

https://dspace.org/

# The relationship between working from home and employee productivity

**Naidoo, Daiveshni**

**2023**
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/40655
Naidoo, Daiveshni. (2023). The relationship between working from home and employee productivity [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WireDSpace.

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

# The relationship between working from home and employee productivity.

**Daiveshni Naidoo**

**1749720**

**A research article submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration**

**Johannesburg, 2023**

**Protocol number: WBS/BA1749720/245**

(Version February 2023)

# DECLARATION

I, Daiveshni Naidoo, declare that this research article is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

DN 

Signed at Johannesburg

On the 05 day of February 2023

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to my supervisor Dr Grant Sieff who provided feedback and guidance throughout this process.

I am grateful to my classmates and first syndicate team on the MBA programme who were there to support me throughout this journey and helped me to get to the finish line.

And finally my deepest gratitude goes to my sister Ramona Naidoo who was there to support me by giving me the time and motivation to take on this journey. And to my dog Trygger who sat through every online lecture, assignment and exam with me providing the endorphins when so needed.

# SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Nominated journal: | SA Journal of Human Resource Management |
| Supervisor / Co-author: | Dr Grant Sieff |
| Word count †: | 16118 |
| Supplementary files: | Interview Transcripts |

† Including abstract references, etc. Excluding appendices.

# ABSTRACT

**Orientation:** The relationship between working from home and employee productivity.

**Research Purpose:** This study aimed to understand if there is a relationship between working from home and employee productivity while also understanding the factors that effect productivity when working from home. The answers received will provide input into policy formation around work from home arrangements.

**Motivation for the study:** With more organisations implementing work from home arrangements, this study was undertaken to investigate if there was a relationship between working from home and employee productivity. The study built upon a rich foundation provided by the literature and gave insight into how organisations can ramp up their employee value proposition and implement policies and procedures to improve employee productivity.

**Research approach/design and method:** The research conducted used an inductive method of thematic analysis of 29 semi-structured interviews of white collared workers who work for organisations based within Johannesburg. Purposive sampling of participants with the common criteria of working from home either full time or at least more than once a week was used. The interviews were semi-structured to elicit as much information from the participants as possible.

**Main findings:** The study showed a positive relationship between working from home and employee productivity in that productivity increased due to ability to focus and minimal distractions. Being disciplined and accountable are vital qualities for employees to have when working from home. Productivity was seen to increase however this could have been attributed to the increase in the number of working hours worked in a day. The participants enjoyed a hybrid working arrangement and preferred to have more days working from home than from the office.

**Practical/managerial implications:** With the changes within the working environment and majority of organisations offering different types of working from home arrangements, policies need to be developed that enhance employee wellness and the employee value

proposition to retain and attract employees. Additionally, organisations being able to leverage on the benefits of increasing productivity through working from home arrangements.

**Contribution/value-add:** This study aims to substantiate other similar studies within South Africa for organisations to enhance employee productivity, improve employee engagement and develop deeper human interactions relevant for the different work from home arrangements.

**Keywords:** work from home, hybrid work arrangements, organisational culture, employee productivity, flexibility

# Table of Contents


**1. INTRODUCTION ..... 1**

1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES ..... 2

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW ..... 3**

**3. RESEARCH DESIGN ..... 10**

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH AND STRATEGY ..... 10

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ..... 11

3.3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS ..... 13

3.4 SAMPLING METHOD AND SIZE ..... 13

3.5 DATA COLLECTION ..... 14

3.6 LIMITATIONS ..... 15

3.7 DELIMITATIONS ..... 15

3.8 DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ..... 16

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION ..... 16

**4. RESULTS ..... 17**

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: BIOGRAPHICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PARTICIPANT. ..... 17

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: PRE COVID-19 WORK FROM HOME AND CURRENT WORKING FROM HOME ARRANGEMENTS ..... 17

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT FACTORS AFFECT WORKING FROM HOME COMPARED TO WORKING FROM THE OFFICE? ..... 23

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 4: WHAT TYPE OF WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WOULD THE PARTICIPANTS PREFER? 30

**5. DISCUSSION ..... 33**

**6. CONCLUSION ..... 36**

**7. REFERENCES ..... 40**

**8. APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS ..... 44**

8.1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 1: ..... 44

8.2 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 2: ..... 50

8.3 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 3: ..... 54

8.4 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 4: ..... 61

8.5 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 5: ..... 68

8.6 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 6: ..... 76

8.7 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 7: ..... 82
8.8 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 8: ..... 91
8.9 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 9: ..... 96
8.10 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 10: ..... 103
8.11 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 11: ..... 109
8.12 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 12: ..... 114
8.13 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 13: ..... 120
8.14 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 14: ..... 128
8.15 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 15: ..... 137
8.16 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 16: ..... 146
8.17 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 17: ..... 152
8.18 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 18: ..... 167
8.19 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 19: ..... 176
8.20 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 21: ..... 184
8.21 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 22: ..... 190
8.22 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 23: ..... 196
8.23 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 24: ..... 208
8.24 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 25: ..... 221
8.25 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 27: ..... 230
8.26 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 28: ..... 240
8.27 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 29: ..... 249
8.28 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 30: ..... 257
8.29 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 31: ..... 264

# Table of Contents

**Table 1: Industry, function and level of the chosen sample. ..... 14**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

With the onset of the fourth industrial revolution, the advancement of technology has changed the way we have been working, enabling office workers to work from anywhere. Majority of the white collared workforce have worked predominantly from offices provided by their employers; however, this has slowly been changing with an increase of these office workers working from home on a pre-determined arrangement with their managers. Organisations have been in the process of preparing to allow their employees to become more flexible in becoming remote workers, allowing employees flexibility in working from home or remotely more than once a week.

With the emergence of COVID-19, organisations were forced to implement a work from home policy with immediate effect as of March 2020. Two years later life is slowly returning to normal with reintegration back into the office with hybrid policies around flexible work practices being implemented. These hybrid policies can include employees coming into the office from once a week, or once a month or only coming in when staff engagement sessions are arranged. With the creation of these new policies, it can be inferred that productivity has remained the same or increased with the work from home. With this research we will investigate the relationship between working from home and employee productivity.

Previously work from home was completed by a limited number of people due to various reasons, however flexible work arrangements are becoming the new norm for the current workforce due to improved technology and changes in culture (Hunter, 2019). Employers have been forced to consider changing the way in which they measure performance from "bums-on-seat" to output.

Work from anywhere has been defined as having the "geographical flexibility" as in a person can be employed by an organisation without being in the same geographical location as the physical offices of the organisation (Choudhury, Foroughi, & Larson, 2021). "Remote working was used to define people working from their home and using technology to communicate with their colleagues at the workplace premises" (Nilles, 1975 as cited in Matli, 2020, pp. 1238 - 1239). Within this paper, the focus will be on employees who are specifically working from home and not from a relocated geographical area. Employees

who work from home, work from their permanent living residence and not from the office or from a relocated geographical area.

Findings from a study conducted in South Africa twelve years ago on employees who had telework arrangements of at least 1 to 4 days a week working at home, revealed that more than half the participants would have preferred to work from home more than they did at that time (Baard & Thomas, 2010). Consistent with the finding of Baard and Thomas's (2010) study, the below study's outcome also had more than half of the participants preferring to work from home more than they currently did and wanted to have the option to decide on the work from home arrangement that worked best for them. Having the hybrid option really made a difference and gave the participants the best of both working from home and working from the office.

## 1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

With the change in working practices, come the changes in employee value proposition as well as policies related to employee benefits and working conditions. Employers need to understand how working from home effects employee productivity and the type of working conditions they have when working from home. With this new way of working being put into place, employers would need to draft new employee value propositions and policies, which ensure benefits for both the employee and employer and that the productivity of all employees is maximised.

Working from home poses a threat in the productivity levels of employees as there is no direct daily oversight as there would have been had the employees been working from the office. From the below literature review, a common theme that emerges is the support needed by employees from their line managers and companies. This research will assist in the design of policies to enable more support and clear procedure of what is expected of employees.

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Investigate the relationship between working from home and employee productivity.
2. To determine the benefits of working from home

3. To what extent does working from home increase productivity?

The research will attempt to answer the following research questions:
R1: Is there a relationship between working from home and productivity?
R2: What factors effect productivity when working from home?

# 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous research completed has provided evidence of both advantages and disadvantages of working from home as well as how productivity is impacted when working from home.

The study conducted by Tejero et al (2021) found that productivity was impacted positively by having an appropriate workstation when working from home. A study conducted with e-workers found that some interviewees had increased productivity levels when they were in a private and noiseless environment at home in which they could concentrate and others found that they were more productive when they were at their desks in the office (Grant, Wallace, & Spurgeon, 2013). Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi (2020) refer to remote working has been thought to be unproductive and inefficient and was thought of as something that did not aid the productivity of organisations. In a study conducted with software engineers, the findings of changes in productivity where mixed, some engineers could account for no change in productivity, a small amount of engineers reported loss of productivity and majority of the engineers reported an increase in production (Smite et al., 2022). Mirela's (2020) study found that 57% of the participants found their thought that working from home decreased their productivity and this was due to not having the required resources to complete their jobs or not having a private, dedicated space to work in at home.

When working from home, factors that decrease productivity are seclusion from work colleagues as well as the conflict between work and family life which can also increase stress and decrease employee engagement (Galanti, Guidetti, Mazzei, Zappalà, & Toscano, 2021). Productivity levels were not impacted when working from home, however, employees found that they increased the number of hours in a day that they worked (Awada, Lucas, Becerik-Gerber, & Roll, 2021). Aczel et al's (2021) study emphasized the Boundary

Theory as a foundation to understanding the environment of home and the environment of work. “According to this theory, individuals utilize different tactics to create and maintain an ideal level of work-home segmentation (Aczel, Kovacs, van der Lippe, & Szaszi, 2021, p. 9).” When working from the office, the drive home acts as the natural boundary of the work environment versus the home environment however with the easy access of technology and working from home, this boundary now becomes faded and blended and employees have to work harder at distinguishing when work stops (Aczel et al., 2021; Grant et al., 2013).

Majority of the participants from a study on working environments pre- and during Covid-19, expressed that they were “productive when working from home” as they were more comfortable, relaxed and focussed in the home environment (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020, p. 919). The increase in productivity was also due to the fact that the participants were able to be more flexible in when they were able to complete their work-related tasks, which is being able to complete their work when they were feeling the most productive during the day.

In a study conducted on a Chinese travel agency, the researched revealed an increase in productivity as well as an improvement in employees’ attitudes towards their jobs (Jalagat & Jalagat, 2019). In a study on academics working from home during COVID-19, it was found that productivity was impacted positively when people had the right technological resources as well as the right training on these technological resources to complete their jobs (AbuJarour et al., 2021). From a study conducted in Thailand, it was made clear that technological resources enables productivity of employees by facilitating the communication process of collaboration (Tanpipat, Lim, & Deng, 2021). Employees with higher productivity levels were able to do this because they had a committed workspace in their home environment (Awada et al., 2021).

Productivity increased when employees experienced happiness in their working from home environment, and when stress was felt employees partook in stress relieving activities (non-work related activities) that promoted happiness (Chu, Chan, & So, 2022). Chu, Chan and So’s (2022) findings specify that the work from home environment needs to be a personal space with technological resources that eliminate barriers that would inhibit productivity.

Although there was evidence that working from home improved the mental wellbeing of employees, productivity was negatively impacted by "poor work from home setups and poor communication" with supervisors, colleagues and clients (Kitagawa, Kuroda, Okudaira, & Owan, 2021, p. 21). A key finding was that employees productivity levels increased when their physical and mental well-being was improved (Awada et al., 2021).

Participants working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan, found that their productivity levels were lower than working from the office especially for those participants for whom it was the first time to work from home (Morikawa, 2022). In Morikawa's study (2022), it is postulated that the hours spent travelling to and from work would positively impact on the increase in productivity as it would add more time for work, however this had little or no impact on the productivity of working from home. Smite et al's (2022) study used thirteen surveys from pre-covid and during covid, showed that productivity levels improved after working from home for a period. The improvement in productivity levels were due to changes of adaptation being made by both the employees and organisations, such as equipping the home office / home work area with the relevant tools or changing processes and strategies of how to work from home – introducing more structure into one's workday.

In a study conducted on call centre agents in Shanghai on working from home, the results revealed that productivity increased due to the increase of time spent working as well as the increase in the number of calls the agents took during their working hours. The agents working from home were more positive and experienced higher job satisfaction than those working from the office (Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying, 2015). As with Smite's (2022) study, Bloom et al's (2015) study also found that productivity increased as both the organisation and employees adapted to the changes of working from home over time. Similarly, Morikawa's (2022) study revealed that those who had previously worked from home had higher productivity levels, showing that those who had experience in working from home were able to be highly productive.

Working from the office provides social support in the means of in time feedback, listening, support, guidance and understanding or clarity which enables employees to be more productive and provides a better balance between work and life (Tejero, Seva, & Fadrilan-

Camacho, 2021). With work from home the reduced social support negatively impacts a person's productivity as the person feels lonely and alienated. Virtual meetings reduce the ability to determine social cues and build relationships (Grant et al., 2013). After the study ended, approximately 66% of the call centre agents who were working from home chose to return back to the office due to feeling lonely when working from home (Bloom et al., 2015). In a study conducted on researchers, it was found that when working from home they were more productive on individual tasks that required focus and commitment, and working from home limited sharing and collaboration as well as in "collecting data" (Aczel et al., 2021, p. 6). This study also revealed that when the researchers worked from home, almost half of them found that their work efficiency decreased.

Working from the open plan office environment, reduced the ability to focus because there was the attraction to socialise with colleagues as well as informal meetings and too many interruptions (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). Another challenge that respondents identified with flexible working arrangements was that when working or collaborating with others on a project, deadlines were impacted as individuals working practices were not synced.

Bloom et al.'s (2015) study revealed that employees had concerns about working from home as there was limited on the job training with their supervisors and were less likely to be promoted due to not being in the office. The literature raised concerns around the disruptions with working from home due to living with family members, having small children or elderly people, noise interruptions, neighbours and so forth (Ka & Ramalingam, 2021). Employees working from home are happier when working from home as there is less supervision and a perception of being trusted and therefore are more likely to stay at the organisation and also have better control over home and work life (Bao et al., 2022).

Living arrangements affected productivity as well, depending on whether the person was working from home alone or sharing the home work arrangements with housemates and family (AbuJarour et al., 2021). In a study conducted in the Netherlands, productivity was impacted by the availability of an office at home either for the full day or part of the day, also in agreement with the study conducted by AbuJarour et al. (Huls et al., 2021). Having a separate office impacted when having children or other family members in the house, Huls et al. (2021) found that people with separate offices were more productive as they were able

to focus more with less distractions. The number of dependents at home with the employee plays a role on how productive the employee is and impacts on the management of work and family life (Nakrošienė, Bučiūnienė, & Goštautaitė, 2019).

Within South Africa an important challenge to working from home is the huge divide in rich and poor of those who can afford to equip their offices with the right resources and those who cannot as well as South Africa's most challenging scenario of loadshedding, the unstable power cuts affects productivity of organisations and their employees (Matli, 2020). "Load shedding is a practice that Eskom uses when electricity supply cannot meet the demand. Load reduction is a practice that Eskom uses in peak periods when electricity cannot meet demand in under-serviced communities because of illegal connections" (Matli, 2020, p. 1247).

Smite et al's (2022) findings concurred with the findings from Tejero et al. (2021) and Grant et al. (2013) in that people with decreased productivity felt socially isolated and missed the talk at the water cooler or had more distractions at home. Whereas those with increased productivity enjoyed the time and space to be able to focus with no office distractions and reduced travelling time to and from the office. Working from home promoted greater focus due to the environment being free of distractions and quieter (Kitagawa et al., 2021). Working from home when feeling unwell enables deadlines to be kept without affecting work colleagues and increases employee well-being and satisfaction (Nakrošienė et al., 2019).

Job autonomy and trust plays a big role in productivity, as per the findings by Tejero et al. (2021) as it enables the person to take full control over how and when they complete their jobs. Employees are able to be flexible in when they complete their work, however work can start very early and finish work very late at night which would impact on employee wellbeing (Bao et al., 2022). The impact of working longer days which can be attributed to the failure to correctly use the Boundary theory can negatively impact productivity when working from home as this could lead to burn-out and diminished mental wellbeing (Tejero et al., 2021). In the study conducted in Japan one of the major negative impacts on productivity was the lack of "face-to-face interactions" (Morikawa, 2022, p. 516).

Some of the advantages of remote working include “flexibility, access to global talents, cost-saving, better working environment, and environmental impact” (Jalagat & Jalagat, 2019, p. 97). Benefits of working from home in the study conducted by Baard and Thomas were identified as “less distraction and greater productivity, greater work flexibility and increased job satisfaction, increased morale and organisational loyalty, greater work-life balance, less stress and a somewhat of a reduction in monthly expenses” (Baard & Thomas, 2010, p. 6). Respondents in a study conducted in Johannesburg by Matli (2020), identified one of the benefits as a reduction in travel time to the office, which reduced costs in terms of travel expenses and as well as enabled increased productivity due to less time spent on travel.

Jalagat and Jalagat (2019) also found that employees’ wellbeing was improved as the stress of travelling to and from work was reduced. Matli’s (2020) research advises that there is a need for employers to look after the wellbeing of their employees while watching their productivity levels. Employees felt an overall increase in wellbeing especially when working from home with regards to time being saved due to reduced travelling to work, an increase in healthy eating habits, exercise, sleep and family time (KuČEra, KrulickÝ, & NavrÁTilovÁ, 2021).

Defining boundaries as to working hours and ensuring that work life does not bleed into personal time, ensures employee wellbeing and ability to keep productive. Working from home requires trust and open communication between employee and manager, sometimes setting up defined objectives and targets or enabling autonomy for employees to complete by a set deliverable date (Grant et al., 2013). The ability to self-regulate and have self-leadership plays a vital role in the productivity of the employee and this should be encouraged in working from home for improved productivity (Galanti et al., 2021).

Jalagat and Jalagat’s (2019) study reiterated the finding by Grant (2013) around work life boundaries and the difficulty of employees being able to separate home and work as well as the temptation of being easily distracted as no one is around to supervise. Bao et al. reiterated the findings on “self-discipline” in working from home and being productive (Bao et al., 2022, p. 11). In Baard and Thomas’ (2010) study, 66% of the participants found it challenging when working from home as they were working longer hours. In a study

conducted on flexible working arrangements a few of the respondents raised the concern that their work life balance was diminished as they were "working longer hours because they did not know when to stop working" (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020, p. 9). Weideman and Hofmeyr's (2020) respondents in their study strongly advised that working from home takes self-control and dedication to complete their work as well as in know where the boundaries between work and personal life lie.

Participants in a study conducted in Poland emphasised the support provided by management and the organisation as well having the relevant IT resources assisted in promoting productivity and efficiency of employees when working from home (Urbaniec, Małkowska, & Włodarkiewicz-Klimek, 2022). The digital proficiencies of employees either hindered or enhanced their productivity levels, that is, the more skilled one was with technology, the more productive one was (Afrianty, Artatanaya, & Burgess, 2022). One of the major barriers that came up was the monitoring of working from home as this fostered an environment of distrust of employees. A study conducted in Romania on working from home listed one of the inhibitors is a "lack of organisation" meaning that managers should be accountable for clear, concise communication which enables the employee to structure their daily deliverables (Mirela, 2020, p. 269).

In the study completed on developers in Baidu, "different strategies" need to be used to ensure that the employee remains productive (Bao et al., 2022, p. 11). Hunter (2019) advises that not all employees will find working from home beneficial as they prefer to be in the office collaborating and engaging with their colleagues as this enable them to be more productive. Being in the office fosters bonds with colleagues, enables transference of learning, and keeps one up to date on the relevant news of the organisation. Some of the findings revealed that there is a preference for a hybrid model of working from home and working from the office to maximise collaboration, efficiency and productivity, provided that when working from home there are boundaries in place (Aczel et al., 2021). Participants from a study of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic felt that they could accomplish approximately 90% of their workload when they used a hybrid working model of both working from the office and working from home (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020).

# 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

## 3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH AND STRATEGY

As per the above research, finding the relationship between employee productivity and working from home is defined by experiences from white collared workers who work from home. Therefore, this relationship can be determined through qualitative research by conducting interviews to perceive how working from home can affect productivity. Qualitative analysis is being used to identify the relationship between working from home and employee productivity and as such be able to impact policy updates for the future of work (Lacey & Luff, 2001). Using this inductive reasoning method, enables an understanding of participants experiences to identify patterns of factors that affect working from home and what type of impact these factors will have (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). This inductive process also allows the researcher to be flexible while conducting the study, to be able to focus on the developments from the interviews.

A "major feature of well-collected qualitative data is that they focus on *naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings*, so that we have a strong handle on what "real life" is like" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018, p. 7). This study aims to determine what the participants are experiencing within a "real life" setting, which is their home environment when working from home. The data drawn from the participants, will provide a rich picture of working from home, employee productivity and the relationship between working from home and employee productivity which will inform future policies and employee value propositions.

Using interviews will assist in determining working styles, times, coping mechanisms, use of technology, impact of working in isolation as well as any other factors that may be able to affect a person's productivity. The themes of behaviour, attitude and perception that appear will be easily categorised and dependants can be identified (Frankel & Devers, 2000). This study will be using a mono method quantitative study, that is, using only interviews to collate data for the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

Research into the relationship between working from home and employee productivity is currently a very relevant topic and unfortunately studies in South Africa are limited, making this study exploratory, which will provide a better understanding of the topic (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

## 3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Open ended questions were designed to elicit information from the research participants on their attitudes, beliefs and assumptions on working from home and whether it did or did not affect their productivity as well as any other factors that may provide a link between the relationship of working from home and employee productivity. Further information gained from this study will provide possible evidence on policy formation on working from home and how to ensure employees remain productive.

Research question 1: Biographical and background information on participant. This question was aimed at understanding the participant better as well as the type of socio-economic status the participant comes from.

Interview questions posed:

1. Demographics: Age, Gender, Sex, do you have any dependants
   Industry, Function, Level, Size of organisation
2. Do you have a home office or dedicated workspace at home? If you have a home office, with what is it equipped?
3. When working from home, are you usually alone? Do you share your working environment at home?

Research question 2: Pre COVID-19 work from home and current working from home arrangements. The aim of this question is to determine whether the participants are used to working from home and if they developed any useful strategies that enabled them to be productive.

Interview questions posed:

1. Have you worked from home pre-covid and how often did you work from home?

2. Do you currently work from home or from the office? Full time or hybrid model
3. What are your current working hours vs working hours when working from the office? What type of schedule do you keep at home?
4. How have you changed the way you work when working from home?
5. How does working from home influence your productivity?

Research question 3: What factors affect working from home compared to working from the office? The aim of this question is to determine what factors would affect productivity when working from home and when working from the office. This question might assist future research in employee benefits for retention.

Questions posed:

1. What type of tasks do you complete while working from home compared to working in the office?
2. What type of distractions do you experience when working from home? How is this different from distractions at the office?
   Is there any difference between tasks at home and tasks at the office?
   Which environment is more effective and why?
3. What do you see as benefits when:
   Working from home
   Working from the office?
4. What is the biggest struggle with:
   Working from home
   Working from the office?
5. What has your productivity been like before and after working from home?

Research question 4: What type of working arrangements would the participants prefer? This question is important as it would provide feedback on what work practices would work best for the participants and would aid employee productivity.

Questions posed:

1. How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement? What makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

2. What work from home arrangement would you like?

## 3.3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The interviewer chose participants from South African companies within Johannesburg that currently have a working from home full time or a hybrid working model. These participants were white collared workers who were able to complete their daily work requirements from home and were working within small to large organisations. Participants were at various levels within their respective organisations coming from different backgrounds. Participants were chosen from a variety of industries, that is, financial, educational, and construction.

## 3.4 SAMPLING METHOD AND SIZE

This research was collated by completing semi-structured interviews with 29 participants. Participants were selected using purposive sampling methods as the participants need to have a common criteria in common, that is, working from home either full time or at least more than once a week (Devers & Frankel, 2000). The use of purposive sampling was used to choose the best possible participants to provide rich and valuable data to the interview schedule (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). A convenience sampling was used for participants from a known network of colleagues and was based on voluntary participation.

| Industry | Function | Level in Organisation |
|---|---|---|
| Construction | Consult/Director | Senior |
| | Procurement | Middle |
| | Project Manager | Middle |
| | Reporting Analyst in Procurement | Middle |
| Education | Learning and Development | Senior |
| | Sales Manager | Middle to Senior |
| | Business Development Partner | Middle to Senior |
| | Student Manager | Middle |
| | Relationship Manager | Middle |
| | Research Manager | Middle |
| | Programme Manager | Junior |
| Financial | Learning and Development | Senior |
| | Executive head regulatory and risk strategy | Senior |
| | Travel Consultant | Senior |
| | Sales Head | Senior |
| | Learning Manager | Middle |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Learning and Development | Middle |
| | Risk Manager | Middle |
| | Financial Manager | Middle |
| | Performance Enablement Specialist | Middle |
| | Learning and Development | Middle |
| | Finance Procurement | Middle |
| | Skills Development | Middle |
| | Learning and Development Consultant | Junior |
| | Social Learning Platform Specialist | Junior |
| | Administrator | Junior |
| | Learning Coordinator | Junior |
| Health | Pathology Medical Officer | Middle |
| IT | Sap Basis Administrator | Senior |

**Table 1: Industry, function and level of the chosen sample.**

## 3.5 DATA COLLECTION

The qualitative data obtained from these semi-structured interviews were conducted via MS teams using the recording and transcription tool available and will be analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was used to recognise themes and patterns from the results of the interviews. The data provided meaning and descriptions of the different perspectives of the participants and the different factors that may affect the relationship between working from home and employee productivity (Creswell, 2012).

The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions to enable participants to expand on their responses. All responses were uninterrupted and unassisted in order to preserve the integrity of the data.

"Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). The data provided by the participants from the interviews provided context and understanding of working from home and employee productivity as well as factors that may or may not influence employee productivity while working from home. Thematic analysis has organised the data into relevant factors and provided the links of the relationship between working from home and employee productivity.

Using qualitative analysis allows the data to be collated and tested while drawing conclusions or inferences and meaning from interpreting what was said through the patterns that appear (Miles et al., 2018). With thematic analysis, the data collected from the participants and were analysed by categorising the information according to themes. As per Miles et al (2018) the first step is data condensation in which the data is chosen and selected and formed into usable information. The grouping or the themes start emerging and focus is placed on the different variables that the researcher is observing. The second step is to display the information in a way that makes sense to the researcher but also gives one a picture that enables easy and simplified identity of the themes. And finally, the researcher will use the display of data to validate and draw inferences that will inform the final proposal of the study. These three steps are iterative and will need to be repeated until all there are no further emerging themes (Miles et al., 2018).

## 3.6 LIMITATIONS

One of the possible limitations to the research analysis is that the coding of the themes is incorrectly completed and that the questions are used as the themes instead of using the participants own words (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Research questions designed may not be able to elicit the rich data required and the researcher would have to be careful not to generalise the results obtained (Frankel & Devers, 2000). Research participants limited in terms of socio-economic statuses.

## 3.7 DELIMITATIONS

Research Design: A qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews.
Selection of Participants: A convenience sample of 31 was chosen using purposive sampling methods as the participants needed to have common criteria, that is, working from home either full time or at least more than once a week.
Chosen sample: This study has been restricted to South African companies based in Johannesburg.
Sample Size: 31 semi-structured interviews were completed.
Time frame: Data collection ran over 2 months.

## 3.8 DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The data obtained was through semi-structured interviews of open ended questions, this will provide validity in terms of the data as it is a realistic account of each participants' experience (Grossoehme, 2014). The trustworthiness of the data will be verified as the themes provided by the data will come directly from the participants' own words. Participants chosen have met the criteria of working from home either full time or at least more than once a week, thereby ensuring that the participants are representative of the research (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

Data reliability refers to the documenting of the study and this will be confirmed by the transcripts and recording of the virtual interviews via MS Teams (Grossoehme, 2014). As per the above literature review, the data reveals that it is possible to duplicate the research study and analyse the analysis of data collected, thereby providing more reliability of the data collected in this study (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

This study was conducted via MS Teams and approximately 30 minutes to an hour was spent with each participant to verify responses. Each interview was recorded, and the transcripts were taken directly from the recordings to ensure preservation of data. To determine trustworthiness of this study, this study could be used as the pilot and had there been more time a future study with a greater study sample could be undertaken.

## 3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

One main ethical consideration was to ensure that participants wanted to participate in the survey as well as ensuring that they have given their consent in writing to participate before the interview. Keeping participants confidential is important as well as ensuring that the participants are aware of what the study entails and what is expected of them. The data needs to remain unaltered when in use to preserve the integrity of the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

# 4. RESULTS

The results presented from the qualitative interviews of 29 participants who worked from home from the time COVID lockdown hit South Africa in March 2020 and currently continue to work from home either full time or on a hybrid model. The themes give insight into the relationship between working from home and employee productivity.

## 4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: BIOGRAPHICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PARTICIPANT.

This question was aimed at understanding the participant better as well as the type of socio-economic status the participant comes from. Of the 29 participants who volunteered for the study, approximately 48% of the participants have dependents who live with them, and all participants were able to work from home without major challenges. Majority of the participants had the financial resources as well as space at home to create workspaces for themselves as well as to navigate the complexities of load shedding. On rare occasions, participants did experience distractions from their dependents and dealt with it by working around their dependents needs and requirements.

## 4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: PRE COVID-19 WORK FROM HOME AND CURRENT WORKING FROM HOME ARRANGEMENTS.

The aim of this question is to determine whether the participants are used to working from home and if they developed any useful strategies that enabled them to be productive.

Working from home pre-covid was rare and approximately 72% of the participants worked from home once or twice a year in cases of emergences such as ill health for themselves or their children or having home requirements. When asked if the participant had worked from home pre-covid, Participant 19 responded: “I did, yes. I would say if my daughter was maybe ill and she was off for two days then that that was it was sort of like an emergency not really a special occasion or if for instance there were meetings that would take place in

the morning and it was on this location closer to home then I would go to the meetings and then go and work from home but it was very rare, maybe once every six months" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 19).

The remaining 28% of the participants worked from home at least once a week due to prior arrangements with their managers or had the opportunity to be part of trials of working from home in accordance with the changing work landscapes.

Some organisations within the financial industry did introduce flexible work practices early as per Participant 14 "So if I can give some context Nedbank introduced a flexible work practices policy in 2006, I was one of the pilot people to explore that policy and there were three types: telework, half day and home-work agreement. Nedbank did allow me to use the home-work agreement. However, at the time the management capability and understanding of it was not in place so. I work three days in office in Johannesburg and two days Thursday and Friday from an alternative workplace which was home based in the Northwest" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 14).

As with Participant 24 who also worked in the financial industry, we see the piloting of working remotely or from home: "pre-covid yes and so what would happen, we FNB started trialling work from home or working remotely. I think roughly I could say 2018 beginning of 2019 before COVID started. We are already piloting working from home. So what would happen is that you would have like, one or two days where you could choose to work from home and not going in the office, so they're tried it with different teams, and I was one of the teams that they tried I was part of the. team that was that they tried it with and then by the time COVID happened. It was just now a matter of just scaling it to the entire FNB because they were already teams that were piloting. It just but a handful of teams. it was about once a week at the time" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 24).

Almost 3 years after serious lock down due to covid, majority of the participants have schedules of approximately 1 to 3 days working in the office and the rest of the days spent working from home, depending on their company requirements. Approximately 48% of the participants work from home on a full-time basis but go into the office if required for meetings, conferences or team requirements which can be anything from once or twice a month or even once in every two to three months. On asked how often a participant works

from home now, Participant 11 answered “Currently we have a hybrid scheme. some weeks it's two days, some weeks it's three days at either home or the office. So there's some weeks is 2 days in office, some days is 3 days in the office” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 11) and Participant 31 answered “Currently working from home. We only need to go to the office if there's like a meeting or something important or like we had a team building thing yesterday, so the whole team was at the office, but predominantly we working from home” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 31).

79% of the participants did not have home offices or studies at home and therefore either converted spare bedrooms or their dining rooms to workspaces while the remaining participants have separate home offices or studies. Some organisations equipped their employees with 3G, extra monitors, office chairs and one organisation even went even went as far as to supply their employees UPS’s and routers to remains connected during load shedding. Within the organisations, it depended on what level and the nature of the position for 3G to be provided while other organisations advised employees that WIFI to work from home is at their own costs and should they have challenges with that they would need to go into the office to work. Approximately 40% of the participants invested in UPS’s, inverters or solar energy due to load shedding, the remaining participants either work around load shedding or go into the office or to coffee shops when experiencing load shedding.

Participant 27 from the education industry confirmed that the organisation she works for had provided all the necessary equipment for all their staff to remain able to work in a simulated work environment at home “We work on a Database system called HubSpot so also our calls can be made directly from HubSpot. And we've been equipped by the company as well with UPS, which is I think about 2 or 3 hours. But I have also installed and got an inverter. So it gives me, you know, much more. time. All employees and anything we needed, and I had my own study desk, so I used it, but when we went into COVID, they transported desks, chairs, all equipment as per individuals. There was like a structured checklist where we did a thing of what was required and everything that we required basically was provided” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 27).

When working from the office participants worked 8 to 9-hour days whereas when working from home participants had increased their workdays as they used their travel time to

complete work. When going to the office, most participants left early enough to avoid traffic and could spend any from very few participants an hour to three hours a day in traffic. Depending on the position and the requirements of the position, a few participants did work extra hours once or twice a month. Majority of the participants work 10-to-12-hour days, and should they have children, they work around the schedule of school drop off and pick up and requirements of the children.

