

# **The Emergence of Alternative Workspaces in Redefining the Future of Work: A Qualitative Study**

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International Management

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Angelika Leiler

61901033

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## **Affidavit**

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to acknowledge the rapid change in the nature of work and how it affects workplace organizations. The SARS-Cov-2 pandemic has forced organizations to adapt to government mandated regulations in order to maintain a safe work environment for both employees and customers. A new form of work practice such as the hybrid model has introduced and adopted. A hybrid model refers to a work environment characterized by both a traditional office and remote work. The thesis aims to answer five research questions; what are the needs of workers in respect to their work environment, how important is it to satisfy workplace needs, what are the perceived attitudes that workers have towards workspace environment, how important are the concepts of productivity, flexibility and interactions when it comes to carrying out work, how do collaborative working-spaces impact the satisfaction of workers? The thesis investigates the future workplace by evaluating current workplace practices and workplace satisfaction and analyzing workplace trends from interview responses in order to recommend a workplace practice that should be implemented in order to maintain a level of workplace satisfaction. The thesis employs a qualitative research design and collects information by conducting semi-structured interviews with participants working in a variety of industries. The analysis shows a clear indication of what form of work employees would like to have implemented as well as what satisfaction means in the work environment. The research argues that while workers are happy to return to the office, they also expect to be given the flexibility and opportunity to implement a hybrid model whereby they are allowed to work remotely during the week while also being welcomed into the office. Additionally forms of remote work such coworking spaces and activity-based workspaces are alternatives that workers can use in order to stay productive and collaborative. Moreover, future research can be conducted following a quantitative framework in addition to perhaps focusing on one industry and collecting data from a larger population.

**Key words:** The future of work, hybrid model, workplace satisfaction, change in the nature of work, workplace trends

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# 1 Introduction

Over the past ten years, society has recognized and carefully observed how quickly the aspects of employment are changing. With the development of newer forms of contingent work, the desire to fulfill newly developed needs and wants of workers, as well as the catalytic effects of the coronavirus pandemic; the idea of workspace location has been called into question on how it will look like and whether or not workers are fully benefitting off of their current workspace set-up (Burke & Ng, 2006; Scully-Russ & Torraco, 2019). Indeed, there has been a wide range of literature published that explores and highlights the devastating effects of the coronavirus pandemic on society and the economy; the concept of third place workers and more importantly the availability of workspace alternatives. The combination of both tangible and intangible elements of third places build community, encourage collaboration, and provide accessibility in a social economy (Waters-Lynch *et al*, 2016). That is why it is imperative to understand if there should be a strong focus on transitioning to newer workspace alternatives in order to support workers in regard to the future of work (Burke & Ng, 2006). This thesis considers the field of workspace satisfaction as the main subject of its study, as the research problem has peaked a substantial interest of the author as well as other researchers.

The change in the composition of employment is a clear indicator that the organizational structure as well as the nature of work must adapt to these new forms of employment in order to fulfill the needs and wants of workers in order to maintain workspace satisfaction (Scully-Russ & Torraco, 2019). Similar contributions have been made by Oldenburg & Brissett (1982) which explore the idea that just like the normal workspace, home workspaces run on an extremely predictable and tiny world, and despite both spaces meeting the perceived important needs of individuals they seldom allow for diversity and newness. In recent years workspaces have been widely investigated in hopes of understanding workspace satisfaction and how alternative workspaces may offer potential solutions on combatting workspace dissatisfaction. Third spaces

have offered long-term solutions in terms of supporting newly developed needs and wants. Coworking spaces are an example of a popular ‘third place’ work alternative as well as activity-based workspaces.

The growing coworking phenomenon represents a newly discovered organizational form and can be viewed as an alternative work facility for professionals as well as an interaction mechanism where collaboration and networking occur among workers who come from various industry backgrounds and skillsets (Amir, 2020; Waters-Lynch *et al*, 2016). Over the last two decades we have seen workspace evolution take place in forms of coworking spaces and other third spaces and more remarkably the ways in which workers relate and interact with each other (Waters-Lynch & Potts, 2017).

We are currently experiencing a change in the nature of work that has also been exponentially accelerated by the ongoing SARS-Cov-2 pandemic (Pabollet *et al*, 2019). The pandemic has required employers to alter work practices by accommodating flexible work schedules, work habits and more importantly adapting to new work environments (Shaw *et al*, 2020). Despite its negative affect on society, COVID-19 has raised even more awareness on how influential work is on the health and wellbeing of individuals (Peters *et al*, 2022). The pandemic, to a large extent, has reshaped the future of work. Discussions on the structure of work have been accelerated to maintain economic activity, protect workers (Peters *et al*, 2022) and to provide clarity and consistency during an uncertain time.

The structural framework of this thesis introduces the research study and is followed by defining the core aims and the development four research questions. The literature review allows for an in-depth summary of peer-reviewed journal articles which have extensively researched the constructs of this research. Continuing on from the literature review, the research introduces the methodology on how data will be collected and analyzed. To bring the research together, and reflect on the final remarks a concise analysis, discussion on the limitations and final conclusions. This thesis will document several key

contributions made in the fields of workspace satisfaction as well as the future of work.

## **1.1 Core Aims And Developing Research Questions**

The extent of the current thesis research study will contribute to existing academic literature that focuses on the opportunities for future workspaces, identifying the perspectives that third place workers have towards workspace location, exploring the development of coworking spaces in a post pandemic world and determining the needs and wants of third place workers and if they are being satisfied. These aims will be answered by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the needs of workers in respect to workspace environment are?
  - a. How important is it to satisfy workplace needs?
2. How important are the concepts of productivity, flexibility, and interaction when it comes to carrying out work?
3. How do collaborative working-spaces impact the satisfaction of workers?

The findings of the conducted research are expected to demonstrate how essential it is to satisfy workspace needs and wants, stay ahead of workspace trends, and understand the attitudes toward workspace environment.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

#### **2.1.1 Motivator-Hygiene Theory**

Designed in 1959, Herzberg's two factor theory on job satisfaction and job motivation has divided both concepts into motivating and hygiene factors and has supported the complexity of understanding the feelings, needs and wants of employees. Herzberg's theory furthermore focuses on satisfiers, also referred to as motivators, and dissatisfiers, also referred to as hygiene factors (Alrawahi *et*

al, 2020). The basis of Herzberg's theory is derived and inspired from Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, however Herzberg used his idea of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and concluded that the hygiene factors cause short-term job satisfaction whereas the motivators tend to cause a long-term sense of job satisfaction (Haque *et al*, 2014).

Satisfiers (motivators) refer to the drivers of job satisfaction, which include responsibility, recognition, and achievement (Herzberg, 1966 as cited by Alrawahi *et al*, 2020). Dissatisfiers (hygiene factors) refer to the causes of job dissatisfaction, which include salaries, working conditions and colleague relationship (Herzberg, 1966 as cited by Alrawahi *et al*, 2020).

It is important to note that Herzberg's theory emphasizes on the idea that the two factors coexist in separate sequences, where employees can be satisfied and dissatisfied at the same time (Alrawahi *et al*, 2020) see figure 1 below.

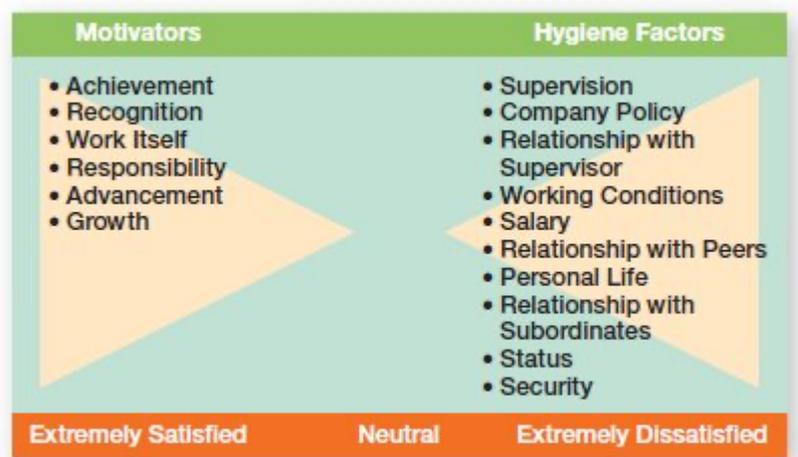


Figure 1 Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (Haque *et al*, 2014)

### 2.1.2 The Third Place

Third place theory refers to the concept of utilizing places outside the normal workspace and home and is characterized by a social framework (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). Moreover, it is a public place for the population to access and provides opportunities for social interaction. The continuous participation in third place environments, provide individuals with more social interactions and

the feeling of belonging compared to normal workspaces and evidently home spaces (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982).

## **2.2 Workplace Satisfaction**

The work environment contributes significantly to the satisfaction of workers, bad working conditions, can restrict workers on achieving their full potential, whereas good working conditions encourage productivity and moreover attain job satisfaction. This narrative has been successfully established as described by Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2014). By providing good working conditions, organizations increase the possibility of achieving efficiency, productivity, and more committed workers. Failing to understand the significance of a good working environment, leaves organizations with limited opportunities to innovate and retain workers.

### **2.2.1 Defining Workplace Satisfaction**

Workplace satisfaction refers to the feeling that employees have towards their role within an organization (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2014 as cited by Vroom, 1964). Satisfaction is an important element in the motivations of employees and is a catalyst for better work performance. While the pure definition of workplace satisfaction has been adopted and interpreted in different way, the most relevant definition, as explained by Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2014) as cited by Hoppok & Spiegler (1938), is the combination and integration of physiological, psychological, and environmental conditions, that fulfill the needs and wants of employees and lead to the satisfaction of one's job. It is important to take into consideration that the attributes of workplace satisfaction are completely subjective to each individual (Taheri *et al*, 2020).

Overall, organization can simply not afford to have dissatisfied workers as expectations set up by those in managerial positions certainly won't be met by employees. Providing a flexible and positive work environment, where employees feel valued and heard increases morale and reflects positively in the productivity of employees.

### **2.2.2 Work environment**

A working environment is made up of two important concepts, namely context and work. The work element consists of the characteristics of a job, ways in which tasks are carried out and job autonomy. The contextual element of the work environment refers to social and physical working conditions (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2014 as cited by Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000; Gazioglu & Tanselb, 2006). Exploring the contextual elements of the working environment include organizational structure, communication between employees, working hours, and relations with co-workers. The importance of a good working environment has been explored by Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2014) as cited by Spector (1997) who observed that most organizations pay limited attention to working environments which leads to a negative effect on job performance.

Newer working environments have grown more common in recent years, naturally accelerated by the ongoing SARS-Cov2 pandemic. Workplace satisfaction has been discussed and overtime has been developed in a wide range of literature including that of Lusa *et al* (2019). Lusa *et al* (2019) discuss that the satisfaction of employees greatly increased when working in either single-roomed or multi-spaced offices, and that those in medium to large open spaced offices were left with a feeling of dissatisfaction.

### **2.3 Workplace Transformation**

Over the last two decades we have seen how the organization of work has changed and developed. Factors such as globalization, technological advancements, demographics, and the change in worker attitudes (Burke & Ng, 2006) have raised awareness of the challenges, as well as issue of how organizations are managed (Burke & Ng, 2006). With newer generations representing the workforce of the future, organizations have observed a new set of demands, expectations, and work habits which employers have to meet in order to maintain workplace satisfaction and keep workers motivated.

Technological advancements have changed how work is carried out, which affects organizations directly. More importantly this kind of advancement has changed from where work is carried out. Fortunately, workers are now able to either work from home, telecommute, and/or meet online (Burke & Ng, 2006 as cited by Ware, 2005b). Collectively, studies have shown that the average knowledge worker spends thirty percent of their work week doing home office, forty percent in office and the remaining thirty percent in third places (Burke & Ng, 2006 as cited by Ware, 2005b). Digital tools used in the workplace have evolved from simple office applications to online platforms (Baptista *et al*, 2020 as cited by Leonardi *et al*, 2013). Despite academic research conceptualizing the effects of new technologies within an organization recently, the new generation joining the workforce have already anticipated and adapted to implementing new digital platforms and tools to carry out work (Baptista *et al*, 2020). Drawing more on the concept of technological advancements, we can see that such developments further reinforce, evolve, and enhance existing work practices (Baptista *et al*, 2020 as cited by Bartunek & Moch 1987).

In addition to the shift in the nature of work, the expectations and values of workers has also changed (Burke & Cooper, 2006). Many industries have evolved into knowledge-based work meaning that employees are in a constant cycle of learning and bettering their skills and improving their knowledge (Burke & Copper, 2006). Moreover, employees have realized the need to work collaboratively with others, as well as the need for creativity and innovation (Burke & Cooper, 2006).

### **2.3.1 Coronavirus Pandemic Impact On The Nature Of Work**

The SARS-Cov-2 pandemic has accelerated the change in workplace place trends by forcing organizations to adapt to government mandated restrictions. Declared as a global health emergency crisis by the World Health Organizations (WHO) at the beginning of 2020, the SARS-Cov-2 has caused a surge of adjustments such as forcing many day-to-day operations to come to shut-down in order to combat the effects its high infection rate (AGBA *et al*, 2020 as cited

by Gua *et al*, 2020; WHO, 2020). The impact of the SARS-Cov-2 has necessitated the need to migrate from an in-person work environment to an online environment where the tools used for working are dependent on a steady Wi-Fi connection (AGBA *et al*, 2020).

Much like many industries dependent on in person interactions, the normal workplace has not been spared. This view is supported by Hamouche (2020), who reports that the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic has had numerous effects on the workplace such as a catalyst of psychological distress in the form of, social exclusion, job security, financial stress, and confinement. Moreover, the pandemic has introduced new workplace adjustments to perform tasks safely from home (AGBA *et al*, 2020). Generally speaking, workplace adjustments are put into place in order to retain workers who are committed and productive and enrich work performance. In respect to the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic, workplace adjustments include adopting a work-from-home and remote work policy, formerly implemented by the private sectors. It is fair to assume that such adjustments have had a revolutionary effect on the working economy and labor market. Moreover, flexible working patterns have been introduced where the change in working hours, work patterns, and location of work are some of the newly adopted strategies used to combat the pandemic.

### ***2.3.1.1 Work From Home (WFH) & Remote Working***

Work from home refers to the practice of carrying out your work tasks from outside the office and in your own home. The ongoing pandemic brings into focus the challenges and benefits of working from home (Aczel *et al*, 2021). The pandemic has not only exhibited organizational change but also provided the opportunity to analyze and research the implications of working from home. Before the pandemic adopting a work from home practice was a planned choice, this meant that organizations had ample time to prepare, and adapt to successfully integrate and support workers in order to maintain a work-life balance (Galanti *et al*, 2021). However, considering the effects of the pandemic, it has forced organizations to enforce this practice without providing workers the necessities for working remotely.

### *2.3.1.2 Social Distancing*

An additional measure taken by organizations to reduce the spread of the virus, is to implement social distancing which entails keeping a two-meter distance between yourself and another person. While this strategy has proven to maintain and regulate health safety within the workplace, further actions were taken such as adjusting working hours among workers by creating staggering work-shifts and depending on the industry official operating hours (AGBA *et al*, 2020).

## **2.4 Coworking Spaces**

In the absence of a normal workplace and alternative to the traditional office, coworking spaces are opening the gap between being hosts of basic business infrastructures and a hub of social interaction (Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2012; Water-Lynch *et al*, 2016). The concept of coworking spaces was first introduced by Brad Nueberg in 2005 as unique spaces that incorporate the elements of a traditional office (Amir, 2020, as cited in Bostman & Rogers, 2010; Waters-Lynch *et al*, 2016). After almost twenty years, the sharing economy has seen the continuous development of coworking spaces as well as how coworking spaces are defined (Amir, 2020). It is essential to understand what coworking spaces are and the benefits offered to the professionals that use them as well as to the economy. Coworking spaces at its simplest definition are shared workspaces or offices dedicated to professionals who are looking for a space to work and carry out their daily routine alongside other peers (Ansio *et al*, 2020; Gandini, 2015; Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016).

The growing coworking phenomenon represents a newly discovered organizational form, that provides solutions to the challenges faced by professionals who do independent work (Howell, 2022) and those who have moved away from the traditional and home office as well as other third places (Paje *et al*, 2020). Coworking spaces offer a common missing component, that being the relational aspect of work, experienced by the self-employed demographic and those that belong to the traditionally employed demographic (Brown, 2017; Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2012). By sharing a central

aim of creating a community as well as synergies between all users (Ansio *et al*, 2020), coworking spaces help to diminish the feeling of isolation, lack of productivity as well the issue of self-motivation that employed persons experience (Brown, 2017; Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2012).

Coworking spaces are characterized by the incorporation of traditional and home office aspects, and attributed by communal characteristics (Sundsted *et al*, 2009:8). The integration of both these characteristics offers a working community more flexibility, opportunities for networking and social interaction (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). Moreover, the community-climate and community building, outlined by Capdevila (2013) and Moriset (2014), interaction between users (Bilanzic & Froth, 2013) and co-presence of complementary professionals using the same shared space (Spinuzzi, 2012) are attributed to achieving a third way between aspects of self-employment and traditional employment.

Coworking spaces have developed to become localized spaces which facilitate knowledge-sharing, collaboration, where resources are opened to be shared and spontaneous interactions (Amir, 2020; Ansio *et al*, 2020). As well as providing an office-infrastructure to its users, coworking spaces moreover give users access to a community of networking where professionals can come together to co-create and build with each other but are also given the freedom to work autonomously (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016; Paje *et al*, 2020).

#### **2.4.1 Coworking Users**

Coworking spaces attract and bring together a mixed group of professionals, creating a diverse set of working attitudes and skills in a concentrated workspace (Howell, 2022). Due to the diverse set of professionals who use coworking spaces, the day-to-day network of users vary during the Monday to Friday work week (Ansio *et al*, 2020). Coworking spaces not only foster a variety of professionals but also those who come from a range of occupations, backgrounds, degrees of specialization and industries (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016; Gandini, 2015; Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Pohler, 2012; Spinuzzi, 2012).

This is beneficial to a coworking community because of the power of knowledge that can be shared from one individual to another.

Coworking users can be divided into two groups, namely those who are traditionally employed and those that are not. Nontraditionally employed persons are those that are independent, specifically those with entrepreneurial backgrounds and are in the early stages of entrepreneurship, self-employed and freelancers (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016; Gandini, 2015; Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Howell, 2022; Pohler, 2012; Spinuzzi, 2012; Waters-Lynch *et al*, 2016; Waters-Lynch & Potts, 2017; Zhao *et al*, 2020) . Overall, the occupational backgrounds of independent workers are found in the creative industry, such as the media sector (Clifton *et al*, 2022 as cited in Barley & Kunda, 2006). Instead of working in bureaucratic systems these ‘digital bohemians’ can exercise their flexible work life by utilising coworking spaces as hubs of creativity (Clifton *et al*, 2022).

It is important to note that coworking users extend beyond nontraditionally employed professionals but also professionals who are traditionally employed, and that understanding that all members of coworking spaces bring with a special set of skills and knowledge which can be shared among other coworkers. Traditionally employed professionals come from various business sizes, such as microbusinesses, medium and large sized organizations (Ansio *et al*, 2020; Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016; Brown, 2017). Traditionally employed professionals use coworking spaces as a result of the opportunity to work remotely or have the freedom to choose from where they want to work from or are members of start-ups (Clifton *et al*, 2022; Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Pohler, 2012).

