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THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE PROFILES AND WORK HABITS ON TELEWORKING

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Abstract: *A review of existing specialized literature reveals that several aspects of teleworking remain underexplored, emphasizing the need for further research to enhance our understanding of its effects and implications in this continuously evolving work model. Additionally, ongoing studies are essential to making meaningful contributions and developing improved practices and policies for the future. Notably, research on remote work often lacks detailed insights into employees' work habits, raising questions about how professional activities are distributed throughout the workday and identifying periods of peak productivity or inactivity.*

This study aims to analyze the work habits of remote employees by examining their interactions with computers.

Keywords: *employee habits, telecommuting, remote work performance, employee monitoring, data analytics, telecommuting motivation, software development.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The sudden transition to remote work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has understandably led to the emergence of a significant number of studies focused on telecommuting, employing various scientific approaches and perspectives (such as medicine, economics and management, psychology and sociology of work, human resources, and ergonomics).

A review of the specialized literature concerning the phenomenon referred to as telework highlights both positive and negative aspects. Teleworking presents numerous advantages and disadvantages at both organizational and individual levels [1]. Certain studies emphasize the beneficial effects of remote work, whereas others focus on its detrimental impacts. The examination of employee exodus from corporate headquarters instigated by the COVID-19 pandemic proves to be a matter characterized by both divergent opinions and contradictory findings.

In alignment with this trend, the authors [2] contend that pandemic-induced remote work has presented both advantages and challenges for organizations, as businesses are now able to attract and retain talented employees from across the globe.

The ongoing digital technological revolution is significantly transforming the nature of employment in two distinct ways. Primarily, it facilitates the spatial segregation of offices in manners that allow for the execution of work-related tasks remotely, tasks which were traditionally performed by workers in close proximity to one another. This trend, identified as telecommuting, has been facilitated by advancements in software suites, video conferencing applications, and the secure, cloud-based sharing and editing of documents. Secondly, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) have enabled the automation of various tasks within the service sector, allowing software robots to automate positions previously performed by office workers and professionals [3].

A report published by the World Bank Group in May 2020, titled *When Face-to-Face Interactions Become an Occupational Hazard*, highlights that only certain types of jobs, such as those in education, science and technology, and professional services, can be effectively performed through telework. In contrast, roles in healthcare, social assistance, food services, construction, and retail require direct human interaction and cannot be easily adapted to remote work [4].

One challenge associated with teleworking is *telepressure*, which affects employees' efficiency. [5] explored how telepressure, a psychological factor, impacts the relationship between remote work and work-life conflict. Defined as the perceived obligation to respond immediately to work-related messages via digital communication tools, telepressure has intensified due to the rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICT). This has led to what is known as *hyperavailability syndrome*, where remote workers feel compelled to respond to electronic communications in real time, regardless of urgency. This phenomenon may help explain the mixed findings regarding the effects of teleworking, particularly its negative aspects [5].

Certain researchers anticipate that the prevalence of remote work within specific industries will remain elevated even after the COVID-19 pandemic is brought under control [6]. Certain scholars anticipate that telework and other alternative work arrangements may constitute a "new normal," characterized by the increased prevalence and acceptance of remote work by both employees and employers [7].

For businesses operating across multiple countries and time zones, remote work is essential for ensuring the seamless execution of functions such as marketing, finance, and supply chain management. A review of specialized literature suggests that pandemic-driven remote work differs from pre-pandemic telework in being unplanned, abrupt, and implemented on a massive scale [2].

Despite the extensive research on teleworking, its impact on employees' professional and personal lives remains a subject of debate, with findings often inconsistent or contradictory [8].

The acquisition of a more comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction through teleworking is anticipated to be more crucial than ever, given that teleworking appears to have become a permanent fixture in our lives beyond the pandemic period. [9].

This study aims to provide insights into the concept of teleworking, offering arguments that assist organizations and leaders in mitigating its potential negative effects. The research seeks to introduce new elements to optimize the workday for remote employees.

2. PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL, SAMPLE AND STUDY SETTING

This study represents natural progression from the research disseminated in the article "Workforce Analytics in Teleworking" [10], published in the journal IEEE Access. It introduces the novelty of extending the employee monitoring period, developing a proprietary application for data recording, and identifying performance indicators as well as employee profiling metrics for participants in the study.

The stages of this research have been represented in a conceptual model (Figure 1), which illustrates the trajectory of the data from collection to the formulation of conclusions and the identification of emerging limitations. The model was implemented within a real-world scenario at an IT company (referred to in the study as "G-telework") where employees engage in telecommuting activities. The generation of knowledge for the study was achieved by recording data from employees' interaction with computers. The documentation of the employees' daily activities, who were participants in the study, was undertaken utilizing a keylogger tool. This tool, being a software application, systematically records any interactions between the user and the computer. The documented data was preserved within a NoSQL database. Subsequent to the initial procedures, the data was exported in JSON

(JavaScript Object Notation) format and subsequently imported into a MySQL database for processing using an application developed in Java. The data processing application is responsible for exporting files that are in the Extensible Markup Language (XML) format. These files are essential to the phase of data analysis and interpretation.

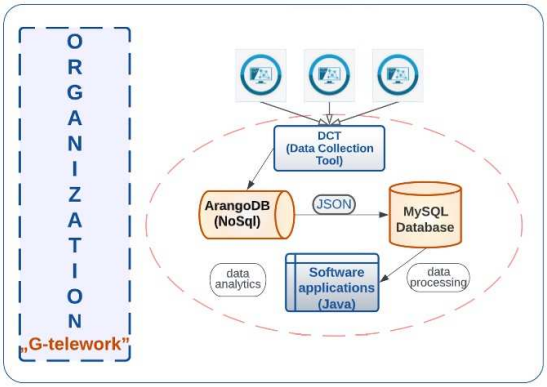


Fig. 1. Proposed research model

The development of the sample adhered to a meticulous protocol, wherein all details pertaining to the participant sample were delineated, ethical considerations were deliberated and resolved, and the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' personal data were assured. Additionally, technical specifications and compliance guidelines were delineated, the commencement date for data recording by participants was set, deadlines for periodic evaluations were specified, and other administrative details were addressed.

The company "G-telework," in which the study was conducted, is devoted to the development and implementation of integrated software. Although the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly decreased, employees of the company continue to prefer remote work, utilizing electronic platforms and specific communication methods with colleagues and superiors. The administration, conversely, acknowledges that the reversion to the conventional office work setting will not proceed without complexity. The sample consists of six employees, including four senior software developers and two software consultants. The individuals selected for participation have accumulated a minimum of five years of professional experience within the organization. In selecting participants for the study, we evaluated the degree to which individuals engage with computers for executing work-related tasks, with particular emphasis on their willingness to participate in the research. (Table 1). An exceedingly significant aspect to consider is that the task of "persuading" employees to become participants in the study was not an easy one. This difficulty stemmed from the method of data collection. However, the transparency of the process, the unobstructed access to all matters concerning data collection, and the trust conferred ultimately facilitated the successful completion of the research.

Table 1

Data for research

Employee Identification Code	Total days recorded	Count of recorded events	Role within the organization
E1	72	4925204	software consultant
E2	79	13439142	software developer
E3	28	1471473	software developer
E4	92	9500191	software developer
E5	51	4629241	software developer
E6	90	3996883	software consultant
Total	412	37962134	

Efforts were made to ensure the collection of high-quality, coherent data to enable thorough analysis and credible conclusions. Data protection and privacy were prioritized, with formal agreements outlining the purpose, context, and consent for data usage, processing, and retention. Participation was voluntary, and study results were reported in aggregate form [11].