When asked the hours the participants worked pre-covid compared to now, Participant 7 responded “So if I had to be a full day at the office, it would be 7:30 to 4:00. You know, on a normal day, but based on this current way of working, I don't think there is set working hours. You pretty much run through as much as you can. There'll be a period where I would log off in the evening just to take care of family requirements or whatever, but I feel like I'm constantly logged on actually on some days because I'm. Checking emails afterwards late in the evening and catching up on things it just seems like that that balance is completely gone. So before COVID if I worked in the office, I wouldn't log on at home unless there was an emergency or something urgent that needed to be attended to. You know, so it was a very rare occasion for me to take out my laptop in the evenings. Whereas now it is a permanent fixture. And also there's very little balance in terms of that. So like I find that a lot of my free time is spent working. You know it's not really relaxation or downtime or self-development but working. That's an average of 12 hours or more sometimes in a day.” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 7).

None of the participants kept a schedule, however they did plan their days around meetings, work commitments and family commitments as per Participant 11’s response “Actually I don't really keep a schedule. If there's work, then I have to do work because a lot of things where we have to have meetings and stuff so that overtakes what I can have as a schedule. So I get called into impromptu meetings a lot. It's hard to have a break so we whenever I can get a chance, I'll take a break” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 11).

Majority of the participants did not have challenges or issues with sharing workspaces at home, either they were alone when working from home or when they were sharing, their partners or children had different workspaces within the home environment. No challenges of sharing space were experienced by the participants whilst working from home as noted

by Participant 9's response "Certainly not the children that would be challenging. My wife occasionally sits in the office, but not often. She's just come and picked up her laptop and moved out because she saw I was in a meeting. That's why I moved to the headset. I suppose I would say 80% of the time I'm alone with my cat. There's a cat that sleeps on the desk next to me and sleeps there all day, nearly every day" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 9).

When asked if their working habits have changed over the past three years of working from home, the participants came up with the following themes of discipline, structure, and focus. At first it was a bit chaotic with meeting overload and a blurring of time and boundaries, however things began to settle, and participants planned around their schedules and become more disciplined in achieving the outcomes needed. However, majority of the participants did not identify any changes that they specifically had to make to work from home in terms of how they work and approached their ever-increasing workloads.

"So when we first started working from home, I found that it was just a frantic panic for everybody to schedule time in one's diary. So what we did is we were just doing meetings nonstop, thoughtless meetings. And I think, and I also felt it was just the need to feel connected. Now I manage my time a little bit better and the fact that I am working from home allows me to use my open time to do deeper work" as per Participant 6 on how have you changed the way you work since working from home (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 6).

Participant 24 confirmed similar sentiments "So yes, I have changed in the way I work I think I work a whole lot more now that I work from home. You get flexibility of choosing your hours. I think that's the one thing I appreciate is that there's more flexibility. I sort of choose the times that I work, and I get more done. So I get to pick like maybe on days. I am not going to the gym. I start my day significantly earlier and that gives me just quiet time to do what I need to do without the travel of having to get to the office and in other ways, it's changed the way I work. I think not necessarily me myself changing, it's my teams or the teams that I work with in the business that have changed the way we work in terms of when meetings start. I think this is something that we had to address because you had individuals sitting up meetings as early as 7:00 o'clock in the morning or 7:30 because there's no travel

time right to the office so everybody thinks that you're readily available. So those are the things a lot of us had to suggest quite early to mention that look some of us have got kids. That time before 8:30 it is us getting our children ready for school doing drop offs or going to the gym. So we can't really be available that early and also people will set up meetings at like 5 till 6:00 o'clock and be like sorry that was the only time I could find in your diary and you're like what do you mean, that's after working hours it has to wait. I think I've enjoyed the flexibility because I can work early or if I feel like you know what my brain is a little tired, I can take a break and work until late. But the things that have been uncomfortable for me from a working perspective is individuals who start meetings like super early or random to like super late" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 24).

Approximately 86% of the participants think that working from home has improved their productivity. This is due to the increase in number of working hours due to using travel time, no face-to-face interactions with colleagues and minimized work distractions of work colleagues just stopping by your desk to have a quick chat. Days are more structured due to scheduled meetings, and one has the right to decline impromptu meetings or calls if they need to. Participants were able to focus more and get through their daily tasks faster due to the extra time and less distractions.

Participant 18 believed that her productivity had been improved but at a cost to her work life balance "So I think I feel personally that I have been able to do a lot more in terms of work output, because I'm constantly sort of always on and available from a work perspective, so it's enhanced or increased my productivity on the work and career side and the inverse side to that is that it has come at a cost I think to my personal life and the balance thereof. So where I had an off switch between when I started work when I was in the office and work stopped and I could then focus on my personal stuff like exercising, taking care of myself, being present with my son and my husband and that kind of thing. That stuff was easy to sort of drop, let it fall by the wayside so that I could be more available. I have all the apps on my phone and that kind of thing. As productive as I have been, I think it's come at a bit of a cost to my own sense of well-being. As an unintended consequence of being able to work almost all the time. So it's helped productivity, but it's come at a price" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 18).

While Participant 2 also felt that their productivity and energy increased while working from home, but they also had the flexibility to run personal errands “I think I'm a bit more productive when I work from home because I don't have to sit in the traffic, so that's a good plus and I don't get to the office, and I don’t feel tired. I feel more energetic because you do not have to be in the traffic and a little more flexibility because if you want to run an errand quickly, you can also, depending on your work schedule, you can do that as well” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 2).

## 4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT FACTORS AFFECT WORKING FROM HOME COMPARED TO WORKING FROM THE OFFICE?

The aim of this question is to determine what factors would affect productivity when working from home and when working from the office. This question might assist future research in employee benefits for retention.

One of the reasons why it was so easy for the participants to be able to make the transition to work from home was that their tasks were easy to complete virtually in the absence of other people. Collaboration and team meetings were made easy to accomplish through digital tools such as MS Teams or Zoom. There was limited or no difference in how the task was accomplished from the office or from home as per Participant 1’s response “There's not really a difference at all. Regardless of whether I'm working on site or off site, I do the same tasks. I still must reply to emails. I still must take meetings. The only difference would be maybe when we're in the office we would attend a physical meeting in the boardroom. Whereas when I'm at home I will dial into a meeting. But currently even my client meetings are still very much virtual. We are set up in such a way that you whatever you do in the office, you can do at home as well” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 1).

Participant 7 summarized the current distractions when working from home which was highlighted by many of the participants “Noise levels is a challenge because I live in a complex, so you know you've got kids playing, you've got the gardeners, you've got maintenance workers, you've got your neighbours, in my complex a lot of people are working from home and there's a lot of noise, you know, during the day. And you know,

there are renovations happening and things like that, that's quite distracting. A lot of delivery vehicles coming in all day. So you are hearing that all the time… Well, you know, these things are happening daily, but they you get to a point where you adapt to your environment and then you kind of tune it out, whereas before hearing the sound of the motorbikes was new because we weren't hearing it so often and you weren't at home to hear it, so it was more prevalent. But now it almost like fades into the background because you used to it. As much as there's times when you just not actively paying attention to it, so it's become more unconscious or subconscious for you. And when you first started hearing those noises, the afternoons working from home are disruptive, because, like all the kids are home and they are playing, so it's noisy. You know, it requires a little bit more focus. There are times when you do have to step out and ask people to keep quiet" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 7).

Majority of the participants did not have any major distractions when working from home, for a few, load shedding had a negative impact however, the participants made an alternative arrangement such as work from the office or a coffee shop or they worked on admin that did not have to be connected to the internet. Others were distracted by garden services or construction work or dogs barking but were easily able to use headphones to be able to continue with meetings. Netflix was a distraction for some however they managed their time, energy, and discipline accordingly to navigate the working day. Those with children, did have distractions when their children came home from school, however they were able to take a break at that time and settle their children and then get back to work after.

Working from the office comes with different distractions in that it brings in the social aspect because there are a lot more people in the office for instance as Participant 3 has responded "From the office I think it's more co-workers and then it's like unplanned meetings and unplanned conversations because you are there, and you are available. So people will use that opportunity like your colleagues or clients to come and have a chat to you. Sometimes it's you know it's taking a bit long; I mean while having a conversation, you can lose out like an hour of doing something else, doing another task that is maybe more relevant or more important. So I would say it's the people aspect" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 3).

People who pass your desk and then you greet and exchange pleasantries or your colleagues going for coffee or lunch, and one gets distracted with chatting and the time passes. Or maybe just colleagues coming up to have a quick chat about deliverables and next steps. Post lockdown now when the participants go into the office, it is great to see colleagues and to engage with them face to face and therefore a lot of the time spent in the office is to catch up with colleagues and their lives. Working in open plan offices also bring in the noise aspect of many people talking at once which distracts from the quiet focused environment of home.

Working from home was more effective for 69% of the participants as they felt that they were able to focus more, have less distractions, and really complete their thinking tasks and general admin as Participant 17 has expressed “The environment that I find more effective between work and working from home, I would say it's here at home. I'm saying I am more relaxed at home. I am able to lay back and do certain things but working from home when I do sit down and work, I accomplish more than what I would do at the office. Mostly, because of the by the time I get into the office, I'm tired. Because there are days, I am not using the Gautrain where I would drive and be in traffic for like 2 hours or so. By the time I get into the office I'm tired from sitting in traffic and there are distractions like people knocking at your door and so on. So, they are constant, and you can't manage them, if you manage them, you become rude and you don't want to be rude to the people you work with, whereas here at home if I sit down and work I work. I do not have any distractions. I have channelled my mind to working” (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 17).

Whereas the remainder 31% of the participants found both environments equally productive as there were negatives and positives to both. Both environments were equally suitable for the tasks needed such as being able to collaborate and interact face to face with their colleagues or teams in the office and be able to focus and have time to think at home. These participants also preferred having the mix of the two environments like Participant 29 “I think the way it's structured now with the 60/40 split, is nicely balanced, because I can do the things that I need, the time and the focus for at home. And that will leave me a little more freedom to do the more. I don't want to call it social aspect, but more the interaction type work with your colleagues and things when you're in the office. So it's a nice balance, I've found that it works well when I don't linger long on things I can get done sooner and

more effectively like administration. As well as make sure that I've touched base with suppliers, customers and my colleagues while I'm in the office" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 29).

Some of the benefits experienced while working from home were highlighted by Participant 18 "Not being in traffic and having to contend with other irritated, terrible drivers and, you know, being on high alert while you're on the road. I think the ability to integrate work life and find some semblance of balance, so like there isn't this rigid structure of time, it's a bit more fluid. So things that sometimes I wouldn't be able to do like if my son who is at a school closer to home, gets sick at school and needs to be taken to the doctor. I don't have to go through the panic of it's an hour and a half to get there and then traffic and whatever. And it's a quick thing, get him to the doctor, come back home and still continue with my workday. So it is a lot more. manageable in the grander balance of things and I think also just for me personally, I've found that from a wellbeing standpoint, so like protecting my energy and me. time is a lot better when I'm at home. Like I don't have to engage with people unnecessarily as much as I am a people person and I enjoy being surrounded by people, I've appreciated and valued the ability to just lock myself in and do what I need to do or just recharge in a different way without having people interact or intrude so it protects my space and my energy and attention I think and that's been quite a refreshing thing for me" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 18).

While some of the participants also included the following benefits of working from home: less disruptions, more focus time, flexibility to complete personal errands or go to the gym, working when not well to ensure deadlines are kept and save on leave days to when needed, saving time from travel, saving costs on petrol and other luxuries such as lunch and coffee when at the office, being comfortable in your own environment, the ability to dress comfortably, flexibility around working hours, flexibility to dedicate time to both family and work, flexibility of attending meetings all over the world and save on travel costs, flexibility to take breaks in the garden and get some fresh air to remain creative and innovative, the ability to protect one's energy, stress and emotions in a controlled environment, and the ability to step up and take more accountability and responsibility for one's tasks.

Benefits of working from the office include physical interaction with people, collaboration on projects, available mentorship or guidance from management and colleagues, structure in terms of when the work day begins and ends, better maintenance or management of organizational culture, knowing you are part of a community and picking up on the office conversations to understand the business better, obtaining immediate feedback, ability to assess people's reaction by their verbal and physical demeanour, working through load shedding as the office has a generator, passage conversations that lead to chance innovative and creative cross-collaborations, more human compassion and empathy experienced face to face, as well as having easy access to all the office equipment such as printers.

"The office environment is more structured, so there will be a particular time to leave and close your laptop. You get to interact with your colleagues, which I think is really important in terms of just getting a general sense of other people's well-being, what's happening in their specific environments, what they're doing well, what they're struggling with. If you can give any advice or whether they can give you advice. So I think it's beneficial in terms of the interactions that happen organically, whereas if you were online, you wouldn't necessarily think about texting someone or sending them an e-mail. So at the office, these types of conversations happen quite organically, and you are able to I'm not sure whether the organizational culture is the correct word, but the organizational culture can actually be better maintained from that perspective" as per Participant 4 on the profound thoughts of the benefits of working from the office (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 4).

Twenty-one percent of the participants did not experience any struggles when working from home just like Participant 15 advised "I don't think I have any struggles working from home. I love it. I would say maybe I don't have an air con, so when it's too hot, I have those days where it really like I wish I was in the office. I would say it's that, but no struggles working from home. Oh no load shedding. But now that I have got a UPS, my router stays on. I don't sometimes I don't even know that the electricity is down, only when I'm using my second screen and it goes off. No struggles" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 15).

Whereas the remaining 79% experienced various struggles such as trying to keep disciplined and not be distracted by family or Netflix, knowing when to switch off from work as time boundaries are blurred and the participants found themselves working past their normal

working hours, feeling of isolation and being disconnected as to what is going on in the office, creating healthy boundaries and balance, load shedding as it effects connectivity and ability to work, increased workloads with reduced deliverable timelines, and at a minimum availability of office equipment and stationery. Participant 16 experienced the following struggled while working from home "I think maybe being responsible, you know you need to wake up at 6:00 to start working at 7 and some mornings it's a little bit hard to wake up because you're already there. The other struggle I think is you just start working in your sleep wear, instead of getting dressed actually and starting to get focused. Other struggles would be load shedding and issues when maybe the Wi-Fi goes off for some odd reason, but that's it" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 16).

Participant 14 experienced the following struggles when working from the office "Really commuting for me was the biggest thing. The culture being in office and having the corporate politics in my face and the grapevine and the corridor talk being more open was very unhealthy to me and my functioning, so I'm not naive. I'm not saying there isn't corporate politics or there isn't the Grapevine or the gossip, but it's not in my face. So I don't really miss that about being in office. I think that was one of the downsides of a culture or the work environment, you know, workplace" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 14). While the other participants struggles included: colleagues requiring attention and taking one's focus away from what is required, limited time as you need to leave by a certain time and therefore the day seems short, finding a quiet space to work where one can avoid distractions, traffic getting to work can be very stressful, and costly in terms of time as well as finances, office gossip and negative culture impacting on personal wellbeing, and noise levels impacting on focus.

Majority of the participants thought that their productivity increased after working from home as they were able to focus more and complete more work tasks than pre-covid when working from the office. Travel time has decreased which has added on to the number of working hours in a day which has also impacted productivity. Participant 8 felt that their productivity increased due to the flexibility of working from home and having the ability to focus without distractions "I think the productivity of working from home has increased significantly compared to work. Because like I said, when you at home you much more dedicated, you much more focused. You have time to think, you have time to do your work

and the flexibility that comes along with it. So you're not always thinking about work when you at work, you do have sense of everything else around you. So yeah, I think that's helped in increasing productivity" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 8).

Productivity has also increased as having your laptop available 24/7, has made it easy to switch on and send an email or complete something you have forgotten. Participants also felt pressured to show that they are productive as they are given an opportunity to work from home and did not want to appear as if they are slacking off. Participant 15 thought her productivity increased as she now had her laptop available to her 24/7 "Before working from home and after, I always make my deadlines, but I feel like now that we're working from home, I'm a bit more comfortable in the fact that I'm a little bit ahead. Maybe I try to keep a little bit ahead before I worked from home, but I never took my laptop home. It stayed at the office so I couldn't, if there was unfinished work, it would have to wait for the morning. I'd write myself reminders on what to start with the next morning. Because we weren't allowed to take our laptops home at the time, but now with working from home if there's anything unfinished and I really have anxiety about it, I'll switch my laptop on and make sure it's finished so I can get ahead for the start for the next day" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 15).

Approximately 17% of the participants said it was difficult to say that their productivity had increased as there were other factors that came into play such as having a deadline driven job or that fact that due to restructuring of the organization there was less people doing the same amount of work as pre-covid and an increase in work demands and requirements. Participant 10 did not think her productivity was improved by working from home as her job was deadline driven "Overall, I don't think it's been affected because we work on deadlines, so the deadline must be done but in terms of focus time I can take control of my time because I'm alone so that's only for activity. But in terms of before covid or before working from the office at home, I think we work on deadlines, so the answer is deadline driven, then the work is done" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 10).

## 4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 4: WHAT TYPE OF WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WOULD THE PARTICIPANTS PREFER?

This question is important as it would provide feedback on what work practices would work best for the participants and would aid employee productivity.

100% of the participants where very satisfied with their work from home arrangement. The participants were satisfied due to being able to have a flexible work practice in that they can go into the office when they wanted to and could choose the number of days they wanted to be in the office, they were able to work in a comfortable working environment when at home, easy access to work from home and accessibility to the necessary resources, no need to spend finances on petrol or time in traffic and ensuring that one is corporately attired to attend to work, flexibility to exercise, eat healthy and maintain a healthy lifestyle, working from home helps provide one with an alternative environment that is more relaxing and emotionally balancing, the ability to engage and collaborate face to face with one's team as well as have time for focusing and thinking is definitely an advantage, working from home forces one to schedule meetings to engage with people instead of being distracted by ad hoc interruptions, the feeling of being safe and secure when working from home, the ability to challenge the autocratic mindset that presenteeism equates to productivity, working from home being isolated from the politics enables a fully engaged employee who can participate in a constructive work environment and not be micromanaged, working from home and the office on a 50 / 50 spilt can motivate one be more energetic and productive, freedom and flexibility to take the time out to engage with kids and spend more time with them when they come from school and then get back to work after the kids have been settled.

Being a working mum, Participant reiterated some of the reasons that made her satisfied with having a work from home arrangement with her organisation "I'm 100% satisfied. I'm not in a hurry to go back to the office. I think it works in the sense that I have freedom in how I manage my time. I have freedom in how I manage my focus and what I attend to or not. I connect I think a lot more with people outside of my immediate work environment and setup, whereas in the office you almost restricted physically to your four walls unless you deliberately choose to venture out to a different place. I think the flexibility of it is quite

a big thing especially for me being a working mom. So I'm able to, at least when my son comes back from school, have a conversation with him, catch up on his day before he goes out to play with his friends. Whereas in the office you kind of come after the fact and your focus is on feed him, take him to bed and it becomes a lot less humanly connecting, I guess" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 18).

Some of the negatives were that maybe they should be allowed to work from home more than at the office that is have two days at the office and three days at home, load shedding effecting working times and team meetings and collaboration, being reimbursed for Wi-fi when working from home, having a proper dedicated working space to work from home and having the correct resources such as an ergonomic chair to use on the days working from home, changing the digital boundaries so that people do not expect one to be available 24 / 7 when working from home, ensuring that the proper work life balance is met. Although Participant 2 was very satisfied with her current work from home arrangement, she would have liked the arrangement to have more days working from home "Very satisfied. It is very comfortable. Because my workspace is comfortable, my environment is comfortable. I suppose the only thing I can say is that maybe it should have been the other way around. We should have been working two days in the office and three days from home" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 2).

When asked about the work from home arrangement, approximately 34% of the participants wanted more days to work from home, that is 3 days working from home and maybe 1 or 2 days working from the office due to the comfort and convenience of working from home. Another 34% of the participants wanted to keep their work from home arrangements as is as it suited them perfectly of being able to have a hybrid work model in that they got time at home as well as time in the workplace with their colleagues.

Participant 1 preferred to work from home only twice a month as per her response "I would prefer to have maybe two days a month work from home and the rest of the time in the office. It would be for it's especially on days. So our House cycle runs on a on a two-week cycle. It's especially on days where my son does not have to go to school. So if he doesn't have to go to school on that Friday or that Monday and he's doing home schooling, I might as well be at home. I don't have to physically take him to school in the morning and then

come to the office, which is very close together" (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 1).

The remainder of the participants wanted to remain working from home and only go into the office when needed. It was clear that all the participants preferred working from home and having the option of going into the office as per their organisation's request or having the option to choose for themselves. As with Participant 4's response "So I would prefer if they were to say you had a choice between working from home or coming to the office. I would choose the working from home option. However, I do understand the nature of our business and I am willing to come in for, you know, for specific reasons, if there is a need where we've got a face-to-face class, or we are launching a new program or we need to have a meeting with the client. In those instances, I would be happy to come into the office", most of the participants would have preferred to have a choice of the hybrid working arrangements (Appendices 1: Interview Transcripts Participant 4).

Participants were asked if they had any comments on the study and some of the thoughts that came through were:

- Facilities at the office are not always ideal or comfortable as one organisation did not have enough bathroom facilities for the number of employees at the office.
- A balance between working from home and working from the office is needed as you do need the physical social interaction with your colleagues.
- Psychological wellbeing of employees, which environment or combination of environments nourish the person physically and mentally to be their best.
- Environmental impact of having more people working from home, reduction of traffic and noise pollution.
- Organisations having more people working from home reduces the amount of buildings required thereby reducing overhead costs for the organisation and increasing cost saving thereby reducing the need for companies to downsize during financial recession.
- Performance and career management conversations while working via a hybrid model of work. Challenging the command-and-control mindset of managers and how they grow their employees or is it out of sight out of mind until deliverables are not being met.

- An issue of trust between manager and employee and check in meetings used as a tool to micromanage rather than to check in and create team bonding.
- Different employees have different circumstances and not everyone may have the resources or support to work from home.
- Challenges experienced when working from home in terms of limited space and other occupants of the home especially in regard to smaller homes who have big families so that the environment is not conducive to working or having abusive partners.
- Working from home and its impact on other parts of one's personal life, has working from home enabled productivity on hobbies, studies or any other creative personal outlets.
- Consistency of message from leaders within the organisation what hybrid work models means and how they should be defined, and procedures set up to enable good working practices.

# 5. DISCUSSION

Working from home was previously thought as being as unproductive and results from studies conducted was mixed in that some participants thought they were unproductive as they were alienated and isolated and others thought that they were very productive as they had space and noiseless comfortable environment to focus (Grant, Wallace, & Spurgeon, 2013, Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020, Smite et al., 2022 and Galanti, Guidetti, Mazzei, Zappalà, & Toscano, 2021). However, within this study the participants have iterated similar thoughts in certain aspects of productivity.

Majority of the participants did not have a home office and had created a workspace within their homes since lockdown and continued to use the space they created when they worked from home (Awada et al., 2021). All the organisations the participants worked at equipped their employees with the right resources to complete their jobs such as technological software and laptops, however some employees were allocated 3G depending on their level and requirements at work. One organization went so far as to equip their employees with Wi-Fi routers and an uninterrupted power supply for the Wi-Fi during loadshedding. This is unlike Mirela's (2020) study who found that employee productivity was impacted by not

having the required resources to complete their jobs or not having a private, dedicated space to work in at home. As in the study conducted by AbuJarour et al. (2021) employee productivity was improved when employees had the right technological resources and training on these resources. Tanpipat, Lim, and Deng (2021) found that having the right technological resources fostered collaboration and productivity.

Some studies revealed those employees without the correct technological resources, an incomplete work from home set up, lack of digital skills of the employees, poor management support and communication and inadequate IT support created a less than productive work environment (Chu, Chan and So's, 2022, Kitagawa, Kuroda, Okudaira, & Owan, 2021, Urbaniec, Małkowska, & Włodarkiewicz-Klimek, 2022 and Afrianty, Artatanaya, & Burgess, 2022), however this was not supported within this study.

Although most of the participants had dependents living at home with them, no challenges were experienced as the participants learnt to work around their workloads and dependents unlike studies conducted by AbuJarour et al (2021), Huls et al (2021) and Nakrošienė, Bučiūnienė, & Goštautaitė (2019) where participants were affected negatively by their living arrangements and other people such as dependents living in the same space as them while they worked.

As per Morikwa's study (2022) the participants found that when working from home travel time was incorporated into working hours making the workday longer. Similarly, it was found with call centre agents in Shanghai their productivity increased due to increase in number of working hours per day (Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying, 2015), which produced the same results to a study conducted by Awada, Lucas, Becerik-Gerber, & Roll (2021). Increase in the number of hours working when working from home can also be attributed to employees being unable to effectively manage relevant boundaries between home life and work (Grant et al., 2013).

As in Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi's study (2020) participants found the flexibility when working from home positively impacted their productivity. In studies conducted by Smite (2022), Bloom et al (2015) and Morikwa (2022) participants' productivity improved over time as the participants had time to adjust and adapt while setting boundaries and schedules to their workdays. The benefits of working from home included flexibility, cost saving,

being in a comfortable environment, being healthier and having time for the gym and personal errands, stress controlled environment, reduced stress from travelling to and from work, increased family time, being more relaxed and happier as per the studies undertaken by Jalagat and Jalagat (2019), Baard and Thomas (2010), Matli (2020), Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi (2020), Kitagawa et al. (2021) and KuČEra, KrulickÝ, and NavrÁTilovÁ (2021). While working from home participants were able to complete tasks that required focus (Aczel, Kovacs, van der Lippe, & Szaszi, 2021). Working from home prompted the participants take more accountability and responsibility for their jobs thereby creating less supervision and more trust between manager and employee (Bao et al., 2022 and Tejero et al., 2021). When unwell, work can pile up but one of the benefits of working from home is the flexibility to attend to deadlines without affecting one's work mates creating a physical sense of wellbeing (Nakrošienė et al., 2019).

While working from home participants experienced several distractions that included noise interruptions like garden landscaping or dogs barking or construction and neighbours (Ka & Ramalingam, 2021), however working from home for three years now has enabled participants to manage these disruptions accordingly. As Matli's (2020) study highlighted load shedding is a huge disruption affecting productivity and resources required for work purposes and there is a vast divide between socio-economic statuses of employees and currently many participants either work around the load shedding schedules or went into the office or to coffee shops to enable to keep working.

Defining work life boundaries was a struggle for some participants on the study as they were unable to switch off when their workday was done as well as sometimes it was difficult to avoid distraction such as Netflix as no one was supervising as per studies conducted by Jalagat and Jalagat's (2019), Grant (2013), Baard and Thomas (2010) and Weideman and Hofmeyr (2020). Self-discipline and self-regulation were vital skills for employees to be productive when working from home (Galanti et al., 2021). Having constant check-in meetings with managers could be considered a form of micromanagement and monitoring thereby creating distrust between management and employee thereby creating a challenge for the employee while working from home (Mirela, 2020).

A challenge of collaboration with colleagues on projects and deadlines were impacted negatively due to individual working practices not being synced presented by Weideman and Hofmeyr (2020) was not evident in the responses received from the participants in this study. Within the study participants did highlight feeling disconnected from what was happening in the office however there was no feedback of having limited on the job training (Bloom et al.'s, 2015).

Similar to Weideman and Hofmeyr's study (2020) participants who worked in an open plan office had difficulty being productive because being in the office increased the socialization with colleagues' factor, increased the number of impromptu meetings, too many interruptions and noise levels reduced focus ability. While the benefits of working from the office provided social support, immediate feedback, sharing and collaboration, guidance from managers, clear balance of where work starts and ends, reduction of the physical and social isolation and a better understanding of human interaction via face-to-face interaction and physical cues as to how people are feeling (Tejero, Seva, & Fadrilan-Camacho, 2021, Grant et al., 2013, and (Aczel, Kovacs, van der Lippe, & Szaszi, 2021).

As not all participants worked solely from home and there was a hybrid work model in place even with those who worked solely from home, it was highlighted that a hybrid work model is preferred as it incorporates different working strategies bringing the benefits of both environments to the employee as being in the office fostered collaboration and part of the organization while working from home allowed focus time and a noiseless environment to complete tasks (Bao et al., 2022, Hunter, 2019, Aczel et al., 2021, and Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020).

# 6. CONCLUSION

Different organisations were impacted differently by covid and depending on the size and resource availability within the company, employees were given resources to work from home either at their own cost for Wi-Fi or at the company's cost with providing 3G, some companies even went so far as to offer chairs and desks or UPS routers for their employees maintaining Occupation Health and Safety. Three years after strict lockdowns, many organisations either recalled their workforce back to the offices or offered some form of

hybrid working models such as working from home full time or a choice of what they would prefer or a spilt of working from home or the office.

This was an exploratory study on the relationship between working from home and employee productivity. The research was spilt into four sections:

- Biographical and background information: this section was to aid in the understanding of the participant, if they dependents, had enough space to create a work environment and even if they had the resources to mitigate any challenges that may have come their way such as load shedding.
- Pre COVID-19 work from home and current working from home arrangements: what strategies or structures were put into place to aid in employee productivity as well as to compare productivity levels pre – and post- covid.
- Factors affecting working from home compared to working from the office: which factors had significant effect on employee productive when working either at home or at the office.
- Type of working arrangements preferrable to the participants: to provide answers on which working environment is preferred and what works best for employee productivity.

All the participants within this study were satisfied with their working from home arrangement, whether it was working from home full time and only come into the office on a need be basis or if it was work from home 2 days and from the office 3 days. The flexibility of working from home gave the participants the freedom to complete their work as and when they felt as well as be able to see to home requirements such as seeing to dependents or home renovations. A third of the participants did signify that they would like more days to work from home as they found it more comfortable, relaxing and convenient, which is in line with the study conducted by Baard and Thomas (2010). The second third of the participants were happy with their work arrangements as they got to work from home and work in the office as they felt like they got the best of both environments as per studies conducted by Aczel et al., 2021 and Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi, 2020. And the final third of the participants preferred to work from home only and having the option of going into the office as this provided more autonomy and control over their jobs.

Although majority of the participants did see their productivity increase, this productivity increase may be due to the increase in working hours as per the study conducted by Awada, Lucas, Becerik-Gerber, and Roll, 2021. Another reason for the seen improvement in productivity could be that participants also felt pressure to be seen as workers and not to be seen as shirkers who do not work when no one is watching. A small percentage of participants found it difficult to ascertain any change to their productivity as there were extenuating circumstances impacting on their jobs, such as restructuring with less people doing more work or having a deadline driven job.

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between working from home and employee productivity, to determine the benefits of working from home and to what extent does working from home increase productivity. These results from these objectives would enhance employee value propositions and employee wellness and as such the possible recommendations can be made:

- As participants had difficulty setting physical boundaries as to when to stop working highlights a lack of clear communication in setting up proper work life balances and requirements. Human resources policies and strategies to be updated to include working from home with clear instruction and details as to requirements, demands, resources and commitments from all parties. Management needs to take the lead in advising and following through on these discussions.
- Investigation into the working from home culture in terms of digital boundaries and to the hours required to be available to clients or team members. This would assist in employee wellbeing to help reduce anxiety around being available 24/7and the pressure of needing to be visible while working from home.
- Physical resources required for the completion of work and how to assist employees in obtaining these resources, this would involve investigation into employees' socio-economic statuses, the current condition of their work from home environments, what works for them and what resources they currently have and possibilities of organisational assistance. This would need to be incorporated into the rewards benefits as well as employee wellness.

Within this study limitations were met:

- The sample chosen were not very representative of the diverse culture and socio-economic statuses of the South African population as majority of the participants were in a good financial position to work from home without any major challenges or influences.
- The sample of participants did not represent people who live with large families and space restrictions or people who would rather prefer to work from the office to get away from their home environments.
- The participants chosen for this study have high work ethics and are highly professional and may have been biased towards working from home and having already high employee productivity.
- The study was aimed at understanding the employees' benefits and challenges of working from home and working from the office and did not account for understanding from the organisations' perspective or policies and benefits currently in place.

The study of the relationship between working from home and employee productivity within South Africa is limited and there is scope for research into the following avenues:

- Identifying the business impact for organisations of having more people working from home and having the reduced need for offices, does this influence overhead costs and increased saving for the organisations.
- Psychological and mental wellbeing of the employee and which environment or combination of environments nourish the person physically and mentally to be their best.
- An investigation of the environmental impact of having employees work from home and the reduction of travelling as a result.
- Further research into performance and career management conversations for a hybrid work model and the impact on training, promotions and rewards benefits.
- Further investigation on the trust relationship between employee and organisation for a hybrid work model.

The most important finding of working from home and its relationship to employee productivity is that having a quiet environment without distractions enables an increase in

productivity, however one needs to be disciplined and structured in achieving their work objectives when working from home. Digital technologies have played a vital role in keeping people connected which made working from home easier to navigate. While for some working from home only and going into the office when needed was a preference, for others using a hybrid work model suited them better as it kept the physical isolation to a minimum and enabled face-to-face engagement and collaboration with colleagues. The literature has supported the findings of this study and highlighted some gaps that could further be expanded on. Organisations wanting to retain employees and find better ways of improving employee value proposition will be offering or looking into different work models and what works best for themselves and their employees.