#### **2.4.2 Perceived Benefits Of Coworking Spaces**

Although coworking spaces vary across each location, the combination of tangible and intangible elements build community, encourage collaboration, work towards sustainability, and provide accessibility in a social economy (Waters-Lynch *et al*, 2016). The main elements that are consistently attributed

to coworking spaces are open-planned offices accompanied by conference rooms, phone booths and private offices (Robelski *et al*, 2019). Additionally, there are also leisurely elements included in coworking spaces, such as cafes and restaurants, that allow users to psychologically differentiate between ‘work-mode’ and ‘relax-mode’ (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). These spaces give professionals the discretion to choose when and where to work, allowing them to manage where they spend their time doing certain tasks and activities (Paje *et al*, 2020).

Due to the diversity of users and objectives that coworking spaces have, the idea of coworking spaces goes beyond that of just creating a shared space, but ultimately creating a space to harness social interaction in the form of working alongside peers, seeking, and obtaining feedback and sharing ideas (Ansio *et al*, 2020; Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2012). The coworking business model suggests that the collaborative environment caters for the development of a social culture, that extends to the creation of an entrepreneurial hub, which further characterizes the concept of coworking spaces (Zhao *et al*, 2020). The attractiveness of the work environment exceeds beyond the desk, chair, and office, with amenities such as 24/7 access to the office space, gyms, office furnishings, restaurants, and cafes (Howell, 2022), coworking spaces accommodate the necessities that working professionals may need to balance their work life and well-being (Ansio *et al*, 2020).

Every coworking spaces varies from one space to another. The layout plays a key role in how strong or weak connections are between users. For example, a smaller coworking space is associated with a tight-knit community where users have strong connections with each other. On the other hand, larger coworking spaces offer more networking opportunities where the connection between users may not be as strong (Howell, 2022). The physical elements of coworking spaces, as well as the practical aspects, such as cost-saving, facilitate the characteristics of coworking spaces (Clifton *et al*, 2022). The sustainable, accessible, collaborative, and communal characteristics of coworking spaces enhance the purpose and benefits that the coworking phenomenon brings to the

social economy (Waters-Lynch *et al*, 2016), as well as recognizing that coworking spaces are more than just shared spaces (Robelski *et al*, 2019).

#### *2.4.2.1 Perceived Benefits Of Coworking Spaces*

As a result of co-presence, complementary work behaviors and varied capabilities, a sense of community is developed evident by social integration. The well-being and satisfaction are improved. Additionally, there is a positive economic impact of coworking spaces because the work-life situation is being improved (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). The coworking environment allows businesses with a volatile lifestyle to grow and develop (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016), as well as giving users the choice of where, when, and how to work (Paje *et al*, 2020). The benefits and value of coworking spaces are closely associated with one another, which is why coworking spaces hold a high purpose to the economy.

Due to the wide-ranging organizations, backgrounds, and industries of coworking users, different varieties of resources are integrated by individuals within the coworking community, allowing each member to uniquely benefit from the available opportunities of collaboration (Paje *et al*, 2020). The benefits of coworking spaces vary from achieving business objectives, increasing perceived job performance, career opportunities, satisfaction and motivation and reducing job retention (Hill *et al*, 2003 as cited in Clark, 2001; Hammer *et al*, 1997).

Coworking spaces offer inimitable solutions that are possible because of the high concentrate of entrepreneurs in one common space (Howell, 2022). Overall, it can be said that coworking spaces provide institutional and individual users an extremely autonomous and flexible use of social and office space (Bouncken Reuschl, 2016).

#### *2.4.2.2 Community & Isolation*

One of the main factors why professionals have turned to coworking spaces is because of the need to belong and be part of a community (Clifton *et al*, 2022).

Coworking spaces offer a new way of social support for standard and nonstandard working professionals. For the group of professionals who have worked from home or are independent workers, suffering from the feeling of isolation is a prevalent issue experienced on a day-to-day basis. Thus, coworking spaces propose a buffer against the feeling of isolation and loneliness by providing opportunities for interaction and establishing an environment in which collaboration and social interaction is possible (Gerdenitsch *et al*, 2016; Moriset, 2014; Pohler, 2012; Spinuzzi, 2012).

Coworking spaces offer a community, that is sustained through the daily interaction between coworking members (Zhao *et al*, 2020), where users can work separately on their tasks while sharing a space (Howell, 2022). A sense of community is important because it allows users to feel validated and allow coworking users to feel like they are doing something impactful and important (Howell, 2022).

#### ***2.4.2.3 Interaction, Networking & Collaboration***

Being surrounded by professionals who carry a similar attitude and mindset towards work, allows coworking users to interact with each other, share ideas and encourage the flow of information as well as constructive feedback of ideas (Clifton *et al*, 2022). This highlights the potential of coworking spaces as a facilitator of collaboration and interaction, an element that does not exist regularly among independent workers. As cited in Botsman and Rogers (2010), the contributors of innovation are social interactions. There are number of unprecedented opportunities for collaborating, networking, and interacting because of the ambiance of coworking spaces and the close proximity of other startups, entrepreneurs, and like-minded professionals (Amir, 2020; Howell, 2022).

Social interaction has led to a variety of outcomes, because every coworking user has a unique set of motivations. Along with easing the feeling of isolation and loneliness, social interaction also allows coworking users to explore and share ideas in order to develop and sustain professional networks and new

business (Zhao *et al*, 2020). By facilitating the exchange of ideas and views, coworking spaces improve the generating and implementation of ideas and establishes communication strategies that are beneficial to coworking users (Amir, 2020; Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016 as cited in Hughes *et al*, 2011). By developing social ties, coworking users can learn and benefit from one another (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). The opportunity to accordingly take advantage of specialized skillsets and knowledge flowing in coworking spaces allow coworking users to gain a better understanding on their work tasks and better the perceived job performance (Howell, 2022).

In a study conducted by Gerdenitsch *et al* (2016), coworkers reported on collaborating by providing feedback on work, brainstorming ideas (which further enhances the purpose of coworking spaces as hubs of innovation), and mentoring, but more importantly collaborating on a business level. Coworking spaces give rise to the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and overall social interaction; this has been explored in a prior study by Bouncken & Reuschl (2016). Thanks to the diversity of coworking users and their expertise in different areas many coworking members are able to benefit off of each other. Coworking spaces offer a broadened networking and learning opportunity which is not always found within an organization outside of coworking bubble, and solve the day-to-day challenges faced by new venturing entrepreneurs (Howell, 2022; Paje *et al*, 2020), this is also why so many professionals have turned to using coworking spaces (Zhao *et al*, 2020).

#### **2.4.2.4 Innovation & Work Performance**

Many organizations are recognizing the need for incorporating external aid, rather than relying purely on the internal capabilities of innovation. External actors have grown to become an essential part in the innovative capabilities of organizations (Amir, 2020, as cited in Enkel *et al*, 2009). The value that coworking spaces offer, encourages the innovative process of idea generation, promotion, and implementation (Amir, 2020). Moreover, coworking spaces encourage the prerequisite conditions needed for generating ideas. Coworking

spaces promote a climate of innovation not only for individuals but also for their teams (Amir, 2020).

As cited in Paje *et al* (2020), the perception of work performance drastically improves in coworking spaces with the increased opportunity for engagement and collaboration. Giving working professionals the flexibility to choose from where to work encourages the feeling of autonomy where users can decide how work is done, what work is done and when work is done (Hill *et al*, 2003). An increased feeling of autonomy plays a significant role in how coworking users perceive the benefits of coworking spaces. Due to the ability to self-organize and concentrate better on tasks, coworking users have reported to feel more productive and produce work at a higher quality compared to working from home or other third places (Hill *et al*, 2003 as cited in De Peuter *et al*, 2017).

Collaborating with other coworking users who share a complementary set of skills has shown to be a significant factor of increased productivity in coworking spaces according to Gandini (2015) and a study conducted by Bueno *et al* (2018), as well as offering a dynamic environment that fosters collaborative networks and innovation (Zhao *et al*, 2020).

Many coworking users, specifically those who are non-traditional workers, thrive in coworking spaces because of the feeling of job control and perceived meaningfulness of their work (Howell, 2022 as cited in Spreitzer *et al*, 2015b). Furthermore, the opportunity to explore new ideas and improve job satisfaction are factors that contribute to the popularity of coworking spaces (Howell, 2022).

The passion and work intensity that many coworking users have, creates a motivated and energized atmosphere which is a catalyst for increased work performance and job satisfaction, an element that is missed from working alone (Howell, 2022).

#### **2.4.2.5 Workplace Flexibility**

Howell (2022) as cited in Grimes (2018) and Hampel *et al* (2020), mentions that entrepreneurs already have more flexible advantages compared to larger

corporate organizations, this is because of the ability to adapt quickly to new stimuli and events. However, the flexibility of entrepreneurs is just as easily threatened when they are forced to sign traditional office leases that range over long and inconvenient periods of time. Coworking spaces offer a solution by offering month-to-month leases, as well as the potential room for flexible work arrangements (Howell, 2022). Coworking spaces make it easier to build and grow office and desk space if there is the need to expand one's team, as well as reducing office and desk space if scaling down one's team (Howell, 2022).

Coworking users are free to create personalized work rhythms to suit their work-life situation (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). This has shown an overall increase in job satisfaction and performance. It is also important to note that not all coworking users make the decision to join coworking spaces independently, in a growing number of cases, they are sent by employers in an attempt to harness innovative and fresh ideas. This attempt provides employees with the flexibility

### **2.4.3 Perceived Limitations Of Coworking Spaces**

This section presents a review of literature that explores the limitations of coworking spaces. While the benefits of coworking spaces have been thoroughly explored it is important to recognize the limitations that come with using coworking spaces. Lusa *et al* (2019) concludes that multi-spaced offices (which include coworking spaces) often face issues of a lack of privacy, increased disruption by irrelevant noises and conflicts with others using the shared space, moreover, problems of storage space and difficulty of concentration are also limitations of coworking spaces.

## **2.5 Working From Home**

Moving away from the traditional office has become a consistent choice among workers over the past two years (Aczel *et al*, 2021). The term working from home also implies being able to work from anywhere and not just from home. A study shows that in 2015, 12% of EU workers were already carrying out a work from home practice (Aczel *et al*, 2021 as cited by Parent-Thirion *et al*,

2016). The decision to employ a work from home practice comes from those who need more flexibility, seeking a better work-life balance, and looking for an alternative workplace environment.

### **2.5.1 Perceived Benefits Of Working From Home**

While working from home does provide the extra comfort of a working environment, it also has the benefits of reducing the commute to work, increased autonomy of time, flexibility, better management of personal and professional responsibilities, greater job motivation and satisfaction (Aczel *et al*, 2021). Church (2015) assesses the benefits of working from home and comments on the time saving benefit of working from home. The time spent commuting to work is therefore spent carrying out work activities and increases productivity.

### **2.5.2 Perceived Limitations Of Working From Home**

While the benefits of working from home are in abundance, there are limitations to this practice, such as the feeling of isolation, where workers feel disconnected from other co-workers (Aczel *et al*, 2021), difficulty between recognizing when the formal hours of work have been fulfilled and lack of visibility from superiors. One of the main limitations of working from home is, as mentioned, the lack of face-to-face contact. While the technology does exist to combat this limitation the collaborative opportunities are somewhat limited when working from home (Church, 2015). Indeed the flexibility of working from home make the practice attractive, however Church (2015 as cited by Russell, 2013) illustrates that working from home blurs the lines of work-life balance. Employees are likely to neglect basic practice of taking breaks and structuring their day to reflect a normal day in the office. Similarly to the issue of work-life balance, another limitation includes the lack of self-discipline. Indeed, the idea of self-discipline is applied to the normal office as well, but working from home exposes workers to more distractions (Church, 2015 as cited by Russell, 2013).

## **2.6 Activity-Based Workspaces**

Activity-based workspaces refer to an office space that requires workers to alternate their workspace based on the task they need to carry out. Adopting this kind of workspace is a growing trend among Western countries and is facilitated by technological developments and knowledge work (Haapakangas *et al*, 2019; Bergsten *et al*, 2021). The key idea of activity-based workspaces is establishing a workspace of unassigned desks that support and enable flexibility of where, when and how work is carried out, autonomy among individuals, and productivity (Bergsten *et al*, 2021 as cited by Van der Voordt, 2004; Wohlers & Hertel, 2017; Hoendervanger *et al*, 2016; Hallman *et al*, 2016). While activity-based workspaces have sparked academic interest, many questions remain unanswered clarifying the effects and benefits of this office design. In an economy where organizational freedom is becoming more enabled among workers, giving employees the freedom to alternate and choose their workplace in line with their needs and wants; an activity-based workspace can support the different aspects of work such as but not limited to creative work, focused work and teamwork (Bergsten *et al*, 2021).

### **2.6.1 Perceived Benefits Of Activity-Based Workspaces**

The advantages of activity-based workspaces range from cost saving opportunities to promoting productivity. The implementation of activity-based workspaces presents cost saving opportunities by creating more efficiently used office space. Creating workspaces catered to certain activities reduces the need for workspaces and decreases office occupancy.

A common goal shared across many organizations is facilitating the space and outlet for interaction among employees, not only enabling community wellbeing but also because interaction and collaboration is known as a contributor to excellent performance (Bergsten *et al*, 2021). Though subjective, wellbeing is characterized by a set of positive emotions in combination with satisfaction in the context of work. Organizations are highly encouraged to implement activity-based workspace designs in order to satisfy opportunities for

communication and the need for collaborating and interacting (Bergsten *et al*, 2021).

A method that organizations use to manage their productivity is to increase output and simultaneously reducing input costs. While the obvious inputs would be rent, a less discussed factor is employee turnover and a lack of community wellbeing. Activity-based workspaces group tasks and assign them a specific area where workers can finish of their tasks and then move onto another task in another space, this ensures that employees remain focused on their responsibilities, are held responsible for finishing tasks off and are less exposed to distractions. Furthermore, since workspace are designed and divided into tasks the possibility of working close with people who are performing the same task as you can improve your productivity. Secondly, activity-based workspaces are facilitators of employee flexibility. This benefit has been explored by multiple authors such as Bergsten *et al* (2021), Haapakangas *et al* (2018), Masoudinejad & Veitch (2023) and Halldorsson *et al* (2021). The aspect of employee flexibility stems from the fact that employees can choose which space to work from and arrange themselves accordingly. This is an added benefit to being able to manage and attain a work-life balance.

The benefits of activity-based workspaces are both observed in organizations and employees. For organizations they are able to reduce their environmental footprint, occupancy costs, increase flexibility, support interaction within teams as well as support change. For employees it includes being given a sense of autonomy, being exposed to technologies that support their mobile work and having workspaces specifically catered for their tasks as a method of combating daily distractions that may hinder productivity (Van Meel, 2020).

### **2.6.2 Perceived Limitations Of Activity-Based Workspaces**

Activity-based workspaces require a lot of carefully strategized implementation, execution and management commitment (Van Meel, 2020). In comparison to other offices spaces, activity-based workspaces are unable to deliver a sense of privacy and silence needed to complete tasks to a good level of satisfaction. This

is an important limitation to consider as high noise levels and distractions have a negative impact of satisfaction and is positively associated with a decrease in not only productivity but employee engagement.

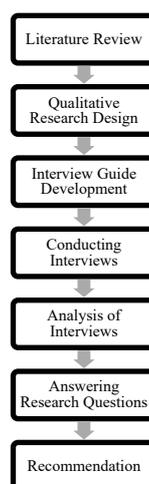
### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

The conducted research study expects to examine workspace satisfaction and the future workspace by answering four key research questions:

1. What are the needs of workers in respect to workspace environment are?
  - a. How important is it to satisfy workplace needs?
2. How important are the concepts of productivity, flexibility, and interaction when it comes to carrying out work?
3. How do collaborative working-spaces impact the satisfaction of workers?

The literature review provides an extensive summary of workspace satisfaction and workspace location. Figure 2 below clarifies a generalized overview of the methodology for this research study.



*Figure 2 Research Steps of the Methodology (Source by author)*

### 3.1.1 Research Questions

The development of research questions is a crucial step in every research study carried out as it creates focus of the research conducted. Research questions may consist of main and sub-research questions. Mohajan (2018a) establishes the idea that research questions should define clear boundaries of the topic of study to avoid research questions that are either too broad or too vague. Additionally, research questions should remain within the capabilities of the researcher being able to answer them.

The changing nature of work is such a prevalent topic, especially considering the current circumstances of how work has been carried out throughout the ongoing SARS-Cov-2 pandemic. The scope of the study looks at the future of work with a focus on co-working spaces. There definitely is a literature gap in the workplace environment and the future of work. Fortunately, almost every industry has had the practical experience of carrying out a form of remote work since the pandemic started, allowing for the researcher to cover new research grounds, and forming a basis for further topic exploration.

Considering the literature gaps and the importance of this research topic the following research questions have been formed:

**Research Question 1:** What are the needs of workers in respect to their work environment?

**Sub- research question 1a:** How important is it to satisfy workplace needs?

**Research Question 2:** How important are the concepts of productivity, flexibility, and interaction when it comes to carrying out work?

**Research Question 3:** How do collaborative working-spaces impact the satisfaction of workers?

The researcher recognizes the importance of word choice when it comes to research questions. That is why after carefully analyzing existing pieces of

research, that have focused on satisfaction, workplace organizations and office design, the researcher has been able to extract themes to explore and research to conduct.

### **3.2 Research Model**

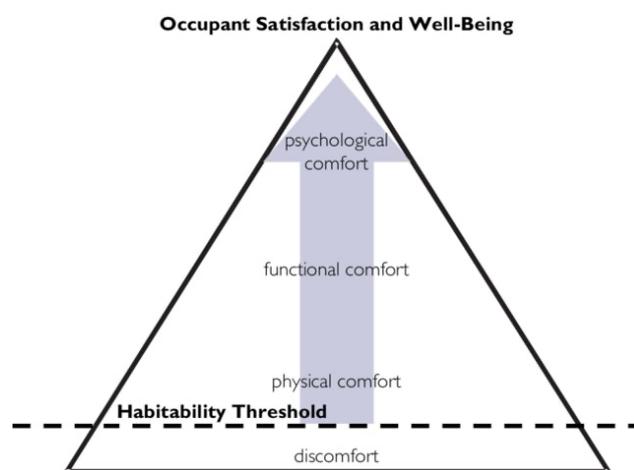
The research model below, identifies the constructs of the conducted research study. The research model suggests that the influences of workplace transformation consist of a combination of workplace needs and wants, work characteristics and the change in the nature of work. These factors have been explored in literature focusing on workplace satisfaction, the future of work and catalysts that have shifted the way work is carried out. Markkanen *et al* (2022) carried out a study that explores the effect of workplace design on work environment satisfaction. The findings indicated that the need for privacy and collaboration enhanced the overall workplace satisfaction of knowledge workers. Workplace satisfaction is dependent on whether or not the work environment needs meet the needs of employee (Van der Voordt, 2004). A work environment that meets the needs of employees fosters the elements of collaboration, productivity, and satisfaction. On the contrary there is opportunity where a level of distraction and exposure to stimuli is promoted, which can hinder the effects of collaboration, productivity, and satisfaction (Markkanen *et al*, 2022). Markkanen *et al* (2022 as cited by Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008; Bodin Danielsson, 2019) have established that the layout of an office is a prominent factor of workplace satisfaction.

Constructs refer to concepts that are used to explore and express a phenomenon. In qualitative research it is not possible to observe directly, however the understanding of the effect that a construct has, is easily investigated.