The keylogger application used for data collection was tested alongside the InputLog application, a keystroke logging software (KSL) that records user input, timestamps, and generates XML-based IDFX files detailing keystrokes, mouse movements, and application usage [12].

The application recorded precise timestamps, capturing keystrokes, mouse activity, and

window transitions. Each saved XML file represents a full workday. Data collection spanned approximately six months, from September 6, 2021, to February 28, 2022. After verifying the recorded data and eliminating inconsistencies, the final dataset comprised 412 recorded workdays across all study participants. Data processing was carried out using a Java-based application developed during the pilot phase of the research [10]. The processing application is responsible for importing, organizing, processing, saving, and storing raw data in an SQL database. This data processing enables the generation of scenarios and reports essential for analysis.

The procedures employed in the processing application to format data for analysis, as detailed in the study by [13], are as follows:

- Each study participant's recorded data was imported daily. Work records include events such as mouse clicks and movements, focus changes, and details like key presses, mouse coordinates, and open window titles. Each event is timestamped with precise date and time information, stored in Unix time or Unix timestamp format, representing the number of seconds elapsed since midnight (UTC/GMT) on January 1, 1970, for both start and end points.
- For focus-type events, the active duration of a window is calculated and recorded. This calculation occurs during data import and represents the difference between the timestamps of two consecutive focus events.
- The application associates a specific activity type with each focus-type event, work, documentation, or recreation, based on keywords stored in the database. Operators can refine keyword identification until they achieve the desired accuracy. These keywords are stored for future processing, allowing the application to "learn" to classify focus-type events into one of the three categories. After importing a relatively small number of files, over 60%-70% of events were identified without operator intervention. Keywords were extracted from participant recordings using the VOSviewer map-creation tool [14].
- Another key step in data processing is identifying and labeling break periods. Any interval of at least five minutes between consecutive events (focus, mouse, keyboard) is classified as a break. These intervals are marked and subtracted from the total focus-type event duration.
- Based on focus-type event durations, the application provides insights into daily work time, categorized by activity type and time intervals. Keyboard and mouse events are also analyzed over time intervals to assess the distribution of work activities throughout the day.
- Arithmetic means were calculated for each employee/week. These metrics include the average total recorded duration, number and duration of breaks, number of open windows, mouse events (clicks and movements), keystrokes, work start and end times, context switch duration (in milliseconds), actual work duration, documentation duration, recreation duration, and unallocated time.

Processing the collected raw data provides a comprehensive view of workdays, including interruptions, break frequency and duration, time spent on documentation, leisure activities on the computer, and actual working time. Additionally, the application identifies the most frequently used work tools and the number of context switches within predefined time intervals (day/hours).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data visualization and correlation analysis were performed utilizing statistical software applications such as Minitab, IBM SPSS, and Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office) for analysis and interpretation.

For the first two variables, average actual working time (measured in hours) and the type of home from which employees work, the Independent Samples T-Test was applied, as one was a discrete variable with two categories. The home type variable included "apartment" and "house," while the continuous variable represented the average effective work duration. Levene’s test was used to assess the homogeneity of variances, yielding a value of 0.037, which is less than 0.05. As a result,

variance equality was not assumed, and the second row of the test results was considered, where the significance level (Sig) was 0.049, also below 0.05. The t-test value was -2.02, exceeding 1.96 in absolute value. Consequently, the difference between participants living in apartments and those living in houses was statistically significant.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between home type (apartment or house) and average actual working time (excluding breaks), calculated based on open window titles and keywords. The data suggests that employees residing in houses worked nearly an hour longer than those in apartments. Specifically, employees working from apartments averaged 3.7535 hours of actual work, while those in houses averaged 4.3060 hours. Additionally, actual working time varied more among employees living in houses. This trend may be explained by the likelihood that house residents have dedicated workspaces with fewer distractions, enabling them to work more flexibly, even outside standard hours, despite the presence of family members who might otherwise cause interruptions.