# 7. REFERENCES


AbuJarour, S. a., Ajjan, H., Fedorowicz, J., Owens, D., Bentley, U., Universitat, P., . . . Elon, U. (2021). How Working from Home during COVID-19 Affects Academic Productivity. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 48*, 55-64. doi:10.17705/1CAIS.04808

Aczel, B., Kovacs, M., van der Lippe, T., & Szaszi, B. (2021). Researchers working from home: Benefits and challenges. *PloS one, 16*(3), e0249127-e0249127. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0249127

Afrianty, T. W., Artatanaya, I. G., & Burgess, J. (2022). Working from home effectiveness during Covid-19: Evidence from university staff in Indonesia. *Asia Pacific management review, 27*(1), 50-57. doi:10.1016/j.apmrv.2021.05.002

Awada, M., Lucas, G., Becerik-Gerber, B., & Roll, S. (2021). Working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic: Impact on office worker productivity and work experience. *Work (Reading, Mass.), 69*(4), 1171-1189. doi:10.3233/WOR-210301

Baard, N., & Thomas, A. (2010). Teleworking in South Africa: Employee benefits and challenges. *2010, 8*(1). doi:10.4102/sajhrm.v8i1.298

Bao, L., Li, T., Xia, X., Zhu, K., Li, H., & Yang, X. (2022). How does working from home affect developer productivity? — A case study of Baidu during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Science China. Information sciences, 65*(4). doi:10.1007/s11432-020-3278-4

Bloom, N., Liang, J., Roberts, J., & Ying, Z. J. (2015). DOES WORKING FROM HOME WORK? EVIDENCE FROM A CHINESE EXPERIMENT. *The Quarterly journal of economics, 130*(1), 165-218. doi:10.1093/qje/qju032

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Choudhury, P., Foroughi, C., & Larson, B. (2021). Work-from-anywhere: The productivity effects of geographic flexibility. *Defense AR journal, 42*(4), 655-683. doi:10.1002/smj.3251

Chu, A. M. Y., Chan, T. W. C., & So, M. K. P. (2022). Learning from work-from-home issues during the COVID-19 pandemic: Balance speaks louder than words. *PloS one, 17*(1), e0261969-e0261969. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0261969

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design; choosing among five approaches, 3d ed.* (Vol. 27). Portland: Ringgold Inc.

Devers, K. J., & Frankel, R. M. (2000). Study Design in Qualitative Research-2: Sampling and Data Collection Strategies. *Education for health (Abingdon, England), 13*(2), 263-271. doi:10.1080/13576280050074543

Diab-Bahman, R., & Al-Enzi, A. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on conventional work settings. *International journal of sociology and social policy, 40*(9/10), 909-927. doi:10.1108/IJSSP-07-2020-0262

Frankel, R. M., & Devers, K. (2000). Qualitative research: a consumer's guide. *Education for health (Abingdon, England), 13*(1), 113-123. doi:10.1080/135762800110664

Galanti, T., Guidetti, G., Mazzei, E., Zappalà, S., & Toscano, F. (2021). Work from Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Impact on Employees' Remote Work Productivity, Engagement and Stress. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine, 63*(7), e426-e432. doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000002236

Grant, C. A., Wallace, L. M., & Spurgeon, P. C. (2013). An exploration of the psychological factors affecting remote e-worker's job effectiveness, well-being and work-life balance. *Employee relations, 35*(5), 527-546. doi:10.1108/ER-08-2012-0059

Grossoehme, D. H. (2014). Overview of Qualitative Research. *Journal of health care chaplaincy, 20*(3), 109-122. doi:10.1080/08854726.2014.925660

Huls, S. P. I., Sajjad, A., Kanters, T. A., Hakkaart-van Roijen, L., Brouwer, W. B. F., & van Exel, J. (2021). Productivity of Working at Home and Time Allocation Between Paid Work, Unpaid Work and Leisure Activities During

a Pandemic. *PharmacoEconomics, 40*(1), 77-90. doi:10.1007/s40273-021-01078-7

Hunter, P. (2019). Remote working in research: An increasing usage of flexible work arrangements can improve productivity and creativity. *EMBO reports, 20*(1). doi:10.15252/embr.201847435

Jalagat, R., & Jalagat, A. (2019). RATIONALIZING REMOTE WORKING CONCEPT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY. *Global Journal of Advanced Research, 6*(3), 95-100.

Ka, M., & Ramalingam, P. (2021). Should I go or Not go to Office? Challenges And Opportunities in Remote Working in An Indian Commercial Vehicle Organisation. *Turkish journal of computer and mathematics education, 12*(8), 2097-2102. Retrieved from https://go.exlibris.link/kJy4yD5r

Kitagawa, R., Kuroda, S., Okudaira, H., & Owan, H. (2021). Working from home and productivity under the COVID-19 pandemic: Using survey data of four manufacturing firms. *PloS one, 16*(12), e0261761-e0261761. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0261761

KuČEra, J., KrulickÝ, T., & NavrÁTilovÁ, P. (2021). THE TREND OF WORK FROM HOME AND ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A COMPARATIVE STUDY. *Ad Alta: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research, 11*(2), 145-150. doi:10.33543/1102145150

Lacey, A., & Luff, D. (2001). *Qualitative data analysis*: Trent focus Sheffield.

Matli, W. (2020). The changing work landscape as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic: insights from remote workers life situations in South Africa. *International journal of sociology and social policy, 40*(9/10), 1237-1256. doi:10.1108/IJSSP-08-2020-0386

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*: Sage publications.

Mirela, B. (2020). THE IMPACT OF WORKING FROM HOME ON PRODUCTIVITY. A STUDY ON THE PANDEMIC PERIOD. *Analele Universităţii din Oradea. Ştiinţe economice, 29*(2), 267-275. Retrieved from https://go.exlibris.link/WkFLgVHF

Morikawa, M. (2022). Work-from-home productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from Japan. *Economic inquiry, 60*(2), 508-527. doi:10.1111/ecin.13056

Nakrošienė, A., Bučiūnienė, I., & Goštautaitė, B. (2019). Working from home: characteristics and outcomes of telework. *International Journal of Manpower, 40*(1), 87-101. doi:10.1108/IJM-07-2017-0172

Saunders, M., & Lewis, P. (2017). *Doing research in business and management: an essential guide to planning your project* (Second edition ed.): Pearson.

Smite, D., Tkalich, A., Moe, N. B., Papatheocharous, E., Klotins, E., & Buvik, M. P. (2022). Changes in perceived productivity of software engineers during COVID-19 pandemic: The voice of evidence. *Journal of Systems and Software, 186*, 111197-111197. doi:10.1016/j.jss.2021.111197

Tanpipat, W., Lim, H. W., & Deng, X. (2021). Implementing Remote Working Policy in Corporate Offices in Thailand: Strategic Facility Management Perspective. *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland), 13*(3), 1284. doi:10.3390/su13031284

Tejero, L. M. S., Seva, R. R., & Fadrilan-Camacho, V. F. F. (2021). Factors Associated With Work-Life Balance and Productivity Before and During Work From Home. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine, 63*(12), 1065-1072. doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000002377

Urbaniec, M., Małkowska, A., & Włodarkiewicz-Klimek, H. (2022). The Impact of Technological Developments on Remote Working: Insights from the Polish Managers' Perspective. *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland), 14*(1), 552. doi:10.3390/su14010552

Weideman, M., & Hofmeyr, K. B. (2020). The influence of flexible work arrangements on employee engagement: An exploratory study. *2020, 18*. doi:10.4102/sajhrm.v18i0.1209

**Templates:**

*Consent Agreement Templates - PDF Templates*. (2022). Jotform. Retrieved June 19, 2022, from https://www.jotform.com/pdf-templates/consent-agreement

*How to Conduct User Interviews*. (2022, May 3). The Interaction Design Foundation. Retrieved June 19, 2022, from https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/how-to-conduct-user-interviews

# 8. APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

## 8.1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 1:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Sales manager, Education - Participant 1**

**Date and time: 28 September 2022 11h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 1:** 40.

**DN:** And your gender?

**Participant 1:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 1:** Yes, I have a son.

**DN:** Do they live in? Do they live with?

**Participant 1:** Yes.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 1:** Education.

**DN:** What is your function within the industry you work in?

**Participant 1:** Sales manager.

**DN:** What would you say is your level within the organization that you're working? Is it Junior, middle senior?

**Participant 1:** Middle to senior.

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 1:** 25 permanent employees, plus another about ten freelance facilitators.

**DN:** So it is a small organization.

**Participant 1:** Yes.

**DN:** Have you worked from Home pre-COVID?

**Participant 1:** No.

**DN:** Not even on special occasions or anything like that.

**Participant 1:** Maybe a day, a year maybe.

**DN:** Do you currently work from the office or from the home?

**Participant 1:** From the office. Mostly from the office.

**DN:** So you do not work from home at all?

**Participant 1:** I would say its 80 / 20 percent, 80% in the office, 20% at home.

**DN:** And that would equate to maybe one day a week from home or two days a week from home.

**Participant 1:** Yes, yes, maybe one day a week.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 1:** I have a dedicated works space, but I do not only know it's not a dedicated workspace.

**DN:** You don't have a. OK, so you basically work at the dining room table or?

**Participant 1:** Yes, exactly.

**DN:** And at home, do you have like your own personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 1:** That's correct. I have Wi-Fi my own.

**DN:** And then does the company give you like 3G?

**Participant 1:** No.

**DN:** OK. And you do not have like a generator or an inverter, anything at home?

**Participant 1:** I have a generator.

**DN:** No extra screens or office equipment that you have at home because you don't have the space for it.

**Participant 1:** I mean, I do have an extra screen that's kind of taken over the part where I sit and work, but it stays there permanently whether I'm working or eating, it's there.

**DN:** Here, OK. And that is the company mandated screen, a company provided screen.

**Participant 1:** Correct.

**DN:** And when you work from home what hours do you keep compared to the hours when you work from the office?

**Participant 1:** This is a trick question, so please be bear with me. My working hours are regardless of whether I am in the office or at home. I started 7:00 o'clock in the morning. I am at the office. If I work from the office at 7:00 o'clock or I am online from 7:00 o'clock in the morning. When I work from home. I leave the office at 4:00 o'clock if I am working in the office and then I drive home for about half an hour and I would say then from about 5:00 o'clock I'm online again until about 7:00 o'clock and again from 9:00 o'clock until about

11 / 12. O'clock depending on where we are when I'm at home. Obviously, I'd take out that travel time and I just work from 7:00 in the morning until about 6:00 and then seven in the evening and then again from about 9:00 o'clock until about 11:00 o'clock twelve o'clock.

**DN:** So you always work long hours irrespective.

**Participant 1:** Yes.

**DN:** And do you keep any type of schedule when you're at home?

**Participant 1:** No, not really. If stuff needs to be done. It needs to be done.

**DN:** So no breaks in between, no, you know, personal errands to be running between nothing.

**Participant 1:** I will never leave the leave the House when I'm working, but I will go and grab a cup of coffee. Or a comfort break or something like that. But it is not at 10:00 O'clock. I'm going to go and break for 15 minutes; it is not a set routine thing.

**DN:** And when you are working from home are you usually alone.

**Participant 1:** Yeah, about 60% of the time I'm alone. The rest of the time, my husband or my son will be there.

**DN:** And do they share that working environment, that working space that you have with you?

**Participant 1:** No, usually not. They will go and sit in the living room and leave me to do my thing, yes.

**DN:** So they will leave you on your own to work. OK, so there's no, like extra distractions or anything like that. And have you changed the way you been working from home from when COVID, you know, when we first started working from home when COVID hit?

**Participant 1:** Just explain the question.

**DN:** So, you know in 2020 when we first started working from home, so we all had to adjust to working from home.

**Participant 1:** Yes.

**DN:** So now, two years later, have you adjusted the way you work? When working from home.

**Participant 1:** Most definitely yes. Yes, no, definitely. I think in the beginning it was very upside down, we did not quite know what we were doing. I had a dedicated space outside of my house where I work during lockdown. But it was outside. It was not. It was under a little roof, almost like a Lapa. That is were. I used to sit and work. That doesn't happen

anymore, because then it was easy, I got everything outside my screens, my laptop, my connectors, everything outside in the morning, and I sat there until the evening when I stopped working. Now it's just kind of become a way of living, not even a way of work that's become a way of living. Your laptop is on you are there. You are working permanently.

**DN:** OK. And has anything else changed besides the location of where you used to work?

**Participant 1:** No, not really.

**DN:** How do you think that working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 1:** I do think working from home is actually more productive. I believe there's less interruptions. Obviously, travel makes a big difference. As long as you stay focused on the task at hand. I do believe that it is increased my productivity.

**DN:** What type of task do you complete when you at home? Compared to the type of task you would complete when you in the office.

**Participant 1:** There's not really a difference at all. Regardless of whether I'm working on site or off site, I do the same tasks. I still must reply to emails. I still must take meetings. The only difference would be maybe when we are in the office, we would attend a physical meeting in the boardroom. Whereas when I am at home I will dial into a meeting. But currently even my client meetings are still very much virtual. We are set up in such a way that you whatever you do in the office, you can do at home as well.

**DN:** And what type of distractions would you experience when working from home?

**Participant 1:** It would only be if I would have to assist my son or my husband to a something. But no, not, not really any distract, or if somebody shows up at our house or comes and does surveys, a lot of those happen with people show up and they just come and do surveys and other distractions. No, there's not really other distractions.

**DN:** And then what type of distractions do you experience in the office?

**Participant 1:** A lot of social engagement. And I wouldn't say it is unproductive because you it's so part of the team dynamic, right, building the relationships and those kinds of things. So a lot of social interactions that would be my biggest distraction.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective for you and why? Working from home or working from the office.

**Participant 1:** So I think if you are asking me more effective, I would say working from home would be more effective because you could sit and focus on tasks and get from the

beginning to the end of the task in in your own time. If you ask my preference, I'll probably say something else, but definitely working from home.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you're working from home?

**Participant 1:** Less distractions. So all not distractions as much, maybe less interruption. At the office we have an open door policy, whereas at home, when you kind of go and sit and do your thing, your family knows that you are busy now working and they will leave you alone so less distractions.

**DN:** And the benefits from working in the office?

**Participant 1:** I think benefits from working in the office. It's definitely better for the psyche or for the soul. At least you get to interact with other people physically not virtually. I do think if it is a team task where you have everyone in one location. Projects might run faster or short projects like daily things that need to happen will run faster.

**DN:** And, what do you find is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 1:** It's having to leave my family alone. That is my biggest struggle. Like I want to get up and go and have a conversation. Well, with my husband or my son and I, I have to apply a lot of self-discipline to just stick to what I am doing.

**DN:** And what's the biggest struggle when you working from the office?

**Participant 1:** A lot of quick conversations at your table.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before and after working from home? So pre covid, what was your productivity like compared to now? Have you noticed any changes?

**Participant 1:** No, not really. I have to be honest. The location does not matter.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangements?

**Participant 1:** Very.

**DN:** What makes you very satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 1:** It is extremely flexible. I can decide. When I want to work from home and when I want to work in the office.

**DN:** So you're not forced to work one day a week from the from home.

**Participant 1:** No.

**DN:** You can choose how many days you want to work from the from home.

**Participant 1:** Exactly.

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement would you prefer?

**Participant 1:** I would prefer to have maybe two days a month work from home and the rest of the time in the office.

**DN:** Why would you want two days a month from home?

**Participant 1:** It would be for it's especially on days. So our House cycle runs on a on a two-week cycle. It is especially on days where my son does not have to go to school. So if he doesn't have to go to school on that Friday or that Monday and he's doing home schooling, I might as well be at home. I don't have to physically take him to school in the morning and then come to the office, which is very close together.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything that you would like to add, or do you think that I haven't asked or anything like that?

**Participant 1:** I'm quite comfortable with the survey.

## 8.2 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 2:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Procurement, Construction - Participant 2**

**Date and time: 04 November 2022 15h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 2:** 47.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 2:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 2:** No.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 2:** Uh, in the construction industry.

**DN:** What function are you with what? What is your function within the organization?

**Participant 2:** Procurement.

**DN:** What level are you junior middle senior management?

**Participant 2:** Middle management.

**DN:** And what is the size of your organization?

**Participant 2:** The size of my organization is maybe about one thousand people.

**DN:** So we would say approximately medium sized organization.

**DN:** Did you work from home pre covid.

**Participant 2:** No. Yes, yes, actually, yes.

**DN:** And how often did you work from home? Pre-covid.

**Participant 2:** Very rarely, maybe not five times, maybe about five times in the year.

**DN:** And currently, do you work from home or from the office?

**Participant 2:** I work both. We have a split. Some days in the office and some days in at home.

**DN:** And approximately how many times in the office?

**Participant 2:** Uh, three times in the office, twice at home.

**DN:** And when you're at home, do you have a dedicated workspace or a Home Office?

**Participant 2:** Dedicated workspace, not office.

**DN:** And what is your workspace equipped with?

**Participant 2:** A chair. A desk. Extra screen a keyboard. A mouse.

**DN:** Do you have home Wi-Fi or company 3G?

**Participant 2:** Home Wi-Fi.

**DN:** Company does not provide you with 3G.

**Participant 2:** No, they do not.

**DN:** And do you have a UPS or an inverter?

**Participant 2:** No, I have solar power solar panels.

**DN:** And what when you work from home, what is your working hours? And then? What are your working hours when you work from the office?

**Participant 2:** Supposed to be the same hours that I work in the office 7:30 to 3:30.

**DN:** And when you work from, but do you keep to those hours when working from home and when in the office?

**Participant 2:** I know I actually work more hours than I am at home.

**DN:** And roughly how many more hours would you say you'd work?

**Participant 2:** Maybe we are two additional hours.

**DN:** And then when you work from home do you have a specific schedule that you keep?

**Participant 2:** A specific schedule in what sense?

**DN:** So do you plan your day like you going to start work at 7:30, but before by 7:00? O'clock, you must have your breakfast, your tea, or you must go to the gym. And then maybe at about 10:00 o'clock, you decide you are taking a short break. You're going to do something else, like meditation, and then go back and like, 10 minutes afterwards. Things like that.

**Participant 2:** No, no, I don't. I just work I work my hours.

**DN:** And then when you work from home, where you usually do, you usually work alone?

**Participant 2:** Yes, I work alone.

**DN:** Nobody shares your working environment with you.

**Participant 2:** Uh, my workspace. Yes, my sister, she is my works in my work environment but in separate working areas.

**DN:** OK, so there's no challenges with the confusion and interruptions and.

**Participant 2:** No, I don't think so. At least I do not feel it.

**DN:** From the time you've started working from home have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 2:** No.

**DN:** And then how do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 2:** I think I'm a bit more productive when I work from home because I don't have to sit in the traffic, so that's a good plus and I don't get to the office, and I don't feel tired. I feel more energetic because you do not have to be in the traffic and a little more flexibility because if you want to run an errand quickly, you can also, depending on your work schedule, you can do that as well.

**DN:** And what type of task do you complete while working from home compared to when you are in the office? Is there a difference?

**Participant 2:** No, no, there's no difference. It's the same task, same thing, same quality of output, same amount of output.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 2:** Sometimes my helper comes and just interrupts while I'm working. If she needs something or my sister wants to talk to me.

**DN:** And what type of distractions would you experience at the office?

**Participant 2:** people are always need something urgent. Everything is urgent.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 2:** I do not know. For me, both are effective. I don't find I find like the so at home it's a bit more output because I'm working the extra hours but at work also it's the same because the there are certain things that need to be lived delivered by certain days. Then I have to do it in that time. I don't find there's a much difference for me.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 2:** Just the flexibility in terms of if you have to run any errands or if you have to do anything at home, like for example, if your geyser bursts, then at least you're home to sort, you know, the issues.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits as when you work from the office?

**Participant 2:** Working from the office. Just you know your interaction with your colleagues. Suppose you being more collaborative in your workspace with your colleagues.

**DN:** And what do you find is the biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 2:** From home I don't know. I suppose the biggest struggle from working from home. Don't think it's a struggle to work from home, to be honest.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when you work from the office?

**Participant 2:** Sometimes it's very distracting because there's a lot of people in your space and then a lot of people you have to focus on their needs instead of focusing on what you need to achieve.

**DN:** And what is your productivity been like pre-covid and now to now, while working from home in the office?

**Participant 2:** productivity. So pre-covid we had a lot more staff, right? So we had more people to do a lot of our tasks now post covid because of the restructuring of the business, there's a lot more work amongst fewer people. So the level of busyness is much higher. So it's yeah, it's just the work has increased because we just retrenched like 300 people.

**DN:** So, so, so you can't really compare because it's doing much more work than you used to.

**Participant 2:** Yes.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home in arrangement?

**Participant 2:** Very satisfied. It is very comfortable.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 2:** Because my workspace is comfortable, my environment is comfortable. I suppose the only thing I can say is that maybe it should have been the other way around. We should have been working two days in the office and three days from home.

**DN:** OK, that comes to my next question, which was what work from home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 2:** I think 2 days in the office and three days at home would have been would be better.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything that you would like to add that you think? That you might have left out or think I didn't ask or anything like that.

**Participant 2:** No, I think that at work also it's the bathroom facilities that a bit of a pain because it's too few facilities for too many people. And I also I think that Working from home. I think you need to have a balance between working from home and working from the office. You can't just totally do one because you need the interaction with your, the interpersonal interaction not only via teams. Yes, with people.

## 8.3 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 3:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Learning Manager, Finance - Participant 3**

**Date and time: 26 September 2022 14h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** Going to start you up with some easy questions. What is your age?

**Participant 3:** 46.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 3:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 3:** 3.

**DN:** And do they live with you?

**Participant 3:** Yes, they do.

**DN:** What is? What industry do you work in?

**Participant 3:** Financial sector. Subsection will be IT.

**DN:** And your function within this Industry?

**Participant 3:** I am a learning manager.

**DN:** And what level would you say you are at in the organization, junior, middle or senior?

**Participant 3:** And that would be a middle management.

**DN:** And what is the size of the organization? Small, medium, large.

**Participant 3:** It is a large 30,000 plus.

**DN:** I am going to ask you a series of questions to compare pre covid work from home and your current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre covid and how often did you work from home?

**Participant 3:** I did, but it was I would say once in two months.

**DN:** Do you currently work from the home or the office?

**Participant 3:** From home.

**DN:** Do you mean do you not go into the office at all?

**Participant 3:** Only when required, but that is minimum hours like two or three hours at most.

**DN:** OK. And how often during the week?

**Participant 3:** I would say once every two weeks.

**DN:** When do you have when you work from home? Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 3:** I have a dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is it this dedicated workspace equipped with?

**Participant 3:** It's got a desk, it's got a chair, it's got access to power switches and the Wi-Fi.

**DN:** Is that your own home personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 3:** Yes, personal Wi-Fi.

**DN:** And you do you have a work 3G, maybe a screen?

**Participant 3:** Yes, I do. I have a 3G uh work UM 3G and a laptop. And the screen.

**DN:** And do you have a like a generator, inverter, anything like that?

**Participant 3:** No.

**DN:** What are your current working hours? Working from home versus your hours when you work in the office.

**Participant 3:** The that would depend on where we are in terms of programs so. At the moment we do not we not active with programs as such. So my working hours would be roundabout from 8:30 to 4:30. It was the same in when I was at the office, but the peak periods around from November to the following year February and those hours can vary that that can start from eight and go all up to eight 9 / 10 at night. And it is really just based on the volume at work at the time.

**DN:** And this is your respective of whether you working from the office or working from home.

**Participant 3:** Correct

**DN:** Do you keep it a schedule? And what type of schedule do you keep? If you work when working from home?

**Participant 3:** When you say schedule, can you just elaborate on that a bit more?

**DN:** So say for instance, you get up at 6:00, you go to the gym, then you decide to have breakfast, then you get, you get started by 8 with work, and then you're like you work for two hours suddenly. Then you take a break, go to the garden, maybe walk around, maybe

stretch, have a cup of coffee, then back to work within 15 minutes. And you know. Also, in terms of what work you have to do is they are specific schedule, you keep to.

**Participant 3:** Well, I think I am pretty flexible. What I do maintain every day is that I work between you know seven or eight hours a day, that whenever I how, whenever and however I do it, that is the flexible part. But I do maintain trying to do 8 hours of work a day. So not a static schedule like you knows on the dot 8:00 o'clock, but the one thing that I am that I do make sure is happens is that there's eight hours of work happening whenever.

**DN:** When working from home, are you usually alone? Or do you share your work environment at home?

**Participant 3:** I share my work environment at home. Well for the, since we have been in a working remotely or since we've been in a lockdown, I've had to share had the work, the work environment at home. However, now that things have opened up, it is I'm no longer sharing the work environment at home.

**DN:** So at the moment like now.

**Participant 3:** Like in the last month, yes.

**DN:** In the last month And before that, you were sharing the environment with the kids or with your partner?

**Participant 3:** With the partner and with the kids, but not the whole day for portions of the day.

**DN:** And were they in your same working a space or were they in a different room altogether?

**Participant 3:** In a different room all together.

**DN:** So how have you changed the way you work? From the time covid from the time we started working at Home, March 2020.

**Participant 3:** So now it is, uh, you work. I work when I can. So my whole day, is it work? I have to make everything I have to work around. What is convenient for me. So in the morning, if there is a I've got to drop kids off at school, then I can't start work. Exactly at 8:00. O'clock. I have got to make sure that they are ready for school. I have got to drop them off. And by the time I get back home, it is probably after 8. And then I have also got to get, you know, make sure I have breakfast and all of that. So I would start round about, I would say, 8:30 or even 8:45. And start working and then mid-day. I have got to pick up. The kids from school. So I try to coordinate that time with having lunch with them and then get back

to work and things like that. So I have a longer stretch in the afternoon of work, than I have in the morning, but I've had to adjust that because of the other responsibilities that I have and now with load shedding and I don't have a generator or an inverter. I've got to work around those times as well. So when I have electricity. And I am connected to the Wi-Fi. Then I try to get as much as possible done when the when we are electricity down then I do work. But I can't do like meetings and things like that I would rather. Work with admin or spreadsheets or something that doesn't require the Wi-Fi, so I've had to make changes like that and adjust according to the things that are happening around me that I'm out of control, that I don't have control of. Whereas when we were in the office, you were just, you know, go in, you've got no disruptions, you've got no interruptions. I things like that. You just work a full day and then you leave.

**DN:** How does working from home influence your productivity.

**Participant 3:** I am more productive because I already know at the start of the day that I'm not traveling anywhere. So you know, I do not have to make any arrangements to be anywhere at any point in time or, you know, special arrangements to pick up the kids. So it's quite I get into the take quicker and like I know I've got to get X number of things done before 1:30 because once my kids are at home, then at my attention is also divided. So first part of the morning is very, very focused and very I try to do all my meetings in the morning and like work that requires a lot of focus and attention. I try to do that in the in the morning parts but work that is slightly more laborious but does not really require me to you know, really focus and concentrate that much I try to do that in in the afternoons. But I think and that helps me with productivity because I know what I want to do in the morning. I know what I got to do in the afternoon and then I know things that can be like I can, you know, roll over to the next day. You know I am, I'm able to make those decisions. So I'm not as stressed as I was in the office, so I don't have this. Anxiety looming over me to get things done and then if there is something that's urgent or whatever, I would. Manage my responsibilities at home and then in the afternoon or the evening. Once I am done with the kids and everything else, then I can dedicate like an hour to. You know, do stuff that is urgent, so yes, it has made me more productive, but it has also made me work longer than I actually should.

**DN:** What type of tasks do you complete while working from home compared to the type of task you would complete in the office?

**Participant 3:** Everything the same, there is no difference. Whatever I did in the office, I can do from home, except that we are not meeting people face to face. Everything is done on the online virtual platform.

**DN:** And what type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 3:** The TV. Look at you at home. You have the comforts of home, I suppose. If you are tired, you could, you know, take a nap. Or if you a bit, you know, overwhelmed, you can sit and watch. A TV program or Netflix or somethings which you don't have that luxury in the office. So in the office you've got to press on. But at home you can. I mean, if you are going to take a 15 minute in a break and do something or watch a quick you know program or something you can do that and you know it's no one's going to be the wiser. But it also is a bit of a gives you a bit of a break.

**DN:** And what type of distractions do you experience when working from the office?

**Participant 3:** From the office I think it's more co-workers and then it's like unplanned meetings and unplanned conversations because you are there, and you are available. So people will use that opportunity like your colleagues or clients to come and have a chat to you. Sometimes it's you know it's taking a bit long, I mean while having a conversation, you can lose out like an hour of doing something else, doing another task that is maybe more relevant or more important. So I would say it is the people aspect.

**DN:** Of which environment is more effective for you and why?

**Participant 3:** It is not going to be either one exclusively. I think for me, I would enjoy a hybrid model because I do feel that there are times where I do need to be in the office with my colleagues, was working on certain projects together because then we are more productive, and we get things done quicker. And some projects like are not. The you it is not conducive for doing on a on a virtual platform like a brainstorming session or something. You sort of have to be in the same room with somebody and then just feeding off each other’s energy, you know, to be innovative.

But I also do enjoy working from home and maybe some of the, the, the solitude that comes with it because then you can focus and get things done, especially if it's tasks that you need to do by yourself and a lot of like you’re thinking work then it's great to be at home because there's no distractions, you comfortable you add piece and you can just get things done. So for me I think I would work best to having. To do both. Work from home and also have opportunities where I can work at the office as well.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 3:** Working from home, you save time because you do not have to travel to the office. I mean, definitely save on petrol. You are saving on other costs like food and you know all of the things you indulge in when you at the office with the, with your, your colleagues. You know, but, but there are some expenses that you have to, you know, incur on your own, which is like things like your Wi-Fi and your own stationery and things like that. But for me, I think the time factor is quite important. Then I don't have to sit in traffic and that morning commute. That and getting ready and all of that, that's like 2 hours in the morning, 2 hours in the afternoon. So you saving about four hours in your day that you can use it to do something else.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 3:** Benefits from working at the office is that you visible you there your everyone like as a team you can see what they are busy with. They can see what you are busy with, sort of like also in a way. Forces you to get things done. And you have the benefit of like if you need mentorship or you need guidance or you need help your colleagues, your management, whatever they all accessible to you in one space.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 3:** I don’t know when to cut off sometimes if I'm if I'm involved with the task and you know, I can see that I'm making a lot of progress. I struggle to just shut down and stop and say, you know what? It's now 5:00, o'clock or 5:30 and I need to like do something else or take care of other stuff. I sort of like. I want to finish it or I want to go back to it and get it done. So I think in that sense. That is what I struggle with. Just finding that place, that that full stop, you know, with work and then starting with other things.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when you work from the office?

**Participant 3:** I think it felt like a like a short work day. It's like, you know, you've got to leave by a particular time because you got to get home and you got to get, you know, do it going with other things. So it is a bit of a mad rush to get through stuff and it always feels like you are rushed like you are always rushing.

**DN:** And what has your productivity been like before pre covid and now?

**Participant 3:** Look, I have always been a productive person, but I think now with having the luxury of working I mean not having to travel or doing anything else. I am more productive at home.

**DN:** How satisfied. Are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 3:** Very satisfied.

**DN:** What makes you very satisfied with it?

**Participant 3:** I am fully equipped to work from home. This uh, apart from the power outages, there's nothing outside really. I can complain about. I have got. The technology I've got Wi-Fi, I've got a working space dedicated for me just to work and yeah. Access to food, access to water, access to a view. I cannot complain about anything.

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 3:** In terms of.

**DN:** So in terms of, you know, the way you currently work, is it the same arrangement you would prefer, would you prefer more hours in the office that kind of thing?

**Participant 3:** Umm, I think if offered the if offered a choice or a few choices then I'd like to work, spend most of my time working from home and sometime in the office or in a five day week I would say I'm happy to go into the office a day or two and work three days from home.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have for you at this stage. Is there anything else that you would like to add or you think I should have asked or you know, I haven't brought up?

**Participant 3:** Umm, I can't think of anything right now.

## 8.4 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 4:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Programme Manager, Education - Participant 4**

**Date and time: 15 September 2022 13h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age? You do not have to answer if you don't want to.

**Participant 4:** All right, 35.

**DN:** Gender.

**Participant 4:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 4:** No.

**DN:** What industry are you from?

**Participant 4:** Education.

**DN:** What is your function within this industry?

**Participant 4:** Program manager.

**DN:** And your level, would you say you are at a junior middle or senior level?

**Participant 4:** Junior.

**DN:** The size of your organization.

**Participant 4:** Do you have a scope or do you want the actual numbers?

**DN:** So would you say small, medium or large? So small meaning you know zero to 100 or below 100?

**Participant 4:** Then small.

**DN:** I am now going to ask you questions about your pre covid work from home and your current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre COVID.

**Participant 4:** No.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 4:** It is hybrid, so from home at times and in the office we needed.

**DN:** And how often would you say you go into the office once or twice a week?

**Participant 4:** Let's say on average twice a week.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 4:** No.

**DN:** Can you elaborate? Do you do you just sit at the dining room table or?

**Participant 4:** So I have a desk in a room. But that room already has its own function. So I've had to make provision for that in an already existing space that had its own functions before working from home.

**DN:** Uh, so you've repurposed the room for a for your working area.

**Participant 4:** Correct.

**DN:** And what is this? Uh, repurposed space equipped with?

**Participant 4:** So there is a desk, an office chair. A monitor so an additional screen. Those are the additional items that I have got in there.

**DN:** And do you work via home Wi-Fi, or do you use a company 3G?

**Participant 4:** Company 3G. Mini DC UPS that only powers up my Wi-Fi router.

**DN:** What are your current working hours versus working hours when working from the office?

**Participant 4:** So working from the office would be an average of probably 8 to 9 hours. And working from home I think would easily be 12 hours.

**DN:** OK, so if you have to put that in start times and ending times, how would you?

**Participant 4:** So working from the office I would. Start working from 7:30. And would finish off around depending on whether there's classes or not. So if there's no classes, I'd be out of the office at 3:30. And if they are, classes would finish off at around 5:30 to 6:00 o'clock. And if I was working from home, it would be from 7:30. Till about 7 or 8 give or take the amount of work I need to complete.