#### **3.2.1 Environmental Comfort**

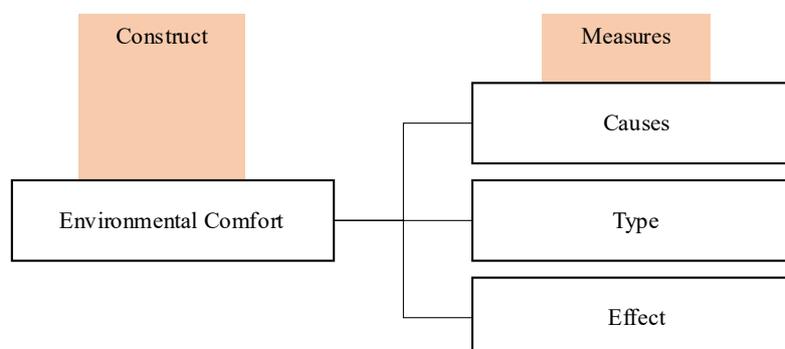
The effects of environment comfort on grouped and individual activity have been investigated by Vischer (2007). According to her findings three elements, namely physical, functional, and psychological comfort must be taken into

consideration for workplace change to occur, see figure 3 below. These three elements are supported by previous models established by Herzberg’s two factor theory on job satisfaction and job motivation. Environmental comfort is an important construct to this research as it is closely related the construct of needs and wants. In addition to this, environmental comfort is a significant factor in productivity, satisfaction, morale, innovation and engagement, all of which are benefits of a good working environment.



*Figure 3 Ranges of Environmental Comfort, from Basic Habitability to Optimal Well-Being (Vischer, 2007)*

Figure 4 below outlines the environmental comfort construct for this research paper, though there is no direct way to quantitatively measure environmental comfort, a method of investigating it would be to look at the causes, type and effect of environmental comfort.

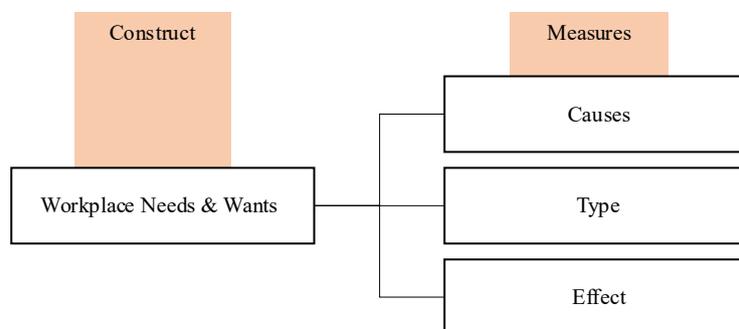


*Figure 4 Environmental Comfort Construct Breakdown*

### 3.2.2 Workplace Needs & Wants

Kristof-Brown *et al* (2005) employs a need-supply fit model which suggests that work environment must provide conditions that are appropriate, functional and support the tasks that employees carry out. Moreover, the work environment needs to be able to support the varying social dimensions of work tasks. Haapakangas *et al* (2019) explore the relation between knowledge-sharing, productivity, collaboration, and activity-based workspaces (ABW). The key idea of activity-based workspaces is to allow employees to select workspace that meet their needs and are based on the tasks they have to carry out. McKinsey released an article in 2022 which elaborated on meeting psychological needs of workers as a method of retaining workers and maintaining workplace satisfaction. The article stated that with so many employees quitting, companies are prioritizing their time towards figuring out how to make working conditions sustainable and more importantly attractive. Workplace needs and wants cover the concepts of workplace satisfaction. Workplace satisfaction refers to how employees evaluate their experience within the workplace.

Figure 5 below outlines the workplace needs and wants construct for this research paper, though there is no direct way to quantitatively measure needs and wants, a method of investigating it would be to look at the causes, type and effect of needs and wants.



*Figure 5 Workplace Needs & Wants Construct Breakdown*

### 3.2.3 Work Characteristics

Work characteristics are a unique element that is differentiated by the industry one works in, the position one is employed in and the tasks that need to be carried out. The reconfiguration and design of offices has continuously grown to become the objective of organizations as a way to mainstream productivity and support the tasks carried out and work characteristics. Office space is by no means a “one size fits all” environment, looking at all the industries there is a clear division of how the marketing industry carry out work and those employed in the finance industry. When looking at the construct of work characteristics the organization for economic cooperation and development (2017) explain that it consists of, the physical and social environment, job tasks, and organizational characteristics.

Figure 6 below outlines the work characteristics construct for this research paper, though there is no direct way to quantitatively measure work characteristics, a method of investigating it would be to look at the causes, type and effect of work characteristics.

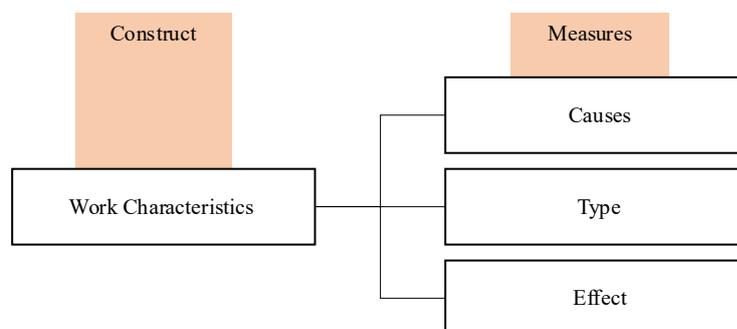


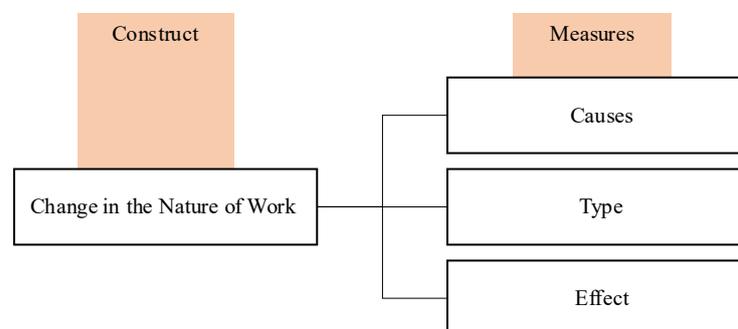
Figure 6 Work Characteristics Construct Breakdown

### 3.2.4 Change in the Nature of Work

Although the change in the nature of work as exponentially changed since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, flexible work practices have been observed dating back as far as the 1970s (Hodzic *et al*, 2021). However, with radical technological advancements in combination with a change in management, the practice has become more mainstream. The shift in the nature

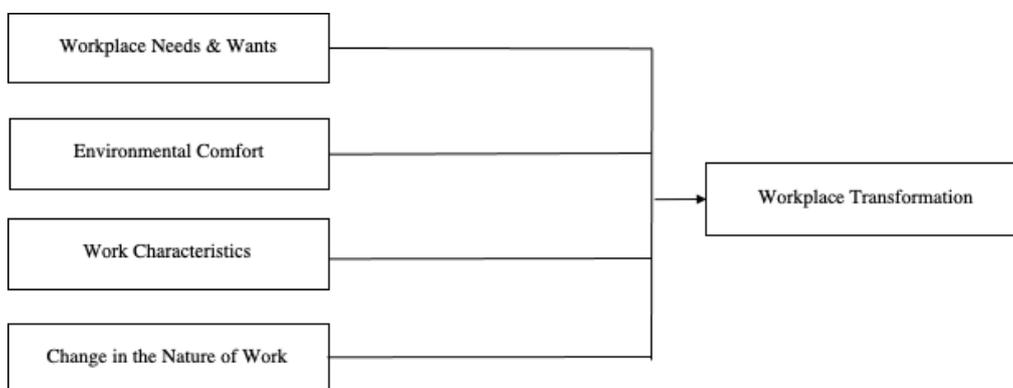
of work has introduced questions on how to adopt a flexible work structure and how to maintain productivity among employees while simultaneously improving or maintaining satisfaction. The future of work is a concept within the complexity of its own, and is imperatively influenced by changing trends, more specifically, the change in the nature of work within the landscape of employment. By investigating this construct the researcher is able to identify opportunities and take advantage of them, minimize potential threats and fulfill economic and social needs of the workforce. This is an important construct as provides information on the flexibility of work, work-life integration, its social and economic impact on society. Embracing change is a crucial component of the successful integration of workplace transformation.

Figure 7 below outlines the change in the nature of work construct for this research paper, though there is no direct way to quantitatively measure change, a method of investigating it would be to look at the causes, type and effect of the change of the nature of work.



*Figure 7 Change in the Nature of Work Construct Breakdown*

Figure 8 below is the research model for this research study, it conceptualizes the above-mentioned constructs and how its effects play a role in workplace transformation.



*Figure 8 Research model containing the constructs of this research paper (Source by author)*

### **3.3 Research Design**

It is crucial to identify and select a research design that reflects the purpose of the conducted research and ensures that the appropriate method of collecting and analyzing data is chosen. As research allows it, there are many approaches that can be used to obtain different forms of data, such as but not limited to quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2014). While each approach has its benefits and challenges, as well as techniques of analyzing the results, for the purpose of this research study, the researcher will employ a qualitative descriptive research approach.

A qualitative approach uses specific research techniques for understanding a specific phenomenon as opposed to a statistical judgment, commonly used in a quantitative approach. Furthermore, a qualitative approach follows a constructivists worldview while using an inductive approach to capture personal

meaning (Creswell, 2014), and includes five different research designs such as phenomenological research, ethnography, narrative research, case studies and grounded theory.

Overall, a qualitative research design is best suited to understand the purpose of relationships between groups or individuals and a human or social problem, and when there are unexplored topics (Creswell, 2014). As the conducted research intends to obtain, explore, and investigate new information, it further supports the choice to utilize a qualitative approach. This choice is further supported by Leavy (2017), who mentions that if research aims to describe, explore, and even explain a phenomenon then it is best to use a qualitative approach. As the research aims to explore the development of new workspace alternatives, the choice of a qualitative method is further supported.

By conducting eight in-depth semi-structured interviews with third place workers from different industry backgrounds, the researcher will be able to collect primary data and carry out an in-depth analysis and discussion. Moreover, the interviews allow for an increased benefit on the research as it allows for the discovery of new trends that would not be discovered when using a quantitative research approach. More importantly, in-depth interviews are convenient to use and apply, as they are easy to schedule, allow for high quality understanding of concepts and opinions and bring to light honest motives.

### **3.4 Unit of Analysis**

A unit of analysis refers to the main emphasis of the research. This research contains two units of analysis, namely the literature review and interviews of those employing a form of remote work. The literature review, and research model aided in the formation of the interview questions. Responses from the interviewees are analyzed as confirmation of research models and theories mentioned in the literature review as well as introduction of the methodology.

### **3.5 Data Collection And Sampling**

The data for the conducted research was obtained by setting up in-depth semi-structured interviews, which took place between March 2023 and April 2023. In order to maintain a flexible schedule, all of the interviews were conducted digitally over MS Teams. The location of the research was not limited to one country and instead took on an international approach, specifically in metropolitan cities.

The interviewee selection followed a rigorous process, ensuring that the target population are currently employed and have carried out home office or another form of remote work for at least six months. The process of inviting interviewees was implemented by reaching out via LinkedIn and inviting connections for an interview. While the majority of the interviewees were contacted over LinkedIn, there were a few who were contacted personally, who would then be able to extend the invitation to a larger pool of interviewees.

The invitation letter included the purpose of the research, and what the research wishes to achieve in order to make all parties aware of the significance of their responses. Additionally, the invitation included the request for their time in either an in-person interview or an online interview. Interviewees were encouraged to answer all questions honestly and to the best of their abilities. Before the commencement of the interview, interviewees were asked for their agreement of voice recording and cooperation. Furthermore, the generic and administrative information of interviewees was not made public, and once the analysis of the responses had been concluded, the researcher erased the recordings.

This research study employed a non-probability sampling method, mainly purposeful sampling, and snowball sampling. Although adopting a non-probability sampling method allows for an easy and cost-efficient collection of samples it does have a higher risk of creating a sampling bias. Additionally, the conducted research had a specific and small population, which further emphasizes the decision to use purposeful sampling. The decision to use

snowball sampling as an additional sampling method is also beneficial to this research. As a result of choosing a specific population it is difficult to access all desired participants, this is why the snowball sampling method allows the researcher to have gained access to a population that meet the criteria of interviewees. However, the drawback of using a snowball sampling method is the lack of representativeness due to fact that the researcher is relied on participants recruiting other people (Creswell, 2014).

The table below identifies the target population adapted from Stienmetz (2022). It outlines the target population by clearly defining the element, extent, time and sampling unit of this research study.

*Table 1 Target population*

<p><b><i>Element:</i></b> Persons who have carried out a form of remote work</p> <p><b><i>Extent:</i></b> Persons based in metropolitan cities</p> <p><b><i>Time:</i></b> Persons available between March and April</p> <p><b><i>Sampling Unit:</i></b> Persons who have done a form of remote work for at least six months and who are currently employed</p>
--

Table 2 below presents all the participants who took part in this research study. The table additionally shows the industry that the participants come from, how long they’ve been employed in the industry, the type of workspace they are using and for how long they’ve been using it.

*Table 2 Interviewee Overview*

	Description			
Interview	Industry	Duration	Workspace	Duration
I1	Web design	2 years	Home office	2 years
I2	Finance	8 months	Office	8 months
I3	Freelance Journalism	6 months	Home office	3 years
I4	Marketing Research	2 years	Shared office/ home office	2 years

I5	Marketing	1 year	Home office	1 year
I6	Marketing Research	3 years	Shared office/ home office	7 months
I7	E-commerce	2.5 years	Home office/office	1 year

### 3.6 Interview Structure

In order to explore workspace satisfaction and future workspace location, the interviews were guided by specific questions which provided the basis of the interview. In addition to the guiding questions that form the majority of the interview, there was also the opportunity to clarify any other areas related to the topic with follow-up questions, this allowed for a deeper understanding and analysis of the conversation between the researcher and interviewee. This type of interview structure is referred to as a semi-structured interview.

#### 3.6.1 Interview Guide

The interview guide introduced the questions to which interviewees shared their responses to. Questions asked allowed for the exploration of attitudes towards the work environment, opinions on the future of work, as well as the needs of third place workers being met. The interviews lasted between 15 to 50 minutes. In order to protect the privacy of the interviewees each interviewee has been renamed to 'Ix' with 'x' corresponding to the numerical order of which the interview took place.

The interview started off by asking preliminary questions, which were asking for the interviewees consent, industry they are working in, for how long they have been working in the industry, and what their current workplace set-up is. Additionally, interviews were thanked for their time before and after the interview as well as being informed that it was a semi-structured interview. The overview of the literature review and constructs mentioned in the research model, allow for the following guiding questions to be asked in respect to the research questions (table 3 below):

---

#### Preliminary Questions

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Do you consent to this interview?

What industry do you currently work in?

How long have you been working in the industry?

What form of remote work are you currently employing?

For how long have you been working in your work environment?

---

*Table 3 Preliminary Questions*

These five questions fulfil the aims of identifying the form of remote work as well as the industry that interviewees are working in. The questions also allow for the seamless transition into the main interview questions.

- **Are you able to choose how and where you work?**

The purpose of this interview question is to determine the level of authority that employees have across the different industries that they come from.

- **What needs do you have in regard to your working environment?**

The purpose of this question is to gain an understanding of the different needs that people have while being employed in different industries. This question additionally allows for the opportunity to answer three of the research questions namely, what are the needs of workers in respect to workspace environment are, how important is it to satisfy workplace needs and, how do collaborative working-spaces impact the satisfaction of workers?

- **Why do you think it is important that your workspace needs are met?**

This interview question answers the same research questions previously mentioned and aims to gather an understanding of the perceived attitudes of workers towards workplace needs.

- **What elements of work satisfy your needs and wants?**

This question investigates how the current form of work benefits and keeps people satisfied. This question allowed for the observation of what

interviewees deemed as satisfying elements within work. It aligns closely with identifying perceived attitudes towards workplace environment.

- **In your opinion, what are important factors needed for a good working environment?**

This question pertains the purpose of answering the following research question; how important are the concepts of productivity, flexibility, and interaction when it comes to carrying out work? By observing the responses of interviewees, the researcher is able to identify elements of perceived good working environments and will thoroughly aid in the code generating section of the analysis.

- **How do the different industries you've worked in vary in regard to workplace needs and environment?**

This question is only applicable to those who currently work in two industries or decided to give comparative responses to the different industries they've worked in.

- **What are some of the challenges your current work environment is facing?**

This is an important interview question to ask, and its purpose is to answer the following research question; what are the perceived attitudes that workers have towards workspace environment? Moreover, this question allows for the reflection of interviewees and is intended to generate an insight on what people determine as challenges in the work environment.

- **How do you feel about your workplace set up and how has it influenced the way you work?**

This question also answers the same research question as the previous interview question. It also explores the collective feeling that people have

towards remote work and how it has impacted their overall feeling of workplace satisfaction.

- **How has remote work impacted your work life?**

This question was asked to prompt respondents to think about the changing nature of work, compare previous experiences to current ones.

- **What do you think will be the most significant workplace trend in the future?**

The final interview question intended to bring the interview to an end and aimed to define future workplace trends both as a general trend and industry specific trend.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Once the interviews have been concluded, the recordings will be transcribed as well as answers being carefully noted down. While there are many qualitative analysis methods the researcher has decided to use a thematic analysis approach. By conducting a thematic content analysis (TCA), the researcher will be able to identify repetitive trends and patterns from the range of interviewee responses while incorporating an inductive approach. The data analysis method outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006) allow for a complete and rounded combination of responses for a qualitative research method and is outlined below in table 4.

*Table 4 Thematic Content Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)*

Phase	Description
1	Familiarisation with the data
2	Code generating
3	Identification of themes
4	Review of themes
5	Defining and naming themes
6	Constructing report

Phase two of the TCA required the researcher to create codes that would later on be used to identify themes, the flexibility of the analysis allowed for codes to change and adapt with every new theme explored. Each theme was given its operational definition and identified using a color-coded system. In order to maintain a valid and relevant identification of the themes, themes will have to be reviewed and either rejected or accepted if there is significant relevance to the research topic.

There are many benefits of coding in a qualitative research framework. Qualitative coding can increase validity, decrease a potential bias, represent data participants more accurately and enable transparency. Using an inductive coding approach means implementing a ground up coding process, this entails starting with your data and grouping them into themes in order to develop and generate codes. In addition to an inductive coding approach, it is deemed appropriate to also combine it with a deductive coding approach. The first round of coding will start off with an *in vivo coding*, this means summarizing responses into phrases or individual words. Secondly, both *descriptive and value coding*, this allows for codes to be given a title and to identify codes that exhibit the values and attitudes of the interviewees.

### **3.8 Research Quality**

The quality of the research study shall take into consideration the criteria of trustworthiness; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lumsden, 2022). Credibility refers to the measure of truth and plausibility of the findings of research. Stenfors *et al* (2020) state that method of recognizing credibility is to see the association between the five components of the research study, namely, theory, research questions, collection of data, analysis, and results. Furthermore, ensuring that the data, analysis, and method of sampling aligns with the discussed framework. Relating to this research, credibility has been considered in the context of linking the findings into a realistic setting. Moreover, using a theoretical triangulation approach, using theoretical perspectives to analyze data, the researcher will be able to use Herzberg's

Hygiene factor theory as well as the third place theory to conclude and strengthen findings and conclusions.

