

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF WORKING FROM HOME IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

The nature of work has changed significantly in recent years, influenced by digitalization, technological advances (e.g., robotics, automation, artificial intelligence), demographics and diversity. As a result, remote work has steadily increased over the last two decades. The article explores the advantages and disadvantages of working from home in public administration. In the empirical part, we wanted to determine whether employees working from home can coordinate their personal and professional lives and whether their employer has properly organized their work from home and provided them with adequate IT equipment. The research was conducted based on an anonymous questionnaire completed by public administration employees. The statistical analysis results showed that the employees see more advantages than disadvantages in working from home. Based on research and theory, we find that part of the public administration continues to work from home.

KEYWORDS: work from home, public administration, motivation, communication, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Remote work is usually divided into work from home, which includes various arrangements regarding the days when an individual works from home and when in the organization, and work from anywhere, which literally means working at any location and anytime remotely. Although this is not a condition, remote work usually involves information and communication technology (ICT).

The emergence of the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus has also affected changes in the organization of work in public administration. Many public institutions had to switch to working from home, but not all were prepared to do so. Experts believe that the crisis will force us to skip a few steps in the development of this area (Ius-info, 2020).

The Civil Servants Act stipulates that a worker who performs work from home has the same rights as one who works at the employer's premises. The worker is thus entitled to food allowance and allowance for using his own resources but is not entitled to the cost of transport to work.

I. Working from home

Work from home is a phenomenon whose incidence is increasing due to the development of information and communication technology and the improvement of the work-life balance of employees. It brings positive effects for both workers and companies, such as shorter commuting times, greater autonomy of working hours and thus a better organization of

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working hours, better overall work-life balance, higher productivity, lower fluctuation of workers, reduced need for office space and associated costs for companies (Wide, 2019).

The first known example of work from home dates back to 1877, when the director of a bank in Boston set up a telephone line to his home in order to work from there (Gačanovič, 2006).

The father of modern forms of work from home is Jack Nilles, who, under the auspices of the US federal government in the 1970s of the 20th century, successfully carried out several projects to eliminate traffic problems and enable people to work from home or at least closer to home.

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the promotion of work from home in the European Union mainly aimed to reduce unemployment in marginal areas (Blatnik in Hočevvar, 2020).

Research up till now in Slovenia has treated work from home as a new phenomenon. With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, work from home has been gaining ground and widespread acceptance. It can be done in many more jobs than we imagined. According to a Eurofound study (2020), the pandemic will trigger a revolution in the field of working from home and change the way we work in the future permanently.

Work from home is a modern form of work where the worker performs work at home or on the premises of his choice when away from the employer's premises. Working from home, where the worker uses information technology, also includes remote work. Such work must be subject to appropriate consent between the worker and the employer in the form of a specific employment contract (Širok, 2019).

Work from home is regulated in the International Labour Organization Convention No. 177, adopted in 1996. Slovenia ratified the Convention in 2021. Working from home is defined as work performed by an employee away from the employer's premises, i.e., at his or her own home or on premises of his or her choosing. The work is paid and results in a service or product produced by the employee at the employer's request (Home Work Convention, 1996).

Not all jobs are suitable to be done from home. These include a wide range of field and high-tech jobs using large and expensive machinery. Some jobs cannot be done from home because they require physical teamwork, while others are of such a nature that employees can do them without visiting the office (Centa, 2021).

I.1. Advantages and disadvantages of working from home

A key benefit for the employee is the time saved commuting to and from work. When commuting is not in play, we are also less exposed to risks to our safety and health. The employee needs less time for organization before going to work, and if the possibilities allow, he adapts the flexible environment to his needs. When working from home, employees are more autonomous; they have the opportunity to learn new things (Stanković, 2020).

The main disadvantages of working from home are loneliness and lack of contact, leading to poorer transfer of knowledge, opinions and experience. Lack of contact can, over a long period, lead to employees lacking a sense of belonging to a team. Often they do not adhere to the rules governing safety at work (Gartner, 2020).