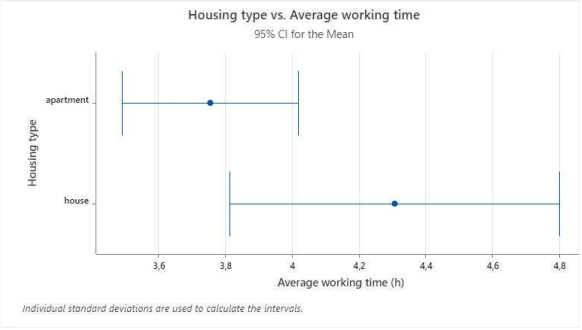


Fig 2. Housing type - Average effective working time

For the next two analyzed variables—working alone in the office and average recess duration (measured in hours)—the Independent Samples T-Test was again applied, given the combination of a discrete and a continuous variable. Since the Levene's test significance value (Sig) was less than 0.05, variance equality was not assumed, and the second row of the test results was considered. The significance level (Sig) was also below 0.05, and the t-value in absolute terms was greater than 1.96, specifically -2.634. This indicates a significant difference between the two groups.

As shown in Figure 3, study participants who worked alone in the office (categorized as "Alone in the office: no, yes") spent, on average, fewer hours on recreation via the PC compared to those who had to share their workspace at home with family members. Those working in shared spaces recorded an average of approximately 0.637 hours of recreation time. A possible explanation for this trend is that employees working alone in the office may prefer to clearly separate professional tasks from leisure activities, limiting recreational computer use during work hours.

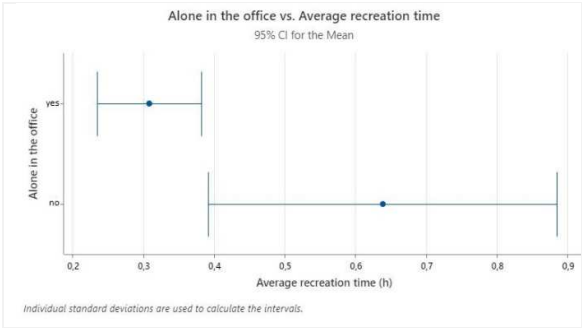


Fig 3. Alone in the office - Medium duration recreation

The next two variables analyzed, working alone in the office (a discrete variable) and average actual work duration (a continuous variable), were further examined using the Independent Samples T-Test. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances produced a significance level (sig) of 0.055, which is slightly above 0.05. Given this result, we assume the equality of variances and refer to the first row of the test results. Here, the t-value is 3.35, exceeding the critical threshold of 1.96, and the significance level (sig) is 0.001, which is well below 0.05. This confirms that the difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

Another key observation is that employees who share their office space with family members tend to have a more narrowly distributed range of actual work duration compared to those who work alone. Furthermore, employees who do not share their

office have an average actual work time approximately one hour longer per day than those who do. Specifically, employees working in a private office recorded an average of 4.32 hours of actual work per day, whereas those sharing their workspace averaged 3.50 hours per day. A possible explanation for this difference could be environmental distractions, including interactions with others, casual conversations, or extended breaks, such as time spent at designated smoking areas. (Figure 4)

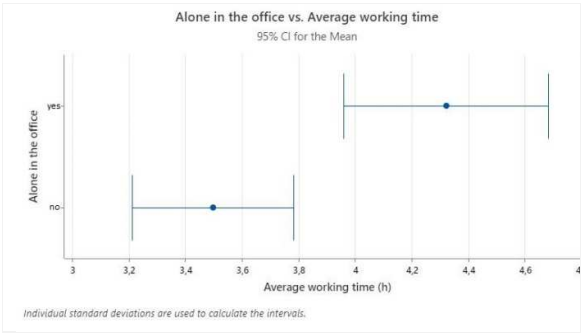


Fig. 4. Alone in the office - Average effective working time

To analyze the relationship between the number of family members and average actual work duration, both continuous variables, a correlation test was conducted using IBM SPSS. The Pearson correlation significance level (sig) was 0.083, which is slightly above the 0.05 threshold. Given the relatively small sample size, this marginal value allows for the correlation to be considered, albeit with a minor error, and suggests that the relationship between the two variables is positive.