Transferability refers to the ability to transfer findings into another context or setting. Recognizing transferability means being able to apply the findings in a population by detailing the context of the study and how it was conducted (Stenfors *et al*, 2020). Relating to this research, transferability has been considered in the context of future research by applying the same methods to collecting data from different age groups, under the same conditions as this specific research. Dependability refers to the consistency and ability to replicate the research in a related condition, meaning that with the information of the research design, other researcher could be able to conduct the same study. This can be achieved by including clear and concise methodological steps in the research study. Relating to this study, dependability has been considered in the context of providing a detailed methodology chapter as well as having fellow peers contribute during the analysis process, namely concerning generating codes and themes.

Confirmability refers to the relationship between the findings of the study and the data. This is achieved by the researcher clearly showing the steps to their findings by including detailed information (Stenfors *et al*, 2020). Ensuring research quality is important for this study because it will ensure that the research conducted is original and relevant. Relating to this study, confirmability has been considered in the context of the coding and theme identification, much like with achieving dependability of the research, and referring back to prior literature and research.

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are important criteria of trustworthiness for this research because it demonstrates truth to the findings in addition to the results being used for future managerial decisions within organizations in regard to deciding how and where work should be carried out. As with any research study some uncontrollable limitations that may occur during this research which include interviewees not providing

thorough enough responses that allow for themes to be extracted and analyzed, interviewees rescinding their participation, sample size available is not sufficient enough, prior research of the topic does not suffice the research conducted, and finally that the findings cannot be applied to a population. Overall, it is important to attain the trustworthiness criterion as it ensures that the research is able to satisfy the research questions and aid in future research.

### **3.9 Research Ethics**

An important element to conducting research is taking into consideration the ethical implications that can arrive throughout the research study. Throughout the process of the research the ethical characteristics have been considered and more importantly applied during the interview process. Interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study, to allow them to personally decide whether to continue participating with the study or not. This was done by reaching out to potential interviewees beforehand over email and LinkedIn. Secondly, the researcher made sure that all interviewees gave their full consent before the interview took place. Lastly, personal information collected was kept confidential and information that was to be used was consented by interviewees. These steps were important to this research study because the researcher dealt with personal information of interviewees, and because the ethical considerations guide the researcher

## **4 Analysis**

The following section discusses the findings of the conducted interviews. The analysis starts by looking at the interviewees and their respective industries and is followed by a general overview by the mentioned industries. Furthermore, the analysis section also looks at the different needs and wants as well as future workplace trends. This topic led to the interviewees elaborating on their personal opinions as well as giving them the opportunity to explore themes. The chapter will look at the responses of interviewees and evaluate how they have coped with remote work and the effect it has had on their work. Additionally

personal quotes will be used to illustrate the information gathered throughout the interview process. Taking into consideration the research design framework, the researcher notes that because of the qualitative framework, the emphasis of the analysis lies in the response of interviews rather than creating a statistical analysis of the topic.

Using an inductive approach and an in-depth analysis of the collected data, five key themes have been identified to describe workspace satisfaction and the future of work. The time frame taken to develop the themes took place during the month of April 2023. The researcher used a software called *Atlas.ti* in helping to generate codes and identify themes. After converting the transcript into a comprehensible document and running it through the software, a number of codes were created. Following the code generating process the researcher then identified themes and reviewed them using existing knowledge from the literature review and determining whether they were in line with the conducted research. As mentioned throughout the research, a qualitative approach is used, this approach generates varying interpretations dependent on the individual. That it is imperative to acknowledge that the findings and discussion can be challenged, accepted and refused by other academics.

Following the theme identification of the collected data the next sections of the research study will further explain and summarize the themes and explore its validity.

#### **4.1 Background Information**

The interviewees identify themselves as remote workers. They are all currently employed and their industry background (see figure 9 below) ranges from being a freelance worker, self-employed and being traditionally employed. All of their responsibilities and needs vary from each other however, it was observed during the analysis of the interviews that some of the interviews shared a common need as well as opinion on the future of work.

*“[I need] a nice clean workspace, good internet, good laptop. And having like good managers and good colleagues, to make sure like you're still happy when you're at work.” (I1)*

*“Definitely enough space and the flexibility for all employees because some people don't like to work alone because it's too quiet.” (I2)*

*“...realistically, you always look for creativity outlets. So having a group, a good team that helps you by creativity is always very important, very beneficial.” (I5)*

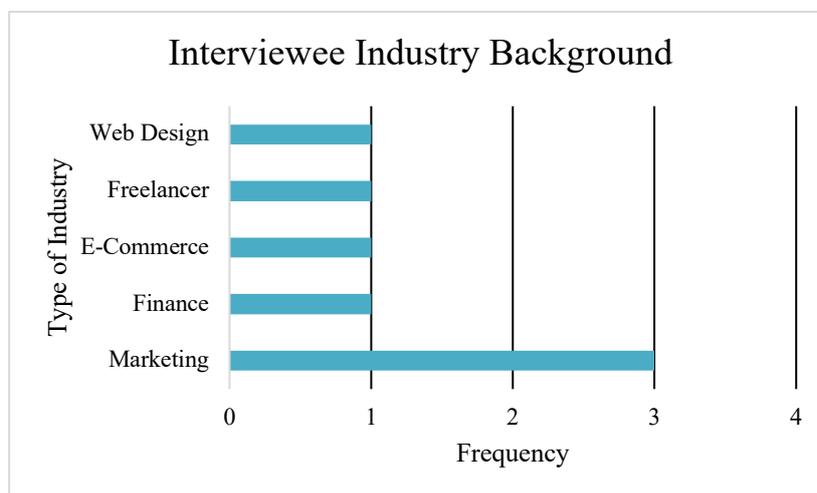


Figure 9 Bar Chart of Industry Background of Interviewees (Source by author)

#### 4.1.1 Interviewees

Table 5 Summary of Interviewees

Description				
Interview	Industry	Duration	Workspace	Duration
I1	Web design	2 years	Home office	2 years
I2	Finance	8 months	Office	8 months
I3	Freelance Journalism	6 months	Home office	3 years
I4	Marketing Research	2 years	Shared office/ home office	2 years
I5	Marketing	1 year	Home office	1 year
I6	Marketing Research	3 years	Shared office/ home office	7 months
I7	E-commerce	2.5 years	Home office/office	1 year

#### **4.1.2 Visual Analytics**

Data visualization can be very beneficial in qualitative research because it provides data with more clarity and makes it more appealing to the human eye. It helps identify patterns and extracts data in artistic ways to represent the knowledge gained throughout the research process.

Prior to extracting codes and themes the researcher has created a visual summary of the codes identified from the responses of interviewees and developed them into a wordle cloud (figure 10 below). Furthermore table 6 (below) displays the questions that prompted responses that led to the codes generated. Words with high frequency are identified by their large text size and prominent position on the page. This visual analysis is beneficial to this research because of its qualitative nature and ability to capture the reality of workplace transformation.



each participant. However, looking at the overall response to some of the questions there is a clear consensus of factors of workplace satisfaction, future workplace trends and challenges faced in current work environments. As outlined in the methodology chapter, the researcher is employing a constructivist worldview, hence the intent to interpret the underlying meaning of the responses.

The researchers interpretation illustrate an understanding of the data set while using prior literature to gather evidence to support recommendations and lead to a discussion.

Firstly, the author acknowledges the overlapping of code words in different interview questions asked. The response from question one generate the words *collaboration, support, and networking*. In context to what the needs are in the work environment the researcher notes that they align closely to what is mentioned in the literature review and the similarity across all seven participants. It therefore fair to assume that people's needs do not vary a substantial amount between the marketing, finance, freelance and e-commerce industry. The second question generate the words *efficiency, well-being, and mental*. Again, the responses lead to the interpretation that no matter what background one comes from, the importance of satisfying needs and wants within the work environment are imperative to maintaining productivity, motivation and physical and mental health. The third question generate the words *teamwork, collaboration, support, and interaction*. The responses give a clear indication of what workplace satisfiers are and support the theoretical framework mentioned in the literature review. In addition to this the third question confirms Herzberg's hygiene factor theory of long and short term satisfaction as well as factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The fourth question generate the words *light, comfort, privacy, and ergonomics*. In response to the question of the needs for a good work environment, the researcher was intrigued by the key words generate as the literature does not include some of these topics. The words generated reveal a literature gap in research. The participants have represented a set of factors that should definitely

be taken into consideration when implementing a new work environment. The fifth question generate the words *balance, distraction, Covid, and privacy*. The words successfully prove the challenges of working in different environments and should also be taken into consideration by managers. Furthermore, they imply that all workspaces come with their own set of limitations, suggesting that the perfect work environment may not actually exists that satisfy everyone. The sixth question generate the words *satisfied, entrepreneurship, balance, and productive*. This question prompted bold opinions of participants and observes the significance of productivity in the workplace in combination with finding a healthy balance working in-office and remotely. The seventh question generate the words *technology, accountability, and freedom*. The questions itself acknowledges change (a concept difficult to grasp and implement in the work environment) and suggests the idea that digital transformation, autonomy in choosing where and when to work as well as the flexibility not only benefits an individual but also improves satisfaction at work. The eighth question generate the words *hybrid, remote-work, flexibility, telecommuting, and coworking*. The generated words clearly defines a future workplace trend, leading to the interpretation that while many may return to the office full time, the opportunity to choose where to work and having the flexibility to move around with work and delegate one's tasks as they see fit is definitely an option that workers want.

## **4.2 Themes**

By conducting the six-phase thematic analysis, outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006) led to the extraction of multiple themes from the interview responses as well as from prior literature. Using an artificial intelligence tool, *Atlas.ti*, a thorough and expedited analysis could be conducted with identifying multiple codes and themes. The word cloud produced aided in code generating, moreover the researcher was able to draw meaning from responses and code words in order to produce a narrative that will answer research questions and provide recommendations. Despite its exploratory method the researcher has consistently referred back to the purpose of the research in order to avoid including irrelevant information. While reviewing the themes the researcher

ensured that the responses aligned and supported the themes, weren't too broad or narrow, and that they made sense. The following themes (figure 11) were initially generated and after a careful review of matching each theme to the purpose of the research as well as cross-checking with the literature review the following main themes have been extracted:

- Employee Well-being
- Flexibility
- Hybrid
- Collaboration
- Challenges of work environments

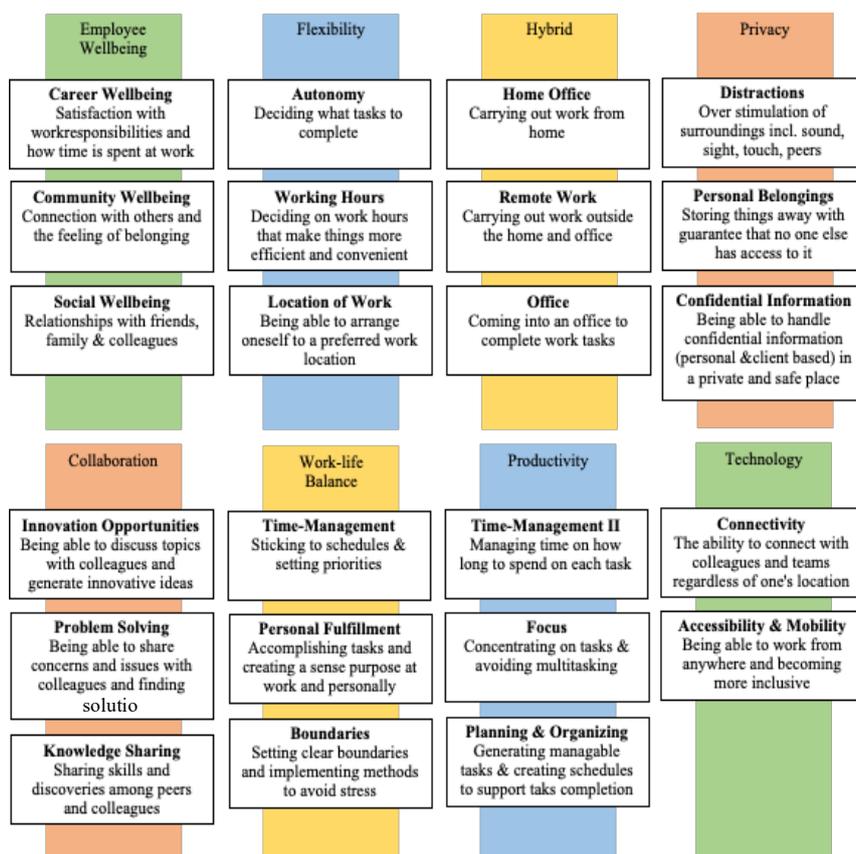


Figure 11 Themes (Source by author)

#### 4.2.1 Employee Well-being

Employee wellbeing can impact employees in significant ways. The focus on employee wellbeing comes from the overlap between work and home life.

Nurturing the concept of employee wellbeing has been observed to play a role in developing resilience in the workplace. In an economy where we bring work life into our homes, employee wellbeing has gone beyond the physicality of wellbeing. Building a holistic approach of employee wellbeing is becoming the heart of keeping workers satisfied and motivated to work. Furthermore, it is characterized by multiple components such as satisfaction at work but more so career, social, financial, physical and community wellbeing. When looking at satisfaction, it is important to take into consideration workplace needs and wants and whether or not they are being met. The responses exhibit four main components of wellbeing, namely community, career, social and physical wellbeing.

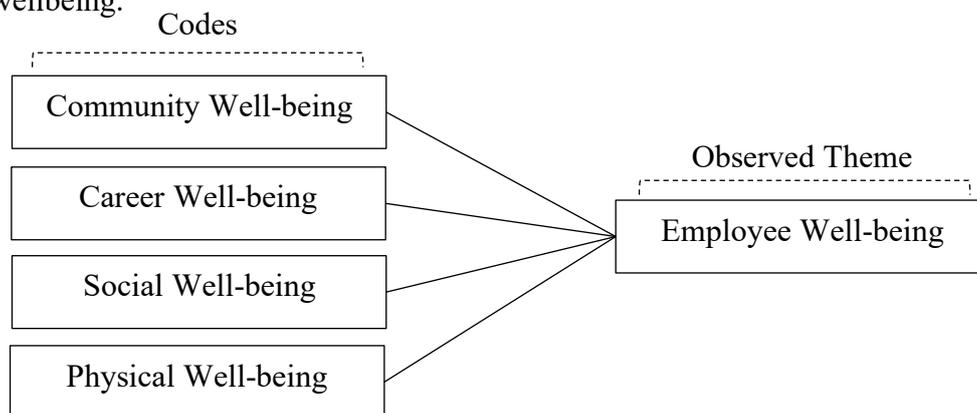


Figure 12 Thematic Framework 1/5

Community wellbeing has been identified as the most common form of wellbeing across all interviewee responses. Furthermore, it fosters a positive work environment that encourages opportunities for collaboration, connection and productivity. The following response below highlights the importance of a safe community and how it factors in drivers of motivation to go to work.

*“I would say it's pretty important...and if they weren't nice to talk to I think I would be a lot less motivated to actually go and work.” (11)*

*“Sometimes I really feel the need to communicate with people around me, such as coworkers... sometimes online [meetings] are not the same as physical meetings.” (15)*

*“I think just because you want to talk to people you want to socialize go out after work.” (I6)*

The first response emphasizes on the fact that surrounding yourself with coworkers who are easy to talk to and approach impacts the motivation to come into work, this response highlights the importance of building a strong social connection at work and how it influences internal engagement among employees. The second response comments on the implications on having online and offline meetings. A key takeaway from their response is how offline meetings allow for opportunities for better communication and socializing prospects and moreover highlights the benefits of in-person interaction and meetings. The third response, to an extent, finds a balance of socializing with colleagues outside of the normal working hours provided that the opportunity to build these connections presents itself during work. Likewise, building strong relationships certainly impacts workplace satisfaction, well-being and employee engagement.

Career wellbeing has been identified as the second common form of employee wellbeing. Creating a sense of career wellbeing is important in the workplace because moderates the feeling of job satisfaction, purpose and feeling fulfilled with one’s work. The following remarks are the responses after being asked why it is important that needs and wants are met.

*“I think it's important because firstly, it will make me more productive, I'll feel better” (I1)*

*“I just generally think the most important thing is they do give you the opportunity to communicate your preferences.” (I2)*

*“Because it [is] probably [more] efficient.” (I6)*

The second response opens up the conversation about being able to communicate one’s preferences, this is an important element of career wellbeing as it makes employees feel as if they are being heard and their needs are being

considered. Interviewee six (I6) explains that meeting needs and wants is an important factor of career wellbeing and contributes to productivity by creating the sense of efficiency among employees.

#### 4.2.2 Flexibility

The focus on flexibility indicates the importance of prioritizing a work-life balance and has the advantage of attracting a workforce that appreciate the chance to choose their work model.

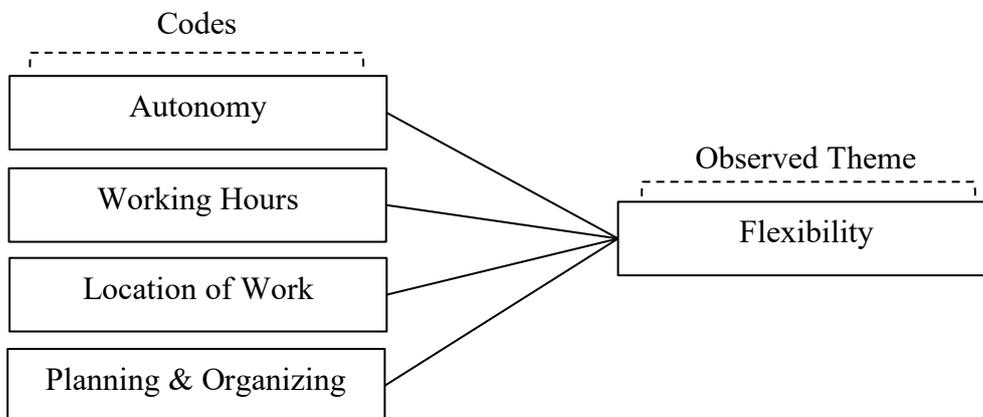


Figure 13 Thematic Framework 2/5

*“I feel like if the workplace is flexible about your workspace, it will be really nice” (I2)*

*“I think in the future, companies will stick to more flexible working arrangements, because also, if you don't, I feel like it's harder to recruit more employees because they want the flexibility nowadays.” (I2)*

*“...it's flexible in some ways where like, if I say I want to work from home, they're not gonna kick off the ballot if I have a delivery come in, if I don't feel well, whatever it is, they'll let me work from home.” (I4)*

*“I think an important thing to recognize the fact that employers will probably be more understanding of people's needs for flexibility.” (I6)*

The first response implies that flexibility is a positive factor when it comes to workplace satisfaction, and is favored among many employees in their organizations. Additionally, the first response also implies the benefits of flexibility from a recruiting stand-point, this opinion is shared among other interview responses such as that from interviewee six (I6). The response from interviewee four (I4) implies that flexibility does not necessarily refer to carrying remote work out but more so the inclination to accommodate the needs of employees. Overall, all responses regarding this theme indicate the potential ways of implementing the idea of workplace flexibility.

### 4.2.3 Hybrid

Hybrid refers to the combination of remote work and the traditional office. All participants highlighted that the ideal work environment is a combination of a traditional office and characteristics of remote work (home office). Many of the advantages of adopting a hybrid model have been outlined in this thesis (literature review), and more so within the analysis section. The model positively benefits organizations and employees and to no surprise has become more and more popular over the past two years.