The purpose of the research is to provide an overview of the experience of working from home in public administration from the employees' point of view. We wanted to get a

broader picture of public employees' attitudes toward working from home to: find out whether they have adequate working conditions, whether their employer has provided them with the right IT equipment for working from home, whether there is communication between colleagues and supervisors, to explore the advantages and disadvantages, and to explore the work-life balance. We hypothesized:

Disadvantages:

- H1: More than half of the employees worked from home outside regular working hours.
- H2: Employees with children found it harder to adapt to working from home than employees without children.
- H3: Employees with more formal education found it easier to adapt to working from home than employees with less formal education.
- H4: Women found it more difficult than men to balance their work and private life when working from home.
- H5: When working from home, employees missed communication between colleagues.

Advantages:

- H6: When working from home, employees were more motivated to work than in the office.
- H7: The employer provided the majority of employees with appropriate IT equipment to perform work from home.
- H8: When working from home, most employees had adequate workplaces.
- H9: When working from home, communication with the superior was smooth.

The research aims to investigate the transition to work from home in public administration during the COVID-19 epidemic. We were interested in how the employees adapted and where they see the advantages and disadvantages of such a way of working.

I.2. Research Results

The survey was conducted based on an anonymous questionnaire completed by public administration employees, which included data on work from home that increased during the COVID-19 epidemic. The survey was conducted in October and November 2022. 136 respondents fully completed the survey questionnaire. The sample of the study is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Claims related to work from home

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	14	10,3
	Female	117	86,0
Age	26 to 35 years	17	12,5
	36 to 50 years	67	49,3
	51 to 65 years	47	34,6
Children	Yes	95	69,9

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	No	36	26,5
Years of service	up to 5 years	19	14,0
	6 to 10 years	18	13,2
	11 to 20 years	38	27,9
	over 20 years	56	41,2
Education	Secondary education	23	16,9
	Higher education	50	36,7
	University education	40	29,4
	Master's degree or higher	18	13,2

I.3. Analysis and interpretation of the data obtained

We made claims related to working from home. The respondents expressed their agreement based on the Likert scale. They responded with values and their codes 1 – I do not agree at all, and 5 - I completely agree.

Table 2 shows the responses of the respondents related to working from home. From the above results, we can conclude that the respondents have appropriate workplaces and that the employer has provided them with appropriate IT equipment.

Table 2: Claims related to work from home

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have adequate working spaces (appropriate temperature, lighting, appropriate chair and desk) when working from home.	135	1	5	3,97	1,152
The employer provided me with the appropriate IT equipment (computer, monitor, phone, etc.) to work from home.	135	1	5	3,83	1,363

Table 3 shows the IT equipment provided by the employer. We note that employers have most frequently provided a laptop, followed by a desktop computer (81%), a work cell phone (72%), small computer equipment (52%), a monitor (51%), a tablet (2%) and a printer (1%). Under the second category, the majority of the respondents (13%) said that their employer did not provide them with IT equipment.

Table 3: IT equipment provided by the employer

	Frequency	Percent
Laptop, desktop	110	81
Monitor	70	51
Small computer equipment (keyboard, headphones, camera, etc.)	71	52

Tablet	3	2
Printer	1	1
Work cell phone	98	72
Other	17	13

Furthermore, we were interested in whether the respondents perform work from home during regular business hours. We found that the majority of the respondents perform work from home during regular business hours.

Table 4: Organization of work from home

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I work from home during regular working hours.	132	1	5	4,22	0,919
I work outside regular working hours.	132	1	5	2,48	1,214
I work from home during and outside regular working hours.	132	1	5	3,11	1,377
I work harder than I would in an organization.	132	1	5	3,52	1,232

Table 5 shows that the respondents were most likely to agree that working from home gives them more time for their private life and least likely to agree that other household members interfere with their work process.

