility of hybrid work allows employees what they have generally wanted for a long time, greater balance, and coordination between their professional and private lives. Despite the fact that the hybrid model appears to be the most efficient form of work, it should be noted that this model will also require careful preparation and planning, and companies will have to adapt to uncertainties in the future as well. Of course, it also depends on the individual employee, for some it will suit them to work from home for part of the week and in the office for the rest, while some may want to work entirely remotely.

#### 4 Conclusion

COVID-19 contributed to the fact that the trend of remote work took hold. Remote work has been known for a long time, but companies did not test it to such an extent until they were actually forced to introduce this form of work in the last two years due to the pandemic. In the case of ICT companies, it is work that is already done from home in many parts of the world, but this time the companies and employees were not ready for an immediate change. The need for quick action and changing conditions did not allow for much planning and preparation. We can certainly talk about the fact that no one, neither the employer nor the employee, was completely ready for the transition. The change of the workplace, processes, resources and the preparation of people was fast, but according to the analysis carried out, the employees responded very well in the case of ICT companies. Employees (also employers) gained experience and checked how they can coordinate their wishes, capabilities and challenges when working remotely. The conducted research showed primarily positive effects on productivity and employee satisfaction with this type of work. The trend of working from home also shows prospects for the future, although a new perspective must be taken into account. The employees were satisfied during the period of working from home and see many advantages in this type of work. However, it was in fact, a period when we could not perform our work in the classic way due to the requirements and measures. Here we can also refer about the satisfaction of being able to do their work without any particular fear of being out of work because it cannot be done or is done under strictly defined conditions. Remote work during this period also offered some security due to the familiarity of the environment itself, so that serious social contacts did not even occur, at least not in the area where we performed the analysis. The question is how it will be in the future. Despite the results, which showed that employees did not miss personal contacts with colleagues and management, it is necessary to consider for the future, e.g., about the need for social contacts, means to maintain this type of work, etc., regardless of the fact that research has also shown that many introverted personalities work in this field. Remote work could continue, but according to the latest research, it appears that the most advantageous way at the moment would be a hybrid model. It is a model that simultaneously offers employees more flexibility while maintaining a certain level of control and stability for the employer. This way of working is certainly more acceptable also because restrictions disappear and people no longer fear and desire to be closed off due to health conditions. The hybrid model allows employers to experiment with solutions and find out what is best for employees and for the company/organization.

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