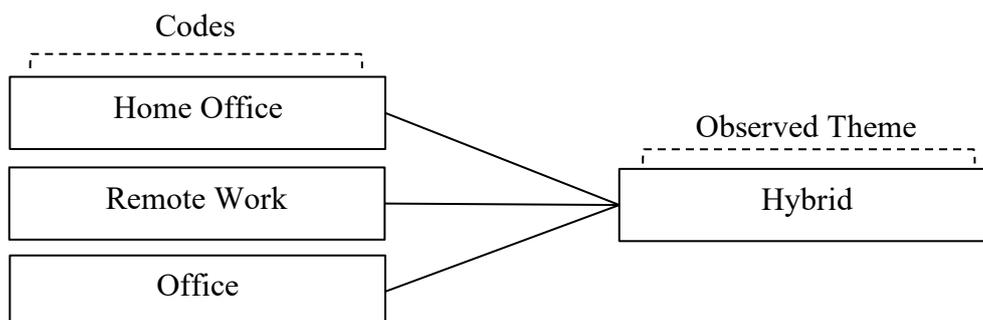


Figure 14 Thematic Framework 3/5

*“I think it's going to be a mix of hybrid like at home and at the office” (I1)*

*“...we have an office, but we also have the opportunity to work from home or from one of the other locations.” (I2)*

*“I think the future I think right now is going hybrid. I think it's gonna be implemented across all jobs.” (I3)*

*“I think hybrid will be the way to go and I think not just in offices but also in educational institutions.” (I5)*

*“I think the future is going to be hybrid work. Because I think like even though I say that I prefer working from the office, it is nice sometimes to have that flexibility.” (I7)*

The first response sees the implementation of hybrid work as a positive development for organizations to put into practice. It builds further on from a previous identified themes of flexibility and provides another way of maintaining a work-life balance. The second response already explains how they are adopting a hybrid work practice, whereby they have the opportunity to not only work from home and the office but also other locations which suggests that the hybrid model proves to be beneficial to the idea of flexibility as there are no limitations to where work can be carried out theoretically. The other responses even go as far as to suggest that hybrid models should be implemented in not only the work environment but also in educational institutions. Therefore it is fair to say that its popularity can only increase the more the model is implemented and potentially the additional research that can be carried out on the topic. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive towards embracing a hybrid model with the exception of interviewee six (I6) who proposes that more people in the future will head back into the office but potentially in the far future adopt a more balanced work practice.

#### **4.2.4 Collaboration**

While adopting a form of remote work has ensured workers remain safe and flexible, the overwhelming feeling of isolation and loneliness has highlighted the importance of surrounding yourself with people in order to cope with stress, relate to others and combat the perceived negative feeling of remote work. Most people have been forced to maintain distance from family and friends as a result

of the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic and have had to turn to daily interactions remotely. The overwhelming feedback from the participants highlighted the fact that there must be opportunity to collaborate and interact with coworkers within the work environment. To push this need, most participants commented positively on the fact that having a space with open-desk seating enabled an increased prospect of interacting with coworkers on both a professional and personal level.

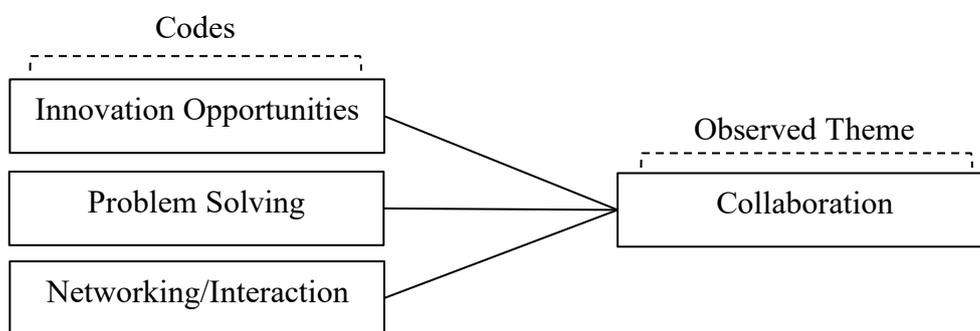


Figure 15 Thematic Framework 4/5

Surrounding oneself has shown to contribute to productivity as highlighted by the following interviewees:

*“I think more social and like collaborative on a professional level. Having meetings in person is 100% better you get more of a sense of the person”*  
(14)

*“I think... you always need [a] team that supports you with your creative decisions.”* (15)

*“I am probably more productive in the office... I just probably put more effort into what I'm thinking about in the office just because I'm around other people.”* (16)

*“Definitely enough space and the flexibility for all employees because some people don't like to work alone because it's too quiet.”* (12)

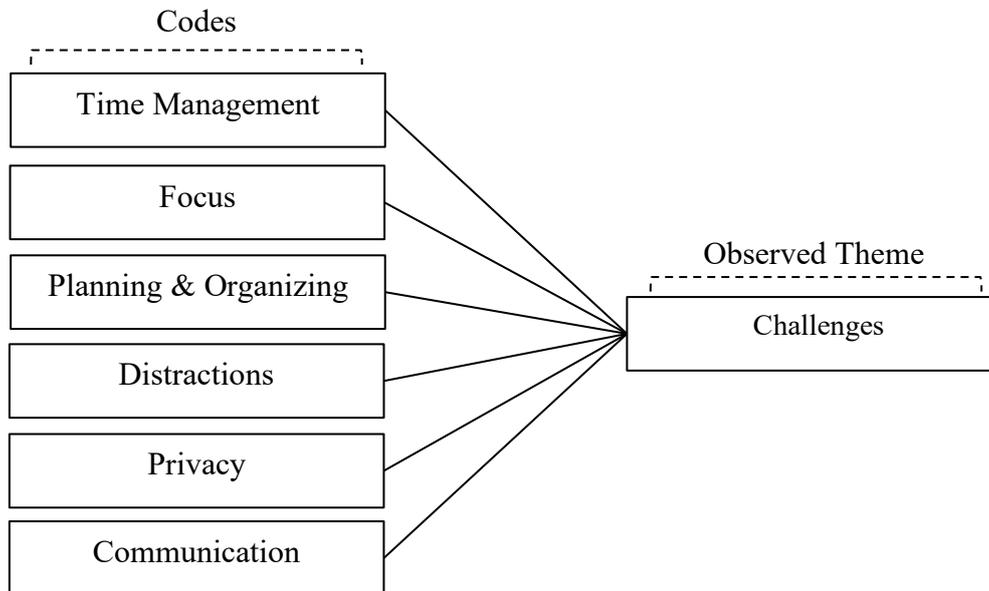
*“Co working spaces I feel are probably the most useful spaces. Just because you get sometimes you have the option of going into solo quiet study. Whilst you can also, I don't know, collaborate with someone over a table or again go to a room that you can book and work in there.” 13*

The first response heavily emphasizes the benefits of in-person meetings, because they provide genuine interactions among team members and creating a collaborative community has evidently shown to improve and contribute to productivity. The second response very clearly shows that it is a definite need to have a team and the possibility to network and interact seamlessly with coworkers as it supports our decision making allows one to reflect, improve and evaluate how we do things, leading to an innovative work environment. The third response suggests that working entirely alone hinders productivity and minimizes the potential effort one puts into work. The fourth response recognizes that some employees prefer to work surround by and with others rather than alone. Their response also intersects with a previous theme mentioned (flexibility) and how it is a contributor to collaborative work. Therefore, surrounding yourself with people, whether that be with your direct coworkers or random people, can motivate you to work harder and as repeatedly mentioned collaborate with others.

#### **4.2.5 Challenges Of Work Environments**

Work environments are dynamically linked to having benefits and limitations. Both features provide valuable insight into the factors of workplace satisfaction, dissatisfaction and motivation, and highlight the importance of recognizing potential strategies to implement in order to stay consistent with modern work practices. One may recognize that the discussed themes correlate closely to one another, where by the discussion of well-being and collaboration extends into the discussion of challenges in the work environment. The responses from the interviewees introduce and demonstrate both sides of remote work, namely working from home/alternative workspaces and working from the office. The key findings include, issues with time management, ability to focus, planning,

distractions, privacy and communication, and moreover, found clear support of prior research outlined in the literature review.



*Figure 16 Thematic Framework 5/5*

The following excerpts have provided evidence of the mentioned challenges of the work environment pertained to a work from home practice. Interviewee one (I1) discusses the challenges of time management with remote work, important to consider is that this participant is simultaneously completing their bachelor's degree and working, hence the challenge of balancing both academic and work responsibilities. This implies that there must be inefficient planning by allocating time and priority wrongly, the possibility of distraction and addresses poor organizational skills. The mentioned implications verify the conclusions of Aczel *et al* (2021), indeed it also confirms the idea that creating and having a designated workspace can aid in managing time and responsibilities. A similar view is shared with interviewee seven (I7) who comments on having to plan and manage time with those who opt to work from home on different days than the rest of the team. Their response also discusses the challenges of communication as well as the importance on having communication channels that are clearly defined and used to discuss and plan schedules.

*“Well, one of the main challenges as I said before, is time management... I’m currently also going to uni so it’s really hard to balance University as well as handling web design clients. I was going to the office all the time in Amsterdam, so I’d have to travel around an hour and a half every day, which was kind of annoying as well, getting up early.” I1*

*“So turns out one of the most important parts of like working in operations is like talking to people and then if you plan to speak to this person on Thursday, but then they’ve decided not to work on Thursday, like not working in the office on Thursday, then it kind of messes with your plans.” I7*

The following excerpts address the following challenges of the remote work pertained to working in the office. The responses discuss the distractions of coworkers and the overstimulation of noise. Distraction and overstimulation of the senses can hinder the level of productivity and negatively impact environmental comfort of employees because of the inability to concentrate on work. Interviewee 2 (I2) voices their opinion on workplace distraction, noise stimulation and focus when working from home and in the office. Indeed the researcher observes that while silence does not exist in the workplace, an excessive amount of noise can be distracting, provide discomfort and steer focus away. Additionally, their response acknowledges that while the office can be distracting so can working from home as the level of distraction is somewhat comparable in the sense that other forms of distractions exists and that one can be susceptible to multitasking in an inefficient way. Interviewee 4 (I4) voices their concerns on distracting and loud coworkers and clearly indicates that those who already struggle with remaining focus are immediately discouraged from working in loud environments.

*“I mean, if I’m in the office, I work in a customer facing -or work with clients. And if everyone is on the phone, you can get a bit more loud so if you have to focus on something you need to move... I think that’s a bit of a challenge because for me it’s super productive when quiet and then if*

*everyone is talking and if you're not super focused, you get distracted very easily, which I think is a bit of a challenge sometimes. "I2*

*"And then working from home I believe, I mean, you're at home so you can be very tempted to do other things and do multiple things at once, instead of only focusing on your work. I think if I really need to get something done I work at home because no one distracts me in my big office. But on the other hand in a big office, I can only do work related stuff so I can't do I don't know do the laundry you know." I2*

*"I mean I have quite a small attention span, and like people talking I'm getting distracted or I would just want to sit with my headphones on and work for like a solid hour and have a break like that. And sometimes it's just people talking all the time and you just kind of feel like they get way less work done in the office." I4*

The last excerpt for this thematic framework comments on the collaborative challenges when working from home. Interviewee six (I6) discusses the feeling of isolation, claustrophobia and hereby lack of collaborative opportunities. The literature review boldly discusses the advantages of collaboration, and interviewee four can thereby successfully account for the importance of collaboration and confirms that collaboration significantly impacts job satisfaction. When working from home, one is automatically caged off from opportunities to collaborate and interact with coworkers.

*"I suppose that's one of the issues with home working is that you're just well I'm just in my bedroom all the time. And that can be quite claustrophobic. You don't have people around you to kind of collaborate where the bounce off of..." I6*

## **5 Discussion & Conclusion**

By conducting the interviews, the researcher was able to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the needs of workers in respect to their work environment?
  - a. How important is it to satisfy workplace needs?
2. How important are the concepts of productivity, flexibility, and interaction when it comes to carrying out work?
3. How do collaborative working-spaces impact the satisfaction of workers?

The results and findings indicate how the future workplace set-up could potentially look like. The literature review suggests that workplace transformation is a growing trend and is an important aspect to adapt to. The results and findings further prove that the trend of workplace transformation is a growing one and that more and more organizations will adopt a new form of workplace and adjust to the needs and wants of employees in order to maintain a productive and innovative work environment.

## **5.1 Research Questions**

The following section discusses the findings of the research study in relation to the initial research questions proposed at the beginning of the study:

### **5.1.1 What are the needs of workers in respect to their work environment?**

The various responses of the interviewees shed light on both the different and shared work environment needs and wants across the varying industries. This concept can be applied in both the professional and personal aspects of life, it is thus important to recognize our differences and find ways to respectively accommodate them in our daily lives. Overall, there is a standard set of needs when it comes to the work environment, namely; an environment with plenty of light, stable Wi-Fi connection, a form of professional and personal interaction and lastly, a desk and place to store belongings. The researcher recognizes the mentioned challenges of remote work and working in the office and can therefore conclude that additional needs in respect to the work environment

include, privacy, clear communication channels, dedicated spaces for certain tasks that need to be carried out, quiet workspaces, and freedom of choice.

Collectively, the identified needs follow a pattern to an additional theory of motivation namely, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (figure 17 below). The theory can be applied in the setting of working from home and in the office. Working from home, certainly forms distance between coworkers, and office life. Implemented correctly, managers will soon realize that there are constant changing trends in needs and wants and that adapting and recognizing change is a beneficial way of creating engagement and satisfaction.

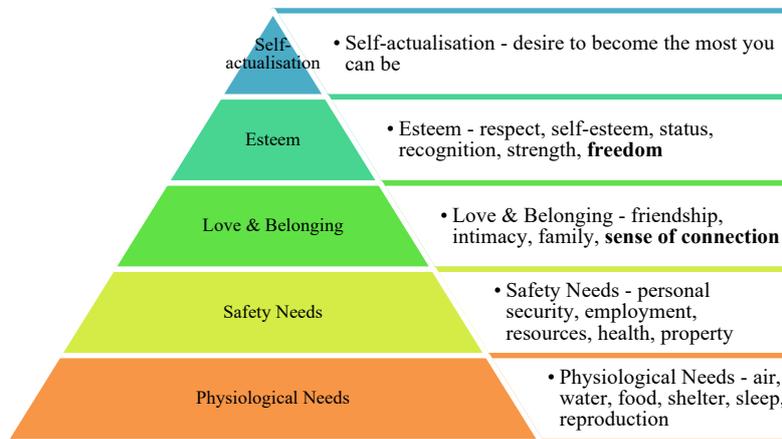


Figure 17 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (adapted from Hopper, 2021)

### 5.1.2 How important is it to satisfy workplace needs?

Just like it is important to recognize our needs in our personal lives it is extremely important to have them satisfied in our work lives as well. Interviewee four provides a perfect outlook and response to the importance of satisfying workplace needs:

*“Because you spend a ridiculous amount of your life at work... and you should be able to live your life where the needs that you want [are] met in that sense.” (I4)*

There is truth to the response, overall we spend most of our lives in ‘office’ and working, it sets the standards of where you create a balance between your professional and personal activities.

Tying in the conceptual framework of this research paper, Herzberg's two factor hygiene theory demonstrates merit throughout the analysis and discussion chapter of this research paper. As a quick recap, Herzberg's two factor theory explore factors of motivation and hygiene factors. His theory suggests that organizations must address both sides of the theory in order to achieve job satisfaction and prevent dissatisfaction at work. As previously discussed a sense of responsibility and autonomy is given to workers when it comes to remote-work, they are able to choose where and when to work and are still expected to meet deadlines and expectations of those in managerial positions. Looking at the hygiene factors the research supports the importance of good working conditions, relationship with peers and personal life. As explored in the literature review as well as the thematic analysis chapter, networking and interaction are indeed important elements that should be accessible to all workers in order to share ideas, solutions and provide balance between work and personal life. Moreover, acknowledgement of employee wellbeing, outlined in the analysis, validate factors of motivation and hygiene factors. Employee wellbeing includes, physical, career, and community wellbeing all intricately incorporated into the two-factor theory.

Certainly, the findings, prior literature and conceptual framework yield truth to the importance of satisfying workplace needs as it undeniably supports satisfaction, motivation and overall happiness at work.

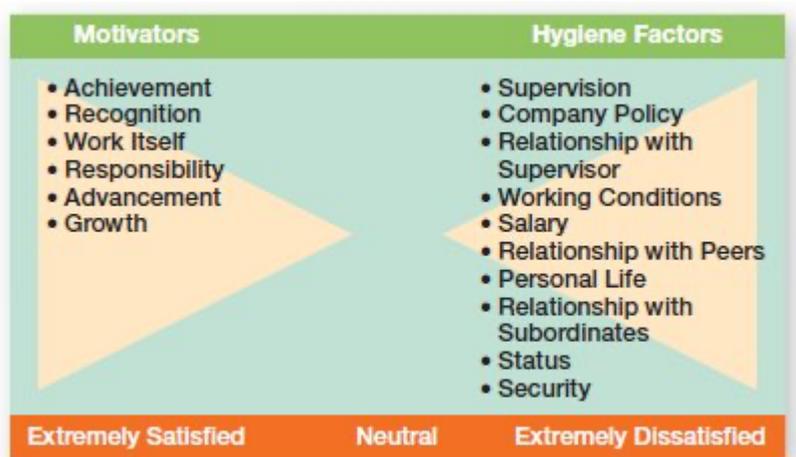


Figure 18 Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (Haque et al, 2014)

### **5.1.3 How important are the concepts of productivity, flexibility, and interaction when it comes to carrying out work?**

Over the course of this research study, and mainly through the analysis of the interviews conducted, common themes like productivity, flexibility and interaction have been identified as important factors of work life. Productivity are common objectives of organizations, at the end of the organizations will implement strategies that improve and increase productivity. From the employee perspective, flexibility is quite important. Not only does flexibility allow workers to choose where to carry work out but more importantly it allows them to arrange themselves so that there is a balance in what managers expect you to get done and knowing what your limit is. Interaction has proven to be very important to workers as it opens the opportunity to communicate with colleagues, ask questions when there are moments of uncertainty and creates a sense of belongingness. Over the past three years, organizations have adopted a flexible work practice which has altered the way employees perceive work. As revealed in the analysis and prior research, flexibility has provided so much more than freedom, it illustrates the ability to incorporate a form of balance, autonomy, satisfaction and self-actualization.

### **5.1.4 How do collaborative working-spaces impact the satisfaction of workers?**

Collaborative working-spaces have shown to positively impact the satisfaction of workers. Collaboration allows for the sharing of ideas, generating an innovative mindset, an outlet of finding balance between work life and personal life. Additionally, when looking at environmental comfort and the hygiene factor theory, a relationship with peers can aid in satisfying employees among other factors. As confirmed by interviewee 6 (I6) collaboration significantly impacts satisfaction and is considered a definite need for the working environment.

*“I suppose that's one of the issues with home working is that...you don't have people around you to kind of collaborate with...” I6*

## **5.2 Managerial Implications**

This thesis research is an addition to the research field, of human resource management, workplace organization, workplace satisfaction, and business management. Topics such as workplace satisfaction and change in the nature of work can be used in a variety of research fields.

Yukl (2012) comments on promoters of change and how those in leadership positions play a significant role in displaying a new method of doing things, being open to take risks, have a creative attitude and having a future-orientated mindset. A lot of the decisions that are made at work are more or less guided by those in managerial positions. Identifying factors associated with workplace satisfaction and well-being is important for managers to take into consideration and require a well-thought-out strategy on how to achieve a positive working environment for workers.

### **5.2.1 Recommendation**

The organization of work as we know it is changing and it is important to recognize the changes and adapt to new working trends in order to receive the benefits as an organization, employer and employee. Before giving the concluding recommendations the author would like to note that while the feeling of normalcy in the work environment is slowly returning that the emergence of remote work is here to stay.