**DN:** So you've extended your working hours when working from home.

**Participant 4:** Correct.

**DN:** And what type of schedule do you keep at home? Is it similar to the one at the office or is it different?

**Participant 4:** Yes, very different. So my, my schedule for at the office is quite structured, especially when there's classes on campus. So there's teatime that allows me to stretch my legs, grab some Tea, socialize this dedicated time for lunch and afternoon tea. So that allows me to get a bit of fresh, socialize and meet students and other colleagues. And working from home is then completely different because there is not a set structure. Even if there is lunch for the delegates who are online. Because I am sitting in front of my computer the whole

time, I just continue working, so there isn't much of a structure working from home. It is quite erratic.

**DN:** When working from home are you usually alone or do you share your work environment?

**Participant 4:** I am alone.

**DN:** Because you live alone as well, right?

**Participant 4:** That's correct.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work when working from home? Because we've been doing this for like this is two years now.

**Participant 4:** Yes. So you mean change from the first time that we started working from home till now?

**DN:** Yes.

**Participant 4:** So I think I used to be a little bit more intentional at the beginning about my time. I'm taking care of myself and I think now you know I've fallen off where. I am not really taking care of my well-being as much as I used to. So I think that's where the biggest change has actually happened. And because my body I think has also adjusted to the level or the amount of working hours. It doesn't feel as intense as what it used to in the beginning, but I also think that's just the beauty of the body adjusting, which can also be harmful at the same time because you're not easily able to feel the strain and the stress. As quickly as you would have in the beginning. So my, my schedule has gotten a little bit worse. I think I was slightly more disciplined right at the beginning.

**DN:** And so when you say you took more time to take care of yourself and to take care of your well-being, what has replaced that?

**Participant 4:** So nothing has replaced it. Actually, it is just more time working and once you offline you try to catch up with the rest of your life. So it's either you studying or preparing supper so nothing additional has really replaced it you've just filled it up with more of the usual routine.

**DN:** How does working from home influence your productivity?

**Participant 4:** I do think that I am quite productive when working from home because there are less distractions. so there are no other colleagues. There are no other students. I'm in my own space and I get very little interruptions. So I think that I am quite productive.

**DN:** I'm now going to ask you some questions that are themed around what factors affect you working from home compared to when working from the office. What type of tasks do you complete while working from home compared to working in the office?

**Participant 4:** Well my task list you know is pretty much the same. It does not change. Umm whether I'm online or I am physically at the office, so it's still remains the same. My duties, responsibilities and tasks remain the same. The only difference would be if there is a face to face class that would require more interaction with students as well as faculty.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 4:** I don't have many distractions when working from home. I suppose probably I will have the radio on. And you know, if there's something on the news, I'll take time to just listen to the news and hear exactly what's happening. I think the other distraction could possibly be, you know, maintenance work that gets done outside like garden service or if there are any repairs happening within the complex that I live in. So that's one of the distractions that I can think of. So those are the two distractions off the top of my head that I have when working from home.

**DN:** And how is this different from the distractions at the office?

**Participant 4:** So distractions from the office will be that you know you've got other people around you. It is a distraction, but I think it also is positive to some extent. So you'll have colleagues, you know, just asking how you doing, how have you been, you know, what are you working on and how it's going? You also, but I think it's good because you get too engaged with other people and you know you also get to know what's happening within their environment. So you get distracted by colleagues in terms of those types of conversations. And just people walking in and out of the office. So, you know, when someone passes by your desk automatically, you know, your head lifts up to see who it is. You pass pleasantries and then you will have to get back into the flow of things again.

**DN:** Which environment is more effective for you and why?

**Participant 4:** It's so difficult to tell because I can really find the positive and the negative in both scenarios, so I can't say I've got a preferred. I've got a preferred, you know, workspace. But I think working from home is more beneficial for me at the current moment.

**DN:** Why would you say it's more beneficial for you?

**Participant 4:** It's more beneficial because the time wasted sitting in traffic. For me is the biggest influencer. So sitting in traffic, the expense of having to drive to the office in terms

of petrol. And the time, that I could have been more productive in other things, are now spent commuting to work.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 4:** Well, working from home benefit is that you in a comfortable environment that you have created yourself. You don't have to worry about what to wear. And you know how you are going to be perceived by other people, so you are in your most would say your most authentic and genuine self obviously still being presentable is important, but you don't, you're not as concerned as you would have been face to face. So that is the that is the biggest take for me in terms of working from home.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 4:** I think the office environment is more structured, so there will be a particular time to leave and close your laptop. You get to interact with your colleagues, which I think is really important in terms of just getting a general sense of other people's well-being, what's happening in their specific environments, what they're doing well, what they're struggling with. If you can give any advice or whether they can give you advice. So I think it is beneficial in terms of the interactions that happen organically, whereas if you were online, you wouldn't necessarily think about texting someone or sending them an e-mail. So at the office, these types of conversations happen quite organically, and you are able to I'm not sure whether the organizational culture is the correct word, but the organizational culture can actually be better maintained from that perspective.

**DN:** What is the biggest struggle you have when you work from home?

**Participant 4:** My biggest struggle is knowing when to shut down. That is my biggest moment. My biggest problem at the moment.

**DN:** And when working from the office.

**Participant 4:** Biggest challenge is finding a place to hide where there'll be no interruptions, so that's the biggest challenge and just, you know, being very strategic about your time in terms of, you know, leaving the house earlier enough to miss traffic, knowing whether you know, especially with load shedding, whether it's more beneficial to just stay at the office or whether to drive immediately after class. So that you missed that, that, that traffic so just be more strategic with time and also finding a quiet place to work if you really have a lot on your plate that you need to, you need to work through.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before and after working from home?

**Participant 4:** I think my productivity has always been good. I think my output has been good. Generally I think with the option of working from home, the workload has increased which then has an impact on how much production I can get out and the quality thereof. So for me personally my, my, my level and quality of work is still the same. It's only impacted by the volume of work that I need to get through.

**DN:** Can I ask you a set of questions from the theme? What type of working arrangements would you prefer?

**Participant 4:** All right.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 4:** On a scale of 1 to 10 I think I am at an 8 so I am happy with the work from home arrangement.

**DN:** So 10 being extremely satisfied or extremely happy.

**Participant 4:** Correct.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 4:** I'm satisfied because I am in a comfortable environment. I don't need to spend money on petrol. I don't need to take the time being in traffic and I don't need to worry about, you know, fitting into that corporate attire. You know to be presentable for the work environment. So those are my those are my key points.

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement would you like to continue with?

**Participant 4:** How do you mean? Just elaborate for that.

**DN:** So going forward, if your organization decided they wanted you to come back to work full time or you had a choice, what would you tell them you would like as you are working from home arrangement?

**Participant 4:** So I would prefer if they were to say you had a choice between working from home or coming to the office. I would choose the working from home option. However, I do understand the nature of our business and I am willing to come in for, you know, for specific reasons, if there is a need where we've got a face-to-face class or we are launching a new program or we need to have a meeting with the client. In those instances, I would be happy to come into the office.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything else that you think would be beneficial to the study and that you'd like to add?

**Participant 4:** I just think the psychological well-being, I think if we could add, I'm not sure whether it's been covered already, but if we add the psychological well-being to say mentally. And physically. In which environment do you feel yourself being at your best? I think that is a valid and a good question to also add, because I think other people enjoy the face-to-face interaction of seeing colleagues and having those conversations while other people don't find any value in them whatsoever. And people who enjoy interactions you know might struggle with working from home because they're not psychologically. Taken care of or they don't they don't nourish that part of themselves.

**DN:** Thank you.

## 8.5 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 5:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Self-Employed, Human Resources- Participant 5**

**Date and time: 16 September 2022 08h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 5:** 52.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 5:** Male.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 5:** No.

**DN:** What industry are you in?

**Participant 5:** So I am self-employed. I am a psychologist by training, and I facilitate a on executive programs and I do my own. I have my own consulting practice. I'm not sure if that gives you an industry, so there's a part of it, I said I think would be learning, learning and development would be an industry, but also human resources probably would be another. Industry in which I am involved.

**DN:** So function is more like yeah. Learning and development in and HR. So I'm not going to ask you what level you're at because you're self-employed.

**Participant 5:** So as my colleagues, as my colleagues would say, I am a director of my own company, I report into me. If it's job title is status was important, I could call myself a director, but actually just call me call me Steven.

**DN:** And your size of organization would be small.

**Participant 5:** That's what? Yes, micro the micro size.

**DN:** OK, the next set of questions is going to be your working habits pre covid and then your current working home group arrangements. Have you worked from home pre covid and how often have you worked from home there?

**Participant 5:** So the answer is yes. So we are not so. So when you self-employed, there's two kind of there's two types of work. The one is where I'm specifically client facing which is which would be me going on to campus or going in visiting a client. But the second part

of my other work that I do is anything to do with assessments or marking or reporting which I do at home in my private time. And I've always done that pre even pre COVID so. My policy would be I might get up at 4:00, I might mark for a couple of hours, go to gym and then go to campus and then facilitate for the day. So there would always be a combination of working from home or doing. I guess administration work, reporting work assessment work and then there would be the face-to-face work which would be on campus face to face with clients. And that was all that was all pre that was all pre covid.

**DN:** So that would be approximately every day, not just most days.

**Participant 5:** Most yes. And most yes. And most days and including weekends. So I guess the other thing about being self-employed is that I might work a Saturday and Sunday if I had a batch of assessments that needed to be done for Monday. But if I wasn't working or I didn't have any paperwork on Monday, Monday and Tuesday, Mark, then be my days off. I might then just go to the gym and hang out with mates and do and not do any work, not log on at all and do any work.

**DN:** And now, do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 5:** I work from home. So everything is done, everything is done virtually so. The only thing that's changed now is that instead of me, so I might get up at 4:00. I might do some assessments. I might go to gym. I'll come back from gym instead of me driving to Henley campus to do a face to face, I would log on to a call and the IT would be a virtual face to face facilitating for the day.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 5:** I do. I do. I have one room that is purely dedicated to. It is my office, my, my library, my all my study materials are here. Everything is here. On my desk is here. Yes.

**DN:** And this will set up pre COVID right?

**Participant 5:** This was all set up, pre-covid correct, you know.

**DN:** Because you, because that's a nature of your job.

**Participant 5:** That's correct, yes.

**DN:** The self-employment, yes.

**Participant 5:** That's correct. Yes. Yes. And I have had this room since. I mean, since I moved into the House, which would have been in 2008. So that's 14 years that I've always had a dedicated workspace simply because the nature of my work would be on some days I

might be at home marking on marking assessments. And then another day I might be on a campus or with a clients doing running a facilitated session.

**DN:** What is your Home Office equipped with?

**Participant 5:** Uh, so I have everything I have. Uh, I have desktop. I have printer, scanner. I have shelving that have all of my materials and books and stuff like that. I have a full desk I have. I have two dogs.

**DN:** What are your current working hours versus working hours when working from the office?

**Participant 5:** So I have time to do nothing. Nothing has really nothing has really changed. Now the COVID pandemic. The only difference was that instead of being from eight at logging a set of being face to face from eight till five, I now log on at 8 and I'm on a computer. I'm on a virtual call from 8:00 to 5:00, so the hours my hours haven't changed, but probably the only benefit is that I'm not losing an hour in the morning sitting in traffic and I'm not losing an hour in the evening sitting in traffic, so that time has filled typically with gym or yoga, or even the additional marking of I needed to do that. From eight until about 5:00.

**DN:** From 8 till about five.

**Participant 5:** It is from eight to five. Would be normal. Yes, so if I am facilitating this. Yes, would be a normal working day. Yes. So I might the class my start at 8:30 but I would always log on a wee bit earlier just to make sure that everything was ready and stuff. So yes. Could it to eight o'clock.

**DN:** And that is working from the office.

**Participant 5:** That's working. That is working. So actually interestingly, working from the office, I would probably get to campus earlier because of traffic. So then I might get to campus at 7:00 and then work for an hour by myself before the students came on, came into the, into the session working from home. I now work and do marking online. And then I log on to the call at about 7:45. So that I am, I'm I have a I'm available to the students as they come into the into the session.

**DN:** And you said your schedule has your schedule changed?

**Participant 5:** Not really. The only thing that is changed is that I am not sitting in traffic anymore. So, but no, nothing. Nothing has really changed and that and yeah, working from

home, working, working, working from home, working on a campus, nothings really changed.

**DN:** When working from home, are you usually alone?

**Participant 5:** Yes.

**DN:** So you do not share your working environment with anybody.

**Participant 5:** No, no. I mean obviously there there's some of my helpers like here. So either my, my domestic either of my domestic helpers on certain days, then that's the only time that they would be in the house.

**DN:** Have you changed the way you work from the beginning of a COVID?

**Participant 5:** I suppose not. I would say not really. The only thing that is really changed is the difference between sitting on a computer all day versus being face to face with people all day. so that is probably the only significant change. I'm probably not your best example of the difference between pre-COVID and you know COVID and pre COVID cause actually the only significant change is the difference between being on a call like this versus you and our sitting at a me coming to your office and sitting at your office having this conversation with you.

**DN:** So for me I'm the next question is about how does working from home influence your productivity? But it's not really an issue for you because.

**Participant 5:** I actually, I actually think I have become slightly more productive simply because I don't have that hour. I am not. I'm not having to take extra time getting dressed into formal work clothing and then sitting in traffic for an hour either. Either way, you know. So actually I feel like I feel like I've probably got more time than I can use, either personally or professionally. So more time in terms of reading or catching up on assessments and marking and stuff like that. So I actually think I'm, I think I'm probably more productive working from home in that sense.

**DN:** OK, so the next set of questions are from the teams. What factor affect working from home compared to working from the office? So what type of task do you do while completing work from home and then compared to the office?

**Participant 5:** Yeah, so working from home the additional time allows me to do more administration and catching up on reporting and assessments. Being office based meant would mean that I'm spending time in traffic. I'm possibly also, if I am face to face, there's more of a demand on my attention from people who can. I just talk to you about this. Can I

just talk to you about that? Whereas when I'm at home, I don't have necessarily, that's. Those kinds of interruptions and so it allows me more time, more time to do the best that back office work if I can call it that. So I don't know if that answered the question you were asking me about factors.

**DN:** You know what type of task do you complete?

**Participant 5:** Yes. So for so facilitating face to face. Yeah, it feels like there's often a lot more demand on me face to face cause people. So for example, if there's a tea break, people who want to spend time to be asking questions, whereas if I'm virtually, if I'm in a virtual, if I'm working from home, I don't have those kinds of interruptions. If you put the camera off and say we're having tea, we have tea. Yes. You know, I don't, I don't have to have people coming to say and not talk to you quickly.

**DN:** So now I'm going to ask you about what happened. Distractions. Do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 5:** I think the distractions probably would it's a load shedding would certainly be a distraction, and even though I have an inverter, there's always that concern that the power is not going to come back on when it's supposed to. And then I'm worried about my battery going. I guess my dog's barking could be a distraction, but I actually have to say I am feeling fortunate in the sense that I don't have kids, so there's no home schooling. I don't have to worry about looking after anybody who, when I'm in my office and I'm online, I'm present and I can be engaged. And I actually do not. I don't have that many significant there's no significant distractions apart from maybe the possibility of load shedding is being extended or something happening in the power doesn't come back on.

**DN:** And how is it different from the distractions from the office?

**Participant 5:** Distractions in the offices that there are. If you are present and there are, there's a lot more opportunity for people to just come up to you and say, can I just talk to you quickly? Can I? So you know, the usual. Sorry to interrupt you, but. Just because you said sorry to interrupt me. It doesn't stop the fact that you've interrupted me. So it's still you still interrupted me. So there is a lot more. I think it's a lot more interruptions. There is a lot more getting called. Getting called to attend to something or getting called into a meeting because you happen to be there. Actually, maybe that's one thing I would say that working home, working virtually or working from home, which has been slightly different is the is the expectation that you can now be in more than one place at the same time. So maybe that

has. Maybe that is a start, maybe that is what's different about working from home is that if I was on campus, people wouldn't say just go and visit Nedbank and then go and have a meeting with Absa and then have a meeting in the afternoon with multi Choice now because I'm virtual, what people will say is can you dial into a meeting so that maybe is a little bit more of an expectation of being in more places than one.

**DN:** Uh, is there any? I know you covered this, but just for the sake of the study, is there any difference between tasks at home and tasks at the office?

**Participant 5:** Not, not, not really. The only difference is the mechanism. So it is either face to face or it is virtual. But the but the reporting, the feedback the No, nothing that all stays the same.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective for yourself and why?

**Participant 5:** That's an interesting one, so I if you had asked me this that we were doing this study in the beginning of 2020, the first six months, I would have said to you I'm more effective face to face. 2 1/2 years into it, I'm really I really think I really enjoy the virtual world, so I think there are benefit. There are benefits for me for both. Ideally a hybrid would be my desired state. So there are some days that are virtual. Some days that are and working from home other days that are meeting, going in and doing and doing face to face. I am effective in both. I have to work with you. I think I'm probably effective in both, but I would ideally like to be able to move between. Between the two, the two worlds working from home and working and working face to face. I said face to face. You say in the office, but that is the same. Yes. It is the same thing. Yes.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 5:** The ability to concentrate. Without interruptions, the time that I am spent that the how quickly I can be available and log on rather than sitting in traffic where for our potentially I'm not available for an hour. The flexibility of being able to work from home so I can work a lot later in the evenings or I can get up really early and work really early. So there is a lot more flexibility around that. There is a probably the main ones.

**DN:** And then working face to face.

**Participant 5:** The energy and the connections and the relationships that I get from being face to face or being in the office. The feeling that I'm part of a community when I'm face to face or working in an office, and the feeling that I'm that I'm in the know I said mate. So often working from home. I feel like there's stuff going on that I do not know about because

I don't hear about it. And so if I'm at the office or if I'm with people you hear, oh, she did that and he's here and he's. And so I feel like I've, I feel like my win as sort of what's happening in the in the organization and the business and the politics and stuff. I have a lot more awareness around that. Working from home can be quite you can feel quite isolated from all of that. All of that stuff.

**DN:** What is the biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 5:** Maybe feeling a little bit disconnected a little bit out of the loop. A little can be a little bit lonely. A little bit isolated. So I think you are that probably would be some of the biggest frustrations.

**DN:** And your biggest struggle when working face to face.

**Participant 5:** But I suppose people can be quite demanding if you've got 30 attendees' participants in a class, you all want your attention, that can be it can be quite it can be quite draining. Lots of interruptions and not getting the stuff I can sometimes be an I can be on campus all day and feel like I haven't achieved anything. Because I've been busy, but I don't. I haven't always achieved because it's always been like small distractions rather than anything, anything that that has value that that value adds.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before and after working from home?

**Participant 5:** So at the interesting thing about being self-employed is that I can't ever take my foot off the gas. Cause if I take my foot off the gas, I don't. I'm always very aware of being present and available and. A high performing all of the time because. If I don't send, it's perceived that I'm not delivering or I'm not turning stuff in quickly enough or I'm not getting to stuff quickly enough. You know, people are just not going to use me again, so I've always been very aware of my. Productivity or my performance brand both pre, pre and post COVID? And during COVID, I think I'm probably a little bit more conscious of it during COVID because you had, I had to make more of an effort to make sure that even though I was virtual that people still recognized that I was present and engaged and delivering and getting my feedback reports out in time and getting my marking done quickly enough and stuff like that. It'll probably become a big I'll probably during COVID become a little bit more conscious and aware of it and a little bit more disciplined in making sure that nobody thinks I'm slack.

**DN:** The this is around what you would prefer. Your future working arrangements to be. How satisfied are you with your current context of working from home?

**Participant 5:** I am satisfied. I do like it.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied or happy with this arrangement?

**Participant 5:** Just up. It has become comfortable. I have got a routine. I've got a good balance in the sense that my try. I can train at the gym, I can do yoga. I can. I can eat the way that I want to eat. So there is a whole lot of those kind of kind of benefits.

Yes. So it has become a, it's become, yeah, it's become very comfortable I and being at home with my dogs, you know, there's a there's a yeah, it's been come it's best become very comfortable.

**DN:** What type of arrangement would you prefer going forward?

**Participant 5:** I would love a hybrid. I would love a hybrid approach. I would love that ability to be able to on certain days, put on a fancy collared shirt and smart trousers and connect with people and engage and get energized face to face with people and brainstorm and think collectively. But there are other days where I would like that to be able to say I'm going to get up at 4. I am going to mark. I'm going to train. I'm going to be online and I'm going to work from home for the day. So a hybrid A high the answer. The simple answer would be I would love a hybrid approach.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have. The stage. Is there anything else that you think would be pertinent to the study and that you would like to add?

**Participant 5:** Tell me to put so just you are. You are the type of your study again is the.

**DN:** Relationship between working from home and employee productivity.

**Participant 5:** And productivity. So I think if I was summarizing it, I would say that. In the early days, when I was adjusting to working from home, I think and trying to find my feet, I probably battled a little bit with my productivity and concentration and isolation and all of that frustration. Two years later, I would say that my productivity and working from home is stronger, is more of an awareness of, of productivity from home and I really, yes, I really enjoy it.

## 8.6 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 6:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Learning and Development, Financial - Participant 6**

**Date and time: 12 September 2022 17h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** So just to start with the few questions easy questions your age, you can opt out of any questions should you want to.

**Participant 6:** No, do not worry the fifty-two.

**DN:** Gender.

**Participant 6:** Female.

**DN:** And do you have any dependents?

**Participant 6:** These I have got. Two children and my mom.

**DN:** And they in the house, live in the same house as you?

**Participant 6:** No, just my children.

**DN:** What industry do you come from?

**Participant 6:** Private practice.

**DN:** Private practice industry, as in what?

**Participant 6:** learning and development. And organizational development.

**DN:** Within which industry?

**Participant 6:** All industry.

**DN:** All industries.

**Participant 6:** It is because I work across all industries.

**DN:** Not specifically finance. So you work across all industries. Your function within your organization.

**Participant 6:** So it was in this organization, it is learning and development.

**DN:** So would you say you are junior middle or senior?

**Participant 6:** Senior management.

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 6:** 28,000.

**DN:** Now I am going to ask you about questions pre COVID. Your work from home status. Versus your current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre covid and how often did you work from home?

**Participant 6:** I did very seldomly.

**DN:** Once a week, once a month.

**Participant 6:** I would say twice a year.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 6:** From home.

**DN:** Is it full time or a hybrid model.

**Participant 6:** Full time.

**DN:** So you do not go into the office at all.

**Participant 6:** I do not have too now. I only do out of my own free will.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 6:** I have a dedicated workspace, yes.

**DN:** And is this, what is the space equipped with?

**Participant 6:** With my personal laptop, desk. And an office chair. Screen. And that's additional screen and an office cupboard. As well as the lamp. And my personal stationery.

**DN:** And in terms of your IT requirements and you said additional screen but also like with your Wi-Fi and 3G?

**Participant 6:** Yes. So IT requirements and I have a home Wi-Fi and I also have increased my cell phone Wi-Fi. Or cell phone data. To accommodate I also bought a generator. To accommodate my work experience.

**DN:** What are your current working hours versus working hours when working from the office.

**Participant 6:** The current working hours are seven till 5. Whereas previously I would have worked from seven till 3.

**DN:** You've extended your day.

**Participant 6:** About two hours at least, roughly on average.

**DN:** And then the type of schedule you would keep at home?

**Participant 6:** I am quite strict so am normally by 5:30. I'm normally offline latest 6:00 o'clock and if I do need to do overtime, then I go online at about four in the morning.

**DN:** When working from home, are you usually alone, or do you share your working environment at home?

**Participant 6:** I am I don't share the room with anyone, but I do share working environment with the rest of the family. My daughter's studies from home and my son will. He is here in the afternoons after school and my husband is retired.

**DN:** So do they have their own space within the house so that each of you have privacy to do what you need.

**Participant 6:** Yes, of course. Yes, definitely.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work when working from home?

**Participant 6:** I work with deeper dive thinking than I did at the office. So I am able to land more solid work. But that is evolved. That statements I do not know if you have space for that in your questionnaire, but it has evolved.

**DN:** Do you want to expand on that?

**Participant 6:** So when we first started working from home, it was just a frantic panic for everybody to schedule time in one's diary. So what we did is we were just doing meetings nonstop, thoughtless meetings. And I think, and I also felt it was just the need to feel connected. Now I manage my time a little bit better and the fact that I am working from home allows me to use my open time to do deeper work.

**DN:** And how do you think working from home influences your productivity?

**Participant 6:** I think it is holds me more accountable for my own productivity whereas before it would have been. It is almost as though it's like the polar effect. Everybody is doing it at the office, and everybody excuses it at the office, whereas we knew at home you feel more responsible, you feel more accountable for your output.

**DN:** Now I'm going to ask you a series of questions from the theme, what factors affect working from home compared to working from the office? What type of tasks do you complete while working from home compared to working in the office?

**Participant 6:** I complete concentration work and analytical work more readily than I would have at when working in the office. And I complete collaborative work and work that requires influencing is not done well working at home. That is best done at the office. That is my experience.

0:10:11.310 --> 0:10:17.870

**DN:** And also influencing and concentration work and analytical work?

**Participant 6:** So influencing and collaboration that type of work is done best at the office and analytical and concentration work is best done at home for me.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 6:** Dogs and power failures. That is my main distractions.

**DN:** And my next question is, how is that different from distractions of the office?

**Participant 6:** Well, I used to, and this is also important to note. I used to feel very distracted at the office by noise constant noise of people. People, noise. And because of my personality, I was distracted by people noise.

**DN:** Explain that one your personality.

**Participant 6:** So I see myself as a people pleaser, which and also a sunshine yellow, which means I love people I love. I'm an extrovert so I'm prone to be drawn to conversations, to listen in on conversations and that's why it was a distraction for me also my, my, my sense of self-esteem is naturally not the highest. So I would always listen in on conversations at work to just create safety for myself and I don't have to do that now. So that is a bit of a relief. myself. Confidence is growing in because of not having to do that.

**DN:** Which environment for you is more effective and why?

**Participant 6:** I would say that working from home is more effective now. Because the job that I am in right now requires me to be more analytical and more task driven. That's why now it is more ideal for my job right now.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 6:** And the fact, well, I think from a nutrition point of view. It's for easier and it's also much more affordable. So I do not have to pay petrol, I don't have to buy lunch. I do not have to buy a coffee. And I tend to eat healthier options and the other benefit is I have more contact even though I am not seeing my family, I have more family contact than previously.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 6:** A sense of inclusion. Gives you. You know you have a sense of inclusion. You also have less fear if you if you are seeing people, you know you do not you people create unity for some reason. So if there is that at least that opportunity it does help. And then the other benefit. Is, you know, feeling a sense of significance because you are producing work that doesn't always have a response, whereas you at the office you get responses and significant, you get the sense of significance just by, you know, verbal or

human or body contact like you. You can these days an acknowledgement or somebody just saying alert to you, or you've connected with somebody in the passage so it gives you a greater sense of significance. In a greater sense of belonging.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 6:** And my struggle is creating the same sense of influence. As I had face to face, I do not have the same sense. Or ability to influence. And show presence in meetings as what are used to have. You know, working from the office, which is a challenge. And I also find, uh, a challenge is to constantly. Be more vigilance of managing. The people's bias. So you know when you're in the office, when you the office, you can pick up whether you've been excluded, or your ideas aren't taking into account, or you can easily pick up on bias straight away. But when you are working remotely, people make assumptions and they have bias against your ideas against your work or, and you will not know that until they've produced their outcome or their documents. So it is there is a there to me, there's a lot more opportunity for bias to creep in working remotely.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 6:** And managing distractions. And even now, when I go into the office, I found that I this there is too many distractions to still finish. Work. I'll go home to finish the work. And the petrol, the bill. That does get me.

**DN:** What? What do you think your productivity has been like before and after working from home.

**Participant 6:** I think my productivity, but they have been two different types of productivity. So my task generation has improved by 90%. So working from home. However, my ideas generation. Has declined by 90%.

**DN:** Why would you? Why do you say that?

**Participant 6:** I think that meetings or set up to achieve Nedbank's, prescribed outcomes and meetings are not set up to innovate. Or brainstorm or create new ideas. And that is that. I do not. You know, people would have innovative discussions, corridor discussions or coffee chats or it is too formal. People do not do that now. That's fallen away, in my opinion. So, and I even feel that I'm naturally. In not as innovative as I used to be.

**DN:** My next set of questions are going to be around what type of work arrangements would you prefer? So how's satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangements?

**Participant 6:** I am very satisfied. On a scale of 1 to 10, a 10.

**DN:** And what makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 6:** And I've been given my leader has given me the opportunity to decide what's best for me. And let me decide whether it's a hybrid if I feel as though I need to come in and you know, then do so they've given me the full range of making that decision based on the nature of work that I do. So they have not boxed me into hybrid or remote or at the office, they've said. Based on the work you need, what is easier for you what's best for you?

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement with do you like?

**Participant 6:** Well, I like the fact that I can come in when I want to. Not when the bank wants me to. I will come in. When? When it is necessary.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything else you that you would like to add that you think might be relevant to the study?

**Participant 6:** There would be an, you know, my opinion is that if and I am just speaking for myself. I have a bias to working from home now because I have become accustomed to it, so I'll probably support it. I do think that there is still a case for people to see each other because I have more stress since working from home. I have also believed that I have entered into situations in a work context that I never had in my 28 years of working, which is. You know, like facing a disciplinary because of work performance. Yet I have worked harder than I ever have, so I am not. I am not sure if it's attributed to the fact that people are less human with one another since working from home or if it's, you know, if it's just that they, they lack, they've lost, or they are losing. The ability to be empathetic. Because that was found that I can be a lot more assertive than I ever was. So do you think that there's a humanity that's been lost with this? And I wouldn't like to admit that, but because it suits me to work from home.

**DN:** Thank you so much for taking the time to be interviewed. Uh, you've provided with me with some valuable insights to learning about productivity when working from home.

## 8.7 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 7:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Learning and Development Specialist, Financial - Participant 7**

**Date and time: 23 September 2022 11h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 7:** 45.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 7:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 7:** Yes, one.

**DN:** And do they live with you?

**Participant 7:** Yes.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 7:** It is the banking financial sector.

**DN:** What function or title are you within the organization?

**Participant 7:** Learning and development specialist.

**DN:** What level would you say your function is at?

**Participant 7:** It is specialist level. Not manager of anyone. Not manager of a team, but specialist of a function.

**DN:** So could we possibly say? And you are at a middle level within the specialist.

**Participant 7:** I think that would be accurate.

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 7:** it is about 33,000 employees.

**DN:** Yes, so now I'm going to ask you a series of questions with regards to pre covid work from home and your current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre COVID. And how often would you work from home if you did?

**Participant 7:** I did within this role. It was very occasional and situational. I think it was mostly based on like emergencies arising and the need to do so. So the role itself at that point was largely office based, but with an intent to move more off-site, you know, because

it I mean it just wasn't necessary to be office based but in previous roles I have worked from home before.

**DN:** And in your previous roles, how often have you worked from home before?

**Participant 7:** So in the consultant role, largely a lot I worked from home because that was own management. And I would only go into the office once a week just for admin and to check in. Because I was often at different client sites. So I think for the larger part of. Five years I worked in that kind of environment because it was a lot of project management and consulting. So I would work. I do maybe check-ins on a Monday and a Friday in the office, but other than that, I was either on the road or working from home.

**DN:** Do you currently work from the office or from home at the moment?

**Participant 7:** Combination of both. So I usually do mornings in the office and then afternoons at home.

**DN:** Do you have a and why is this if you could?

**Participant 7:** So the reason is for convenience. Actually I do not need to be office based at all. But because of traffic and travel and I do the school run for my daughter, it's just more convenient for me to come into the office after I've done the morning school run and then after I pick up we go home and then I log in from home and it's around logistics and also cost saving. And you know, it saves me that time of back-and-forth trips and petrol costs. And frustration in traffic.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 7:** So I don't have a specific study. Or space I literally work out of my dining room.

**DN:** So that's specific space. Is it equipped with anything special for, for your work or for your work requirements? Or is it just standard work-related equipment?

**Participant 7:** Most standard work-related equipment, so I mean it is just I have a laptop only that I you know a laptop in a headset and then the office has provided us with the ergonomic chairs. So I have that.

**DN:** Work 3G? Or do you use your own Wi-Fi?

**Participant 7:** So at home I used the Wi-Fi because it connects better than the 3G, but we do get 3G, it is 20 gigs a month.

**DN:** And this is your own personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 7:** Yes, my personal Wi-Fi.

**DN:** What are you currently working hours versus your working hours when you work solely from the office. So if you have to do a full day at the office.

**Participant 7:** So if I had to be a full day at the office, it would be 7:30 to 4:00. You know, on a normal day, but based on this current way of working, I do not think there is set working hours. You pretty much run through as much as you can. There will be a period where I would log off in the evening just to take care of family requirements or whatever, but I feel like I'm constantly logged on actually on some days because I'm. Checking emails afterwards late in the evening and catching up on things it just seems like that that balance is completely gone. So before COVID if I worked in the office, I would not log on at home unless there was an emergency or something urgent that needed to be attended to. You know, so it was a very rare occasion for me to take out my laptop in the evenings. Whereas now it is a permanent fixture. And also there's very little balance in terms of that. So like I find that a lot of my free time is spent working. You know it is not really relaxation or downtime or self-development but working.

**DN:** So approximately how long would you say you logged on for a day now?

**Participant 7:** That's an average of 12 hours or more sometimes in a day.

**DN:** And do you keep a set schedule when working from home? So I know now, because of the hybrid you do keep that schedule where you go, drop your daughter off and you pick her up.