Table 5: Work-life balance

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I find it difficult to separate work and personal life.	132	1	5	2,50	1,281
Working from home gives me more time for my personal life.	132	1	5	3,52	1,293
Other members of the household are interfering with my work process.	132	1	5	2,27	1,178

Table 6 shows that the respondents agree that working from home is equally efficient and of good quality; more than half of them miss communication between colleagues, and the least agree that working from home has been difficult for them to adapt to.

Table 6: Claims related to work from home

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am more motivated when working from home.	131	1	5	3,54	1,139
I have done my work from home with the same quality and efficiency.	131	1	5	4,35	0,894
The employer has properly organized the work from home (instructions, notifications, support of superiors).	131	1	5	4,01	1,011

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When I work from home, I miss communication between colleagues.	131	1	5	3,47	1,205
I had a hard time adapting to working from home.	131	1	5	2,04	1,070

The respondents were most likely to agree that working from home is done with the same efficiency and quality and that it is done during regular working hours. Their employer has organized their work from home properly, provided them with the right IT equipment, and they have adequate working space when working from home. Most agreed that working from home allows them more time for their private life, that they are more motivated when working from home, and that they work more than they would in an organization. What they miss is communication between colleagues. Half of the respondents find it difficult to separate work and private life. Fewer than half agreed that other household members interfere with their work process. Most were able to adapt to working from home. Agreeing with the statement that it was difficult to adapt to working from home was the lowest.

Table 7: Communication with the superior when performing work from home

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have enough communication with my superior.	131	1	5	4,01	0,941
The superior is available.	131	1	5	4,05	0,947
Meetings run smoothly.	131	1	5	3,94	0,943
Communication occurs in several ways (electronic, telephone, and video conferencing).	131	1	5	4,46	0,611

The respondents agreed (Table 7) that communication with the superior is carried out without problems in several ways (electronic, telephone, and video conferencing). They very much agreed that the superior is accessible and that they communicate enough. Although slightly less, the respondents nevertheless agreed that meetings run smoothly.

Table 8: Advantages of working from home

	Frequency	Percent
It makes it easier for me to balance my personal and professional life	82	63
Greater flexibility	73	56
Less time commuting	117	89
Better working efficiency	67	51
Reduced costs	57	44
Greater peace (no co-workers present)	69	53
Other	1	1

The respondents mostly agreed (Table 8) that the greatest advantage of working from home is that they spend less time commuting. They also consider it easier to balance their private and professional life. They agree that working from home allows them more flexibility,

peace of mind, better work efficiency and lower costs.

Table 9: Disadvantages of working from home

	Frequency	Percent
Poor organization of time	10	8
Lack of social contact	93	71
Less mentorship and exchange of opinions and experiences	53	40
Less sense of belonging and connection	64	49
Inadequate working conditions	19	15
Presence of family members	29	22
Other	12	9

The main obstacle to working from home is the lack of social contact (Table 9). Less than 50 percent believe they have less sense of belonging and connection as well as less mentoring and exchanging of opinions and experiences. A bit less than a quarter is disturbed by the presence of family members and inadequate working conditions. However, they are least likely to agree that their time is less well organised.

II. Testing the hypotheses

H1: *More than half of the employees worked from home outside regular working hours.*

In the first hypothesis, we were interested in whether more than half of the employees performed work from home also outside their regular working hours. Table 10 shows that 25.7% of the respondents stated that they do not agree with working from home outside regular working hours, 29.4% disagree, and 14.7% neither agree nor disagree. Less than a quarter of the respondents, i.e., 24.3%, agree that work from home is also done outside regular working hours, and 2.9% fully agree.

Table 10: Performing work from home outside regular working hours

Performing work from home outside regular working hours	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I do not agree at all	35	25,7	26,5	26,5
I disagree	40	29,4	30,3	56,8
I neither agree nor disagree	20	14,7	15,2	72,0
I agree	33	24,3	25,0	97,0
I strongly agree	4	2,9	3,0	100,0
Total	132	97,1	100,0	

Given that more than half of the respondents (56.8%) do not agree or disagree with the statement that they work from home outside regular working hours, we have rejected our hypothesis that more than half of the employees perform work outside regular working hours, as we have not been able to prove it statistically.