Examining Figure 5, we observe that as the number of household members increases, so does the number of hours actually worked. Conversely, employees who live alone or with fewer people tend to maintain a more structured work routine, leading to greater uniformity in actual working hours. One possible explanation is that in households with more family members, there is a higher likelihood of domestic responsibilities and interruptions, which may extend the total work duration as employees compensate for lost time.

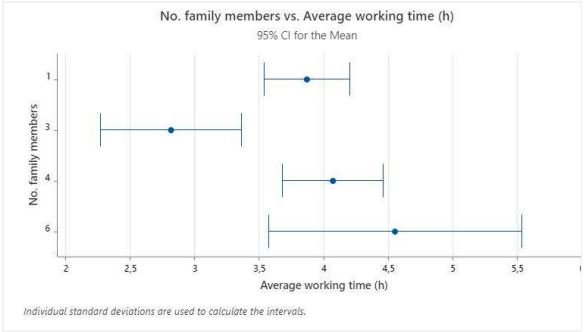


Fig 5. Number of family members - Average effective working time

For the variables children under 18 years old and average recreation duration, an Independent Samples T-Test was conducted. Since the Levene's test significance (sig) was less than 0.05, we did not assume equal variances and referred to the second line of the test results. The significance value (sig = 0.068) suggests a noteworthy relationship between the two variables. Although this value is not below the conventional 0.05 threshold, it is still considered relevant due to the small sample size and limited number of observations, a practice acknowledged in statistical literature ([15]; [16]).

As illustrated in Figure 6, a correlation was observed between employees with children under 18 and their average recreation time using a computer. Employees with children recorded less recreation time on the computer, averaging 0.3324 hours, whereas employees without children had an average of 0.5208 hours. This suggests that individuals with children tend to prioritize spending their non-working time with their children rather than engaging in computer-based recreational activities.

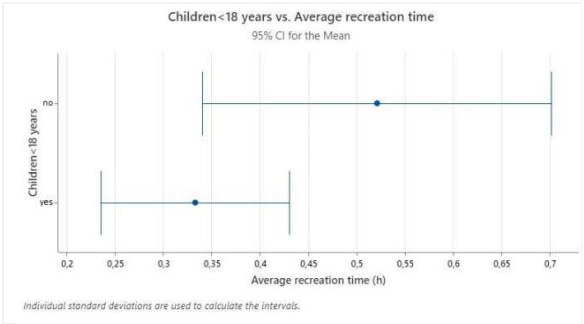
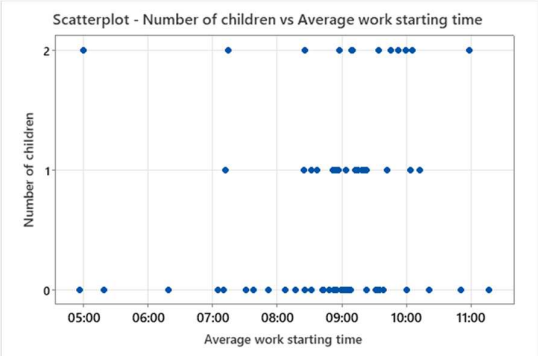


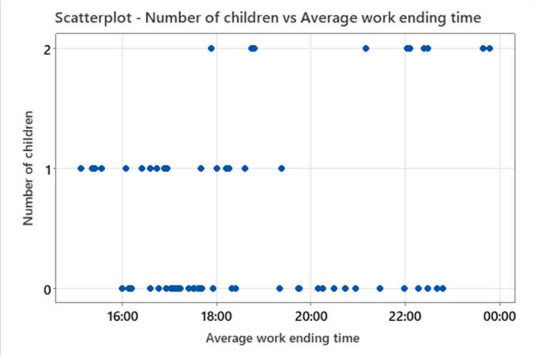
Fig. 6. Children <18 years old - Medium duration recreation

Regarding the work schedules of the study participants, significant correlations were identified with both the number of children and the presence of other teleworking individuals in the same household. As illustrated in Figures 7(a) and 7(b), employees without children tend to have relatively consistent start and end times, typically beginning work at 09:00 and finishing between 16:00 and 18:00.