Following the analysis in combination with the literature review the following recommendations can be made:

Foremost, it is imperative to establish a clear channel of communication between all stakeholders involved with the integration of a new work environment. Communication between colleagues across all hierarchical levels is a key element of making the hybrid model and traditional office communication work. Secondly, though not directly indicated, it is important to manage expectation when taking on a new form of work, everyone involved in the transition should understand what is expected of them this can easily be

measured by their level of output (productivity). Thirdly, as collaboration and interaction have proved to be a significant factor in the work environment, it is highly recommended to encourage and provide the resources that help foster collaboration and networking within the work environment. Fourthly, adapting a the hybrid model in regard to the type of industry it is being used in, is also very important and helps incorporate a previously mentioned point; managing expectations. Fifthly, the researcher recommends to adjust and adapt to ongoing trends occurring and relating to work practices. This is an important point as it creates a feeling of desire and attraction to join and remain in an organization.

The findings suggests that human beings crave the company of others, and that the traditional office is able to cater for the collaborative needs. A building that is able to facilitate social networking, planned and more importantly unplanned meetings, and build trust are moderators of organization success. Overall finding the balance between all office alternatives will definitely guide organizations in the right direction to keep employees satisfied and motivated to come into work and carry out work from any location.

It can be argued that it is still too early to determine whether or not the office as we know it is a concept of the past, but there definitely lies truth that the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic has demonstrated that there technically is no need for offices anymore. Therefore, it is more than fair to conclude that adopting a mid-way solution to the work environment, in which the freedom of choice and flexibility are drivers of deciding where work is carried out, should be seen as an opportunity that organizations should take advantage of.

### **5.3 Limitations & Future Research**

Despite research studies aiming to present the realities of the world as accurately as possible, there are limitations that every researcher encounters during their investigation. There will always be a limitation factor regardless of what is being tested, studied, and analyzed. The limitations of this research study were in the scope of the data collection and analysis. This study looked at the future of work with a focus on remote work; the initial proposal was to investigate

coworking spaces as a primary location for the future of work. However, the researcher later realized that to look into the future of work the research cannot be subjected to just one form of remote work, as this would also narrow down and limit interviewee responses. The researcher also took into consideration the possibility of their own potential bias, this consideration was held unconsciously throughout the research investigation. Moreover, interviewees have employed a form of remote work for a short period of time, so there are not a lot of opportunities and threats that they have encountered, and their judgement is based on recent experiences as there are not significant number of situations for comparisons.

Moreover, the findings of this research provide a valuable insight into the topic and hold a significant amount of merit in regard to the conclusions drawn in addition to the research topic. The findings represent a new form of work within the sharing economy and provide meaningful and informative information while allowing for the opportunity for future research in areas related to the topic as well as the topic itself. The importance of this topic allows for future research to expand its investigations in order to gain a wider understanding of the topic.

An additional limitation to the analysis is the type of analysis conducted. While a thematic analysis offers an extremely flexible and accessible analytic approach, it also means that there are multiple angles of interpreting the ultimate meaning of the data. It is an entirely subjective approach which may limit the decision on deciding what is of significance and what is not. An oversight that fortunately did not heavily influence the analysis chapter was making sure to identify themes from the data and not the research question. The analysis section allowed the researcher to temporarily ignore research question and focus purely on the data presented.

Future research conducted could be repeated in a quantitative research design in order for clearer comparisons to be drawn out and gain another layer understanding within the research topic. Interview questions could be asked differently by other researchers- hence deriving different conclusions from the

study. The research could be repeated by interviewing more people within the same industry in order to identify the extent of remote work. Additionally, it would be interesting to involve different age groups in the study namely, those between 16 – 18, 25 – 30, 45 – 50, 70+.

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## 7 Appendix

### 7.1 Interview Questions & Guide

# Interview Questions

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## Interview Questions on Workplace Transformation

*Submitted to Name*

Interview conducted by: Angelika Leiler

*Please read carefully,*

You have been invited to take part in this research study, carried out by the researcher, Angelika Leiler – student at Modul University Vienna, as part of the Bachelor thesis for obtaining the degree in International Management. Before deciding to continue with the interview please read the following information which outlines the purpose of this research, should you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out using the following email address: [61901033@modul.ac.at](mailto:61901033@modul.ac.at).

The purpose of this research is to identify the change in the nature of work and how organizations are starting to adopt and implement a remote and flexible work structure. There is no obligation to take part in this interview and are free to withdraw from the interview at any point in time. You will be asked a set of questions (provided on page 2), about your industry, workplace set-up, and change in the workplace. Questions answered will remain anonymous, furthermore names will remain confidential.

The interview will be recorded and transcribed and after the analysis has been done will be permanently deleted. Thank you for taking the time to read through the information sheet.

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*Initial, Date*

### **Preliminary Questions**

1. Do you consent to this interview?
2. What industry do you work in?
3. How long have you been in the industry?
4. What is your current workspace arrangement?
5. How long have you been working in your current workspace arrangement?

### **Questions**

1. Are you able to choose how and where you work?
2. What needs do you have in regard to your working environment?
3. Why do you think it is important that your workspace needs are met?
4. What elements of work satisfy your needs and wants?
5. In your opinion, what are important factors needed for a good working environment?
6. How do the different industries you've worked in vary in regard to workplace needs and environment?
7. What are some of the challenges your current work environment is facing?
8. How do you feel about your workplace set up and how has it influenced the way you work?
9. How has remote work impacted your work life?
10. What do you think will be the most significant workplace trend in the future?

## **7.2 Interview II**

**Researcher:** This is a semi structured interview, which means that you have the opportunity to go further into your responses and explore other themes. It's not

like a structured interview where you answer questions one after the other without the chance to build additional information to your response. Make sense?

I1: Sounds good.

Researcher: Great. Okay. So, the first question would be, do you consent to this interview?

I1: Yes.

Researcher: Great. And what industry do you work in?

I1: I work in the web design industry as well as the marketing industry.

Researcher: Okay, and how long have you been working in both industries?

I1: For the web design industry, I've been working for two years now. And for marketing, it's coming up to a year.

Researcher: Okay, that's good. And what is your current workplace arrangement?

I1: As in like, where?

Researcher: As in; is it remote - remote work, co-working spaces, cafes, and office.

I1: I primarily work at home. But I also do work in Amsterdam once a week.

Researcher: Okay. That's good. And how long have you been working from home?

I1: For two years.

Researcher: Okay, good. So, I guess that would go into the next question, which is, are you able to choose how and where you work?

I1: To a certain extent, so I currently work three jobs. For my web design work, as well as social media management for a venture capital firm, I'm allowed to work wherever I want. I work as a social media manager for a company called AdCombie and there it's not a requirement, but they asked me to come to the office once a week.

Researcher: Okay, and what needs do you have in regard to your work environment?

I1: My needs, I need my laptop, I need a monitor. Otherwise, I'm not productive. I need my headphones in. I enjoy being in a quiet space. But from time to time, I'd say my needs are that I also want to see my colleagues and kind of interact with them that

Researcher: That makes a lot of sense. And why do you think it's important that your workplace needs and wants are met?

I1: I think it's important because firstly, it will make me more productive, I'll feel better yeah, that's it pretty much.

Researcher: Okay. And what kind of priorities does your organization have towards workplace?

I1: So, in terms of my own job where I can work remotely, I don't really have any priorities for myself. I would say my own priorities are just to really focus on time management. I realized working alone, like I have to have control everything. There's no one telling me what to do. So, I really have to put everything into the calendar every day I write a to do list.

Researcher: Okay. And in your opinion, what are important factors needed for a good working environment

I1: A nice clean workspace, good internet, good laptop. And having like good managers and good colleagues, to make sure like you're still happy when you're at work.

Researcher: Okay. And you mentioned that you work in two different industries. Have you noticed a major difference between workplace needs between your marketing job and the web design job?

I1: Yeah, I would guess I think so. So, everything is a lot more strict for my marketing job. I feel more like an employee there and I have a manager who's telling me what to do. At on my own job, I tell myself what to do. If I don't want to do something, I won't do it.

Researcher: Good. Moving on from that one what challenge have you faced in regard to your work environment or your workplace setup?

I1: Well, one of the main challenges as I said before, is time management. I'm currently also going to uni so it's really hard to balance University as well as handling web design clients. And then I'm always in contact with my social media clients as well. Previously, I was going to the office all the time in Amsterdam, so I'd have to travel around an hour and a half every day, which was kind of annoying as well, getting up early, and then you wait for the company to pay you back at the end of the month.

Researcher: And how do you feel about your workplace setup? Would there be something that you want to improve and how has it influenced the way you work?

I1: I really liked my workspace setup. That's kind of basic right now. I just have a monitor in my living room. If I was to improve it, I would like to get my own office, of course, my own private space, probably get another monitor. But I think it's decent. It's all right. It works. And I think it's definitely made me more productive. Yeah, it all works well.

Researcher: Are you considering taking on different alternative workspaces like co-working spaces?

I1: I've considered it, there are a few workspaces here in Rotterdam. But you have to pay. Of course, that's kind of like, is it worth it in the end? I might as well just stay home.

Researcher: And I'm assuming that with your office job you have, they're not going to offer you to go to co-working spaces if they have office spaces already.

I1: For sure.

Researcher: So how would you describe your workspace atmosphere?

I1: In terms of?

Researcher: In terms of when you're in the office, or when you're at home.

I1: I would say they both really vary. When I'm in the office I talk a lot to my colleagues. It's almost worth talking all the time. I kind of enjoy it, though I only see them once a week. So, it doesn't feel as formal as it should be. The colleagues are really chill. We just talk about anything. But there is still that point where the manager will tell you like okay, get back to work do this. My atmosphere at home is pretty nice. It's chill, I can work when I want to. I have roommates. My girlfriend's here so sometimes it does get a bit loud if they're just in the kitchen and I'm sitting here in their living room, but it's manageable.

Researcher: Comparing home office and going into the office. Which one would you prefer?

I1: If I had to pick one, I would work at home. I think it just gives me a lot more freedom. And it saves me a lot of time. I don't have to get up earlier. I don't have to travel. But then the downside is I don't get to see and interact with my colleagues. But yeah, if I had to pick one - work at home.

Researcher: Do you think interacting with your colleagues is important to you?

I1: Yeah, I would say it's pretty important. Especially a few months ago when I was going every day, if my colleagues were nice, and if they weren't nice to talk to, I think I would be a lot less motivated to actually go and work.

Researcher: And what do you think will be the most significant workplace trend in the future in regard to where work is carried out?

I1: I think it's going to be a mix of hybrid like at home and at the office. Like there's already a trend. I've seen like a lot of office buildings are empty. People are starting to like to work more at home. And I think as well, like AI is becoming a big thing. I think it's definitely gonna change the workplace trends in the future.

Researcher: And if you had to describe your ideal workplace, which attributes would you use?

I1: Ideal workspace, having like a proper setup. Nice quiet environment.

Researcher: Thanks so much for your time, also all information will remain anonymous, and the recording will be deleted once I've analyzed everything.

I1: Yeah of course.

### **7.3 Interview I2**

Researcher: I'm going to first ask you the preliminary questions where I just ask you for consent of the interview, the industry you're working in and how long you've been working and then we'll dive into the rest of the questions. This is a semi structured interview, so you do have the opportunity to dive deeper into your responses and explore other themes.

I2: Sounds good.

Researcher: Good. Do you consent to this interview?

I2: Yes.

Researcher: Good. And what industry are you working in?

I2: I'm currently working in the financial sector.

Researcher: Okay. And how long have you been working in the financial sector?

I2: Eight months now.

Researcher: And what is your current workspace arrangement?

I2: Um, we have an office, but we also have the opportunity to work from home or from one of the other locations. So, it is quite flexible, I would say. And I think nowadays, it's called hybrid mode.

Researcher: Yeah. And how long have you been working in this current workspace?

I2: Eight months as well.

Researcher: Okay. And so that means you're able to choose how and where you work from, correct?

I2: Yeah, yes, more, or less because in a financial sector you have to stick to some rules and regulations. So, I'm allowed to work in a country where I live in, which is Austria and I'm also allowed to work in the country I work in. My workspace is in Lichtenstein and also in Switzerland. So, for me, you can work in those three countries. Just because the information we're working with is very sensitive. If you work abroad, you would have to ask for a special permission. You are quite flexible to choose. But I do have to say this is also dependent on the national regulations of the country. So, if for example, the special regulation because of COVID It's gonna be lifted. I'm not sure if you could work as flexible with remote work. But for now, you could do whatever you want.

Researcher: Okay, that's interesting. I didn't know about that.

I2: Yeah, I mean, in Switzerland, they give you the regulations. That's like a special case now. But for now, it says it lasts until June. So, after that, I think it's really dependent on the company itself.

Researcher: And what needs do you have in regard to your working environment?

I2: Is this regarding in the office or generally speaking,

Researcher: Office.

I2: Okay. It's, um, I would say enough space to have a setup and everything. And for me personally, it was really important that there is light in there. So, you can see what time it is outside. You don't want to be stuck in a dark room. And also, regarding the environment, I think, I don't know if that counts, but your work colleagues, it can't be too noisy as well. And in my opinion, you should have the opportunity to get a quiet room if needed. Because I do get it not everyone can get like single office. But I would also say regarding a work environment like good colleagues, I mean, I don't know if that's a factor which counts but I think it is also really important to be productively working.

Researcher: And do you think it's important that your organization meets your needs in regard to your work environment?

I2: Definitely, I think it's not just a benefit for me as an employee, but also a benefit for the organization itself because you would be more productive, and you enjoy work more because you feel more comfortable.

Researcher: And what elements of your work, satisfy your needs and wants?

I2: Elements of?

Researcher: Elements of work environment, like do they provide you enough amenities or like a good workspace?

I2: Yes, for me personally, I feel very comfortable. I have a bright room. And also, we have enough space. I mean, I work in a big room. Like where a lot of people sit but it's surprisingly not as loud as I expected it to be. So, it is okay, but it's definitely something I guess someone has to get used to. Also, if I need, I could get a quiet room for a bit to continue working there. And also, they offer the possibility to work from home which I really appreciate.

Researcher: You mentioned earlier that in the financial sector you do have a set standard at work. So, what are some of the important workplace priorities that your organization has set out in regard to how you work?

I2: So, for example, if you work from home - everyone has to have the right equipment because at work, you have more screens and a computer and you know stationaries and, for example my workplace offers equipment. So, if you need you could get like computer screens, a mouse and a keyboard, everything like to provide you with headphones, for example, about anything you need, you can ask for it. And if they deem it as appropriate, then you can get it for at home as well. So, you can create your own working environment at home. So, you don't have to work from a small computer all the time or I don't know whatever you prefer. So, they offer that and also, they really keep you updated with the regulations and what is going on. And they have a really good support team if you need something. Also, if you're working from home not only when you're in your office, which I think is really nice because technology nowadays does not always work perfectly. But yeah, that is I think really good.

Researcher: Okay. And, in your opinion, what are the most important factors for a good working environment, just a general overview.

I2: Definitely enough space and the flexibility for all employees because some people don't like to work alone because it's too quiet. I guess. Some people don't like to work if it's too loud. So, I feel like if the workplace is flexible about your workspace, it will be really nice. And I just generally think the most important thing is they do give you the opportunity to communicate your preferences I

mean, I feel like a few years ago, it was not a thing to work from home. But nowadays it is like more or less a given. And I think companies really have to like jump on the train and offer the employees what they feel most comfortable with because the more comfortable you are at the workplace wherever it is I think the more productive you are and more satisfied with your job in general.

Researcher: Yeah, I agree. And what would you say are some of the challenges of your current work environment?

I2: You mean in the office now or at home or both?

Researcher: Both both.

I2I: I mean, if I'm in the office, I work in a customer facing -or work with clients. And if everyone is on the phone, you can get a bit more loud so if you have to focus on something you need to move only if you can. If you don't need to, but if you want to move you can move and I think that's a bit of a challenge because for me it's super productive when quiet and then if everyone is talking and if you're not super focused, you get distracted very easily, which I think is a bit of a challenge sometimes. And then working from home I believe, I mean, you're at home so you can be very tempted to do other things and do multiple things at once, instead of only focusing on your work. But this also depends on what kind of person you are, but for me personally, if I'm at home I work next to my coffee machine, so I stand up way more often to get coffee. Whereas the office I have to, you know, walk out first and then go to another building, so I feel like I'm more focused. I think if I really need to get something done, I work at home because no one distracts me in my big office. But on the other hand, in a big office, I can only do work related stuff so I can't do I don't know do the laundry you know.

Researcher: I get that. How has home office influenced the way you work vice versa with the office.

I2: I think you save more time because I need to commute to work. It takes me 30 to 45 minutes, so you save way more time. You are way more flexible at home because you forget certain appointments you can take them whereas in the office, you always have to leave and come back and more complicated I would say so what was the question again?

Researcher: How has working from home and home influenced how you work vice versa with them going actually into the office?

I2: Yeah, I get more sleep, obviously, and I feel like the possibility to sometimes work from home I feel like it benefits your work life balance, because you are working but it is a small change. You know, because if you're going to the office every day, it's always the same. But if you can work from home- like just a change of scenery I feel like this also gives me for example new ideas. Because you don't always see the same thing and it just yeah, I think it's generally a benefit that you have the opportunity. I mean, I do not believe that if you only work in the office, it's very good or you only work from home because you're missing the social interaction from the office, but I think how do you say the change up you know, is the key. Like, yeah.

Researcher: Okay, that's a nice way to put it. And what do you think the future of work will actually look like?

I2: Future of Work in regarding the work environment or?

Researcher: Yeah, and in regard to where and how work will be carried out.

I2: I think this remote working thing is gonna get a lot more popular. I mean, it already is getting very popular. And I feel like based on this trend, maybe some companies will reduce the office space because the rent is so expensive, and if people are not always coming into the office or rotating to come to the office, they would need way less space for more employees. And I also believe the flexibility I mean, I'm not really sure if you're more productive when you're at home. So, I'm not sure if this will be better in the future. Because I do believe

in the office. You know, you know this is the office you know you need to work, but also think the time you commute to work makes up for it. So yeah, I think in the future, companies will stick to more flexible working arrangements, because also, if you don't, I feel like it's harder to recruit more employees because they want the flexibility nowadays, I believe.

Researcher: Yeah, definitely. I agree with you there. Yeah, yeah. Would you ever try exploring an alternative form of remote work like co working spaces? Of course, cafes might not meet the needs of you know, the financial sector with privacy with all that sensitive information.

I2: Hmm. Well, I do use it sometimes. For example, when I'm traveling, when I have meetings in different cities, to save time I work there may be like also in a cafe or co working space, I would need it and also use it. But it is more like if it's right if it's really convenient right now or if it's like I have no other choice, sometimes I also work from the train, which is also not an ideal working environment. But I think if you do it once in a while, it doesn't really affect you. Like I can still be productive on a train you get used to it. And for co working spaces I mean, I like it. But then also, if I have an office, which is basically a co working space for me it doesn't really make a difference for me to go commute to another place other than just go to the office because I have all my equipment there. I don't have all my stationary stuff there [coworking space].

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. And when you have to use co working spaces in other cities, have you seen a benefit to using them?

I2: Well, yes, I feel like coworking spaces you see other people in the first place. And also, there everyone's so focused on working. So, it makes you feel more pressured into working as well. Because in the office, I feel like you don't waste time, but you spend a lot of time chit chatting because you already know the people whereas in the co working space, you get some social interaction. You don't feel alone, but you don't have this usual chitchat going on with strangers

you would have with your sitting neighbor that you sit next to every day. Yeah.  
Okay. Yeah, exactly.