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H2: Employees with children found it harder to adapt to working from home than employees without children.

Table 11 shows the results of the statement, "I had a hard time adapting to working from home." The table shows that those who have children were most likely to choose the statement "I do not agree at all" (42.1%) and "I disagree" (35.8%). Employees without children most often chose the option "I disagree" (47.2%), followed by the answer "I do not agree at all" (22.2%).

Table 11: Adapting working from home according to children

			Children		Total
			Yes	No	
I had a hard time adapting to working from home.	I do not agree at all	Frequency	40	8	48
		% without children	42,1	22,2	36,6
	I disagree	Frequency	34	17	51
		% without children	35,8	47,2	38,9
	I neither agree nor disagree	Frequency	9	5	14
		% without children	9,5	13,9	10,7
	I agree	Frequency	10	5	15
		% without children	10,5	13,9	11,5
	I strongly agree	Frequency	2	1	3
		% without children	2,1	2,8	2,3
Total	Frequency	95	36	131	
	% without children	100,0	100,0	100,0	

We also did a Pearson chi-square test and designed Table 12. The table shows that the p-value is 0.345, which means that it is higher than the level of risk or characteristic (0.05). The latter means that we can say with 95% certainty, or a 5% risk level, that employees with children did not find it more difficult to adapt to working from home than employees without children. Our hypothesis can be rejected.

Table 12: Pearson's chi-square

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,479	4	0,345
Likelihood Ratio	4,710	4	0,318

Linear-by-linear Association	2,490	1	0,115
N of Valid Cases	131		

Based on frequencies, response rates and Pearson's chi-square test, we were not able to demonstrate a difference that employees with children found it more difficult to adjust to working from home than employees without children. We reject the second hypothesis.

Testing H3: *Employees with lower formal education had a harder time adapting to working from home than employees with higher formal education.*

For the following hypothesis, we wanted to know whether the employees with lower formal education had a more difficult time adapting to working from home than employees with higher formal education, so we grouped respondents' education into two groups, i.e., lower and higher education. We grouped primary, vocational, secondary and post-secondary education into lower education. Higher education includes higher education, university and specialization, master's degree or more. The education of the respondents is shown in Table 13. The majority of the respondents have higher education, i.e., 96 respondents (70.6%), and 35 (25.7%) have lower education.

Table 13: Education of the respondents

Education of the respondents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lower education	35	25,7	26,7	26,7
Higher education	96	70,6	73,3	100,0
Total	131	96,3	100,0	

Table 14 shows that 12 respondents (34.3%) with lower education and 36 respondents (37.5%) with higher education do not agree at all that they had a difficult time adapting to working from home. 15 respondents (42.9%) with lower education and 36 respondents (37.5%) with higher education do not agree that they had a difficult time adapting to working from home. 5.7% and 2.9% of lower-education respondents and 13.5% and 2.1% of higher-education respondents agree and strongly agree that working from home has been difficult for them to adapt to.

Table 14: Adapting to work from home according to education

		Education		Total	
		Lower education	Higer education		
I had a hard time adapting to working from home.	I do not agree at all	Frequency	12	36	48
		% without lower - higher education	34,3	37,5	36,6
	I disagree	Frequency	15	36	51

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		% without lower - higher education	42,9	37,5	38,9
	I neither agree nor disagree	Frequency	5	9	14
		% without lower - higher education	14,3	9,4	10,7
	I agree	Frequency	2	13	15
		% without lower - higher education	5,7	13,5	11,5
	I strongly agree	Frequency	1	2	3
		% without lower - higher education	2,9	2,1	2,3
Total		Frequency	95	35	96
		% without lower - higher education	100,0	100,0	100,0

From the responses we received, we found that the respondents with lower formal education did not find it more difficult to adapt to working from home than those with higher formal education. Therefore, we reject our third hypothesis and argue that employees with lower formal education did not find it more difficult to adapt to working from home than employees with higher formal education.