**Participant 7:** Yes. And then So what I would do is typically because in the afternoons I need to assist you with homework at about between 4:30 and five. I typically log out so that I can then dedicate time to her. And then once she's back, she's in bed, which is after 7:30. That's when I'll be back on. But I am trying not to make that. You know, at one point I was doing that almost every day. I'm scaling back on that because I'm finding that I can't keep up.

**DN:** And is there any other type of activities that you include in your schedule like exercise or?

**DN:** Anything like that?

**Participant 7:** I used to, but I think since May I haven't I used to go to the gym twice a week, but I don't. I just have not had the time.

**DN:** And when working from home, are you usually alone or do you share your working environment with anyone?

**Participant 7:** No, no, I am alone. I am alone.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work from the time covid started to know?

**Participant 7:** To be honest with you, I have not really put in a practice or set rules or guidelines. I just literally have been logged on and work and. Yeah, I have not like created a proper schedule when COVID first hit it, I did have a bit of a schedule and that was because of home schooling. So I would, you know, I prioritize my day in terms of different tasks that I needed to fulfil for work as well as then being available for when my daughter went on to online classes. But with her being back at school and me just being alone at home or whatever, it has just pretty much been. Work until I need to get up and run an errand which is picking her up from school and then continue thereafter. So I know that you know a lot of people structure it and structure regular breaks and things like that, but I must be honest. I have been really bad at doing stuff like that.

**DN:** So when you started with COVID, besides that change from home schooling, nothing else is changed. You just get up in the morning, you do what you need to do with the regards to your tasks.

**Participant 7:** Yeah, yeah, I find that a lot of my day is spent in meetings, which is the reason why the after like the afterhours is to catch up on the admin because, like almost all of you are available times during the day, gets pulled into meetings. So actual operational work you cannot get done. In as you would normally do when you were in the office.

**DN:** How do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 7:** I am certainly doing a lot more than I was doing before, but I think that. In a lot of the ways where I would be working smarter. When I was in the office and getting stuff done in, in a shorter space of time. I am not doing that as much as I would, and I should be. I think that I am now accepting a lot more. In terms of a workload and like. it has become more overwhelming. So from a productivity perspective, there are days when I personally do not feel that I am productive, but it's just because of. So many tasks going on at the same time. Which I felt was not really happening during COVID like in COVID. I could focus a lot. I could go and sit in on classes that were taking place and things like that. And be part of like more. Active engagement. Whereas now. I feel like I am very bogged down with things.

**DN:** Going to ask you about factors that affect working from home computer to in, in the environment in the office. What type of task do you complete while working from home compared to the type of task you would complete in the office?

**Participant 7:** So I don't really have a differentiation in that sense. I mean, I would. everything that I would do in the office I'm doing at home as well and vice versa. From work task because it's the meetings, it's the I mean, a lot of the meetings are virtual and then it's the admin and project work. The only thing that is not happening now is because there's no there's or there's little face to face engagements that I'm involved in, I'm not going out to business schools and being part of that. Exposure.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 7:** Noise levels is a challenge because I live in a complex, so you know you've got kids playing, you've got the gardeners, you've got maintenance workers, you've got your neighbours, in my complex a lot of people are working from home and there's a lot of noise, you know, during the day. And you know, there are renovations happening and things like that, that is quite distracting. A lot of delivery vehicles coming in all day. So you are hearing that all the time.

**DN:** So how often would you say you experience those distractions?

**Participant 7:** Well, you know, these things are happening daily, but they you get to a point where you adapt to your environment and then you kind of tune it out, whereas before hearing the sound of the motorbikes was new because we weren't hearing it so often and you weren't at home to hear it, so it was more prevalent. But now it almost like fades into the background because you used to it. As much as there's times when you just not actively paying attention to it, so it has become more unconscious or subconscious for you. And when you first started hearing those noises, the afternoons working from home are disruptive, because, like all the kids are home and they are playing, so it's noisy. You know, it requires a little bit more focus. There are times when you do have to step out and ask people to keep quiet.

**DN:** Is the. How is this different from the distractions you experience in the office?

**Participant 7:** So pre covid, I think we you know we knew we had something to do, and we got down to it irrespective of who was around us and I think it was more mindset kind of thing. Post COVID now coming into the office, I must say I do struggle a lot working in the office when a lot of people come in because it gets extremely noisy and it's difficult to

focus and I think it's just purely because we've gotten used to silence in a way or they're being few people around. So you can just get on with things but and also levels of noise because. People have not adjusted to this like. Inside voice kind of thing, we used to in we working from home we alone so we can talk as loud as we need to and when in the office you find like when somebody else is on the phone it is quite distracting. I do not know if I've answered adequately.

**DN:** No, you have and. Are there any other distractions you find in the office?

**Participant 7:** No, no, it is. I am well, you've got the cleaners that come through. Like I think every hour to clean your desk. So sometimes, you know, middle of a meeting and you've got to stand up and move your things out of the way so that they can clean and sanitize. But that is about it.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 7:** If I had a personal choice of just doing one, I would, I would choose working from home. I feel that. While I haven't created the right balance and that's really something that I haven't done, I do get a lot more done. Like in A and like thinking time and things like that. It is better for me at home. Also, the other things on which you would focus. You know you can eliminate when you at home like the admin around getting ready for work and things like that. You know, you shorten all your, your, your logistical time. So you're more focused on those kinds of things? You don't get the frustration from traffic and where you feel like you know when sometimes when you get to the office, you need to just you need a moment to debrief from sitting in traffic and things like that. So working from home, you do not have those challenges. You can literally move from. Your bedroom to your bathroom, to your desk to work.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 7:** Flexibility, I would say. Flexibility and freedom. Convenience. And I think this less overheads, you know, from a company perspective. And I think when people are in a in an environment where they feel more comfortable, they give more of themselves as well. They are willing to give more of themselves.

**DN:** And what do you see as the benefits from working from the office?

**Participant 7:** I think that's the shutdown time is the largest one for me. Is like, you know, you know, you've done your day and your day is over and you're going home. And you can get on with your life at home. Whereas. At home, when you are working from home, it is

not like I mean that’s your office. You, you, you. You can either consider it is working from home or living at work.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 7:** I think creating the healthy boundaries and balances.

**DN:** And your biggest struggle when working from the office.

**Participant 7:** I think there's certain rigidity. In that. In that space and the. I do not. Sometimes you know, there's that you focused on the external stuff as opposed to what you need to get done. So you can get easily distracted by somebody else. You can be, you know, you, you do not. You do not necessarily get to stick to your own plan for the day. You can get pulled into things that that is happening around you, which detracts from what your own purpose is.

**DN:** What was your productivity like before COVID? And now after working from home.

**Participant 7:** I am more productive now. I am doing a lot more now. Then I was pre-covid and that was because like there was a lot of my role that involved. Travelling so that you know when I first started out in my role, so that used to take up a lot of my time. There was a lot of more face-to-face engagement also and that does require time and planning. Whereas here you know you can get away with the shorter meeting when you when you are online, you can also. Utilize more e-mail communication as a as opposed to setting up a meeting to do something so and then you are multitasking. So while you are in a meeting You probably attending to emails, attending to other things or working on some on data sheets or something like that. Whereas when you physically present with someone you have literally got to give them that attention and not be busy with something else. I do not always think multitasking is a good idea, but I sometimes find that it's necessary because that's the only way you're going to get anything done.

**DN:** these examples that you gave me, how do you say it is affected your productivity when working from home? And then pre COVID so your productivity pre covid. Was it the same? Or do you think you now? A more productive or less productive.

**Participant 7:** I think I am more productive now. I think I am more productive now. I think there is fewer distractions in that sense. That I can attribute to other people. I think if there is anything, it is because I am not focused or planned, but I think I'm more productive. In terms of my own outputs.

**DN:** I'm going to ask you about the type of working arrangements that you would prefer. Currently, how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 7:** I am very satisfied with it. I think I have got great flexibility. You know, I have the ability to come into the office when I want to and when I need to. I am not restricted to that. I can work from home as well. And in terms of working from the office also, I don't, I'm not limited to one site. So I can opt to work at a different site if it's closer to me. If I have to be somewhere else. So I enjoy this option. I like the I think the hybrid. Would largely work. For a lot of people, and for me definitely does.

**DN:** And what home from work arrangement would you like?

**Participant 7:** When you were still. Yes, just let me understand this. You are saying? Which? Which would I prefer?

**DN:** What's your preference? So if Nedbank, thanks said, OK, we are going to go back to being only work from the office. What? What would you say is your preference? If you if you could.

**Participant 7:** No, I would not. I would not. I would not enjoy that. I enjoy the ability to choose. And have this adoption of when I want to come into the office to work it, you know, and if there is a requirement for like, off of team stuff and stuff like that to come in but. I prefer having the hybrid model. Or the flexibility in this you know to work from home. I would not want to be completely office spaced again.

**DN:** So, that is all the questions I have right now.

**Participant 7:** I hope I've answered them adequately.

**DN:** Is there anything that you think? You anything that you want to add that you think is pertinent to the study, but. Also, you think that I should think of.

**Participant 7:** So from an environment perspective, you know, I think that the work from home option has given is, is better in that sense because you're reducing the amount of people out on the roads, you're reducing, you know, all of that impact on the on the environment itself, the traffic pollution and noise pollution, all of that. Companies then also benefit from not having to have so many buildings that they rent, which means that. You know you it should curtail job losses for companies that experience financial difficulties where they need to do staff layoffs and things like that. So rentals of buildings and rentals of equipment is minimized. You also mitigate Risk companies can greatly reduce risk for

injured on duty kind of things and needing to manage those aspects and can focus more on the softer aspects of people management and well-being for people.

**DN:** Thank you so much for taking the time to be interviewed. You have provided some valuable insight into the study.

## 8.8 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 8:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Risk Manager, Financial - Participant 8**

**Date and time: 03 October 2022 15h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 8:** 33

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 8:** Male.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 8:** Nope.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 8:** Financial.

**DN:** What is your function within this industry?

**Participant 8:** Risk manager

**DN:** And what level would you say you are at within this industry, junior, middle or senior?

**Participant 8:** Middle.

**DN:** And what size of the organization is the? What is the size of your organization?

**Participant 8:** it is good. Large.

**DN:** Have you worked from home pre COVID.

**Participant 8:** No.

**DN:** Not even on special occasions or anything like that.

**Participant 8:** No, no.

**DN:** So do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 8:** From home.

**DN:** you do not go into the office at all.

**Participant 8:** we do on a time stamp basis. Depending on the need. Then we go into the office. But yes, full time from home otherwise.

**DN:** And would you say the need would be once a month once in two months, once in three months?

**Participant 8:** Once a month.

**DN:** And at home, do you have a dedicated workspace or a Home Office?

**Participant 8:** Yes, I do.

**DN:** Dedicated workspace or Home Office.

**Participant 8:** Dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what? What do you have in your dedicated workspace? What type of equipment to do your job?

**Participant 8:** It is a table chair and all the equipment provided by Nedbank.

**DN:** Does that include an extra screen?

**Participant 8:** Yes, it does include an extra screen, a mouse.

**DN:** 3G.

**Participant 8:** Wi-Fi, not 3G.

**DN:** So is that Wi-Fi your personal Wi-Fi or company Wi-Fi?

**Participant 8:** It is my personal one.

**DN:** So you are not provided with the 3G?

**Participant 8:** No.

**DN:** And do you perhaps have an inverter or generator?

**Participant 8:** No, not currently.

**DN:** OK. Anything else?

**Participant 8:** Nothing of which I can think.

**DN:** when you work from home what hours do you work? Is it from eight till five? And then when you work from the office, what hours do you work?

**Participant 8:** usually from eight to five both work and office, but sometimes it is working from home does go beyond the five 5:00 o'clock.

**DN:** So does that happen often or is it just, uh, maybe at month end or once a week once a month?

**Participant 8:** No, you can say usually it does happen very regularly say about three times a week.

**DN:** Three times a week and how much longer? After five. Do you work?

**Participant 8:** Till about seven. Depending on the priority and the work that needs to be done. But usually around 7:00 it is the cut off, yeah.

**DN:** Do you keep a schedule when working from home?

**Participant 8:** No.

**DN:** And of work when you work from home, are you usually alone.

**Participant 8:** No, no. So both my wife and me work from home.

**DN:** And do you share the same working environment?

**Participant 8:** No. So she has her own dedicated to workstation and I have my own dedicated workstation.

**DN:** so you are not in each other's space and there's no challenges there.

**Participant 8:** No.

**DN:** From the time you have started working from home. How have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 8:** Well, it is much more. Ah, what can I say? We don't stick to a schedule where we are just. Continue working on an ongoing basis. It is like you can take your breaks, you can. It is much more flexible. There is much easier.

**DN:** And so from the time we started working from home, you find that it is easier for you to work from home.

**Participant 8:** Correct. Yes.

**DN:** And you haven't changed anything in the way you work, such as maybe. I know when some people started. Depended on the industry. Some people had minimal work. Because you know their suppliers and their customers were also closed down so it took some adapting for them to adjust to workload. But in your case.

**Participant 8:** No, I think when it was a good transition into the from working at home because. I mean the meetings. We did not have to adjust for meetings. We did not have to adjust significantly, for any of the work that I performed. So it was an easy transition to just continue working from home.

**DN:** how do you think working from home as is influencing your productivity?

**Participant 8:** I think it is improved in terms of productivity given the fact that you able to focus more. On your deliverables. However, I do think that, uh, the meetings the there is an increase in meetings and, therefore. that time. Like we have mentioned earlier that the. going beyond 5:00 o'clock. It does tend to happen much more frequently, however. Given that. I think productivity has increased.

**DN:** What type of task do you complete compared to the type of at home compared to the type of tasks you would complete when you in the office? Is there a difference?

**Participant 8:** There's no significant difference, I think. That is why it became much easier to actually adjust when I worked from home. As well as the office. So it was not a significant difference. So in terms of tasks they want, anything major that has changed, I mean work is business as usual. So yes.

**DN:** And then what type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 8:** Other than the load shedding, it is not much of distractions. I think the. There is much more focus instead of distractions.

**DN:** And what type of distractions would you experience in the office?

**Participant 8:** I think the fact that is more people surrounding you with in terms of the noise level in terms of you walking for meetings? I am going to one, building to another building, I think that's. Those are the type of distractions you face at work on other than at home.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 8:** Working from home, Definitely because I think the pace at which you can actually dedicate your time is much more flexible than when you in office.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 8:** Well, you can do both work and you can see to your personal. Stuff at home. So I think that is a major benefit there. It also, yes, yeah. You can run errands. You can deal with personal as well as your work items. I think working from home I think at the office it's just, uh, you're just office bound and restricted in in some way. But at home you can actually dedicate time to both work and family.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits when you? Work from. The office.

**Participant 8:** To be honest, I there is not any. Like I said, besides the utilities and that is being the load shedding, I think that is the only benefit that I can see working from the office.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 8:** And that is going to be the electricity issue again.

**DN:** And your biggest struggle when you work from the office.

**Participant 8:** I will not say there is not a struggle. You think it's just the traffic going into the work? the traffic. To get to the workplace is the biggest struggle.

**DN:** What would you say your productivity was like before you started working from home? And what is your productivity now while working from home?

**Participant 8:** I think the productivity of working from home has increased significantly compared to work. Because like I said, when you at home you much more dedicated, you much more focused. You have time to think, you have time to do your work and the flexibility that comes along with it. So you're not always thinking about work when you at work, you do have sense of everything else around you. So yeah, I think that's helped in increasing productivity.

**DN:** And how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 8:** I'm very, very satisfied with it.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied with it?

**Participant 8:** And the fact that you have that flexibility, the fact that you have that. when you getting up and taking a break, you you're not only surrounded by work or surrounded by. people from work. You're surrounded by other factors. So you have the capability to take your mind away from work and then go back to it and give it your all.

**DN:** What? Working from home arrangement would you like? So if they told you had a choice, what would you prefer?

**Participant 8:** The one that I currently have right now. So you just work from home. So I am just thinking of the choices. And yeah, so the eight to five working from home is perfect for me. I'm just going into the office whenever needed.

**DN:** Can some of the choices would be maybe two times? It worked to turn three times in the office. or fully work based or fully home based.

**Participant 8:** Yes, fully home based. Much more preferable for me.

**DN:** Preferable without the going into the office.

**Participant 8:** Without.

**DN:** those are all the questions I have. Is there anything that you? think I you might have forgotten to say, or you think might be pertinent to the study that you would like to add.

**Participant 8:** Nothing at this point, but if I do, I can. I will probably just. Send you an e-mail.

## 8.9 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 9:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Executive Head, Financial - Participant 9**

**Date and time: 21 September 2022 14h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** So we are going to start off with some easy, easy, uh questions. What is your age?

**Participant 9:** 50.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 9:** Male.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 9:** Yes, two boys.

**DN:** And do they live with you?

**Participant 9:** Yes.

**DN:** what industry are you in?

**Participant 9:** Banking. Financial services.

**DN:** What function within or your job title within this industry?

**Participant 9:** Executive head in the office of the COO is the title I use, although there's a document that says something about executive head regulatory and risk strategy, I think.

**DN:** The level that you are at is senior.

**Participant 9:** That would be correct.

**DN:** And the size of the organization.

**Participant 9:** 27,000 of us

**DN:** Very large organization.

**DN:** I'm going to ask you about pre covid work from home and your current working from home arrangements now. Did you work from home pre covid and how often did you work from home?

**Participant 9:** No, and never would be my 2 answers. Pre covid.

**DN:** And currently do you work from home or the office?

**Participant 9:** I work from home.

**DN:** And so you do not go into the office at all.

**Participant 9:** Very seldom. So for meetings, trustee meetings and a couple of other meetings, but very seldom it's not. It's not once a week, one day a week. It is not one day, a month.

**DN:** So it might be once every three months, or once every four months.

**Participant 9:** Something like that, yes.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 9:** yes. Does not look exactly like this. This is a screen, but I am fortunate enough to have a workspace at home at an office environment here.

**DN:** So you have a Home Office. And what is your Home Office equipped with?

**Participant 9:** I suppose my Nedbank technology stuff and Wi-Fi that is my own personal household Wi-Fi.

**DN:** And your Nedbank's' stuff with that include an extra screen or just your laptop and your 3G.

**Participant 9:** Laptop two screens. Double screen connector. Mouse. Keyboard. And these headsets are mine.

**DN:** And what are your current working hours versus your working hours when you work from the office?

**Participant 9:** I suppose my working hours are pretty similar and, but I do not have to do the travel in, in and out of Sandton so. My working hours are 8 till five or six depending on the on the day.

**DN:** And that's not factoring travel at all?

**Participant 9:** Yeah, that's excluding travel.

**DN:** What type of schedule do you keep when you work from home?

**Participant 9:** Not sure I understand the questions by schedule.

**DN:** So when you at home are you, do you have like a dedicated? Plan of action as to what you're going to do when you're going to take a break a.

**Participant 9:** Ah, no.

**DN:** Things like that.

**Participant 9:** Now I suppose. Yeah, I am quiet. It is interesting. I hardly ever leave. The desk if I if I do, it's for body breaks only. I do not do lunches. I don't do coffees at the canteen cause at the at the coffee station or water at the water cooler. So it is yes, it is. I'd say less

social and probably more intense working from home, but the counter the benefit is there's no traffic which is much better.

**DN:** And then when you work from home, are you usually alone or do you share your working environment with? Maybe your wife or the children.

**Participant 9:** Certainly not the children that would be challenging. My wife occasionally sits in the office, but not often. She's just come and picked up her laptop and moved out because she saw I was in a meeting. That's why I moved to the headset. I suppose I would say 80% of the time I am alone with my cat. There's a cat that sleeps on the desk next to me and sleeps there all day, nearly every day.

**DN:** So you so she shares the office with you, but not often?

**Participant 9:** Correct my wife.

**DN:** How have you from the time we started with COVID, how have you changed the way you work? So, for instance, some people have told me they've become more focused, or they've decided they need to put a schedule in place and, you know, go from there. Whereas when COVID started, maybe the work was not so intense, so they would just be all over the place.

**Participant 9:** I suppose. I would describe my myself as being more focused. So I think my concentration and focus has increased the intensity of my working efforts has increased. The balance is I do not have to spend time in traffic, so I've got the energy. As opposed to the challenge of fighting traffic. But I wouldn't say other than that I wouldn't say much. Still very interactive with people and communities, but just in a in a digital way.

**DN:** And how do you think working from home as influenced your productivity?

**Participant 9:** It has improved my productivity given. The lack of distractions. You know, working as a as an individual with in being the only person within the work, the Home Office versus the distractions of the work environment. And I suppose the converse of that is reduced social interactions have been an outcome of that.

**DN:** so the next set of questions are going to be around what factors affect you're working from home compared to when you're in the office? So what type of task do you complete while working from home computer to the task you complete when working in the office?

**Participant 9:** That has not changed. Then the work that I do is the exact same work. And so I am not doing different work, I am just doing it in a in a different way. It is a quieter. Setting with less distractions and less noise and less social interaction. But the content is

identical. I mean I suppose during COVID I would reflect and I assume you're aware of this, but I went through a deep reflection on understanding myself in the world and my world view. And I suppose I think that that's definitely changed post COVID. And so how I understand the role of business and the purpose of work and the important things in life, I think has evolved through the COVID journey.

**DN:** so it is the same complete same. And what happened? Distractions. Do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 9:** Occasionally the birds make a noise that would be probably the only distraction. We have birds that roam around the house. No, none of our animals are in cages, so our birds our dogs or cats our bunnies and they all roam around and occasionally the birds make a racket Another reason I bought these.

**DN:** And then what type of distractions would you experience at the office?

**Participant 9:** yes, multiple. I mean from fire drills being an infrequent but substantial one. To you know, just general noise levels on the floor and social activity and. Yeah, disruptions from. What is happening in in the workspace? We have moved away from offices. I had always preferred open plan. Rather than office in the workspace, but. I have realized the extent of the distraction of an open plan work environment relative to a quiet space.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective in? Why working from home or working from the office?

**Participant 9:** Obviously working from home, that is why I choose to continue to do it.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 9:** Lack of distraction. Ability to focus. And uh convenience of not having to travel and the and the flexibility of being able to. To do to have personal flexibility. If my wife's not able to pick up the kids, I am able to go and pick them up and still conduct the meetings whilst driving. That type of thing. Big benefits.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 9:** The community, the connection, the socialization are big benefits.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 9:** There's an element of missing people missing community. I am fortunate in the sense that I've got solar batteries and a generator as backup, so power disruptions is not a problem. But that is a problem for many other people working remotely, and I suppose that is very disruptive for many.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle with working from the office?

**Participant 9:** Like I haven't worked from the office for a long time, so I don't really have a struggle. What? Why have I chosen not to go back into the office? Is, I suppose firstly we moved during COVID. So our office setup is no longer where it used to be. I haven't even been to see the new one. But the obviously Nedbank strategy was to reduce the workspace and have a more densified work environment. Hot desking all of that type of stuff. And I suppose the convenience of having my own setup with split screens and all of the setup is very useful. And then the biggest issue is not the biggest benefit. Or downside to the office environment is obviously dealing with traffic at inconvenient times. So at the end of the day, when you're tired and you just want to be home, you then have to commute. I am relatively lucky I stay 5K's from 135. And so my commute was probably 20 minutes on a bad day. But yeah, I suppose I never enjoyed the energy of climbing into a car at the end of the day and driving home, I did start to use public transport, but then I found public transport was erratic. I then used Uber. An Uber was certainly more expensive than public transport. If there was an app that enabled me to track the Gautrain buses, I probably would have continued to use Gautrain buses.

**DN:** So what was your productivity like pre COVID and what has? What is it like now after working from home for so long?

**Participant 9:** I think my productivity is materially higher post COVID working from home.

**DN:** And can you elaborate on that, why do you? Say that.

**Participant 9:** I feel I'm able to get through more contribute more and I have, created space to pursue. Pursue activities in the work environment that are not directly linked to some of my operational tasks. The you know the stuff that you I assume would be aware of.

**DN:** So now I'm going to ask you about what you would prefer going forward. How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement and why would you say that?

**Participant 9:** Suppose I would say I am very satisfied. I am I really like the convenience. And the. And flexibility that my current working environment gives me so very satisfied.

**DN:** And going forward, if Nedbank came to you and said, OK, let's change the way we work, what type of home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 9:** I'm not sure, so if Nedbank mandated that I couldn't always work from home or what.

**DN:** No, it is so if Nedbank came back and said we owe you have left Nedbank for instance. And you can now dictate to the company of your choice what type of working arrangement would you want to go to or would you like to see? Even if you want to stay in the same one.

**Participant 9:** I suppose it has the challenges. If I left Nedbank, I would probably want to go into a work environment that was a physical in person, work environment and the reason is because one has to build relationships, community and networks within a system to operate effectively. And so I'd have to do that again from scratch in Nedbank. In my existing tenure. I've joined the bank in 05, so I've been in the bank for 17 years. I have networks, communities, connections and relationships, so. And that isn't the same issue as joining a new organization. I would if Nedbank came and said to me. Do you want to carry on doing what you're doing? My answer has already been yes, I do. And I suppose my boss has given me the flexibility. And I think that there is an opportunity to evolve to a slightly more hybrid model where there are more meetings on site, there's a community, a community of us that I'm meeting tomorrow because one of us is sick, we've decided to go virtual. And that was a bit of a disappointment for me. I'd have preferred to have had that meeting in person eyeball to eyeball. And just, you know, feel where we all at. But it's going to be a virtual meeting. We will see how it goes. So I think that's the direction of where I would like to see the working environment moving. Does that make sense? Does that answer your question?

**DN:** Yes, yes it does. Then I just have a follow up question for when your wife works with you in the office. Is that a distraction for you or is it that the you know you? You managed to work. Together peacefully.

**Participant 9:** I do not think it's a distraction. I mean. I think we managed to share the office. As I said, it's less than 20% of the time. And I think that's I even don't, I don't think it's 20. I think it might be ten at tops. So it is not a lot of the time, but it's fine. We work together, yes.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything else that you feel you'd like to add that might be relevant to the study?

**Participant 9:** Yes. So I suppose having that discipline is very important and that and that is interesting. Yeah, I suppose. Yes. My focus is always being balanced. And I have always been explicit. My family is my priority, so. And. But I feel I've been able to do that better and more effectively in work from home environment. I think there's a huge issue in the world about mental well-being and I think COVID has really. It's helped us identify the

many, many issues with our current system and the way we think and the way we work. And so I am hoping that going forward, there's an opportunity for us to opt into a different way of being as humans.

## 8.10 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 10:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Quantity Surveyor, Construction - Participant 10**

**Date and time: 17 October 2022 20h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 10:** 39.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 10:** A female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 10:** Yes, I do.

**DN:** How many and do they live with you?

**Participant 10:** Uh three yes they do this with me.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 10:** In the construction industry.

**DN:** What function are you within this industry?

**Participant 10:** I am a consultant. I'm a cost consultant or they call it a quantity surveyor.

**DN:** And what level within your company are you at. Junior middle and senior.

**Participant 10:** I'm a senior operation director.

**DN:** And what is the size of your organization?

**Participant 10:** Including admin and all the stuff about 26, yeah, 26 stuff.

**DN:** So it is small.

**Participant 10:** Yes.

**DN:** Have you worked from home pre COVID?

**Participant 10:** No, not pre-covid no.

**DN:** Not even for emergencies.

**Participant 10:** no, I worked outside sometime, I used to use other client office or. I yeah, I used to work offsite, but not necessarily like working from home. Yes, but I I'll go sometime places to I used to seek for places to work basically before covid yes. But is not the me.

**DN:** but this was a job requirement to be on site at the clients premises.

**Participant 10:** not necessarily sometime I go for meeting and I stay there longer to work, but not necessarily a client requirement no. Or if I travelled in between travel then I'll sit wherever I am to work, a bit longer, but not as a as a job requirement.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 10:** I do both about three times a week at the office and two times at home sometime alternate sometimes three times at home two times at the office. But I do hybrid we use the hybrid model.

**DN:** And when you work from home. Do you have a Home Office? Or dedicated workspace.

**Participant 10:** Yes. The dedicated workspace that converted one of the. The bedroom to an office.

**DN:** And what is your Home Office equipped with?

**Participant 10:** Uh desk I've got a chair lamp and a screen. And obviously the laptop as well.

**DN:** And do you have a company a 3G or do you have your own personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 10:** I've got my own personal Wi-Fi fibre, yeah, Wi-Fi fibre line.

**DN:** And do you have any inverter or a generator as well?

**Participant 10:** Yes, an inverter yes.

**DN:** And when you work from home what hours do you work?

**Participant 10:** At least. 9 to 10 hours.

**DN:** And when you work from the office how many hours do you work?

**Participant 10:** Normal office hours, 8, but I do come at home and extend anyway. So I think it depends on the deliverables that they generally probably 8 as well, or 9 as well to 10. Even when I'm at the office because I do come back home and carry on. From home.

**DN:** And is this often or is this just a depending maybe month end because you have reports to you.

**Participant 10:** I think depending on the workload yes.

**DN:** So would that be like a? Once a month or maybe? Five times in a month.

**Participant 10:** at least five times in a month where I work long hours. When I am at office yes.

**DN:** And do you keep a schedule when you work from home?

**Participant 10:** No, I do try and observe lunchtime. But not necessarily if I've got meetings throughout I'm just going to carry on. But I don't really take a lunch break. No, not Yeah, but I do keep it in my mind to say that at 1:00 o'clock. I need to break but sometimes it does not always work like that.

**DN:** And when you are working from home are usually alone.

**Participant 10:** Yes, I am alone in my room in the office, yeah, where I work, yeah alone. Yes.

**DN:** OK so nobody shares your work environment with you.

**Participant 10:** No, I am alone, yeah, no one shares I'm by myself.

**DN:** And from the time you started working from home. Have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 10:** I work long hours in the week that my changes. My main changes. But I will work less over the weekend. That is one of my major changes after COVID Before, I used to work. Long hours even weekend. But I think since covid had long, long hours and about weekend. I generally do not work. That is yes.

**DN:** OK and then how do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 10:** In terms of time, stealers or yeah, it all the chats with my colleagues I avoid when I'm at home. I know I can focus. and I can do more especially when I have got a lot of admin e-mail to do follow-ups. I do better when I am at home, then when I am at the office.

**DN:** What type of task do you complete when you are working at home? And what type of task would you complete when you in the office? Is there a difference?

**Participant 10:** Focussed admin I do it at home meetings. I prefer face to face meeting Friday at the office. but I do more of the focus time at home compared to when I'm at the office.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 10:** Not really, I think at some point when the inverter was not working sometimes you get interrupted but I think I'm sorted now but generally. No, not really people talking to me and trying to make conversation or me trying to solve everybody's problem. I do not really get a lot of distraction. No.

**DN:** So the distraction you are talking about is load shedding.

**Participant 10:** Yes, load, shedding is hmm.

**DN:** And what this type of distractions would you have at the office?

**Participant 10:** In the interruptions. people want to chat. It is more those chats in between and. The Conversation. Yes, in between works. So after the meeting or before the meeting it is more those chats? Yes. And everybody wants because they see you, they want to talk to you, sometime on a personal level sometime on work. But because it looks like they talk to you because they see you. This is early because they need to talk to you in that moment that is what I've noticed.

**DN:** They want to connect.

**Participant 10:** Yeah, they want to connect. Yeah, it's going to be like just random questions and things like that. And before you know it. One thing leads to the other and you spend 20 minutes chatting. as opposed to focusing on the work.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 10:** I think I at home because I can see that progress I can track my progress. I can choose not to answer certain calls, but at time, and just focus on my work. So I think the working from home, but again because of my function. I cannot just do that. I need to go and engage as well with other people at office. That that I work better at home.

**DN:** What benefits do you see when you work from home?

**Participant 10:** I do not get tired as much. because of the distances. Obviously, the downs of its I don't exercise a lot compared to when I'm at office. The stays the bathroom so they don't the advantage. I do not get tired. I can actually carry on after a day with other stuff and my life after hours I don't get a lot of fatigue. That's one of the plus and also I saved as well. And I do not go to the office. I don't stop at the garage buy drinks or anything on my way to the office. So I save and then I don't get tired. It is much when I. When I go to the office.

**DN:** And what benefits do you see when working from the office?

**Participant 10:** sometimes getting your things done when you follow up. You are working in teams. You want to make sure the deadline is met. So you need to be where the team is following up things at the office tend to be difficult way by people do not pick up phones. You do not know what they're busy with, but when you see them at this, you understand the dynamics and you can help when possible. It is more teamwork. I need to yes that is one of the advantages to be at the office.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 10:** I would not say few meters, I guess it's probably. Ten meters, but it's maybe it's 7 meters to my bathroom. Uh I generally short distances, probably three sometime or maybe 700, the bedroom so it's not that much. No.

**DN:** is that your biggest struggle going through and going to the bathroom.

**Participant 10:** Yes, yes, going like one trip. I do not travel a lot, yeah.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when you work from the office.

**Participant 10:** I did not find when I hear you asking sorry the question was a struggle. I thought was it a struggle or the travel. Sorry I missed that.

**DN:** Struggle sorry.

**Participant 10:** No sorry struggle. No, I do not. Yes, except lack of exercise. That is one of it. If I can link it to that, Yeah, but other than that there's not much, I guess. This is more focusing on the work and do my meetings when I need to, and that is it. Yes.

**DN:** And then your biggest struggle when you work from the office.

**Participant 10:** From the office yes does interruption. I do not get to do all my work and so I need to come back and carry on or I need to. Use one of the boardrooms as opposed to working in open plan so that I don't get distracted. I struggle to focus on work. Basically, unless I use the boardroom and where I lock myself in it is supposed to open plan.