Researcher: Thank you. That is all the questions answered.

I2: That's good. Hope you could have gotten some insight.

Researcher: Yes, I loved your answers. They were perfect.

I2: Yeah, that's good.

#### **7.4 Interview I3**

Researcher: So basically, I'm looking at the future of work, the main focus is remote work, co working spaces, home office, hybrid, all of that. And I'm conducting interviews to then do thematic analysis of the responses.

I3: That's so cool. So, sort of, are we going to be working in offices in the future?

Researcher: Yeah, how it's going to look like do people want to work from home, do people want to start using co working spaces?

I3: I would prefer hybrid to be honest.

Researcher: Yeah, I get that.

I3: I think since COVID, a lot of people have gotten into hybrid, I know that people who go into office like three days a week, and they just seem so much happier, like yeah, they'd go to the gym, they go to lunch, you know put the washing machine on.

Researcher: Yeah, exactly. Okay, so I'm going ask you five basic questions that are just about consent, the industry you have worked in or are working in and for how long? Okay?

I3: Okay.

Researcher: So, do you consent to this interview?

I3: I do.

Researcher: Great. And what industry do you work in?

I3: So, I'm currently doing freelance for a magazine and online magazine.

Researcher: Okay, and how long have you been working in that industry?

I3: So, since September 2022, I want to say yeah, along with my masters.

Researcher: Okay. And what's your current workspace arrangement? In terms of where do you work from?

I3: I usually work from home or if I'm meeting with my editor, I usually call from home somewhere quiet. But if I'm writing something up or writing an article, I usually go out. I can't really work from home sometimes, so I just go out to like coffee shops or I work with a friend something like that.

Researcher: That's good. And how long have you been working like that?

I3: Um, oh my gosh. Probably since I want to say COVID. I mean, not for this company. But I feel like that's always been the case for since the pandemic, you sort of get freedom over where you can sit and be productive and I feel like I'm finding more spaces where I can actually sit down and work with either someone else or work in quiet or something like that.

Researcher: Okay. So, are you then able to choose where and how you were with your job?

I3: There is some restrictions and for example, if I'm on a call with you, I would want to choose something quiet where I can't be disturbed. But if I am collaborating with someone or doing something where I need to focus, I don't mind going outside putting my headphones on. For example, I was I'm working on a podcast as well right now so if I need to edit, I usually find somewhere quiet. Or if I'm working with someone else maybe like a co working room, in a

building so like in a library or in a public space that's like a room you can book out and have discussions and without anyone else.

Researcher: So then in regard to your like, I guess workspace needs what are they?

I3: Workspace needs? Yeah, oh god. A desk or a flat surface is very important. I can't sit on my bed and just type on my lap. I feel I found that I can't work like that. A charging port. That's so important. When I go to a coffee shop, I always look for a seat next to a charging port. Somewhere that doesn't feel too crowded, I would say so if I'm working in a co working space, I want it to be like a table in like a big space not like in a cubicle or in one of those like exam tables if that makes any sense.

Researcher: Yeah, makes sense.

I3: My needs are very basic. So, I can pretty much work anywhere that has a desk and a charger.

Researcher: Okay. And in terms of collaboration or interacting with people. How's that?

I3: In my workspace?

Researcher: Yeah. Do you need it? Is it something you would want?

I3: That really depends on what I'm working on. So again, if I'm working with someone, I would prefer, like a bookable room especially if it's like the confidential things I'm talking about, or I don't want anyone else overhearing. But yeah, I think if I'm on my own, and I'm working on a singular project, writing an article I usually don't mind just sitting at like a small table. But if it's online as well, that also helps because if it's on like notion teams, zoom, everything's just on your screen. So, I just need like a nice like, place and also background matters, somewhere with good lighting, you know.

Researcher: Yeah. Okay. That's good to know. It makes complete sense. So then, taking into consideration that you're doing home office and occasionally go to cafes, and co working spaces; do elements in those areas, satisfy your needs, and wants to in regard to your workspace environment.

I3: Okay, so yeah, I think my only issue is that my room right now does not have a desk. So, I have like a little like table like a bed table with like a tray. And I just use that as a desk. But other than that, if I'm going out to work, I usually have most things that I would require. Yeah.

Researcher: And then in general, what do you think are important factors for good working environment?

I3: For good work working environment? A Wi Fi connection, especially if you're doing remote working, if you need to be on your laptop on your own, I think a Wi Fi connection... Can you repeat the question?

Researcher: All good all good. In your opinion, what are important factors for having a good working environment?

I3: Oh, I have to kind of feel productive. Sometimes I feel like I can write for hours but then sometimes I'll switch I need to go somewhere with other people. Not necessarily other people to speak to but other people to drive productivity. So, I feel like that's what I struggle with. Sometimes when I'm working alone at home. It's just like I don't have that atmosphere where everyone's working at the same time. But that's just very personal to me. I know some people can work anywhere so.

Researcher: Yeah. And then what challenges have you faced from working in home office, cafes and co working spaces?

I3: Challenges? I think we all have different ones I would say in cafes things can get a bit loud. So, we have to be like particular what kind of work I want to be doing. So, for example, cafes are good for like solo work, I would say or just sitting at a table with someone not really speaking. It's more just for like

focusing on writing, focusing on editing stuff like that. Home is more sort of, I think for meetings I would rather call someone at home than outside. I feel more calm, less stressed. Co working spaces I feel are probably the most useful spaces. Just because you get sometimes you have the option of going into solo quiet study. Whilst you can also, I don't know, collaborate with someone over a table or again go to a room that you can book and work in there.

Researcher: Yeah, I definitely agree with you on that. And how do you feel about your workplace setup? Do you like working from home? How does it influence the way you work?

I3: Do I like working from home? I think like we talked about I get to do more of my own thing. So, like, I'm not a student working full time. I'm just working alongside my studies. So, I feel like when I'm not at school, I still have the time to sort out my life. You know, make my meals, do the washing you know, like have time on my phone even. But again, like with the whole productivity aspect, I feel like there are sometimes where I benefit more from leaving the house and being with other people. I don't know what it is. It's just it just helps me kind of work better when I'm around people. But it really does help kind of to go and be able to interact with people even if it's just like going into work or being on a call with like my editor.

Researcher: And how has remote work impacted your life.

I3: Remote work. I just think it's I think it's more fulfilling, I would say it's like, I get to do what I would usually do in my daily life but have freedom over when I can clock in if that makes any sense. So, like if today I don't want to write for my magazine. I can write for them next week. Also, my editor is really understanding about the fact that I'm doing it alongside my studies. So, she would say well, deadlines are flexible. If you have other priorities, you can fit into these later. But yeah, I feel like there's no sort of pressure to sit down and like be in that hustle culture, you know, and I really do think it's better for your mental well-being for also like the way you approach work. I feel like if you're

there nine to five, it's sometimes getting a bit boring. It gets a bit sort of I don't know, like you feel very pressured in your work, and I feel like remote has really changed that.

Researcher: Yeah. And then regarding the future of work what do you think is most significant work trend? Do you think it's going to be all hybrid or all in office? Are people going to be using cafes more?

I3: Yeah, I think the future I think right now is going hybrid. I think it's gonna be implemented across all jobs. But um, well I'm in the creative industry. So, most of the work I do and most of the work my friends do is like freelance. Yeah, so there's no set schedule for it. So, I think that might be the future of it. Like I think hybrid and remote work I think also co working spaces. I would personally love to see more co working spaces that are not like you know, based on membership or they get too busy. Like I know the local Starbucks is probably full of people all day. So maybe like more of that kind of energy. I would say I would think that would help me choose a job that works remotely more if that makes sense. Yeah.

Researcher: And you mentioned the creative industry, what are like important factors that you need in a creative industry, with your work environment, going from the people you work, being able to take breaks, having like stimuli that I guess gets the juices flowing?

I3: I would say, again, co working spaces are so important. Like, especially when you're in the beginning phases of a project. So, beginning phases of a project, and you're in development, there's a lot of discussion and I feel like a lot can be said in person that you can't transfer onto a text or emails or phone calls. But also, like just like a facility to edit I would say like something with you know, big desktops maybe it can like log into like we used to have at school, you know, where you have like this big desktop, so you just do whatever you want on them. And Adobe is like so expensive. So, if there was a place to maybe meet up and I don't know you come back from a shoot, you have to edit. You

have to organize, basically have that on your screen and have the co working space as well. I think that's really crucial.

Researcher: Out of all the alternatives that you've used, which one do you prefer?

I3: It's circumstantial. I mean, I've never worked in office, but from what I've heard, like, it's very - you go in and you sit at your desk you do this, you have your meetings, like I think meetings are probably the most like co working space, you could probably find, and I feel like co working spaces let you extend beyond the meeting. It's like a more casual environment for you to sort of bounce ideas off each other, or I don't know even complain about work. I think it's just a calmer environment, it feels a bit safer. And I think you get along with your colleagues and everyone else more when you're in that space. And then you can sort of I don't know, it's like being at school again. You get like your own little cafeteria table. You have to like, talk to people, you know, but you also have the option to step back and study in your own space, whether it's like at home or at a cafe. So, I think that's what I love most about working in a co working space is that it doesn't feel like an office job. But it still has that element of like you've got other people from your work there.

Researcher: Yeah, no, definitely.

I3: Yeah. Do you know any co working spaces where you are?

Researcher: Yeah. So, I know in Vienna, there is one that I used to work at like I was employed at which was good. And because it was part of like a big hotel chain, maybe you've heard about it they used to be called The Student Hotel but now they're called The Social Hub and they have a bunch of locations pretty much like all over Europe like really all over the Netherlands, in Italy. I really see so many benefits especially for specific industries as well like startups, especially if you need to be surrounded by people that specialize in their own thing to bounce ideas off of. I just think there's a lot of flexibility especially I guess, for people who are also traveling like on business trips, you know.

I3: That's important. Yeah, exactly. I know in Bangkok I don't know a lot of co working that is like free it's usually like part of a cafe. It's like one room in a cafe. I'm like, well, that's simply not enough, I think in Bangkok anyway, the culture is very like hybrid. So, everyone goes out to do work, even if it's like, at the end of the day or during their lunch break, they go out and do work. So, I think the closest I can get is like the Starbucks in Central World, the massive one like everyone goes there. There's like big tables like you can literally sit there all day like I've done it. But like other than that, there's like this co working space in Midtown. It's like near Central but you have to pay a membership. It's open 24 hours, but again, there's like the basic tables. Yeah, like power sockets and stuff.

Researcher: Thank you for answering all my questions.

I3: Of course.

## **7.5 Interview I4**

Researcher: Hi, I'm Angelika nice to meet you. It's a semi structured interview. That basically means that you have the opportunity to, I guess explore more themes with your responses.

I4: Okay, got you.

Researcher: Do you have any questions before we start?

I4: No. Good. I had a quick look over the questions earlier.

Researcher: I will also transcribe and record this, but it's all going to be deleted once I've done my analysis. Do you consent to this interview?

I4: Yes

Researcher: Great and in what industry do you work in?

I4: I work in market research.

Researcher: That's really interesting. I'm also really interested in pursuing a marketing career.

I4: If you have any questions about that, you can ask me to share any insight that might hatch.

Researcher: Great, thank you. And how long have you been in the marketing industry?

I4: Just under two years.

Researcher: Okay. And what is your current workspace arrangement in regards?

I4: Yeah, so we have a, it's like a co working space as in as a whole building. But then we actually have two rooms that are like private for us. So, we have like a main office and then like a meeting room, but then the whole rest of the building is shared. So, there's lots of other businesses in that. And yeah, at the moment we're doing four days in the office, so Monday to Thursday, and then Friday working from home. But it's flexible in some ways where like, if I say I want to work from home, they're not gonna kick off the ballot if I have a delivery come in, if I don't feel well, whatever it is, they'll let me work from home. So, it's quite flexible. But they also really like people to be in the office, which I think makes sense.

Researcher: And how long have you been working in this setup?

I4: I'm in this specific setup since about October last year. And then before that it was the same office, but it was really flexible. It was like, whatever you want. And then most people were doing like one or two days a week and it was very, very flexible, but not as many people in then. So yeah, the first one was to October that one was to about September the year before and then before that I was it was Covid, so I was always working from home.

Researcher: Okay. Interesting to know. And so, I guess you're able to choose how and where you work?

I4: To some extent, like today is like, I didn't have that much work I would have rather stayed at home, but I don't really have a good reason. So, I had to go to the office. So not in that sense. No, I don't get to choose where I work.

Researcher: And in regard to your working environment, what needs do you have?

I4: I mean, obviously the basic ones would be like internet, like facilities, like the places to make like tea or coffee. For me personally, I like to have like a comfy chair. Like some of the chairs in the office are really uncomfy so I actually asked my boss to get a comfy chair because it was uncomfy. Apart from that I think you need somewhere where you can relax as well. It can't just be an office you need to have lots of like lounges and there's like a rooftop there that's like a terrace which is really nice. So, something like that as well. I mean, again, it's not a major one but a cycle room. So having like a place where I can leave my bike is good. The one we're at now has showers that are nice showers as well, but I don't use them often. But sometimes I run with my colleagues at lunch. So again, that's pretty good. I think that's most of it. And then I mean in terms of location, the office, it would have to be you know, obviously can't be in the middle of nowhere. It needs to be accessible for people, public transport, roads, whatever has to have shops around there. Hopefully some sort of like green space stuff like that.

Researcher: I agree with you there. And why do you think it's important that I guess work meets those needs?

I4: Because you spend a ridiculous amount of your life at work, how much you're gonna spend when you're about 20 Something to 60 at work, so mostly your life is gonna be like that and you should be able to live your life where the needs that you want to meet in that sense. Yeah.

Researcher: And have you worked in any other industry before?

I4: This only like full time

Researcher: And within the marketing industry, what needs are required in a working environment?

I4: In terms of office space?

Researcher: Yeah, office space environment.

I4: I think not as many as some other industries potentially. Because a lot of the stuff we do is project based so it doesn't matter how long I work each day, as long as I get the projects done. So many market research agencies have like one or two days in the week, completely flexible hybrid work where you want for how long you want stuff like that. So, I'd say marketing is probably more flexible other than some other industries.

Researcher: Okay. And then we've talked about all like the needs and the importance of satisfaction at work. What are some of the challenges that you've faced within your work environment?

I4: I think one is that it is just quite taxing in the sense that if you do wake up, not feeling 100% having to travel into work and sit there around people all day and work and it is a bit it takes a lot of energy. Like you'd save more energy if you stayed at home, so sometimes I don't always want to do that. But I feel like you are less productive in the office. I find the days where everyone's chatty, so like a Monday. And then it's so, I mean I have quite a small attention span, and like people talking I'm getting distracted, or I would just want to sit with my headphones on and work for like a solid hour and have a break like that. And sometimes it's just people talking all the time and you just kind of feel like they get way less work done in the office. And I guess it's a silly one, but just like I don't know like doing chores in your house. Like going to buy food, like Amazon deliveries if you're physically not in the office.

Researcher: And how do you think your current work setup has influenced the way you work?

I4: Um I think if I was fully remote, like working from home all the time or the predominantly, I think I'd wake up sit down for a good like four or five hours or whatever do all the work and then I go to the gym, I go do my activities and then I think in the office I don't want to sit there in silence and work for four or five hours, even if I get everything done, because I can't really get up and leave at 2pm or 3pm Because everyone's like where the hell you going. Sorry, what was the question again?

Researcher: The question was, how has your workplace setup influenced the way you work?

I4: It's more collaborative. I think more social and like collaborative on a professional level. Having meetings in person is 100% better you get more of a sense of the person, and you know, it's just it's more spontaneous thing. Like at the end of the day, before I started my job, I hated seeing my friends like because I live close to my sibling all the time. And then I've moved away a little bit and now as I see my colleagues more, they're becoming my friends. So obviously you want to build good relations with them.

Researcher: And so how would you then describe your workspace atmosphere?

I4: Um, I don't know. I think on those chatty days, it can be quite like hectic. But then on other days it can be I think physically our office isn't the nicest, like the building is always nice, but the actual room is quite like dark. It's not that dark, but it's a bit dingy. And it's just, it's not very, like clean, I mean it is clean but it's not. It doesn't really have like any soul to it. It's just like a kind of gray room with like a window on one end. So, I'd say it's a bit gray in that sense, but I mean generally quite laid back. I think my company is quite a laid-back company in the sense that you don't have to walk in wearing a suit on time, like, sit there and you can actually like joke with people and it's a bit more jovial, which is definitely a plus.

Researcher: So, what's your idea of what the future workplace will look like?

I4: To me personally or in general?

Researcher: Generally.

I4: I guess in terms of physicality; it would be just a bit nice. I'm a big advocate for like plants and like aerospace and lights. I mean, I studied psychology at uni, and we did something about the workplace as well. And it was like, people that sit near the window, have a score lower on like depression indexes and people that sit in the shadowy corner office, which obviously makes sense. Think about it, but it's like, little things like that.

Researcher: Did you start your career during the pandemic?

I4: Yeah, I started in May 2021. And then it was still the bullet six and stuff. And I met my colleagues once or twice right at the start to pick up the laptop and stuff. And then after that, I didn't see them for like a bunch of months. And then there was a good six months where we were only working from home. And then just when we got this office, and we started going into the office. But yeah, I mean, your next question is probably how was it?

Researcher: Yeah, how has remote work impacted your work life?

I4: Um, it's quite difficult to say because I started working remotely, so I don't really have like a reference point. But I know that if you look at it the other way around since I came into the office, I feel like you kind of know you're around people, you're going to learn more and grow more both on a professional level but also on a personal level as well because when you're working from home, I was living in a house was just me and my best friend. And I saw him on a day-to-day basis. I'd see a handful of like four or five people and that's not really enough to stimulate us. So, it was yeah, it was it was boring as well, like it was it was nice in some ways because I had so much freedom. I could go to the gym in the morning and do whatever. But I feel like, especially at the start of your career or just early on in your life you need to be around people and learn stuff

and interact with people. So now I would quite like a bit more remote working. So, it's a bit of a balance.

Researcher: Thank you, you've answered all my questions already. Do you have any questions or thoughts, anything extra you want to add?

I4: I will say that I'm not sure if this is interesting, but when it was October, and our boss was like, we're gonna change it to like for set days. It was quite funny because after I was kind of like, this is silly, and I didn't say it straightaway, but I kind of sat with it for a bit. And then actually, I asked him, I was like, let's go have a chat. And he sat down I went to him. I was just like, Look, I'm not happy. It's just silly in this day and age. And he went crazy. He was like the first thing he said was like, you don't like it then you can just go work for another agency. And I was saying what I was saying to you earlier that I get distracted and it's nice to have the flexibility and he was really not happy with it. But basically, he was very much against it. And then he also said that he thinks in the future we'll be forced more back into the office in a way which I kind of think people like the sentiment and people like to think I'm gonna go to my company. But I think in practicality, I just don't think it going to happen. Because obviously I mean, I'm not sure if you know, but in the UK there's a big problem. With like, train strikes and stuff like that. It feels like if anyone is like, I don't know 35 plus and has kids or a dog or whatever, any excuse to not come into the office -they aren't coming into the office. It's all well and good that some manager somewhere is saying yeah, I want those people in the office so that you can learn, but then it also doesn't feel good when the younger workers are being forced to go in when the older workers don't have the same load requirements.

Researcher: Do you think it's an age thing? Or a position within an organization with that kind of attitude?