The results were confirmed with Pearson's chi-square test. Table 15 shows that the p-value is 0.345, which means that it is higher than the level of risk or characteristic (0.05). The latter means that we can say with 95% certainty, or a 5% risk level, that employees with less formal education did not find it more difficult to adapt to working from home than employees with more formal education.

Table 15: Pearson's chi-square

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,280	4	0,684
Likelihood Ratio	2,448	4	0,654
Linear-by-linear Association	0,061	1	0,805
N of Valid Cases	131		

Based on frequencies, response rates, and the Pearson chi-square test, we failed to prove the difference that employees with lower formal education had a harder time adapting to working from home than employees with higher formal education. The third hypothesis is rejected.

Testing H4: *Women found it more difficult than men to balance their work and private life when working from home.*

For the fourth hypothesis, we wanted to know whether women found it more difficult than men to balance their working lives when working from home. Table 16 shows that 14 men and 117 women answered this question. The arithmetic mean of agreement with the statement is 2.79 for men and 2.47 for women. For men, it is close to agreeing with level 3 - neither agree nor disagree, while for women, it is closer to agreeing with statement 2 - disagree.

Table 16: Work-life balance by gender

	Gender	Frequency	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Fifference
I find it difficult to separate work and personal life.	Male	14	1	5	2,79	1,188	0,318
	Female	117	1	5	2,47	1,297	0,120

The one-sample t-test in Table 17 tested whether, on average, women are less likely than men to agree with the statement that it is difficult to separate work and private life, with a p-value of > 0.05 , indicating that the answers differ statistically. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis that women find it more difficult than men to balance their work and private lives when working from home.

Table 17: T-test for one sample

	T-test					
	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	95-% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
I find it difficult to separate work and personal life.	0,868	129	,387	0,316	-,404	1,035
	0,930	16,932	,366	0,316	-,401	1,032

Using statistical parameter calculations and a one-sample t-test, we could not prove the difference that women found it more difficult than men to balance their work and private life when working from home. This result is also attributed to the fact that only 14 men and 117 women participated in the survey.

Testing H5: *When working from home, employees missed communication between colleagues.*

Table 18 shows that 14 respondents (10.3%) do not agree at all with the statement that they missed communication between colleagues when working from home, 10 respondents (7.4%) disagree, 33 respondents (24.3%) neither agree nor disagree, 48 respondents (35.3%) agree, and 26 respondents (19.1%) strongly agree that they missed communication between colleagues when working from home.

Table 18: Communication between colleagues when working from home

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Communication between colleagues when working from home	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I do not agree at all	14	10,3	10,7	10,7
I disagree	10	7,4	7,6	18,3
I neither agree nor disagree	33	24,3	25,2	43,5
I agree	48	35,3	36,6	80,2
I strongly agree	26	19,1	19,8	100,0
Total	131	96,3	100,0	

Based on the frequencies and proportions of the responses, we find that more than half (54.4%) of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they miss communication between colleagues when working from home. Hypothesis 5 is confirmed.

Testing H6: *When working from home, employees were more motivated to work than in the office.*

To test the sixth hypothesis, we considered the statement, “I am more motivated when working from home.” Table 19 shows that 25 respondents (18.4%) disagree that they are more motivated when working from home, 29 respondents (21.3%) neither agree nor disagree, and 77 respondents (56.7%) agree or strongly agree that they are more motivated when working from home.

Table 19: Motivation when working from home

Motivation when working from home	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I do not agree at all	8	5,9	6,1	6,1
I disagree	17	12,5	13,0	19,1
I neither agree nor disagree	29	21,3	22,1	41,2
I agree	50	36,8	38,2	79,4
I strongly agree	27	19,9	20,6	100,0
Total	131	96,3	100,0	

By calculating all frequencies of responses, we concluded that the respondents mostly agree with the statement that they are more motivated when working from home, as the frequency of agreement with the statement was higher than the frequency of disagreement. Therefore, we confirm our hypothesis: "When working from home, employees were more motivated to work than in the office".