**DN:** And what do you think your productivity was like before you started working from home compared to now?

**Participant 10:** Overall, I do not think it's been affected because we work on deadlines, so the deadline must be done but in terms of focus time I can take control of my time because I'm alone so that's only for activity. But in terms of before covid or before working from the office at home, we work on deadlines, so the answer is deadline driven, then the work is done.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 10:** Yeah, I am very satisfied on I said on average model that we need to engage sometime, and I didn't need it to work with my team, but I think I'm happy with the. Like a 40/60 or 50/50 type of spilt yes happy. I was satisfied I am satisfied.

**DN:** What work from home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 10:** Are you talking to the physical desk or is it in terms of?

**DN:** It can be anything so would you like your working arrangement to stay the same way you like 40/60 or 50/50 at the office in at home or would you like it to change maybe a less time at the office and more time at home?

**Participant 10:** I think because of the type of work that we do, I think 50 to 40 40/60 or 50/50 it ideal at the moment? so I do not want to change that to work more from home and not being at the office. Otherwise, I'll yeah, sometimes I said, you need to see the team you need to engage with them. So I will probably be happy with 60/40. Maybe two times at the office in three days at home.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have at this stage is there anything else that you would like to add that you think I might not have covered, or you know you think might be pertinent to the study.

**Participant 10:** Am I OK, maybe I am not sure if I'm covering your question. But I think maybe the productivity measure, it might be difficult to test? How do we quantify? Maybe that is the only thing that might be a bit kind of a tricky question. Yeah, I think that's one thing that I think uh probably struggle as well because it's difficult to quantify might be difficult to quantify because yeah, it can depend on the number of things. but other than that I think the hybrid model looking at way the world is going. And looking at the younger generation in terms of flexibility actually more people actually asking to work from to be more flexible because I want to take control of their time. So I think that's the way to go. I guess for company might just be open to that. But I did if I have to draw some of my experience talking to other people as well. Other consultants during the guys who do the design for them, they struggle working from home. They feel like people being at the office actually engage better way instead of sending an e-mail to someone you can just talk. To someone and attach the information or they can hear when while you talking to someone else. Unfortunately, when you at home. No one someone actually takes your their time to write to you so that the challenges that some of the other companies are experiencing. but I think yeah, I think that that that's it if I can just add.

## 8.11 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 11:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: SAP Basis Administrator, IT - Participant 11**

**Date and time: 18 September 2022 13h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** Can you tell me your age?

**Participant 11:** 41.

**DN:** Gender.

**Participant 11:** Male.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 11:** For dogs, I mean two dogs, 2 cats.

**DN:** What industry are you from?

**Participant 11:** IT.

**DN:** And what to function in the organization? Are you at? What is your job title?

**Participant 11:** sap basis administrator.

**DN:** And what level are you in the organization? Are you in junior, middle, senior?

**Participant 11:** Senior.

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 11:** We have the approximately of 455. Employees.

**DN:** So we are going to go with medium. I'm going to ask you a series of questions about pre COVID work from home and your current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre COVID.

**Participant 11:** yes, but it was like. Maybe twice in a year or so.

**DN:** And do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 11:** Currently we have a hybrid scheme.

**DN:** So how many days of work are you at home in how many days a week are you at home? In how many days a week are you in the office?

**Participant 11:** OK, so uh, some weeks it's two days, some weeks it's three days.

**DN:** At home or at the office?

**Participant 11:** Both. So there's some weeks is 2 days in office, some days is 3 days in the office.

**DN:** And when working from home, do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 11:** Dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is it equipped with?

**Participant 11:** screen power supply. Pen paper. That is it.

**DN:** Wi-Fi or 3G.

**Participant 11:** Wi-Fi.

**DN:** And that is your own Wi-Fi.

**Participant 11:** Yes, yes.

**DN:** what are your current working hours versus working hours when working from the office?

**Participant 11:** current from working in office. It is from. 8:00 o'clock to 4:00 o'clock. While when I walk at home, it's from 7:30 to 5:30 six.

**DN:** When you work from home, do you keep what type of schedule do you keep?

**Participant 11:** Are you talking about in regards to what time you start work? What time you have a break?

**DN:** Yes.

**Participant 11:** Actually, I do not really keep a schedule. If there's work, then I have to do work because a lot of things where we have to have meetings and stuff so that overtakes what I can have as a schedule. So I get called into impromptu meetings a lot. It's hard to have a break so we whenever I can get a chance, I'll take a break.

**DN:** When working from home, are you usually alone? Or do you share your working environment with someone?

**Participant 11:** My workspace is for myself.

**DN:** When you working from home, are you working alone or is there someone else in the house also working from home?

**Participant 11:** No, there is someone else my wife.

**DN:** OK. But you will have you'll separate spaces to work with that. It is not encroaching on each other’s.

**Participant 11:** Correct.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work? Where from when you first started working from home to now?

**Participant 11:** OK. Could you repeat that?

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work from when you first started working from home to now?

**Participant 11:** from now. I guess there will when I am at home, I'm actually more focused on what I need to do compared to when I'm in the office.

**DN:** OK, so you know when we started with COVID? Everybody, it was up in the air. Everybody was confused. Uh, a lot of people were on a go slow when working from home, you know, things were not very critical, however. Some of the people I have spoken to have said things have gotten more critical, so they're now more focused. They are more driven. you know that kind of thing. They've also realigned the way they work in terms of they get up, they have their coffee and they sit at their desk and you know, they move structured those kind of things. So when COVID first hit, how were you working and now how do you how have you structured the way you work? Have you changed anything?

**Participant 11:** No, not really. It is still the same.

**DN:** How do you think working from home as influenced your productivity?

**Participant 11:** It has influenced my productivity because. I'm not really worried about like the drive back home. What time I'm going to get home from the traffic. So I think that's why I just add those extra hours in because I can focus from the morning to the afternoon. Easily.

**DN:** What type of tasks do you compete when working from home and we compared to when you work in the Office for example? Some people have told me that when they work from home, they prefer to do the long, intricate reports that they need to do because then they get they can focus and think, whereas at the office they're more. More doing than mundane tasks that they can just get done, or some people have said their tasks haven't changed because irrespective of whether they're in the office or whether they at home, it's the same task they have to compete. So what type of task do you complete while working from home compared to working in the office?

**Participant 11:** It's actually the same whether I'm in the office or you know whether I'm at home except for when I'm at home, I get less disturbed because nobody can just walk into my office and ask me for help directly.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 11:** distractions, maybe. The dog's barking, but that's about it.

**DN:** And how is this different from the distractions at the office?

**Participant 11:** it's like every 10 to 15 minutes, someone's walking in the office and speaking to me about a certain issue and then I have to forward them to the correct department. Or system if I can.

**DN:** Which environment is more effective for you and why?

**Participant 11:** working from home because I am all I'm. I have more productivity. At home than in the office. In office there is too many. well, how can I put this objects in the way?

**DN:** Objects like people.

**Participant 11:** Yes, people. They are my objects. They distract me from what? I need to be doing.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 11:** Work longer hours. I can concentrate better.

**DN:** You see that as a benefit the working longer hours. Any other benefits you can think of like?

**Participant 11:** Well, also like if I finish certain tasks earlier. Sometimes during the day I can actually go out and do some activities like shopping or something in between. Which are a big benefits.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 11:** In the office. at least you know that there are people are around. You have interaction with people. And if someone wants to go for lunch break or something. they invite you along To go for lunch break.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 11:** Load shedding.

**DN:** Anything else?

**Participant 11:** No there's that.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 11:** People.

**DN:** People.

**Participant 11:** Requesting me to do other things.

**DN:** distraction and distracting you from your tasks? What has your productivity been like before and after working from home?

**Participant 11:** My productivity has actually have been better from working from home than working from the office.

**DN:** It has improved.

**Participant 11:** Yes, it's has improved. Because that whole travel time cut out. saves a lot of time.

**DN:** So how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangements and why?

**Participant 11:** It is good. It gives me the opportunity to work from home and work from the office, so if they are things for users that require me to be at the office, I can assist them.

**Participant 11:** When I'm in the office, basically, and when I'm at home, I can concentrate more on what the effort of work I need to perform in doing my daily a daily, weekly and monthly tasks.

**DN:** On what work from home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 11:** I would prefer three at home, two at work.

**DN:** And currently you have got both. You've got two days in the office or three days, depending on the week.

**Participant 11:** Yes.

**DN:** So you would prefer two days at home, two days at work and three days at home.

**Participant 11:** Yes.

DN: That is all the questions that I have that the stage. Is there anything else that you think would be that you would like to add to this?

**Participant 11:** No, I am good.

## 8.12 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 12:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Travel Consultant, Financial - Participant 12**

**Date and time: 18 September 2022 14h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** Your age.

**Participant 12:** 45.

**DN:** Gender.

**Participant 12:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependants?

**Participant 12:** No.

**DN:** What industry are you from?

**Participant 12:** The travel industry.

**DN:** what industry do you work in?

**Participant 12:** bank and Nedbank banking.

**DN:** The finance

**Participant 12:** Yeah, finance.

**DN:** A what functional job title are you?

**Participant 12:** Travel consultant.

**DN:** And would you say you are in the within the organization, you are juniors middle or senior level?

**Participant 12:** senior level.

**DN:** And what is the size of your organization's? The small, medium or large.

**Participant 12:** Large.

**DN:** So I'm going to ask you some questions from pre COVID working from home and then current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre covid and if you have, how often did you work from home?

**Participant 12:** I didn't work from home pre COVID.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 12:** I work from home.

**DN:** Is it a full-time work from home or a hybrid model? Or how often do you work from the office?

**Participant 12:** I work full time, but only for certain meetings. Do I go into the office? If it is a face-to-face meeting that is required.

**DN:** And how often is that once a week, once a month, twice a month?

**Participant 12:** Once a month.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 12:** A dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is this equipped with?

**Participant 12:** A desk. A chair. And stationary. Whatever I need to and my laptop.

**DN:** Do you? Do you have work 3G or Wi-Fi? Your own personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 12:** My personal Wi-Fi.

**DN:** What are your current working hours when you work at home?

**Participant 12:** It is supposed to be 8:00 o'clock to 4:30.

**DN:** And what is your working hours when you walk from the office?

**Participant 12:** 8:00 to 4:30.

**DN:** So you said it's supposed to be 8 to 4:30 when working from home, but what? What hours do you work when you work from home?

**Participant 12:** When I'm working from home. It is anywhere from. From about 6:00 o'clock in the morning till about 10:00 o'clock at night.

**DN:** Is that every day or is that on special occasions?

**Participant 12:** Almost every day.

**DN:** What type of schedule do you keep at home?

**Participant 12:** I'm supposed to keep a schedule, which I'm not, but. It's because of the workload I'm unable to keep a normal schedule with regards to taking breaks focus time. The lunch breaks, that kind of thing.

**DN:** When working from home, are you usually alone, or do you share your working environment at home with someone else?

**Participant 12:** I don't share the working environment, but my husband works also from home but in a different room.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work when working from home so you know when we initially started with COVID to now you know, have you changed the working style anything like that?

**Participant 12:** I've definitely changed the working style because I have to factor in. doing my work as well as. Doing the chores that I need to do at home as well. It is, how do I explain it? I have to factor in making breakfast, Making lunch. Seeing to myself and to my husband, and also trying to get work done as well and more often than not. I am doing more work than actually trying to get. Things at home done as well.

**DN:** So within your daily schedule, right, you would actually wake up at 7, log on, do what you need to, and then go make breakfast, then come back and sit and work, work, work until it's lunch, that kind of thing.

**Participant 12:** Yes.

**DN:** How does working from home. How do you think working from home is influenced your productivity?

**Participant 12:** Look, my productivity is quite high. It's much more higher me working from home because I'm putting in extra hours. Whereas if I am in the office it would be cut off, time would be 4:30. Because we used uh desktops in and we never had laptops. So now we have laptops so. I put in those extra hours.

**DN:** What type of task do you complete while working from home? From peer to when you in the office?

**Participant 12:** I would say it's the same, it's just that the workload has increased considerably. Because we currently short staffed.

**DN:** OK, so when you in the office, what type of work do you do? Is it just meetings or is it, uh, doing your work, your daily tasks or, you know, is it? Daiveshni Naidoo
Is it different from when you working at home?

**Participant 12:** With regards to meetings. What could what when we were working in the office? it was easier for someone to just approach you and speak to you, but now they have to schedule a meeting because you are not in the office. So just to have a daily catch up, you have to schedule meetings, have those meetings and. That that human interaction is not there as it would have been had we been in the office.

**DN:** So my question is actually around currently. When you work from home and then when you go into the office, is the tasks that you do the same currently? So you know when you forced to go into the office once a month.

**Participant 12:** Yes.

**DN:** Is it? Where are you doing the same task that you do at home? Or is it different tasks?

**Participant 12:** No, it is the same task.

**DN:** Nothing different.

**Participant 12:** Nothing different.

**DN:** And then when you go, what type of distractions do you experience from when you work from home? Besides the, so you, you mentioned you have to do home chores like making breakfast and making lunch.

**Participant 12:** For me it is less distractions and it's it gives me much more time to. To get stuff done when I'm working from home. Because.

**DN:** So when you at home, what type of distractions do you have? I want to know the distractions please.

**Participant 12:** so distractions would be my dogs, my pets. Sometimes it would be a delivery. My husband coming and asking me questions or. my family coming and asking me questions. I cannot say the TV because that's never on. Just. I would just say, yes.

**DN:** But these are not constant distractions as such.

**Participant 12:** No, it's not constant distractions.

**DN:** And then when you in the office, what type of distractions do you have? Currently, if you go into the office, are there any distractions that you have?

**Participant 12:** Yes, because there's always someone that would want to come and talk to you, irrespective of whether you're busy or not and. It is a. Like it, it would be colleagues coming to talk to you, having a conversation and then uh, if my boss needs something then she just comes through rather than when we at home. Then it is a scheduled meeting. So I know I've got to set aside that time. But when I'm at the office, it's just. Anyone just comes up.

**DN:** Which environment is more effective for you and why?

**Participant 12:** Working from home for me because it allows me to have. More flexible time in although I am working a set time, I do have the opportunity to work overtime, which

is not necessarily healthy but. At the current situation that we in where we short staffed, I can get my work done. And I can help out where I can.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 12:** Benefits is I don't have to be transported to work. I can. I do not have to. Dress up and go to work. I don't have to see people face to face. And., we are saving on petrol. We are saving on the car wear and tear and. Which is the fact that I'm getting more done at home.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when you work from the office?

**Participant 12:** Benefits working from the office human interaction. Although I do not really like that often. But just being out of the house and away from being in a different environment.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 12:** My biggest struggle when working from home is knowing when to switch off and enjoy family time. There is no work life balance.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 12:** My biggest struggle when working from the office is the constant interruptions by co-workers wanting a chat and telephone calls from travellers and suppliers. Also the amount of time wasted sitting in traffic.

**DN:** What? What has your productivity been like before and after working from home so pre covid to and now what it what is your productivity been like?

**Participant 12:** My productivity pre COVID. I would say that. I used to get what was allocated per day done. And. After COVID uh, it is more like. I would get what needs to be done that was allocated to me to be done. I get it done, but then I take on more because I have more time because I'm not sitting in traffic and I'm not. I don't have to leave uh home to go anywhere. I as I would in the office, like from the office to home so that that time I actually got and I I'm able to do more work.

**DN:** So how satisfied are you with your current working from home arrangement and why does it make you satisfied? Why?

**Participant 12:** I am quite satisfied with my working from home. I prefer to work from home because. To me, it is beneficial health wise because I'm not in contact with a lot of people. And I prefer to. I prefer the whole. like creating meetings? If I need to speak to someone rather than them. Distracting me, I feel I am more focused when I'm at home.

**DN:** And what may work from home arrangement with you prefer. So I know you currently very satisfied with going and maybe once a month or so, but would you prefer to go in maybe once a week, or you know or keep it as is or you know what?

**Participant 12:** And I'd prefer to keep it as is.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything that you think you'd like to add that might be? That I haven't asked or you think needs to be added in.

**Participant 12:** no.

## 8.13 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 13:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Social learning platform specialist, Financial - Participant 13**

**Date and time: 22 September 2022 14h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** I'm going to start you off with the few easy questions. What is your age?

**Participant 13:** I am thirty-two.

**DN:** What is your gender?

**Participant 13:** No I lie 33, I turned 33.

**DN:** thirty-three it is OK. And then you are changing your gender.

**Participant 13:** female.

**DN:** do you have any dependants?

**Participant 13:** Apart from Rocco Kirshlen.

**DN:** Your dog and your husband.

**Participant 13:** My dog and my husband.

**DN:** And does your dependants live with you?

**Participant 13:** Yes.

**DN:** what industry do you work in?

**Participant 13:** Financial.

**DN:** What is your functional title within this industry?

**Participant 13:** Social learning platform specialist. Sure, it is a mouthful.

**DN:** And what level within the organization would you say you're out, junior, middle, senior?

**Participant 13:** Junior.

**DN:** And what's what is the size of the organization you work in.

**Participant 13:** Sure. On average, I think it is 32,000 or 33,000 staff members.

**DN:** We're going to go with the large. so now I'm going to ask you a couple of questions from. Pre covid work from home and your current work from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre COVID? And if you did, how often did you work from home?

**Participant 13:** Every Wednesday I would work from home pre COVID. Pre covid every Wednesday, but yeah, my arrangement was every Wednesday.

**DN:** And now. Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 13:** From home.

**DN:** And do you go into the office at any time?

**Participant 13:** When needed or when requested.

**DN:** And how often would you say that would be? Once a month, once a week.

**Participant 13:** So we do go now once in three months, but it is dependent if there's load shedding, I go into the office. Yes. So that is a tricky one.

**DN:** So you do basically work at least once a week now with load shedding because load shedding is at its highest, I think.

**Participant 13:** No, I go to a coffee shop too. Dependent if this testing. Then we go into the office this testing? Then it is office.

**DN:** And when you work from home. Do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 13:** I have a Home Office.

**DN:** And what is your Home Office equipped with? What do you have there?

**Participant 13:** so I have an extra screen. I have a desk. I have a chair, I have stationary. And a view.

**DN:** Nice. Do you have an extra screen? Do you have a?

**Participant 13:** Yes, extra screen. Desk chair.

**DN:** Wi-Fi. Is that your personal Wi-Fi? Do you have work 3G?

**Participant 13:** Yes, personal Wi-Fi, no personal Wi-Fi.

**DN:** You do not have work 3G.

**Participant 13:** No, they told us. If we want to work from home. It is at our own cost.

**DN:** Do you have like an inverter generator?

**Participant 13:** No.

**DN:** what are your current working hours when working from home Compared to your working hours when working from the office?

**Participant 13:** in the office, it is eight to five. And then when I am lying to you and it is not even 8 to 5 8 to 4. And then at home at sure. I sometimes knock off six, but if there's, you know if it's reporting and so forth, we can sometimes push it.

**DN:** you started like eight at home as well or do you start earlier?

**Participant 13:** I start at 8, it is dependent on whether we have like early morning meetings and so forth. But on average, I try to keep it standard where I log on at 8.

**DN:** how often do you go beyond the 5:00 o'clock mark?

**Participant 13:** month end. Because of reporting we go over the 5:00 o'clock mark. When we are testing, we test over weekends. Because users, yeah, cannot be on the platform. So we Test over weekends that specifically on a Sunday. Business does test on a Sunday. We so it's dependent if I have like an initiative to launch, then yes, I work a bit later. But if there's no launch and stuff I can do 5.

**DN:** so especially once a month, maybe more in a month.

**Participant 13:** Yes, more in a month like towards month end where I, I work later, yeah.

**DN:** So it could be like a whole week in a month.

**Participant 13:** So it could, and I will not say a whole week like I'd say like two or three days. say three. Say three things to do, Manco. It is dependent if your uncle sets the MANCO on Monday. And if the first falls like over the weekend, then that means you got to work over the weekend to get the Manco pack.

**DN:** And the type of schedule you keep at home. What? What do you follow a schedule? Do you like? Say, I am going to wake up and by 8, OK.

**Participant 13:** I have to otherwise I will lose track. So my plan is to wake up at 6:30 and then gym and then shower and then start work at 8:00 and then. But I honestly, I do not have like a set schedule a schedule for my day because I could have meetings from the morning till 3. So didn't that mean like you literally don't leave your seat? I know how unhealthy that sounds. But that is generally a Monday, our Mondays are like that. We have back-to-back meetings, PI planning and all of these JIRA meetings. From the morning till on average 2:00 o'clock so from 8 to 2. every Monday.

**DN:** And the rest of the week?

**Participant 13:** Rest of the week yet again, it's dependent. But on average, I am not going to lie to you. I have, yes. So we have a lot of meetings in a week. A lot like for a day, I think. Ninety percent of our day is just in meetings.

**DN:** And then when you work from home, where you usually alone, or do you share your working environment at home?

**Participant 13:** I share it.

**DN:** Would you share it with and do and the person you shared with, do they?

**Participant 13:** Does it have to be a person.

**DN:** do you share it with your doggie?

**Participant 13:** Yes, I do. I shared with my dog.

**DN:** But for the purpose of this, this this question. I want to know if you share your working environment with somebody else who works in the same space as you or not.

**Participant 13:** No, he is in a different room.

**DN:** so you do you do share the house uh with your partner.

**Participant 13:** We share the House, correct.

**DN:** but you have separate work working studies to work in.

**Participant 13:** Correct

**DN:** And how have you changed the way you work from when we start? First started working at home from covid.

**Participant 13:** I feel like I get a lot more done. Again, I'm a lot more focused from home because there's less distraction, so if I can call it so therefore, I have a designated like, not a workspace, but office because I get lost in that office. If I could say that. Yes. And there is no one to talk to. I am easily distracted. If there is someone to talk to and so forth, I can easily get distracted. But now, working from home, I am yeah.

**DN:** Sorry, sorry. I am just going to interrupt you there. So you know when we started two years ago working from home. So we are in the in this past two, two years. How have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 13:** Change the way I work and.

**DN:** like some people have said that. OK, so that the workload was not so hectic. So they used to do whatever. Whenever some people have told me they've become more structured when they have to plan in advance some people and said they've started working a lot harder or a lot longer times, you know, those kinds of things.

**Participant 13:** So I would say I have become more focused, yes, definitely more focused as well as I have to plan my day. Otherwise I could go an entire day without eating. So I have to plan my day when I am going to take a break whenever, you know, going to make something to eat and so forth. So planning is key because I also have to include whenever going to see Rocco and play with him and give him some love. So that is my lunch there. So I need to plan my day to ensure that I do take a lunch. You know, planning as well as

yes, a lot more effort cause there is a lot more work. I just feel like ever since COVID happen. From the learning space, work has just drastically increased.

**DN:** How do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 13:** So firstly, working from home has increase my productivity because there is less distractions from, you know, bumping into a colleague walking to meetings. At, you know, taking the odd walk to what was it, the Marc and so forth. So there is none of that. So I am much more focused or have more time to focus on work itself. what else working from home? I can think of. The question again please. I've like lost track.

**DN:** No, it is fine. How does working from home influence your productivity?

**Participant 13:** Because now there is no sitting in traffic, so I can use that time to actually complete a lot more of my work as well as I feel like working from home has allowed me to better plan my day. I can. Yeah, I can really plan my day.

**DN:** So the next set of questions are from what factors affect working from home compared to working from the office. So what type of task do you complete while working from home compared to working in the office?

**Participant 13:** So I do a lot of queries from home and then in the office a lot of testing. Because of bandwidth and so forth.

**DN:** OK. So can you just go into a little bit of detail as to what the testing requires?

**Participant 13:** So because we manage like a lot of systems of the learning systems, they are quarterly, sometimes monthly. Updates to the system, so we need to test those changes prior to it being like put into prod for the users to test so that we can pick up any issues and so forth. So that is an ongoing testing for platforms.

**DN:** And then what?

**Participant 13:** But I can also test from home if I have a stable Internet connection.

**DN:** But you prefer to do the testing from the office.

**Participant 13:** I do because it's it gets done a lot quicker. But if it is over the weekend testing over the weekend and I just, I've seen it's much more feasible to just do it from home because to get into the office and so forth, you know, yeah, it's a hassle sometimes. Just book a desk.

**DN:** And what type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 13:** My dog. He is the biggest distraction. But other than that. Other distractions.

**DN:** Why is he a distraction?

**Participant 13:** With my husband, my husband is a distraction. He is, especially when I'm working over hours and then he's like, are you done? Are you done? Can we eat? Can we cook? He is my distraction. Yes. Good distraction.

**DN:** So he's actually like you. You, you. He is. He's the person that's putting your boundaries into place because he's actually telling you need work life balance right now.

**Participant 13:** if I don't take lunch, he literally comes in. You need to eat. You need to eat. So it is actually a good distraction in a way. My dog is a distraction when he jumps on my window. Look at the sad face and he wants to play. That he is a distraction. But other than that, I love working from.

**DN:** And how is this different from the distractions at the office?

**Participant 13:** Oh my soul. Oh my colleagues are just distractions. My colleagues are distractions. If there's a sale in Edgar's, my colleagues will definitely distract me.

**DN:** they let you know about the sale in Edgars? And then they take you off to Edgars?

**Participant 13:** They do. They do. That is Aasif. If that is definitely Aasif. Black Friday was the worst. You could never find us.

**DN:** any other distractions in the office that you can think of?

**Participant 13:** Walking between meetings, I feel that was a big distraction. Just sometimes you'd like bump into people, or you get side-tracked. Or maybe we can Just go to Maple? Yes. It was. It was a big distraction and the fact that they had a bar that was open after five, that was a massive distraction.

**DN:** it Stopped you from working.

**Participant 13:** It did. Extra hours stopped me from working extra hours.

**DN:** Is there any difference between the tasks at home and the tasks at the office?

**Participant 13:** I just feel like since COVID a lot more work has come in, but the tasks has not changed. It is just the quantity has increased.

**DN:** And which environment do you find more effective working from home or working from the office?

**Participant 13:** Working from home.

**DN:** Why?

**Participant 13:** For me, working from home because I am a people person. So if I see people, I start talking and I lose, I lose the entire plot of what I was supposed to do. And so like this, I stay more focused on what I need to do and so forth.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 13:** so the flexibility in terms of? Like. You know, when can I log on and so forth? So it's that the other benefit from working from home is that there's no traffic. So I'm a happier person by the time I log on. So I am happier. what else? The effort of just getting ready and going to work that is removed that is completely removed. I don't have to put my face on every day. Or even worry about it, how my hair is or anything of that sort? Or even the hassle of finding what to wear. So I am happy.

**DN:** And then what do you see as the benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 13:** The social interaction. I am that is one of the benefits of social interaction. I wouldn't say the social, I'd say the face to face interaction because we can still socially engage over MS teams, which we still do in. So I just say the face to face. Interaction. It. Yes. That was one of the benefits because we still collaborating, even though we virtual we still. So I just think the face to face.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 13:** The biggest struggle is. When to switch the laptop off like that is your cause. You know you have so much of work. You know you at home, OK. just work. Sometimes past your required hours and so forth. I think that is the biggest struggle and yes, and load shedding. That is my other biggest struggle to load shedding.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 13:** Getting into office? The traveling. That is one struggle of traveling and then two would be. Do you know? Just say no to the colleagues. That is hard.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before COVID. And now when you are working from home.

**Participant 13:** It's OK. So I would say it's increased drastically because that that Wednesday that I used to work from home. That was more for me to get my stuff in work. Really. Like, you know, my admin stuff responds to mails and so forth. So I think now because I work from home every day. I've just been more productive because I'm doing that together with testing together with meetings. Yeah, reporting so forth, training the works. So it is a lot more.

**DN:** So you're saying your productivity is better at home?

**Participant 13:** Better way more? Yes, better. It's better, I think, because I'm working Monday to Friday if I'm home as opposed to just a Wednesday. You know, because that Wednesday was just my admin stuff for work. Respond to mails and whatever else.

**DN:** And then also including your, your days when you worked in the office before COVID.

**Participant 13:** Yes, it is a lot more productive now.

**DN:** So it is a lot more productive.

**Participant 13:** A lot more productive.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current working from home arrangement and what makes you? If you are satisfied, what makes you satisfied with these arrangements?

**Participant 13:** So I'm very satisfied with the current work in situations and the reason behind that is. Since the accident I hate being in a car. So it's helped me to not put myself in that situation as much. So I am. I removed that struggle of sitting in traffic and all of that and I get to work in my comfort, my place of comfort, my place of safety for you. For me, that is my place of safety.

**DN:** And what work from home with arrangement with you prefer?

**Participant 13:** Working from home completely.

**DN:** Why? Yes.

**Participant 13:** OK. So we are on, what's it called work from work remotely, but when required to come into the office. So we are on that basis.

**DN:** But you would prefer to be completely working from home.

**Participant 13:** Completely working from home. And only see people when we got to go to. Olwazini. That is it. Well, that's it.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have for you at this stage. Yep. Is there anything else that you think that you'd like to add that you think needs to be added into the study?

**Participant 13:** I think that I'm also like. Much more happier since I've been working from home, in the sense that. Traffic was a nightmare going and coming from to Sandton and I feel like I'm just a lot more happier, a lot more happy and I have a lot more time. To do stuff while it's little bright and so forth, as opposed to going into the office and only coming back around six and so forth. And then it starts getting dark. So it is less time to do anything.

## 8.14 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 14:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Performance Enablement Specialist, Financial- Participant 14**

**Date and time: 19 September 2022 10h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 14:** I am. I AM 49.

**DN:** And what is your gender?

**Participant 14:** I am female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 14:** No, I am single and not married and no dependent.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 14:** I mean the banking financial industry.

**DN:** And what is your function at work?

**Participant 14:** I am currently in Group, our group human resources and my current function is performance enablement. I am a group specialist.

**DN:** And what level would you say are you within the organization, junior, middle or senior?

**Participant 14:** I would say I would say at the moment middle.

**DN:** And how? What is the size of your organization?

**Participant 14:** We are. We are on about just about 27 to 29,000 permanent staff members.

**DN:** So we can say large, a large organization.

**Participant 14:** yes, yes.

**DN:** so now I am going to ask you a set of questions about pre COVID work from home and your current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre COVID? And how often did you work from home?

**Participant 14:** So if I can give some context Nedbank introduced a flexible work practices policy in 2006, I was one of the pilot people to explore that policy and there were three types: telework, half day and homework agreement. Nedbank did allow me to use the home work agreement. However, at the time the management capability and understanding of it

was not in place so. I work three days in office in Johannesburg and two days Thursday and Friday from an alternative workplace which was home based in the northwest.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 14:** At the moment, from home mostly full time, there is an expectation currently with our challenges with power. If it's long out and you don't have 3G or a what you call Wi-Fi or hotspot then I am required to go into my local Nedbank campus site.

**DN:** And how often do you go in?

**Participant 14:** I must be honest, I am very fortunate at the moment. I think maybe once in two months.

**DN:** Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 14:** Yes, I do.

**DN:** Home Office or dedicated workspace.

**Participant 14:** A dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is your dedicated workspace equipped with?

**Participant 14:** So it meets the Nedbank occupational health requirements. So in terms of my ergonomic chair desk, with enough space for my laptop. Me. Measuring to my eye level so I can work comfortably with enough desk space to have books and writing pad, and even in terms of communication, in terms of privacy and sound limitation. And interruptions. So it is all minimised.

**DN:** And do you have like a work 3G or a personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 14:** Both. I have a personal Wi-Fi and I have a qualify for the Nedbank 3G which we get the maximum of 20 GB.

**DN:** And then Cell phone. Do you have a work phone or is it just a normal your normal private phone?

**Participant 14:** So recently I was required to use my personal work phone to be available 24/7 in terms of the latest HR restructure. I now qualify for a work phone as well, so I got both a personal and a work phone.

**DN:** What are your current working hours versus your working hours when you work from the office?

**Participant 14:** I've always so in terms of working full time from our Nedbank head office, I'm generally an early person. So to avoid traffic, I used to get to the office by 5:30. And if there were no meetings after 3:30, I would leave the head office at 3:30, get home and then

log on from there to avoid the traffic. I believe in using time smartly in terms of working from home. I am I have the similar habit. Yeah, but I am a better person in the morning, so I have an early start. However, I won't lie, I think it has. I do not find the balance. I find that the meetings now are also extended till later and I tend to work longer hours. But I'm trying to find a balance in the more disciplined approach in meeting them and one of them is Viva insights just trying to help me get more focused on, but I think that's a bit of my own work habits together with Nedbank as an employer trying to commit not having meetings like later than four to six, which forces us then to be available. So my work hours are very there's no, I can't say I work a traditional eight to five or it is. Very long hours and it can be from the most I start like 6 and I can finish only at 10 at night.

**DN:** And even when you work from the office, you work such long hours.

**Participant 14:** Yes.

**DN:** and what type of schedule do you keep at home? Do you like? So if you start at 6, do you say, OK, I am going to work from 6 till 8, then I'm going to get up and have a break and then from 8 till 8:30, I'm going to do meditation or exercise. And then from 8:30, I'm going to continue right up until 10. You know, those kinds of things.

**Participant 14:** Yes. So I do, I am quite structured that way. I'm a planner so if I know my day, majority is going to be in mandatory meetings and I structure my focus time differently. Meetings where I know I don't have to be there, I don't really. I do not have to. It's more learning, sharing and it's something I can listen to later by a team recording. Then I'll structure my time accordingly so I'm quite a good planner that way. But I'm also a nimble when I'm required on ad hoc basis just to be available.

**DN:** When working from uh, you said you have no dependants, but when you work from home, are you usually alone. Or do you show share your home environment with someone else's also working from home.

**Participant 14:** No, I it's just my I only have one sibling, my sister and me. So we have a 3 bedroom house and she has her own task in and IT tools and she works on her own. She accommodate my rather, my work environment instead of the other way around.