However, for employees with one or two children, there is greater variability in both start and stop times, particularly in the end time. This pattern likely reflects the need to adjust their work schedule to accommodate their children's school hours, extracurricular activities, or medical appointments. Similar challenges in balancing work and personal life among teleworking parents have also been reported in the literature [1].



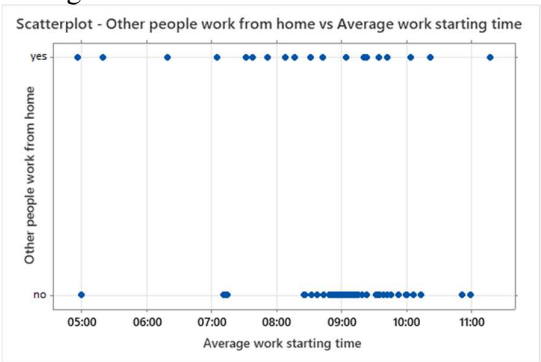
(a)



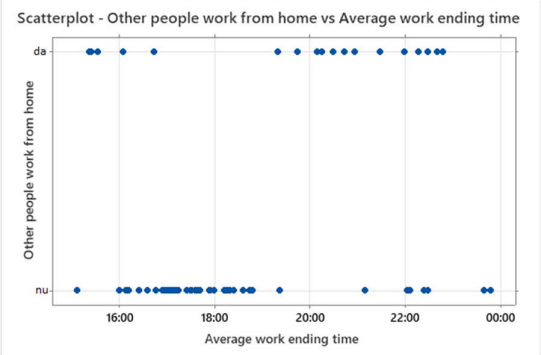
(b)

Fig 7. No. of children – Working hours

In line with the previously identified correlations, employees who do not share their household with others working remotely ("Do other people work from home?": No, Yes) tend to have more consistent start and end times for their work schedules, as shown in Figures 8(a) and 8(b). Conversely, employees who live with others also engaged in telework exhibit greater variability in their working hours. They may start their workday as early as 5:00 AM and finish as late as midnight, indicating a less structured work routine compared to those working alone.



(a)



(b)

Fig. 8. Other people work from home – Working hours

To analyze the relationship between happiness level and average context change frequency (how often an employee switches between windows), we conducted a One-Way ANOVA using IBM SPSS.

First, we tested the homogeneity of variances using the Levene Test, which returned a Sig. value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). As a result, we did not assume equality of variances and proceeded with the Tamhane T2 test. The F-Sig value was 0.002, indicating significant differences in context-switching frequency based on employees' self-perceived happiness levels.

Findings suggest that happier employees tend to switch between windows more frequently

throughout the week, registering higher context-change values compared to those with lower happiness levels (Figure 9).

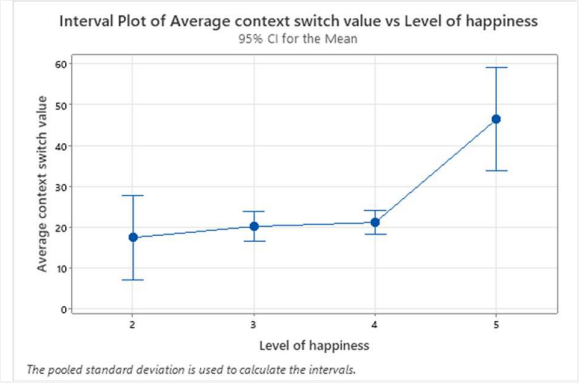


Fig 9. Employee happiness level – Average value change context

4. CONCLUSIONS

Assessing employee satisfaction, motivation, performance, and engagement presents challenges even in traditional office settings under direct supervision. These difficulties are further amplified in telework environments, where employees operate remotely without direct managerial oversight.