Testing H7: *The employer has provided the majority of employees with appropriate IT equipment to perform work from home.*

When testing the seventh hypothesis, we were interested in whether the employer provided most employees with appropriate IT equipment for performing work from home. Calculations of all frequencies and percentages of responses are presented in Table 20. 11.8% of respondents do not agree at all, 7.4% disagree that their employer provided them with adequate IT equipment, 8.8% neither agree nor disagree, 29.4% agree, and 41.9% strongly agree that their employer provided them with adequate IT equipment.

Table 20: Suitable IT equipment for performing work from home

Suitable IT equipment for performing work from home	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I do not agree at all	16	11,8	11,9	11,9
I disagree	10	7,4	7,4	19,3
I neither agree nor disagree	12	8,8	8,9	28,1
I agree	40	29,4	29,6	57,8
I strongly agree	57	41,9	42,2	100,0
Total	135	99,3	100,0	

The respondents overwhelmingly (71.3%) strongly agree that their employer provided adequate IT equipment. We confirm our hypothesis: "The employer provided most employees with adequate IT equipment for working from home."

Testing H8: *When working from home, most employees had adequate workplaces.*

The eighth hypothesis hypothesized, "When working from home, most employees had appropriate workplaces." Of the 135 respondents, 54 (39.7%) strongly agree, and 50 (36.8) agree they have suitable workplaces for working from home. 10 respondents (7.4%) neither agree nor disagree, 15 respondents (11%) disagree, and six respondents (4.4%) do not agree at all that they had adequate workplaces at home.

Table 21: Appropriate workplaces for working from home

Appropriate workplaces for working from home	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I do not agree at all	6	4,4	4,4	4,4
I disagree	15	11,0	11,1	15,6
I neither agree nor disagree	10	7,4	7,4	23,0
I agree	50	36,8	37,0	60,0
I strongly agree	54	39,7	40,0	100,0
Total	135	99,3	100,0	

Based on the frequencies and the proportions of the responses, we concluded that 76.5% of the respondents agree or completely agree that they have adequate workplaces for working from home. Based on this, we can confirm our hypothesis "When working at home, most employees had appropriate workplaces."

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Testing H9: *When working from home, communication with the superior was smooth.*

The last hypothesis we set is, “When working from home, communication with the superior was smooth.” Table 22 shows that three respondents (2.2%) do not agree at all with the statement that communication with the superior was smooth when working from home, five respondents (3.7%) disagree, 24 respondents (17.6%) neither agree nor disagree, 55 respondents (40.4%) agree and 44 respondents (32.4%) strongly agree that communication with the superior was smooth when working from home.

Table 22: Communication with the superior when working from home

Communication with the superior when working from home	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I do not agree at all	3	2,2	2,3	2,3
I disagree	5	3,7	3,8	6,1
I neither agree nor disagree	24	17,6	18,3	24,4
I agree	55	40,4	42,0	66,4
I strongly agree	44	32,4	33,6	100,0
Total	131	96,3	100,0	

Based on the frequencies and proportions of the responses, more than half (72.8%) of the respondents agree or strongly agree that communication with their supervisor was smooth when working at home. The last hypothesis is confirmed.

CONCLUSIONS

The trends towards the gradual introduction of flexible forms of work, with home-from-work being one of the key forms, received an additional "kick in the pants" with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the topic is receiving increasing attention (Blatnik in Hočevar, 2020). According to the experience of companies, working from home has many advantages, most notably employee satisfaction and, thus, increased productivity. However, it is not suitable for everyone or every job (Bandur, 2014).

This article discusses more broadly the work-from-home of public administration employees during the COVID-19 epidemic. We have explored the advantages, disadvantages and opportunities that this form of work offers. The survey was conducted among public administration employees, with 136 respondents completing the questionnaire in full.