**DN:** so this is she doesn't work from home.

**Participant 14:** No, no.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you have been working from home since COVID started?

**Participant 14:** Frankly, I have not. I think I have diagnosed myself a bit of a workaholic. I've imposed a bit of a guilt syndrome like. I'm working from home, so I overcompensate. so my I need to but one thing I have done a bit better and I must be honest is structure my own learning so before I will try to do learning after hours of study or assignments or attend webinars where there isn't a time difference. I've now tried to incorporate some of my learning and upskilling activity during my working hours where possible that for me I think I've done much better than before when full time at the office.

**DN:** How does working from home influence your productivity?

**Participant 14:** But I don't think it is impact my productivity. I'm very I'm a very dedicated and a purpose led individual I do take my commitments quite seriously. So work I consumes me in a way I like to deliver. promptly I take pride in my delivery so it hasn't impacted my productivity, whether I was a full time equivalent back in the office full time at office versus full time at home. And in fact I think I'm more productive even from home because less distraction, less breaks, maybe time with friends and colleagues and taking time out, which I do miss. But I think I've in that way. I'm I I'm meet my goal commitments more efficiently and effectively and my availability is in no way compromised.

**DN:** so now I'm going to ask you a series of questions around what factors affect working from home compared to working from the office. What type of task do you complete while working from home compared to the type of task you would complete in the office?

**Participant 14:** So yeah, I think I think something that that we used to do in the office like Co-designing Co creation. and just brainstorming that, that facilitation is slightly different now when we're doing it from the virtual or remote working because we forget that we're dealing with people on the line. So we can go at it at four to five hours where I think in office we would have had scheduled breaks be it a tea break or lunch break or just a leg stretch. And we forget that that for me has been, I wouldn't say, a positive. It should be a con. But in terms of task, what I find I do better and has been better than. It's my research, so part of my job or part of my requirement or my GCC is research on thought leadership practices. I that has been quite lovely to have that time when working from home.

**DN:** And what type of distractions do we experience when working from home?

**Participant 14:** I'm very fortunate because I don't have. It is just my sister and me. I do not have a lot of distractions and if there are ad hoc distractions. She normally copes or helps me out with that. So I'm usually quite attentive to my work at the time I'm required.

**DN:** And what type of distractions would you experience at the office?

**Participant 14:** Yeah, I think in the office because we had open plan, people come to my desk chat and then you, you lose your thought process and then you forget where you were or you take. So that for me those distractions were the open plan with the phones, people talking loud. That was for me very disruptive. I find that I do not miss that at all. I like I like my own time where I can think.

**DN:** So is there any difference between the tasks that you would accomplish at home and the tasks that you would accomplish at the office?

**Participant 14:** I went to a definite but I would say for more and effectiveness or where it will take me longer back in the office like we don't get that solitude time unless you literally leave your desk to go sit in the knowledge centre to do reading research, whether it's going on to the digital learning portal or the CRF website, or Gartner to do research which is required for our job like now with our HR 2.0 work with product visioning, the I would have had to find a quiet space to go do that type of brain think time. whereas at home I can do it now.

DN: Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 14:** Effective in in the type of the type.

**DN:** Effective in in in both in like what in your tasks and what you get done.

**Participant 14:** I need to find a bit of a balance in there. What is immediate versus? So I have a general phobia for my inbox being full. And I need to like just to clean it up. I need like nothing outstanding and that puts a bit of pressure on me. So I need to find a way that what emails or require an immediate response action. and I churn a lot of work. I like. I like I said, I'm a planner, so I if I can get things which are quite repetitive, task or business as usual task, I'll do that in, in in the future. So working from home allows me that space where I can do that type of future planning, strategic type of planning which is required in our centre of excellence for human capital strategy and especially the space we  In now, in repositioning or engineering our practices. That for me, I think from a time point of view I get the benefit from working from home.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 14:** So I think you know in a summary is 1 it the commuting. So as I mentioned earlier, because I live in Johannesburg where I used to stay versus with the office was if I didn't leave. the home early to get at the office by 5:30 or six It would have literally taken

Me 2 hours in traffic and I just. I do not do well with that. I think it's not using time effectively. It doesn't help with contributing to our social, economic challenges and pollution. So working from home, I save on time and capacity. I think also I am. I am on a different view, that collaboration I have found back in the day in the office you had to either have a structured formal meeting or coffee. session to get into a space with people I find now that we are working from home, I collaborate with people. Frequently, and even in connection with other people in, in, in a business where I would have never done it in person, and I have been with Nedbank for a good 28 years and I have earned my reputation and my respect for my contribution, but I don't. I do not think I got to that type of. association or transparency? Where I would be involved in the business and get. That type of introduction and commercialization before in business because then you needed permission to travel cost be the flight or be not everyone could be everywhere and I think with the virtual way I could be in Cape Town from being in my home without being getting permission to book a hotel or travel that exposure and that networking and being on the floor and being in the business that has been just a. A real rewarding experience from working from home, and I think that's been a con when you full time at office because depending on hierarchy, cost efficiency, who goes where you're limited and you don't get that type of exposure.

**DN:** So I was I was asking you about what do you see as benefits when you work from the office?

**Participant 14:** I gave the example about traveling and the exposure education and being exposed to people where you know offense. If you have to travel or train. It was cost and efficiency at thing working from home you could be at Cape Town, Durban and connect with people. Even with my NAR subsidiaries I mean Namibia, Lesotho I've been exposed to them with which is. A benefit for me?

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 14:** It's, it's the balance for me. I really I find that I churn more work like I'm a hamster on the wheel. I do not switch off. I really do not. And it I've, I have now actually found that I am suffering from. I used to suffer from insomnia, but it is more heightened. My brain don't switch off because I worked later the time the switch off and by time I'm up again. So that's a discipline I'm I need to get back into also I think the is Nedbank is an employer we really need to look at frequency of meetings and lengths of meetings . With the assumption that people are working from home, whether it's Wi-Fi, we would never ask

people to be back-to-back meetings in the office, the. To the current situation where I think I find myself in too many meetings and regretfully, because there's only one of me like PM specialist I find that I have to be almost everywhere and I need to. I'm starting to actually say to myself I can't be all things to all people. So Part of that is that the ability and the safeness of saying no.

**DN:** And what do you find was your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 14:** Really commuting for me was the biggest thing. The culture being in office and having the corporate politics in my face and the grapevine and the corridor talk being more open was very unhealthy to me and my functioning, so I'm not naive. I'm not saying there isn't corporate politics or there isn't the Grapevine or the gossip, but it's not in my face. So I don't really miss that about being in office. I think that was one of the downsides of a culture or the work environment, you know, workplace.

**DN:** And what do you think your productivity was like before? And then now after working from home?

**Participant 14:** Hi, I am uh. I mean I mentioned it earlier, I think it's actually the same. In fact, I think my productivity working from home has or working full time from the office has not been impacted and I think the effectiveness, the efficiency is still there. I still deliver with speed without compromising on quality, my availability to my clients, my internal stakeholders and where I do have external collaboration has never been compromised either way. Working from home or working from office, so I would say it's my much on par.

**DN:** I'm going to ask you a couple of questions around what type of working arrangements you'd prefer. So with your current working from home arrangement, how satisfied are you with this arrangement and why? And what makes you satisfied with it?

**Participant 14:** I've always wanted to be a working from home from a personal perspective because I've lost quality time with my family. I was my home was Johannesburg, and I was isolated from my family and I would visit them weekly from Thursday to Sunday and Rush back. So I lived basically out of a suitcase in my car and I was exhausted, mentally, physically and emotionally. So, well, after 29 years working from home has been awesome. I think I have proven and challenged the autocratic mindset that presenteeism. Equals productivity because those command control managers that believe that if you were in office at your desk, you were productive. I do not think it's true anymore. People could be at their desk, and they could procrastinate or watch a YouTube video and not actually deliver

anything. So I think we have challenged that type of status mindset in Nedbank that presenteeism does definitely does not equate to productivity. And for me, the most important thing is the ability to connect with people have. Conversations and dialogues and probe thinking pick up the phone and check for understanding. Check for guidance and coaching is been quite optimal and beneficial for me, but on a personal level I have brought my best self to Nedbank after 29 years from working from home yet Nedbank has regarded me as a Topper achiever back where being full time at the office but it came with a high price to pay and I'm. I think that for me was a very sad, sad reality. But now working from home as an individual, I'm fully I can honestly say I'm fully engaged. I am not. I am not aware of the politics. I can choose not to participate in corporate politics, the Grapevine. I'm I can participate in constructive things that bring that's conducive for my well-being mentally, socially and physically. So I can do my work well and contribute to Nedbank's purpose and mission, and also me being fulfilled. So working from home is really, really an employee value proposition that keeps me employed at Nedbank.

**DN:** And what working from home arrangement would you like going forward? Would you like to stay in the same? A situation arrangement you have or.

**Participant 14:** Yes, yes. So we recently had to choose our digital on our digital platform, our work arrangement and I have agreed to permanently work from home. where required to participate in uh thought leadership sessions? I would. I've also been very clear and quite an introvert. I am. I'm not someone for social events. It come. I don't like that to invade my spiritual or religious side of practices. So yes, I think I've I prefer it this way.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything else that you think would be personal to add or you know you just want me to be aware of at this stage with regards to the study?

**Participant 14:** No it's a wonderful study and I think your topic is quite prevalent. In terms of South Africa, I know we as global companies we like to do best practice research, we invest in understanding the trend. And I mean you lead some of the or manage coordinate, some of these leadership programs, we're investing people to go to INSEAD executive programs, go to Silicone Valley to learn all these best practices. But honestly speaking what I would love to see is we challenge our own Nedbank mindset. And I mean recently Mike in our media. Announcement financial result, he wrote the article where he said that the working from home or the alternative ways of working or hybrid ways of working, he

seemed to see the return on investment. They're paying off and I really believe that it comes down to really challenging the command and control status orientation managers, not seeing people in person so they don't have to feel they can control what I would love to also see you including your study and I see that's lacking. Because we're not in person performance from a performance point of view, we focus a lot on the what, what have you done this week? What are you accomplish where have you focus on? But I would love to see also see that we mustn't forget that people still have a career in Nedbank. So doesn't mean out of sight, out of mind that you don't forget that that person still has a career in Nedbank and think about them as talent. And the career where in terms whether it is a promotion or whether it's a learning opportunity, I think that has become, I don't know for other organizations, but I think that has become sort of a neglect because we focus we do very well on the performance management side. So even through the continuous conversations even those that are I have done through my own study for performance management, the quick check-ins and the quick regular conversations between line managers and employees focus on the what. What have you done this week? Uh, how your stats? How is your data sheet doing? How are the targets? What have you accomplished, and even maybe some punitive like you weren't at your desk? When I phoned you, were you doing a side errand or? I saw you on Facebook. But you were supposed to be at a meeting. That I've see happen, but what I don't see a lot of happening is that yes, you still part of Nedbank and the community you have a career in Nedbank. Let us have a career conversation. Where to next? that worries me a bit that. That that's almost like that out of sight, out of mind. Kind of dilemma that is coming into play.

**DN:** You're talking about the development plans in the learning and the growth for a person to move, like for example, for you to move from where you are currently and what would your next steps be in Nedbank?

**Participant 14:** Yes. what? I think we need to prove is that that presenteeism in office at your laptop does not guarantee productivity.

## 8.15 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 15:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Procurement Reporting Analyst, Construction - Participant 15**

**Date and time: 16 September 2022 16h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** Of biographical and background information, how old are you?

**Participant 15:** 37.

**DN:** Gender.

**Participant 15:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 15:** Just my husband and I.

**DN:** What industry are you in?

**Participant 15:** Industrial, I would say industrial construction.

**DN:** And what is the function? What function do you is your title?

**Participant 15:** So I am the reporting analyst in the procurement. I report to the reporting analyst in the procurement team. So we basically report on what's going on in procurement.

**DN:** And which you say you your level is junior middle or senior?

**Participant 15:** I would say middle.

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 15:** very huge.

**DN:** So above one hundred between 1000 to 2000 or more.

**Participant 15:** Employees Yes, 2000 or more.

**DN:** going to ask you a set of questions that that is going to compare you pre covid work from home and your current working home working from home with arrangements. Have you worked from home pre COVID.

**Participant 15:** No, I have not.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 15:** So we have a three day in the Office, 2 day off. Schedule going on.

**DN:** So it's a hybrid model. Do you have a Home Office or dedicated workspace when at home?

**Participant 15:** Yes, I do.

**DN:** And is it a Home Office or a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 15:** It's a dedicated workspace in a spare room that I have with no furniture except a desk, so I it's a spare room. But yeah, now that it's got a desk, I would call it my Home Office.

**DN:** And what do you have in your Home Office?

**Participant 15:** I have got a desk. I'll computer screen my laptop when I'm working from home stationery. I've got a bookshelf with books on it. Are you looking for that kind of thing? Bookshelf of books plugs, UM plug point for my for charging my laptop a heater. The usual stuff that you would sort of have in your office. Just a bit more comfortable.

**DN:** And do you work with Wi-Fi or 3G?

**Participant 15:** Wi-Fi.

**DN:** And is that your own home Wi-Fi?

**Participant 15:** Yes, it is.

**DN:** What are your current working hours versus Your working hours when you go into the office.

**Participant 15:** So current working hours in the office is 7 till three at home. It's also it should also be 7 till three. But because you work from home you tend to pull it a little longer sometimes till 10 or 11.

**DN:** And what type of schedule do you keep at home?

**Participant 15:** Usually at about 3:00 o'clock if I am on my work from home days, I don't shut down my computer because there's always more to do. So I just take a little half an hour break, have some tea, get back to work, and then at about 7:00. Dinner shower and then work again. If there is, and then at about 9:00 I try to start studying.

**DN:** And when you work from home to you usually are you usually alone.

**Participant 15:** Most of the time, but my husband's also he works. He is on night shift, day shift rotation, so sometimes he's at home for half the day and by 12 he leaves. So other than that alone, most of the time.

**DN:** So you do not share your home, uh, your working environment with anybody.

**Participant 15:** No. So he is an engineer, so he can't bring work home. Yes. So he can only work at work.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work from the time covid hit? When working at home.

**Participant 15:** I feel like I am a little bit more organized working from home because I save a lot of time waking up an hour early for work, having to shower that early and spending an hour driving to work. So it is. In the beginning, much more relaxed because you kind of. Get a little bit more rest in the morning even though you work a little bit later, but. I feel much more organized because there's not a lot of people constantly coming to your desk, your phones not ringing off the hook, so you get. In a more into your work start from the top because you get those days where you like. OK, I'm going to start from the top and just go through it and then you try to start from the top end by the end of the day, you still trying to start from the top because there are people constantly coming around you so. I don't know if that answers your question. How have I changed working from home, but that has definitely changed to me and it makes a huge difference because I do feel more in control and more organized on the days I work from home as opposed to the days that I'm at the office.

**DN:** Just to clarify the question of so, when you started working from home and to now because it's been two years now that we've been doing this hybrid model. How is your working? The way you work from home changed.

**Participant 15:** So how have I? How is it changed? From two years ago to how it is now, OK, so it has definitely gotten better. Because in the beginning it was a little bit, you know, Wi-Fi on and off until I get a router, load shedding gets an inverter. So in the beginning it was a bit on and off and in the beginning, it was also a much more relaxed. Even though he had all these load shedding issues and all of that was much more relaxed because pretty much nothing was happening because everyone was in lockdown. So I am not sure if I am. I feel like I'm not completely answering your question, so it's changed. It's changed in a sense of I've gotten more control of it because I feel like I and now things are happening in the beginning when we were working from home, there wasn't a lot happening. It was not that busy. Because everyone was like on a go slow, most of the companies were shut down. We couldn't place many orders in the department that I was in at the time. So yeah, over the past year, it's definitely gotten more. Uh, I have become more stable. you know, got my timing right. What time should I do this? Waking up in the morning? You know, your shower times are different, so it has definitely become more stable and. I feel like I'm now

more reliable working from home than I was in the beginning when I was working from home. So yeah, and also now they've issued us with company cell phones. So that makes it easier because it's always run out of air time on my private phone because you can never just get a hold. People didn't really know how to use teams in the beginning and now teams is like second nature. So now with teams and everything, you know, things are much more organized and.

**DN:** How do how do you see working from home influencing your productivity?

**Participant 15:** I definitely feel like I am way more productive working from home. I could do with one more extra day working from home actually. So it is. I do feel more productive. I feel like concentrate a lot more. It does get a little bit, I think. And your mind also needs to be stimulated from time to time with conversation, so it does get a little bit tiring when you just quiet and all alone at home working. But a friend of mine at work, my name is Ramona. She is given us some advice saying, like, you know, she's always got a podcast on or something on. So she is she feels like. She is out there in society like, you know, so it just keeps you awake. So I listen to the radio now and then. But definitely more productive working from home. As opposed to working from the office, although I am enjoying the hybrid vibe. Because you got a little bit of balance, you know, on those days when you really need to like. Push through your work because it just a time to do working from home is a good thing. So yes, I feel that I am way more productive and organized. When I worked from home All in all.

**DN:** Even though you are working longer hours at home.

**Participant 15:** That's the only downfall. It is not just about working. The longer hours you can't you sort of lose track of time. Because you're not clockwatching to leave the office like you do at the office. So you do sort of lose track of time. But I also feel in some way. Working from home. I don't mean it in a horrible way or anything, but I do feel like in some way working from home. It's expected of you to work harder and longer.

**DN:** I'm now going to ask you a set of questions from the theme of what factors affect working from home compared to working from the office. So what type of task do you complete when you work at home compared to the type of task you complete when working from the office?

**Participant 15:** I actually complete the exact same tasks when I work from home complete yet office I just get. More of the tasks done at home because I'm like a system support person

so I handle calls every day and I feel like get through the calls faster when I'm at home as opposed to when I'm at the office because at the office if you're in a meeting you have to be present at the meeting where is at home on teams you can just switch your camera off and carry on working while in the meeting. So you do tend to cover more work. When you at home. So I would say I do the same tasks, but just maybe a higher percentage done at home than I am at the office. A lot of thinking, reporting for home and the reporting which I can do while at the office and interacting with other people. I do at the office. If I can leave the long important reports for home I do, depending on where the month end and the week you know the days fall. But I do try and do those at home towards like the evening. So if I started at about 1:00 o'clock I can go through till like 5 or 6 and then shut down for the day. but most of the time the exact same tasks, because like I said, it is like a call centre. It is. I'm just constantly helping people with the system.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 15:** The neighbour knocks on my door all the time and which is not. I mean, she's very old, so if she needs help to carry oxygen tank into the car so it it's mainly things like that nothing major because you know, it's just my husband and I. So there's no kids, there's no other types of distractions. It is not. Not too bad.

**DN:** And then how is this different from the distractions that the office?

**Participant 15:** It happens like maybe once or twice a month with at the office, that distractions are there constantly not that it is bad distractions at the office. It's just it is distractions.

**DN:** And what would you say are distractions at the office?

**Participant 15:** I would say distractions at the office. Most of the time it's people coming to your desk. I like having conversations with your colleagues that sitting around you. I do not feel that's much of a distraction. I feel that kind of and this sounds a bit silly because it should be classified as a distraction, but it kind of gets you through the day as you working, but then you know, while you're busy doing something, you having a conversation about family or what happened over the weekend, that sort of thing is like a good distraction. But at the office you do get people coming to your desk and like, standing there until something is sorted out, but you're in the middle of something else. So those type of distractions doesn't happen often either, but also those aren't good distractions for me because I'm the type of person that likes to work through something from the top going down. But then they come

to you, like, did you see my e-mail? I am like, no. But when I get to it, I will see it and I'll deal with it. It's, you know, something like that. But if you at the office and you present. Then they come to you. Did you see the e-mail that I sent you? OK, this is, and they like, go on and like, no, I will get to it, and I'll respond. I will answer that call and I will phone you. And. But you don't have to tell me every time you send me an e-mail, you have to come to my desk and I will read it when I get to it. So those are not such good distractions.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective than why?

**Participant 15:** I would have to say both. I the only reason I would choose working from home is because of the extra sleep in the morning. That is like the only reason that is that like half an hour to an hour extra snooze that you get in the morning. But I would say both because like I said. It keeps you. You still need people. I mean, it is there was a time during the COVID lockdown when I was working from home where I was like this is it like that? I have had enough. I need to put on heels. I but I mean it's ridiculous to put on heels and sit at home in your bedroom and work with your heels on. You know like it like I needed to see people it came to a point although there's days that work when there was no covid I was like oh I wish I could work from home and then then when you start working from home you like no I need to see people now. It got a little bit too much. So I would, I would say both because it is a nice, it is a nice little break. You know it is a little bit of both. So it gives you like to me for me it is a little bit of balance. I like the mix, although I do wish that they would keep our days consecutive. So like you know, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Monday, Tuesday instead of Monday at the office Tuesday at home, Wednesday at the office. Because then you like unplugging, taking, you know, your computer, your life, so. Consecutive days would suit me better, but I still do not mind the hybrid working.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 15:** I feel like. On health wise? Of the bathroom is closer, so you tend to use it more often. Because I mean, that is a big thing. Uh, you know, having to if your bathroom is upstairs at the office downstairs, you tend to like, not go to the bathroom that often because it is a lot of time away from your desk. The kitchen is also close. So if you want to have four cups of coffee a day, it is not a major thing where you're waiting in a queue because the kitchen is too full at the office. Those are benefits. The extra sleep, the comfort. Mostly health benefits. For me, drinking water like there's no. If there is no, if there's we out of water, the office. So if there is no water cooler, the office. I mean, I tend to drink at least a

little more water when I work from home than I do at the office at the office. I tend to not even drink water sometimes. So even eating I can eat Curry and rice from home has at work. It is mostly sandwiches, although I do try and take Curry and rice sometimes, so it is just a little bit more comfortable. I feel healthier at 3:00 o'clock when I leave the office, I am starving at 3:00. O'clock when I am at home, I am not starving. It is for me. It is health benefits.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest? What is your benefits when you work from the office?

**Participant 15:** benefits from the office. I would say that if there is some urgent matters that you need to deal with and the people that are involved is at the office, you can speak to them face to face and get it done ASAP as opposed to waiting for them to be available on teams or waiting for a response on e-mail. And then nothing happens and you're getting into trouble the next day it's a great benefit. It's like before COVID, when people were always around, things would just get resolved because you could just go to them and speak to them and get signatures. We're now there's a lot of waiting and uncertainty or misinformation or somebody misread your e-mail or didn't understand it and you know. Before that, if there wasn't, there was still people misinterpreting stuff. But it wasn't as often as it as I've experienced. It happened now.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 15:** I do not think I have any struggles working from home. I love it. I would say maybe I do not have an air con, so when it's too hot, I have those days where it really like I wish I was in the office. I would say it is that, but no struggles working from home. Oh no load shedding. But now that I have got a UPS, my router stays on. I do not sometimes I do not even know that the electricity is down, only when I'm using my second screen and it goes off. No struggles.

**DN:** And what is the biggest struggle when you work from the office?

**Participant 15:** My biggest struggle at the office is the bathroom situation and because you know, people have different health issues, so sharing only two toilets with like. But he ever woman is quite a big deal for me and also, I kind of sorted out my chair situation at work because you don't get to choose your furniture. So if the chairs are does not suit your posture or the way you are. You know, you just got to stick with it. So I used to, like, sit almost. I would say like 1 1/2 rulers away from my desk and have to bend over to type because my chair does not go under my desk. So I could go like, into the desk. So I just went to one of

the boardrooms and I swapped the chair there. And I have got a chair with no handles now. So it goes into my desk. But otherwise, those are the major struggles. And the drive there is a little bit scary because I'm not such a confident driver. So I leave like about half an hour early to miss traffic. Just so you know, I don't have any encounters with trucks or. You know the road is empty, so I feel a lot better and a lot more confident when the road is empty, and I can swap lanes without anyone flicking their lights at me and things like that.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before and after working from home?

**Participant 15:** Before working from home and after, I always make my deadlines, but I feel like now that we are working from home, I am a bit more comfortable in the fact that I am a little bit ahead. Maybe I try to keep a little bit ahead before I worked from home, but I never took my laptop home. It stayed at the office so I couldn't, if there was unfinished work, it would have to wait for the morning. I'd write myself reminders on what to start with the next morning. Because we weren't allowed to take our laptops home at the time, but now with working from home if there's anything unfinished and I really have anxiety about it, I'll switch my laptop on and make sure it's finished so I can get ahead for the start for the next day.

**DN:** So are you satisfied with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 15:** I am satisfied with it. I do think that. So we should be reimbursed for Wi-Fi. But that goes with the deal. If you want to work from home, you use your own Wi-Fi or you come to work five days a week. But overall satisfied and do not mind it now.

**DN:** And what makes you satisfied with the arrangement?

**Participant 15:** I was satisfied with the arrangement because we get. We get to work comfortably for two days of the week. That is about it.

**DN:** What worked from home arrangement would you prefer?

**Participant 15:** I would prefer two days a week, but three days isn't bad. I would just prefer if it was consecutive days solely because of the fact that I hate the unplugging and plugging, and you know taking all my stuff to work and then to me if it was consecutive it would just feel a little bit better.

**DN:** So that's two days a week at the office or at home.

**Participant 15:** Two days at the office, but I do not mind the three days. I just wish they were consecutive days.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything else that you think might be relevant to the study that you have not added or would like to add?

**Participant 15:** I think. That when we were at the office. Employees, obviously below management were trusted more by their managers and I think when the working from home started, it was not such a big deal. But as it progressed into post COVID now. I feel like with employees working from home, management has become a little bit more less trusting in their in their staff. Because I think a lot of OK, it is the fault of the staff as well. A lot of people have taken advantage of the working from home situation and that is obviously cast a dark shadow over all staff.

So management has now wearier. So I wouldn't say they micromanage you, but you know you have to check in every morning at a certain time now and like whereas before my manager would trust that I wouldn't have to check in with her eight o'clock, she already knew that I was working at 8. But yeah, I think a lot of the staff has taken advantage of it and it's just unfortunate that the that the good workers also pay the price for it. So where I would work from home, wake up and start working in my pyjamas. Now I have to wake up and dress up, so have to have my camera on. You can see me at 8:00 o'clock, you know, working. So yes. So that was.

**DN:** Do you not think? Do you not think it is a Wellness issue to check if the staff are OK?

**Participant 15:** No. I do not, I don't. I know they do not trust us.

## 8.16 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 16:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Student Manager, Education - Participant 16**

**Date and time: 27 September 2022 11h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 16:** 26.

**DN:** your gender?

**Participant 16:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 16:** No, no.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 16:** it is probably academic.

**DN:** Education. what function are you with functional title within the organization, are you?

**Participant 16:** Student manager.

**DN:** And within your organization, what level would you say you were at junior, middle, senior?

**Participant 16:** I would say it is middle.

**DN:** And what is the size of your organization's small, medium and large?

**Participant 16:** Small.

**DN:** I am going to ask you a series of questions. That compares pre COVID work from home. To your current working from home arrangements. Have you worked from home pre COVID.

**Participant 16:** No, not at all.

**DN:** Not even on special occasions.

**Participant 16:** Only if it is an emergency. Something wrong at home or. Maybe something wrong with campus, but not likely.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or the office?

**Participant 16:** So it is half, half.

**DN:** Do you mind explaining how many times a week in the office, how many times a week in at home?

**Participant 16:** So it is two days from home and three days at the office.

**DN:** Do you have when you work from home? Do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace within your home?

**Participant 16:** I have a Home Office.

**DN:** And what do you have in your office? What is it equipped with?

**Participant 16:** so it's my normal laptop with the second screen, a lot of stationary, a whiteboard printer. bookshelves. Almost everything that I have at work as well.

**DN:** And then, uh, do you use so that is your laptop, your printer, your whiteboard, do you have a second screen? Do you have a home Wi-Fi or work 3G? Those kinds of things.

**Participant 16:** So I have unlimited fibre. I do have a second screen if.

**DN:** Is the unlimited fibre your personal fibre or work, OK?

**Participant 16:** Yes, personal fibre.

**DN:** And with regards to load shedding, do you have a generator inverter?

**Participant 16:** Yes. So we have a power bank for the modem, the Wi-Fi modem that lasts up to 8 hours.

**DN:** No. And is that your own personal power bank?

**Participant 16:** Yes.

**DN:** What are your current working hours when you work from home versus the working hours when you work from the office?

**Participant 16:** So from home it is around 6:30 to 4:00 and from the office it's from 7 to 4.

**DN:** And do you keep a schedule at home? And what type of schedule if you do?

**Participant 16:** Yes, so I tried to stop working at four. When I work from home, but sometimes I go until 5:30. Six. If I have nothing better to do.

**DN:** And then any other type of uh schedule within your, you know, like do you plan? I am going to wake up at up at 6, and I'm going to do XYZ from here to here. And then from maybe 8:00. O'clock. I am going to take a coffee break and then from maybe 9 to 10, I'm going to do the gym. You know, things like that. Or is it not?

**Participant 16:** Yes, I saw I have a daily project task. spreadsheet that I complete every day, so it would be basically Umm from 9 to 10 how many meeting from 10:to eleven. I am doing student support, so I follow the. Daily task schedule quite to a tee.

**DN:** And you do not add any personal activities into that like exercising? Or meditating or anything like that.

**Participant 16:** No, it is only for work.

**DN:** And when working from home my you usually alone. Or do you share your working environment?

**Participant 16:** So on Tuesdays. I am completely alone. And then on Thursdays I have someone with me.

**DN:** Is that your partner or a that shares your office space with you? Or is it someone that just works in the house that?

**Participant 16:** It is my partner.

**DN:** And does your partner share the office space with you or do they work from a different? A space within the house.

**Participant 16:** It is in the same office. Same space.

**DN:** And does this? Is how do you work together? Is it a good kind of collaboration? There are no challenges.

**Participant 16:** No, it is, it's actually fun. So he is a software developer, so don't talk at all on the phone. When I am in meetings, he will just have his music in his ears, so it's actually works perfect. I enjoyed quite a lot.

**DN:** Do you have a? Have you changed the way you work from when we first started working in covid? When working at home.

**Participant 16:** Yes it is a little bit different. I would actually say a lot more responsible following what I need to do. When I have to do it because then I know it has done and dusted, and I also don't want to not do what was supposed to be done. And then be said that I need to come back to office permanently. So that actually helps quite a lot to keep you in line. To be able to keep those benefits.

**DN:** So what I am hearing is you're a little bit more focused and more diligent around the way you work now.

**Participant 16:** Yes, yes, I am a lot.

**DN:** How does working from home influence your productivity?

**Participant 16:** I am a lot more. Productive at home, there is less distractions. Less just quickly come check here. Or I am quickly going to walk around and go chat to that person,

so I actually get a lot more done. I would say I get almost twice done. Then what I do at work.

**DN:** I am now going to ask you about what factors affect you when you work from home, compared to working in the office. So what type of task do you complete while working from home compared to working in the office?

**Participant 16:** So it is actually exactly the same tasks. I would just say. The only difference is some of the meetings is on teams instead of in person, but the rest is all the same.

**DN:** And meetings and teams are when you're working from home, not when you're working from the office.

**Participant 16:** Yes. So other meetings will only be online when you are not in the office.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 16:** From home, I think it would be only when load shedding some little bit too long which does not have happen often. But other than that, actually nothing.

**DN:** And then what happened? Distractions. Do you have in the office?

**Participant 16:** So in the office it is kind of you're trying to sit and do your own thing but can't help to hear different conversations and situations. the distractions of someone just quickly coming to you and asking for something or. to quickly take a break with you? And so it is. Basically actually just. People distracting me. But that is it.

**DN:** Is there any difference between tasks at home and tasks at the office?

**Participant 16:** No, no, it is all still the same.

**DN:** Which environment is more effective for you and why?

**Participant 16:** So I prefer working from home, it is just it cuts a lot of. Unnecessary travelling time out of my day. it also makes me less stressed and as well as less. Irritated if I can say it that way. Umm, you know, the usual. Sometimes you're just not in the mood to come to work all those. Feelings just disappears. I'm also a lot more productive at home. And there is not. Like at work I would sit and I'm not in the mood for this. Where at home. I actually, I'm not in the mood for it, but I still do it because then I can finish a little bit early and do whatever I want to. So yes, I prefer. Working from home instead of from the office.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 16:** well financially it would be petrol and E tag. Time wise, the traveling from and to work which is about 2 hours a day for me since I live in Pretoria and work in Sandton. So, so and as well as. Just being. You know, if I'm not in the mood to sit on an uncomfortable

chair in the office at home, I can sit on the couch a little bit with my laptop on my. On my lap, if I need to breathe a little, I can just quickly go and water my plants and just focus. Where at work it's kind of you. You're stuck in an environment which you don't have control over. So if everyone's kind of grumpy on a Monday. Gets to you as well.

**DN:** And what do you see as the benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 16:** Let us say the socialization between. Work hours that sometimes you just kind of miss it when you are working from home. You do not have that. Funny moments and those quick chats. I think that is actually the only benefit from working from home, from work, my bad working from work. Cannot think of a different one.

**DN:** If it comes to you, just let me know what the biggest struggle is when working from home.

**Participant 16:** I think maybe being responsible, you know you need to wake up at 6:00 to start working at 7 and some mornings it's a little bit hard to wake up because you're already there. The other struggle I think is you just start working in your sleep wear, instead of getting dressed actually and starting to get focused. Other struggles would be load shedding and issues when maybe the Wi-Fi goes off for some odd reason, but that's it.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 16:** Just the distractions. Working in a in an open office with everyone talking around you. Sometimes a little bit hard to as well as to hear someone in your meeting when everyone is talking around you. That is also kind of a little bit of a negative point.