The framework and tools introduced in this study offer a structured approach for monitoring and evaluating remote employee performance. Their effectiveness was tested over an extended period within a company specializing in economic-financial software development.

The research provided substantial insights into telework. Findings revealed several correlations between employee profiles and telework behaviors:

- Employees living in houses tend to work longer hours than those in apartments.
- Individuals working alone in a dedicated home office spend less leisure time on computers and work more than those sharing a workspace.
- Employees from larger households exhibit greater variability in their actual working hours than those from smaller families.
- Having other remote workers in the same household, as well as the presence of children, significantly impacts employees' work schedules.
- Employees with children under 18 tend to have less recreational screen time compared to those without children.
- Happiness levels influence context-switching behavior, with happier employees exhibiting more frequent window changes during work.

These findings highlight the importance of aligning self-perception with managerial evaluations to ensure accurate performance assessments.

Analysis of telework activity data provided insights into the most productive times of the day, periods with higher inactivity levels, peak recreational computer usage and moments when employees engage in documentation and learning activities.

Recognizing and proactively addressing telework challenges should be a priority for supervisors.

Research highlights the need for organizational policies that support remote work arrangements while ensuring fairness in promotion, career advancement, and work conditions [8].

Organizations could design and offer training programs to support employees who opt for teleworking. Such training programs should not only cover the technical aspects of teleworking, but also the health and safety and well-being of employees at home. [1].

Management can mitigate remote work drawbacks by offering:

- Guidance on task management;
- Support in workload distribution;
- Time-off policies and encouragement for social interactions;
- Employee psychological well-being plays a crucial role in overall job performance [17].

A primary limitation of this study was the small sample size, only six employees participated. Recruitment for the study proved challenging, and participation required strong justification. However, the originality of the data collection, recording ~37 million events over a six-month period (412 monitored days), ensures consistency and credibility in the research findings.

While survey-based studies typically gather data from hundreds of participants [11, 18 – 19, 20 - 21], studies requiring extensive behavioral data collection often have fewer participants.

- [22] conducted research based on 5 million IDI events.
- [23] studied six developers' interactions with Integrated Development Environments (IDEs).
- [24] recruited 20 participants, but their study lasted only two weeks.

This study observed IT specialists and consultants in their real-world work environments rather than an experimental setup, aligning with previous telework research. As literature suggests, many teleworking studies use non-experimental designs, limiting causal conclusions. Additionally, it is possible that only high-performing, highly trusted employees are given the opportunity to telework, which could influence productivity outcomes.

By implementing structured evaluation frameworks, organizational support systems, and proactive managerial strategies, companies can enhance remote work efficiency while fostering employee well-being and performance in telework settings.

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Impactul profilului și obiceiurilor de lucru ale angajaților asupra telemuncii

O revizuire a literaturii de specialitate existente arată că există încă multe aspecte ale telemuncii care necesită cercetare suplimentară pentru a înțelege mai bine impactul și implicațiile acestei modalități de lucru în continuă evoluție, dar și pentru a aduce contribuții semnificative și pentru a dezvolta practici și politici mai bune pentru viitor. Așadar în inspectarea cercetărilor despre munca desfășurată de acasă nu se regăsesc aspecte concrete despre obiceiurile angajaților, astfel apar întrebări și curiozități despre distribuirea activităților profesionale pe durata unei zile de lucru, despre perioadele din zi în care angajații sunt mai productivi sau sunt inactivi.
Scopul prezentului studiu este de a analiza obiceiurile angajaților care lucrează la distanță pe baza interacțiunii lor cu computerul.

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