The respondents mostly agreed that they find it easier to balance their private and professional life, but above all, they see the advantage in spending less time on the road. They thus expressed great satisfaction regarding more flexibility that working from home allows them. Also, they estimate that working from home is less stressful and that there are fewer distracting factors because no co-workers are present. As Tavares (2015) notes in his research, those who work from home tend to be more productive than their counterparts in traditional offices because they are subject to fewer interruptions and disruptions and thus make better use of their working time.

The respondents largely agreed that the employer properly organized their work from home, that communication and cooperation with the superior took place without problems, and that it was done in several ways (electronically, by phone, and via video conferencing). They agreed that the employer provided them with appropriate IT equipment, and most respondents agreed that they had appropriate working conditions at home and that the amount and quality of work done at home was comparable to working in an office.

When it comes to possible disadvantages of working from home, the majority of the respondents agreed with the claim that they miss communication between colleagues. The respondents also perceive less sense of belonging and connectedness and less mentoring and exchange of opinions and experiences. Although, as Dermol (2010) states, mentoring is one method of on-the-job training, it can be replaced by using instructions and discussion via videoconferencing.

Among the disadvantages of working at home, less than a quarter are bothered by the presence of family members and inadequate working conditions. At the same time, a few agree with the statement that their time is less well organized. If work permits, working from home can help adapt the working hours to improve work, family and social life. This has made the boundaries between working and non-working hours flexible and adaptable to different needs, such as study time, family or private pursuits. Working from home can be a tool for deciding on working hours and adapting to the employee's needs and the employer's requirements (Tavares, 2015).

Organizations must be aware that quality communication is even more important when working from home due to less frequent physical contact and the inability to "read" non-verbal communication. This will require striking a balance between, on the one hand, constant connectedness, pressures on performance and maximizing economic value, and, on the other hand, people, their mental and physical health, job security and building long-term relationships with colleagues and organizations (Aleksić and Černe, 2022).

Despite possible concerns, however, we believe that working from home, with its positive characteristics and consequences, has a future in the global market and public administration. Higher work efficiency, the possibility of integrating less employable groups of the population, lower costs, lower gender differences in the labor market, lower racial intolerance, and easier coordination of work and family are only some of the positive aspects of remote work (Rogina, 2006).

The survey results suggest that those who work from home find it easier to balance their work and private life. Working from home allows them more flexibility, and they find it less stressful. For the most part, the employer properly organized the work from home and provided them with appropriate IT equipment. The employees consider that communication and cooperation with their supervisor were good in several ways (electronic, telephone, and video conferencing). What the respondents miss most about working from home is social contact and communication between colleagues. Some also perceive less sense of belonging and connection and miss exchanging opinions and experiences.

Trust between the employee and the superior plays a key role when working from home. If the superior trusts the employee, the latter will be able to do the job well. Superiors can establish the manner and frequency of communication and set clear instructions to the employee regarding hours worked, availability and meetings. However, it is important for

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employees to organize their time properly and to be able to focus on their work, despite the breaks they take.

Given that work from home in public administration was ordered overnight, there were quite a few challenges in all areas of public administration. Overnight, information systems had to be changed, computer applications updated and digital competences taught to employees. Many have not had the opportunity to prepare for the changes, so there are still some challenges in this area lying ahead. In any case, digital competences, work organization and communication skills will benefit employees and employers, even if the work in public administration returns to the way it was.

The most optimal combination of work is work from home and work at the physical location of organizations. This increases job satisfaction and performance while reducing the chance of burnout. The latter can often result from isolation or too much autonomy when working remotely. On the other hand, work in the office is sometimes too controlled by superiors (Lamovšek et al., 2020).

Combining home- and office-based work will increase social contact, employees will not miss communication between colleagues, and there will be a greater sense of belonging and connectedness. During the mentoring period, the employee should work at the employer's premises. Leaders should also convene in-person meetings, in combination with video conferencing, to ensure more exchange of views and experience.

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