I4: I think a lot of it is I say kind of age or like life stage I think that I mean it's a weird one you can't really tell because someone who's 25 isn't going to be

some senior manager, so it's like you can't tell which one is but yeah, I think so.  
Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: Thank you again for participating.

I4: Of course.

## **7.6 Interview I5**

Researcher: Great. So, thank you for taking part in this interview. It's a semi structured interview, which means that you do have the opportunity to explore other themes and your responses. If you do have anything additional that you want to add, please feel free to do so. So, to start off, do you consent to this interview?

I5: I do consent to this interview.

Researcher: Happy to hear and what industry do you work in?

I5: I'm working in the marketing industry since a year now.

Researcher: And what workspace arrangement do you have in terms of; are you using co working spaces or home office?

I5: I've been doing home office for a year, although I do travel to the office in another city every once in a while, for other administrative issues or for example, if there's something podcast related that needs a certain kind of equipment that I don't have, but for the most part, I'm just genuinely at home or wherever I choose to be. But there's no there's no exact location that I need to be for finishing my job.

Researcher: So, you're able to choose and how you were chosen how and where you work.

I5: Exactly.

Researcher: Okay, and what needs do you have in regard to your like working environment?

I5: I need a connection, a good Wi Fi connection. I need my laptop. I need a calm environment and for the most part, nothing very technologically complex that would require me to perform anything additional over the things that I can perform on my laptop.

Researcher: And why do you think it's important that your workspace meet needs are met?

I5: I think because, especially that people very much confused marketing for being just social media friendly. But in reality, it's really about all the tools that you can access over the internet more than the tools that you need physically. Right. And that's the creativity that comes from with them a lot more than the creativity of the tools, the physical tools that you could use, like I don't need a desktop, for example. So that's why it's important for me to just have a laptop for instance, and the good Wi Fi connection.

Researcher: And what elements of works satisfy your needs and wants right now?

I5: Elements of work that satisfy my needs right now. are keeping in touch with my supervisor and my superiors mainly. I'm constantly working on something new, something like obviously nothing really comes along right away. But every time I tried to come up with something new, what I really need is proper feedback. And proper checking for my work all the time.

Researcher: And what are some of the challenges you have with your workspace?

I5: Sometimes I really feel the need to communicate with people around me, such as coworkers for instance, or sometimes online clubs are not the same as physical meetings. That's why I would kind of be different if I were to be an office around my coworkers and having to meet my superiors. At work, face to

face. So, it's a challenging thing to do sometimes to just not communicate face to face with people.

Researcher: And in your opinion, what are important factors for good working environment within the marketing industry?

I5: A good working environment. I think what's necessary is the Bluster of ideas that happens so when you sit in a group and you brainstorm, obviously when that is done face to face, it's a lot different. But realistically, you always look for creativity outlets. So having a group a team, a good team that helps you by creativity is always very important, very beneficial. So that's why I think as a marketer, you always need that team that supports you with your creative decisions. A lot more than anything else. Because what you know, your coworker could know a little bit more sometimes even if they know a little bit less, they like difference and perspectives always make a difference.

Researcher: Definitely no I agree with you on that point. Um, and how has home office influenced the way you work.

I5: Sometimes, obviously, because there's no accountability around you, there's no coworkers that motivate you to stay in touch with your work. So, you could lose that sense of accountability. But it doesn't happen as often as I assume that would be at first. It did affect me a little bit because I felt like there was not much accountability from my side. It was more about deliverables that you have to show up at this hour and you have to log in at this hour. But then over time. I think the made a difference was that you get the sense of accountability when you get faster feedback from their boss or from people that work with you in the same office. Right. So yeah, accountability is a huge necessity, to be honest, that would make workplaces different.

Researcher: And how do you think the change in the nature of work has affected your workplace setup? Sorry, come again. I realized this suit I was like, oh, how has the change in the nature of works affected your workplace setup

I5: Which question was it again?

Researcher: It was how has the change in the nature of work affected your workplace setup?

I5: I have done an office all of the time. But what I think affected me the most was that when I realized that how it compares to being on site with coworkers' people who helped me achieve my goals did make me miss on site, teamwork, and it made me want to do homework home office a little less. It became a little bit less significant. For me to stay at home and finish some work. Right? Because you obviously get that motivation from the people around you. And it's obviously a lot more fun when you share your goals with people who are also interested in the same issues as you right. It's different from when you sit with people in like a co working space, for example, people who don't know anything about your job will be completely different than it is when you have people that work with you on the same company.

Researcher: Yeah, definitely. And what do you think will be the most significant workplace trend in the future? Do you think people are going to move back into the office or are people going to be using co working spaces more or activity-based offices?

I5: I think hybrid will be the way to go and I think not just in offices but also in educational institutions. Because obviously offices are huge assets. And education institutions have buildings and that's a huge asset as well. However, having a hybrid mode, just going to the home, is going to the home, and going on site is always going to be the way to go in my opinion, especially over the long term. Because I think having a mixture of both that flexibility and staying at home and also going to the on-site whenever you can like for example, I've seen a lot of modes where people offer jobs, two times a week where you could go to the office and the rest of the days you say Oh, I think that's very interesting to see because people are adapting to it a lot more they want to stick to the office

mode since COVID. But they also they also want people to be on site and have that social, social aspects of work.

Researcher: Yeah, definitely. Well, those are all my questions by the way.

I5: Really?

Researcher: Yeah.

I5: I wrote some answers. I expected myself to, you know, like kind of have pointers around what I was talking but I guess it was a lot more interesting to just you know, like elaborate on stuff.

## **7.7 Interview I6**

Researcher: Do you consent to this interview?

I6: I do. Yes.

Researcher: Great. And what industry do you work in?

I6: Market research. Okay.

Researcher: And how long have you been in the industry?

I6: Just over three years.

Researcher: Cool. And what is your current workspace arrangement?

I6: Do you mean like whether I work from home or yeah, so I work from home? Three days, four days a week, depending? Basically, just whether I've got stuff on whether it makes more sense to work. So, but yeah, three days a week in the office, sorry, three or four days a week in the office and working from home. Once or twice a day.

Researcher: Okay, nice. And how long have you been working like this?

I6: Um, probably since last August [2022]. They kind of put in more set rules last August before but and it was very much maybe like two days a week in the office.

Researcher: Okay. So, are you then able to choose how and where you work?

I6: Yes, but I don't have a lot of flexibility. So that obviously want to go into the office. That's I'm in the office. I could work from home in a cafe, but I'd never do that because I need a second screen. I need a monitor. I need keyboard so yes, but I wouldn't do that.

Researcher: Okay. And your kind of already answered the next question, but I'll ask it as well. What needs do you have in regard to your working environment?

I6: Yeah, so a monitor, mouse. Keyboard, big desk. Have a lot of tea

I don't know if that's relevant. And yeah, that's pretty much it.

Researcher: Okay, and why do you think it's important that your workspace needs are met?

I6: Because it probably efficiency. So, if I didn't have a monitor or a screen, I would be so much slower. If I didn't have a computer mouse. I would. I just the trackpad for what I'm doing is just not jumps around. It's not super helpful. So, it would just take everything would take longer. I'd be less efficient, and I'd probably get more frustrated.

Researcher: And what elements of work currently satisfy your needs and wants in home office when you're in the office?

I6: What do you mean by needs and wants.

Researcher: You mentioned you're need to have like a desktop and a monitor, and I guess like a big desk. Is there anything else? Like at the office - if it's

surrounding yourself with other colleagues that you can collaborate with or a space to really take a break from everything.

I6: Yeah, yeah. So yeah, definitely having colleagues there in the office is a big one, having somewhere to go and take private calls. Obviously, interviews just like this, we do a lot of, so I need to be able to go somewhere that has like a phone booth, for example. Which we have like a meeting room. In my office, I get free coffee, which sounds like the most ridiculous thing ever but that makes a massive difference. Yeah. We have like fruit and everything like that. So that's really nice. I can have like breakfast in the office and everything like that. So, I guess it kind of makes it feel like it's a bit more tailored to what I need and it's more like a life. Like the office isn't just for work, it can be for my life as well. Like I do quite a bit of running and we've got showers there, so can balance my work time and personal needs. And then obviously at home obviously I can do all of those things. I can get coffee I can get runs whenever I want and stuff like that.

*Interviewer nods yes*

Researcher: And within the marketing industry, what in your opinion, what are the most important factors needed for a good working environment?

I6: I think definitely like face-to-face interaction where everyone can sit around a table. So that's one of the things that we didn't have in our office to start with and that we got we got like a spare room, bottom probably as mentioned, and we had like an extra room that we can all go into. And I suppose it probably feels like we couldn't operate without it. It's so important to have that big table space where everyone can discuss and then we've got a big like board with pens and everything that we can write on, which is cliché, but it works. Yeah, I think at home, obviously, it's just important that you can communicate I mean things like teams and group calls you just wouldn't be able to work without them. But yeah, I think definitely, obviously during the pandemic, everything was done by teams. And you do miss that kind of human interaction.

Researcher: Definitely. And you did touch upon a few of the challenges but if you could elaborate more that would be great. What are some of the challenges of your current workspace arrangement, you know, home office and in the office?

I6: Let's see if I have any challenges, obviously yeah, at home I don't know the people there. At home, I suppose that's one of the issues with home working is that you're just well I'm just in my bedroom all the time. And that can be quite claustrophobic. You don't have people around you to kind of collaborate where the bounce off of does that answer your question?

Researcher: Okay. And how has home office and working in the office influenced the way you work?

I6: Well, it's a good question. I am probably more productive in the office. And I'm probably more thoughtful and not so outward. I just probably put more effort into what I'm thinking about in the office just because I'm around other people. I'm conscious that other people are watching what I'm doing. It's super easy when you're at home to just be on Instagram for an hour and you go, I'm probably way more productive in the office.

Researcher: And finally, what do you think will be the most significant workplace trend in regard to the work environment in the future?

I6: Oh, my goodness. Significant workplace trend is that like-

Researcher: home office, office, co working spaces, activity-based workspaces.

I6: I think that more and more people will slowly go back to the office. And I don't think they'll ever do five days a week. Well, it's hard to say because my age group obviously would skew towards going into the office a lot more. I think just because you want to talk to people you want to socialize go out after work. So, I think over time, people will go back to the office more however, and I think an important thing to recognize the fact that employers will probably be more understanding of people's needs for flexibility. So, like sometimes it just

doesn't work to go to the office, and I love having a couple of days at home to do my laundry. Or if I'm having something delivered, then I can be home for that. So, I think people will expect employers to have a degree of flexibility. But I think people go back to the office.

Researcher: Yeah. And do you think co working spaces have potential?

I6: I used them a little bit when we didn't have an office, so we had to use co working spaces. I didn't like this is my personal opinion. I don't think it's just like in my office now I have a desk. I have a set of drawers. I know where everything is. I'm set up to work there. And I'm comfortable with it. I mean co working spaces are fine for like a day, but I wouldn't want my whole job to be in a co working space. It's almost too flexible. If you're a freelancer and you work on kind of your own, you don't have a team you don't need an office and obviously a co working space is perfect, but we work in one of those like buildings that has lots of offices in it. So that's kind of a kind of a blend, but I still very much need the office. I don't like spaces where there are lots of different companies in one big room.

## **7.8 Interview I7**

Researcher: Welcome. I'm going to ask you five questions, which are the preliminary questions of consent, your industry, how long you've been working in them as well. So, do you consent to this interview?

I7: I do.

Researcher: And what industry do you work in?

I7: So, I work in E commerce at the moment.

Researcher: And how long have you been working in E commerce?

I7: For two and a half years now.

Researcher: And what form of work is it in regard to the environment like home office, hybrid, co working space?

I7: Um, so it started off 100% remote. So, I did that actually from another country. So, I was working and living in Germany and then once COVID died down a little bit, then we did a hybrid working model. So, it was three days in the office and then two days from home.

Researcher: And when you were working fully remote, did you ever use co working spaces or cafes? I mean, I believe Germany was on a very strict lockdown.

I7: Yeah, so I lived in a like a business accommodation. So, they had like meeting rooms and like a pub, like a public working space and that was still available. So, I use that, but it was like within my building.

Researcher: Okay, nice. And how long have you been doing your current workspace arrangement working in your current workspace arrangement?

I7: Um, like my room at the moment or like the current structure?

Researcher: The current structure.

I7: Okay, so that has been for a year now, with the three days in the office two days from home.

Researcher: Okay, and with your current work, are you able to choose how and where you work?

I7: What do you mean by how I work?

Researcher: Ah, like your hours. Taking a break, leaving work early, starting a bit later.

I7: So, I don't have any flexibility in terms of like times. So, because my work is in combination with a warehouse I work in supply chain management, essentially. So, I work within warehouses. What was the second question?

Researcher: Can you choose where you work?

I7: Yeah, so they can be quite flexible, because as long as I'm online, they try to encourage that we stay in London, but in like special circumstances, for example, like my home is not London, so over Christmas periods and stuff I go back home, and then I can still just work remotely as long as I'm online.

Researcher: Okay, nice. And what needs do you have in regard to your working environment?

I7: At home or in the office? Um, I would say coffee. I don't know if that counts. I need a second screen. But it's something that's really important for me and comfortable like, chair desk. Um, and light. Like that's one of the big things as well, like, especially if I'm working in Thailand, for example, if I'm working in London hours, and it's dark.

Researcher: Why do you think it's important that your workspace needs are met?

I7: Um, I think as long as you're comfortable. It's quite difficult in general to concentrate from home already. So, if you're in a space that you're not 100% comfortable, I need it to be somewhat quiet. So, it's like if I'm being distracted by lots of noises, if it's dark, and I'm feeling sleepy, if my chair just uncomfortable, and I'm spending every few minutes having to stretch or something like that, then it's kind of all of those breaks that interfere with my workflow, then just make it harder to get and get back to work. But rather have the blocks of time that I can concentrate with no interruption. Yeah.

Researcher: And looking at workplace needs what elements of each of home office and the office satisfy your needs?

I7: Um, so from the office, I would say I have a better setup in general. So, like, I specifically ordered like desks that are really big. We have a coffee machine of course, and then we have like these comfortable chairs, and everyone has a monitor. We also have an office manager so every time you need new equipment or something then it's not up to me to organize everything it's sorted by her. And then also just in terms of convenience with having like the people nearby it's like if I have any questions or if I need to, like speak to someone about getting a report done, you don't have that time delay where they're just there I can just go to the desk and be like, hey, I need this now. For home it's kind of based on me organizing the equipment like the company will provide it but I have to say like this is what I need. I need it this day, be home to collect it, whatever these kind of things re. Um, basically advantages like, I get food and coffee, and I can kind of feel more relaxed to take breaks when I need to, which sometimes actually makes me more productive. Yeah.

Researcher: And in regard to the E-Commerce Industry, what are some of the important factors for good working environment?

I7: Specifically for E commerce? So, I'm just thinking about it. Um, I'd say for e-commerce like, because I work in operations on pretty much like central between all these different teams. So being in the office makes it a lot easier for us to work a lot more efficiently. For example, like if the customer service was having problem with the delivery, they can literally just come and ask me and then I will be able to give them the answers straight away. And I think also in terms of like, the time that we work, because it's not very flexible, but it is very long hours as well because it's like we operate when the warehouses operate. So, I actually personally prefer working in the office because that means, first I am not tempted by going to sleep when it gets late and I'm tired. And then the communication makes a lot easier as well. It's just like a space that is specifically for work.

Researcher: And what are some of the challenges of doing home office and being in the office? I know you touched a little bit on it, but if you can elaborate, please do.

I7: Like the hybrid model?

Researcher: Yeah.

I7: The biggest annoyance is always like having your laptop in a specific location. So, if I'm doing 100% from the office, which I do every once in a while, I never bring my laptop home my laptop is always just there. But then having to do like a hybrid. It's very much like I have to plan which day I then bring my laptop home and then it might be I planned it wrong. Then the next morning, I have to then make it to the office and then get back home or something like that. It just is quite annoying to plan. And then it's just in terms of like, again the communication part. So, turns out one of the most important parts of like working in operations is like talking to people and then if you plan to speak to this person on Thursday, but then they've decided not to work on Thursday, like not working in the office on Thursday, then it kind of messes with your plans.

Researcher: And how has remote work influenced the way you work?

I7: Um, I think being given the opportunity to work from home made me realize how important it was to be in the office. So, like when I first started working, I was excited about the possibility of working from home because I felt it was more flexible. You know, I could do more errands at home. At the same time, like I could get an extra hour of sleep in the morning, so I didn't have to wake up and get ready. But then after actually working from home for a while I realized like when you combine your home space and your workspace it becomes very like you don't really get a chance to relax ever because your home relaxation space becomes your workspace. So, I found that actually like after work, I was more tired and wouldn't get anything done.

Researcher: And let me just look what the next question is. Yeah, yes, I think it's the last question now already. What do you think will be the actually it's one of the second last question. What do you think will be the most significant workplace trend for the future in terms of are people going to still stay with the hybrid? Model? Or is it going to be either or?

I7: I think the future is going to be hybrid work. Because I think like even though I say that I prefer working from the office, it is nice sometimes to have that flexibility. And I think when big things people like to choose as I like to come to the office because I choose to be there not because someone tells me to be there. And I think that's quite a common trend, especially within our generation. A lot of people want that option, especially if they also want to travel or if you're international. You want to go back home for a while. You want that flexibility. Yeah, I think in the short term is going to be a lot of bigger companies will be pushing for people to come in the office on 2% of the time. But as younger generations start to take on more management positions and move up then it's going to start shifting more to the hybrid model. Because as soon as companies say 100% work from the work from the office, the young, talented people tend to leave and find opportunities that they can then work remotely or do a hybrid

Researcher: Yeah, no, I like 100% agree with you like Yes. And finally, have you used a co working space before and if yes, what are your thoughts on those?

I7: Yeah, so when I was doing my undergrad, I worked as well over that time. So, I worked as an operations analyst and our office was based in a co working space. And I loved it to be honest, like I thought it was kind of the perfect environment to be in. So, I think one of the main things which doesn't sound great is like when you're in the office with the same people over and over again, you kind of get fatigue of those people. But being in a co working space is like you firstly can have the opportunity to work with people like your colleagues and stuff, but you also can then just leave and then work somewhere else. You get to meet other people. Which is nice. But also, with like when you're in a co working space, they always have better communal facilities. So, like in my

office now we have an office manager that handles everything but because we're a small business, we have the snacks aren't as good as the kitchen is not as nice yeah, we don't have as many benefits. But in a co working space. They have the facilities to do that. Yeah. So, your kind of it feels a lot more like luxury. So, it's a lot nicer to be in the office space. Yeah. Yeah, it also just changed around like rather than sitting in the same seat. It's kind of the equivalent of like when you work from home, and you work at the same desk. Sometimes you go work in the dining room, for example. It's just like changing where you are. Yeah, just helps to like to refresh your mind.

Researcher: No, definitely.

I7: I think it's a very interesting topic that you are doing because I feel like everyone has really different perspectives, but I think at the end of the day, it comes down to it comes down to like the person that you are, yes. So, like, my sister, for example, works from home 100% of the time, and she loves it like she loves it. She can then fit like her work around for running. So, for her priorities that she's working on running is not her job. So, it's nice for the flexibility that she can prioritize her things but then for me, it's like, as sad as it sounds. My life is my work. That's my priority. So, it's nice that then I can go to an office that's the space specifically designated for me to do this job. And then come home at the end of the day and then rest so

Researcher: Great. Well, thank you for participating. This was a really good and interesting chat.