**DN:** What do you what was your productivity like before COVID and now, after working from home?

**Participant 16:** I think it improved after COVID. With just the idea together that you have to kind of manage yourself and make sure that everything gets done. where pre-covid was not. You were not used to being on your own and making sure that everything has done. You still have that person asking you. OK, is this done? Has. How did that go? So after covid that kind of. Became your own responsibility to make sure that everything has done. No, I think it. Got a lot better after covid.

**DN:** so how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement and what makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 16:** I am very satisfied with having two days from home and three days from work? Because I think it's 50 / 50, so I bring my side to the company, and I also get a little

bit back. It also motivates me because it is one day from home one day from work, so it's not that constant. Exhaustion as well as it just makes you feel little better. OK, today I was working from home. Tomorrow, I need to go into work. so I love it to be honest. It is a very, very good arrangement.

**DN:** And what arrangement? What home? Work from home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 16:** Well, if I could have everything that I want, I would say UM, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from home and only Mondays and Fridays at the office. I think that would be great.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have at this stage. is there anything else that you would like to add or anything you think that might be relevant, but I may not have asked.

**Participant 16:** That I actually think that COVID provided us with this whole working from home thing which a lot of companies actually. Adapted, I mean, many companies don't even have offices anymore. But I think for some people that actually works and for some not I. Depends on the personality. Umm, I am a very OCD reliant person. So me working from home won't be a problem because I know if have something's not done. It is my own fault. I think other individuals. Who is working from home? Might slack and not do what is required and only have their teams on available but are actually watching movie. So there is positive. Reasons for that and negative reasons for that. I do not really know if it is more positive than negative though.

## 8.17 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 17:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Pathologist, Health - Participant 17**

**Date and time: 21 September 2022 22h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** I am going to ask you a series of easy questions to start with. So what is your age?

**Participant 17:** I am 31, yes.

**DN:** Gender.

**Participant 17:** I am a male.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 17:** No.

**DN:** Industry you work in.

**Participant 17:** I mean the in the health industry but under pathology.

**DN:** And your function within the organization.

**Participant 17:** A pathologist. That is what you call pathology medical officer. So should I elaborate further?

**DN:** No, it is fine. what? So what level would you say your position is at an organization? Are you junior middle senior?

**Participant 17:** Middle

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 17:** I will say it is not medium. If I if I was going to scale it between small, medium and Large. I will probably say medium.

**DN:** I am now going to ask you a series of questions. Of when you worked from home pre COVID and your current from a working from home Have you worked from home? Pre-covid. But it is OK. A lot of people do it.

**Participant 17:** No, no, I was not working from home pre-covid.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 17:** As a currently I am hybrid, so with the kind of job that I do, there are certain tasks that you can carry out, like for example in autopsy. I can't carry out in autopsy at home, so for such. procedures. We I go to work like two times a week. Where I do those, the

autopsies in theatre and the other three days paper days we call them Paper days where by your compiling reports and looking at the slides from histological analysis like the microscope basically the samples that you took from the bodies you checking them to make diagnosis. So those things I do them at home, so I will be working at home with that. And the other part that I also leave home is when I go to the scenes, which does not happen often. If maybe they need me at the scene of crime or murder, and also when I go to court for expert witness here.

**DN:** So a when you work at home, do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 17:** So I have a. It is not a, it's not an office. It is a room that I turned into. Know it is a bedroom that I turn into an office. So in a way it is an office.

**DN:** And what is this office equipped with?

**Participant 17:** So why in this office this gym machine that is just sitting here collecting that which is a study desk here that shelves bookshelves and there is a cupboard in here, so the cupboard has obviously a like blankets or clothes that I do not wear. I do not know why. And OK, there is an old coffee table like sitting here.

**DN:** And then work wise, do you have like an extra screen, do you have like a specialized equipment that you need for you know for analysing those slides and so forth?

**Participant 17:** Yes, definitely. So on my desk now, there is a microscope and there's a laptop and mobile laptop. There is no desktop. There is no computer desktop and there is a printer, so it is a printer on my left and a microscope on my right and. I would sit in the middle here with my laptop usually, and sometimes full of paper.

**DN:** And do you use like does the company give you 3G or do you use your own home Wi-Fi?

**Participant 17:** I use my own home Wi-Fi, but it is a fibre connection.

**DN:** And do you get like a company cell phone and?

**Participant 17:** So what the company offers is a cell phone. Yes, I have the cell phone from the state phone I have. I have a camera for when I go to the scenes and the things that I use at home that they only provided is the microscope. So as I said, the Internet is on me. The company does not. I mean they the Department of Health does not subsidize for that.

**DN:** And what are your current working hours at home versus your working hours when you work from the office?

**Participant 17:** when I used to go to, it was eight hours, so it's 8 hours. per day and at home. Because there really is not anybody who? Who monitors your, who regulates you. You do not have to sign any form of clocking in. So I manage my work according to the time that I have. So sometimes you will find it if I have a lot of reports that I have. Like, especially in winter, when a lot of people are dying and so on, we are, we have a backlog. So I find myself working even after hours. Just to catch up, yes, and also. You know, sometimes my studies I have, I am involved in the course, so my work sometimes falls behind because I have to deal with the assignments and so on. So I find myself. I will compensating by working on weekends when I actually my work. I mean, like the. The police, I mean the contract that I signed does not say I must work on weekends. So I find myself pushing work on weekends where when I used to work at the office where the office, obviously you have. I you have access to the office but then you have to organize with the with the security and the facility manager. So it was not often that I had to try to work after hours. So I would go to work from eight knockoff it at 4, sometimes at five, yeah.

**DN:** So when you say you work later hours at home, is that often or is it just on a need by need to basis?

**Participant 17:** I will say it is, it's not often it's just on a need basis. It is not often.

**DN:** So in winter you might find yourself working three or four days. Late, but in summer you might find only maybe one day out of the week.

**Participant 17:** That is absolutely correct. So in the winter, that's when we have a lot of cases. So I will find myself doing more procedures. So with every procedure, everybody has to be signed on. So I will find myself having to push work. So I would have to stay until late working, or I will have to do it also on weekends. Because so but that that is like in winter and. The other time where I find myself working. over. It was during the COVID itself, during the period of covid. So it also came with the with adjusting from. From being used to work at the office and now working at home so you felt like OK, you are not doing enough. So I felt like because now I have this benefit of staying at home, I should really put myself in a way. So I used to work extraordinary hours during that time. But now I have adjusted. I have realized and I am out of that mindset. So I do I do what? is needed? That attack, so with the kind of work that I do this always to be, to be honest, it's always backlog. So you can never catch up, you know, because people don't stop dying. Sorry to say that,

but they will always be work. There is always work. There has never been a point where I can say like my desk is clear. I do not have any report that is pending.

**DN:** What type of schedule do you keep at home? Or do you keep a schedule?

**Participant 17:** Yes, I definitely do Keep the schedule. So what I do, I wake up at, which is a privilege, you know, because when I used to it, I stay in Pretoria drive to Joburg. So when I used to do that, I used to use Gautrain so I would wake up at leave in the morning at 5. Like wake up at factual wake up around 5:00 so that I make it to work at 8:00. So now that I am working at home, I'm able to wake up at. It's seven, or sometimes in the in summer, because the sun will wake you up anyway, you find yourself all we get. At 6. Say around 6:00. The schedule is. I will wake up in the morning, but I know it is at 8:00. O'clock. I should be sitting behind the desk, pushing work, then from eight until one. If I do not have any. Any appointments? Actually from 1 until two. If I do not have any appointments. If I do not have anything that I have to attend to, so I go to the gym, I use the time to go to the gym, which I never used to have when I was working at the office, I had to go to gym at 9:00 PM. I mean at 8. It P 8:00 PM at night so that I come up at 9:30 in the gym closes. So now I'm able to go during the day and still come back at around two cause the gym is not far from me. So it takes me like an hour. Then maybe 30 minutes of adjusting after the gym, taking the shower and so on. Then go back to work around 14h30. Then from 14h30 I will push it until around. Around 5:00 and 6:00. Yeah, that's when my partner comes back from work. Then I stop working. Yes.

**DN:** When working from home, are you usually alone?

**Participant 17:** Yes. So most of the times I'm, I'm alone at home, so I don't have dependents. The person I stay with works from the office here.

**DN:** So the this so your partner works from the office full time and not and so you do not share your work environment.

**Participant 17:** Yes we don't share a work environment at all. Yes, unless. And they want to use the gym machine. And I'm sitting there in the office, in the office, in inverted commas. So we don't, we don't have conflict at all.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work from when COVID first started to now?

**Participant 17:** Like in in what sense?

**DN:** So earlier on, you alluded to uh, where you worked longer hours because you felt like you needed to prove yourself. But you now changed. You know, you have more of a balance.

**Participant 17:** Yes

**DN:** Is it in anything else that you have changed with regards to your working?

**Participant 17:** apart from the that I used, apart from the fact that I used to try and prove myself at that time. To now there isn't really much that I've changed. would say that they the only thing that I have changed is keeping up to the schedule that I set for myself in a way. So what? What makes me keep to the schedule is the fact that I always want to go to the gym and so that in a way. Forces me to keep to the schedule, but to be honest with you, there are days when I do not feel like working between me and you. The days where I don't feel like working and I don't touch work at all and I just sit behind TV, watch Netflix and yeah. Which is something that you would that I would never do it the office because it's I don't have privilege that privilege because there's no TV at the office. Or a couch, that I can just sit on.

**DN:** And how often would you say those days happen? Once a week, once a month.

**Participant 17:** there was a time where it happened for a whole month. I promise you, there was a time where it happened for the whole month is because of the cause of I'm doing so I neglected my work. It was it was easy for me to neglect it because I'm at home, nobody watching at me. Nobody is watching me and yeah, we just give out what is required and if the report is not required or just it. So you have those cases were. a report is urgent, they needed for the court and the police officer will call me and request for fast tracking, so I will just sort that out, get it out of the way. And leave the ones that are there and go back and watch my TV. So it does happen. So I would say it happens. Close to often. Yes, but not too often. like I said, like it was. There was a time when it happened. The whole month. And other times it would have been maybe in other months it will happen maybe say. Twice I know Fridays for real. It is definitely I. I never touch work. So on Fridays I do not touch work. But that was our culture. It is a culture also from the office. On Friday we used to knock off earlier at one. So with that. You cannot do anything in that short period. So we never used to really like touch so much work. You know. So yes, it also at home on Fridays I hardly ever touch work. Unless there something urgent that I need to attend to.

**DN:** how do you think that working from home influences your productivity?

**Participant 17:** OK, working from home and my productivity. It OK from the time I started working from home my productivity was very high. Like during the covid and during the lockdown and shortly after locked down. But up to then, my productivity kind of decreased.

But I wouldn't say because the other factors you know that are happening sometimes. You do not want to. You do. You just do not want to work. Yes. Yes. So now I would say the productivity level is quite low. Yes. To be honest, as compared to when I was. When I was starting to work from home. So there are times when I sometimes even I was even thinking to myself that sometimes I just need to go to the office. Yes, just to push work. So that it puts me in that environment where I really have to work. If I don't feel if I wake up in the morning and I don't feel like I want to touch the laptop or I want to go into that office so. In order for me not to. Be unproductive. I must just go to work because I have that opportunity. With my organization being hybrid, I have that opportunity to go to work. But I don't do it in something, right? And I just think of and I don't need shelter for me when I wake up in the morning, I think of the distance that I have to drive to work. I think of the petrol price, now I think of load shedding and robots not working, being stuck in traffic. Yes. And I end up not going to the office here.

**DN:** I am now going to ask you about factors affecting working from home compared to when you work in the office. So what type of task do you complete when you working at home and then compared to the type of task you would complete in the office? So you alluded to the autopsies at work compared to the reports at home.

**Participant 17:** Yes. So it at home it is the reports definitely and the viewing of slides like doing Histology and that microscopy component. I do it here because now. The microscope that I used to. I get that. I used to have in the office. They gave me permission to bring it at home. Yes. So I don't have a microscope there, so I definitely have to do it here at home. And at work. The tasks that I will have to perform is the procedure itself, because that is one thing I just really making me go to work. Not sure if I answered your question.

**DN:** No, you did. So it is like the autopsy procedures. Any medical procedures that need to be done in a specific environment.

**Participant 17:** Yes. In in in the other task that that was so that also. It's going to go also do it work. We have entire. Interdepartmental consultations, you know with the. With the junior staff there. To come, the specialist senior medical officers and so on. There are some cases where I need to discuss. Between us, I mean between that final opinion from another specialist, especially with. high profile cases and so on. So in such instances my organization does not. It doesn't have, for example, we don't have teams, we don't have a platform where we can meet online unless we do it on your phone, which is not effective on your phone

because you need to sit down, look at the people, look at the presentation or the report is going and everything. So you can't do it over the phone. So when I have to carry out such tasks, I go to work. And also with the with the weekly academic meetings we have weekly academic meetings where journals are presented from different yeah, from all over the world. So for that as well we go we all go to the. a facility, but to be honest, in the past I can see in the past six months there hasn't been much presentations as the presentations. As it used to be so pre-covid we you. Academic meetings. There is definitely going to be a meeting. But since the beginning of this year is about past six months or so, it's after my head of the department who's actually running the thing went on leave from. We just decided not to continue. And when he came back, he also did not continue with it. So it just, they are not happening. They are there on paper, but they are not happening. Yes, unless somebody really wants to share something with us. Then ok fine we will go. And we had one in like last month. Last month and. The attendance also was very poor. I will say like. 100% that we used to have now only 60 percent, 60% of the staff showed up.

**DN:** So what type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 17:** Working from home the distraction that I have. I love my TV. I love my Netflix. That is number one, Netflix. if somebody can take Netflix away, I will be productive. Yes, see Netflix. Having to go to the fridge all the time and eating. And I would say fortunately, load shedding is not an issue where we stay here. We do not experience load shedding. I think we have a minister; somebody stays out there. I do not know why. So I electricity. Yes. So electricity is not an issue. The other distraction that I have is the. In winter. I do not know if I should say this is a distraction in winter it is so nice to stay in bed like it is hard to get up in the morning. So in a way that it's a distraction because. I am kind of not forced to go to the office. I am here to home and nobody is seeing, so I can just stay in bed until around 8:00 AM and so on. If I do not have urgent work. Yes. And the other distraction that I have is that since of the COVID I have been doing. private work, yes, so I maybe I am performing private with autopsies for. other undertakers. So you will find it in Undertaker requires. Especially with Hindus. They bury they bury quickly. So you will find that they require post-mortem and it is urgent and it has to be done. Same day that the Undertaker calls me or the following day thing, they have 48 hours. Being that they follow that within 48 hours, they should have buried so that you don't. You don't miss your blessings when you get to paradise. Yes, something like that. So I have to with such cases.

I leave my work aside and go there. Where else? When I was still working from the office, I was able to tell the Undertaker. Maybe hey Pratish, maybe I will come later. I will come after work at 5. So now I just easily leave. my work and do my private. My side hustles, yes.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience at the office?

**Participant 17:** At the office. Type of distraction is your people knocking on my door. Colleagues obviously colleagues will come, and it was a colleague of the day will come in, they will be coming to you to ask for PPE or see you came to ask for, maybe it's something as simple as a stapler but it won't end up as a stapler. Did we start? We start talking about. Our lives issue. You are you. We will just sit there and just talk about it. That is one distraction that I experience and the other one is from the signing of reports. So you find that sometimes, especially when the police come and collect your report. When we're still working with the office, we used to sign. physically, but nowadays the court allows us to do. digital signatures. A lot of people like the admin stuff asking you to sign your reports whenever you're trying to work. They ask you, can you please sign this for me doc? Can you please? sign this non-infectious, so non-infectious is a form that people who are going outside who are leaving the country, like the bodies that are leaving the country. They need this form that needs to be signed to give permission for you to leave. To say that this body is not infectious to where it's going, so that doesn't push them there. So you will get people who are asking you to sign that for other doctors who are not who are who are not full time, who are not full time. So we have sessional doctors who just comes according to our contract did just comes in twice a month. I mean like twice a twice a week. Because they are not at the office at that time, we have to do their job so. The admin staff will be coming knocking at your door nonstop. And the and the other issue would see it was the. It was there. Yeah, it was the Internet, you know, even the Internet, at work. But it plays from both sides because now I will say Internet at home so having Being online at work I used to yeah, find myself browsing on stupid websites and not actual work.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 17:** The environment that I find more effective between work and working from home, I would say it's here at home. I'm saying I am more relaxed at home. I am able to lay back and do certain things but working from home when I do sit down and work, I accomplish more than what I would do at the office. Mostly, because of the by the time I

get into the office, I'm tired. Because there are days, I am not using the Gautrain where I would drive and be in traffic for like 2 hours or so. By the time I get into the office I'm tired from sitting in traffic and there are distractions like people knocking at your door and so on. So they are constant, and you can't manage them, if you manage them, you become rude and you don't want to be rude to the people you work with, whereas here at home if I sit down and work, I work. I do not have any distractions. I have channelled my mind to working.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 17:** And working from home benefits, I save a lot of money. Yeah, I used to spend a lot of money on Gautrain.  the petrol is petrol, major. So that is the benefit number. Like financial benefit. That is the first one. And then the second one is flexibility. Yeah, to, to carry out well flexibility. I know it is another different, but I will use it in, in the sense that I'm trying to explain. push the message across so flexibility to do other things. That I would not do if I was in the office like the benefit of being able to go to the gym. The benefit of being able to push out my side hassles, the benefit of being able to even sometimes, like when you order online, you know something you find yourself because there's no one at home when you were still working at the office. There is no one who would receive your package. So when you're at home, you know, like, OK, well, that comes at home. You can receive it. You do not have to ask the security phone day from the gate to keep it for you. Yeah, I know. And also when you when you are sick, you know when you are sick, you don't necessarily have to. You do not understand. You have to take a sick leave. You can because you're managing your work so well. You are able to. To compensate for the days that you were actually not working. And also with the with the leave days. You do not. I do not. It's bad for the for my employer because like for example this year. Because I'm studying and I've been right last year, I've been writing a lot of exams, so I had to take study leaves. And so this year, I have not taken any leave, but because I'm working for home, I don't even feel like. I have not taken any leave. I do not know if that makes sense. Yes. So yeah, so those are the benefits, so they are the perks.

**DN:** And what are the benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 17:** when working from the office. The benefit is that for one I. When I have to deal with admin I when I am at home. If I need something from the admin, I have to call and you know calling government calls, those guys don't pick up their they don't pick up the

phones. Yes, and. I didn't pick up the landline like the telephone, and I don't like. bothering people on their private line so. The communication is very hard, yeah, but when I'm waking at day at the office, the communication is easy. I just go downstairs to the admin to request for their. Whatever that I need? Yes. So, yeah, those are the benefits being able to also interact with your colleagues, because sometimes you find that. I used to have a colleague who for example I. Well, I know they used to I have. In so our office set up, is set up in a corridor kind of way whereby we have. each doctor has his own office, so I'm able to log in, to knock to the next office if there is maybe something that I need to discuss or that I need to maybe word it on my report in a certain way. So it was easy for me to just say. Hey doc. Can you please just? look at this report. How would you word it? Does it make sense to you? Do you think the court will understand what I'm trying to say? Yes. Which is actually sometimes because we because of the jargon and the medical jargon and we sometimes. find it hard to kind of translate our reports into. layman's terms. Yes, so. If you have that a person next to you, like another doctor, just next to you can just go to or the admin person who doesn't know medical jargon and just read. Yes, it was easy for that. So basically, it is all-around communication. So the communication was easy and assistance as well. It was very easy. Now, when I'm working from home. I am kind of shy to call colleagues. Say, can you please just e-mail them my report and say cannot look at this report and so on because the other issues that we don't have a. I can see maybe a cloud system. I don't know what to call it, where you can just log in and do your reports online. So you do. I do my reports on. word. I send them by e-mail to admin so that they I send them, send them out so that they print them out. Yes. So we don't have we don't have that kind of a software whereby you can just have do everything login, do everything online and that's it. So that is one. The other issue is that. With the reports that we do. Because it's uh, medical legal, it's kind of, I mean, crime investigation cases, by the way. In you can't take the docket home. You know you cannot take the docket home. You need to sit there and do it there at wake or take a picture of it or make copies of it. So when I was working, still working at the office, it was it was easy to push work there. So now. Every time I go to the office, I know I have to make copies, you know for the dockets that I want to do. And there was a time when the machines, photocopy machines were not working and you know in government when something is not working, can take about three months wait to be fixed. So I used to like use my phone to take pictures of. Of the dockets. Of the reports so that I can do them from home. So meaning by reports I

mean like that. OK itself, the history. You need the history of all the person, everything that was involved around that. So for that information. Sometimes hard it was hard. It is actually a hard to it is not a hard, but it's. It's quite a chore to make such copies and. you are wasting resources this way with these paper? that you are using?

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 17:** The biggest struggle when I work from home. I have not really thought about it. Perhaps it's because I don't have like a biggest struggle, so this this issues that I'm bringing up. I issues but there are solutions to them. I don't really have like struggle where I find myself. No, I do not. I do not have. I wouldn't say like this in the struggle that I would see. Is that big to that extent?

**DN:** And then your biggest struggle when you work from the office?

**Participant 17:** My biggest struggle when I work from the office is the traffic Getting to work. You know the traffic is the biggest struggle. I promise you. So among other factors like having employees always knocking at your door. Those ones are minor ones. The traffic because I used to. There were days were. Especially in winter, when I think of. Going to work on weekends when I remember that I have to go to work the following day and I have to sit on traffic. I will just be demoralized. Yes. So now being able to work both at home and in the office other days it kind of eases that. Yes. And also get into work when you get to work that exhaustion that you have because there is a brief moment where you just have to regroup. that you have to regroup again. I do not know how the correct way where you just have to maybe rest a bit and yeah, so you can actually start with your work. so you find that I have been on the road for so long, even though I get to work at eight, I've always start working at. 10 or so because the first hour I am there sitting talking to people. Yes. And the other hour, there's always tea there. When I'm not on the days when I'm not performing procedures. I will go on a tea break then maybe start actually working it around 10. Because of the traffic and the existence it brings with. And also the money the spending that I had to. On the Gautrain my gosh. But I used to pay. I used to pay for both parking. And also for the rides. So I used to spend something like a 3.7. Just on traveling and that parking. Yes. Not too. Not even talking a month, not even talking the days were. I actually drove because there's also petrol factor that was coming in there as well.

**DN:** So what do you think your productivity has been like before and before covid compared to now when working from home?

**Participant 17:** Yeah, before covid I was not working from home. But I would say during lock down to now. during lock down. I was very productive, but I was not kind to myself.

**DN:** No, I so I'm actually asking what your productivity was when you're working full time in the office compared to now?

**Participant 17:** when I was working full time at the office compared to now. I will say working from home. The productivity is very high as compared to working with at the office. There's a sense of psychologically, you know, when you're psychologically in your head, you. You because I feel like this is a benefit that you don't deserve. So you make sure that you actually prove. To your employer that you're actually doing something. Yes. So working from home. I am more productive than working at the office because at the office, as long as you are there because even with our KPI, so we don't, we don't have our KPI's, are they in paper, but they are actually non-existent. Yes, they do not they do not. evaluate your performance in a way? So if you have been at work, they are happy you came to work as to What were you doing while you're at work? Nobody really cares about it unless it is on the days then that you have to perform autopsies. You really have to do them, but in terms of signing out reports and things like that, like paper work, nobody really checks up when you. But though we have, we also have a we have a I can see it's some sort of a rule. That we your back log mustn't be more than two months. So meaning you cannot have a report. I mean a case that you've done two months ago. Still without report. Yes. So yes. You will find that. Yes. You actually when you regularly visit actually have cases that are two months ago you know But here when you're working from home like your back log is something like. Four weeks in a month, sometimes three weeks. Because the backlog is always there, it's just how much, how many, how many cases I think, yeah. So the productivity at the home is better to be honest, yeah.

**DN:** So how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement and what makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 17:** What makes me like very satisfied, is the flexibility. The flexibility of being able to do other things like it's the same. Same reason that I've gave before I can push my, my side hustles. I can do other things. I am able to study, I'm able to push. Yeah, like I'm even able to take care of myself better. Yeah, I'm able to wake up in the morning, have my breakfast, whereas during those days, when I was still working at the office, I hardly ever ate breakfast. You know, I would. I would go to work. And when I get to work because I

have to chase time because I woke up so, so, so early. And I still on top of waking up so early. I need to get to work on time. I actually do not have time to sit down with breakfast and so on. So is it like we health wise? I am doing better. Yes. Taking care of myself.

**DN:** So going forward. What home arrangement work from home arrangement would you prefer?

**Participant 17:** Going forward, the work arrangement that I would prefer to me and my employer. Is to keep things as they are. But. Yes. To keep it hybrid and it works perfectly, hybrid being having the flexibility to go to the office and still here working from home. But also on top of that I will. We must have an arrangement. There must be some sort of a software so that there's some sort of a communication platform where we can we can engage like we used to when we still working at the office amongst each other because now the sense of engagement is called like we don't even see each other that much because we don't come on the same days. You find that you are working with someone here, you can go about a month without seeing them. And there was that sense of what you called. Because you are working with these people is all like upliftment, you know, we knew each other so well. Like it is to work. So now it is like you are dependent on yourself. You are so dependent on yourself you have to. You have to do this thing on your own in a way. Even though on the days that you go through these kings consult someone, but even those days when you want to consult, that's someone that's someone is the day that he is not there. I do not need that makes sense. So you are so self-reliant. for many things you know this this lack of collaboration and also I what I am seeing now with the with the because during covid with the Department of Health actually. Subsidized us. I don't need subsidies. Correct term to use. But it gives us more, more junior doctors. Yes, so we had more. We had like 5 new medical officers who came into the facility which joined us. I do not know them. and you can see with them like for me when I started like. with the organisation about eight years ago, I. It took me literally about. A month just to catch up because I had support from all sides. With them, they've been here since COVID covered was in 2020, but they are struggling with so many things. It's been over two years like it's so hard for them to catch up. Understand and be able to do the work, because I think it comes from the fact that they are also struggling. So the kind of arrangement that I would like to have. I do not know, maybe we can have also. days that we. we all go to the office and maybe in a month just for that purpose? And I know at some point I have to stop being selfish. Maybe just in a month,

you say, OK, this week. All the employees have to come to work, yeah. So we get to have that kind of collaboration. Because. I cannot see this good work full time because is proved to even today to facilities. That the output of us. Most, I mean, like most of the employees, I do not want to talk for everyone, but generally. The organization is doing well with which issuing of the report, which is our core business, which issuing out reports. to the relevant parties. It's doing very well as compared to before. Pre covid, yes. So any you must have an arrangement whereby see, OK, these days. Or maybe three certain times in a month. You all have to come to the office.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything that you'd like to add that you think is pertinent to this study?

**Participant 17:** you have covered all the. The corners, but I think you can also. What one thing that you what you did, cover it. You covered it. Well, actually. With the other issue that that that is there that people a lot of times, especially when we were working at home, are always at home like. It. There is conflict at home between us and our partners, because I I'm just like me being home all the time. One factor has been missing obviously. When they come to, when they come home, they just want to relax, and because I've been at home the whole time. Whatever it is like. OK, fine. Now I want to change garments, and I want. I want my, my, my darling. I want to sit down with you. And so before covid there was there was that synchrony that. OK bye. We all came from where we are tired. OK now we have each other but this sense of. There is conflict in a way. Between people who are who are living together, and the other issue will be, I don't know, for me, unfortunately. The other issue that I know one of my colleagues is workspace. You know they. She struggles with you because she's working from there her own bedroom. So she's struggles with the with the partner. To get along I mean to. To get along in that setup, you find that she is working, and the partner wants to sit there and maybe to sleep. or do other things, but she is working there. But you have covered that in your study, but for me, I feel like it's something that a lot of people overlook because they're very they talk about other factors, but this one. It's psychological issues and I feel like it's the one that also causes conflicts in in relationships because they. So is the one that causes. Separations. Fights in the. Their household, and so on. So it isn't an expectations that you would know. For example, when I used to, work at the office. On the days that I was not working and my partner is working, I would. Oh, take care of everything in the house and when you come back from work. the house is clean.

Everything is nice. You can relax and so on. But now, because I'm so used to being at home, I don't do such things anymore. They come in the house and they don't feel relaxed because the house is a mess. I made a mess because I've been home the whole time just sitting on the couch the whole day watching Netflix go into the kitchen and coming back the dishes always in the dishwasher and so on. So such things they spike. These big fights. You know we within the interpersonal relationships.

## 8.18 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 18:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Learning and Development, Financial - Participant 18**

**Date and time: 08 October 2022 12h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** I'm going to start you off with some easy questions. What is your age?

**Participant 18:** I am forty-one.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 18:** I do. I have a son.

**DN:** And does he live with you?

**Participant 18:** Yes, he does.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 18:** In financial services.

**DN:** What is your function within this industry?

**Participant 18:** It is learning and development.

**DN:** What level are you? Would you say you are in the organization?

**Participant 18:** Middle management.

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 18:** Over 20,000 people.

**DN:** Did you work from home pre COVID.

**Participant 18:** No, I did not.

**DN:** Not even for emergency cases where anything like that.

**Participant 18:** In emergency cases, yes, I could.

**DN:** And how often would that be?

**Participant 18:** Hardly.

**DN:** Maybe once a year.

**Participant 18:** Twice a year maybe.

**DN:** And do you currently work from home or the office?

**Participant 18:** I work at home. I work from home.

**DN:** Do you go into the office at any time?

**Participant 18:** When there is load shedding.

**DN:** And how often are we in a week? Would you say you go into the office?

**Participant 18:** Once. Probably Once, twice every two weeks.

**DN:** Twice every two weeks. Do you have a when you work from home? Do you have a Home Office, or do you have a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 18:** I have a dedicated workspace in one of the rooms.

**DN:** And what is your dedicated workspace equipped with?

**Participant 18:** So it is a desk and a chair and a laptop stand.

**DN:** Do you have an extra screen?

**Participant 18:** No, I do not.

**DN:** do you have company 3G?

**Participant 18:** Yes, I do.

**DN:** Do you have your own personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 18:** Yes, I use my personal Wi-Fi for the most part.

**DN:** And do you have like an inverter or a generator?

**Participant 18:** No, I do not.

**DN:** What are your current working hours when you work from home?

**Participant 18:** Probably 10 hours a day.

**DN:** And then if you work from the office, approximately how many hours would you work in a day?

**Participant 18:** 7 / 8.

**DN:** Do you keep it a schedule at home?

**Participant 18:** No, I just work. No.

**DN:** So no set schedule with breaks or anything like that. And when do you, when you work from home, are you usually alone?

**Participant 18:** I am usually well. I lock myself in the room, so my husband also works at home.

**DN:** But he has got his own dedicated workspace. You will don't work in the same kind of environment.

**Participant 18:** No, we do not.

**DN:** So from the time you started working from home, how have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 18:** so I'd probably say that I work more. Because I don't have to be in traffic, so like I can start work a lot earlier and because I'm a morning person, I can get a lot more of my productive work than in the mornings. And the thing that's challenging is the consistency of meetings that are back-to-back because everybody now schedules time to meet and. Online and then I finish a little bit later than I would if I was in the office so I can work put in like an extra hour of work in the afternoon. as needed. So I work. Yes, generally probably work more, but at the same time, I also feel like I've gotten connected or collaborated with them. A few more colleagues because we do not have physical, physical boundaries. Then I would have when I was still in the office. So there is not really this like sense of separation from people because you now connected to each other virtually. So I would say I I'd been a bit more productive on the work front. It hasn't been as good for the personal family side.

**DN:** How do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 18:** So I think I feel personally that I have been able to do a lot more in terms of work output, because I'm constantly sort of always on and available from a work perspective, so it's enhanced or increased my productivity on the work and career side and the inverse side to that is that it has come at a cost I think to my personal life and the balance thereof. So where I had an off switch between when I started work when I was in the office and work stopped and I could then focus on my personal stuff like exercising, taking care of myself, being present with my son and my husband and that kind of thing. That stuff was easy to sort of drop, let it fall by the wayside so that I could be more available. I have all the apps on my phone and that kind of thing. As productive as I have been, I think it's come at a bit of a cost to my own sense of well-being. As an unintended consequence of being able to work almost all the time. So it's helped productivity, but it's come at a price.

**DN:** What types of tasks do you complete when working from home and what type of tasks would you complete when working from the office?

**Participant 18:** So I think the. It's the same, same stuff, just perhaps done a bit differently. So in a way like when the kind of work that I do has a lot of research and like presentations and papers that you need to write for people. So I'm able to get quiet time to do a paper from start to finish with less interruptions. I when I'm working at home, I'm able to focus on some research and development and all of the things that I would need to understand to be a bit more proactive. I think when I go into the office it's more of. a social collaborative. Also get

to connect with people beyond work on a more personal level just to hear how everybody's doing so it the connection feels a bit different. I think in person than it does as much as we'd like to think that virtually can replace face to face. It does not really. And then I think the chance meetings at the office of people that you wouldn't normally think of scheduling time with, but it's maybe someone you needed to go to, so you can spend time in the central coffee shop and then you bump into people that you wouldn't normally meet with and that creates I suppose better conversation or opportunity to think about new projects because you just. By chance, I think encountering people.

**DN:** What type of distractions do we experience when you work from home?

**Participant 18:** So I think as much as we have got. personal separated workspaces. It is easy for my husband to pop his head at the door say I've got something to tell you quickly. Or can I run this idea by you or can you quickly help me with this? which I think is always a difficult balance between no I am busy and yes, come in and let's do it quickly. So there is that. But it I find that it is still less than the number of interruptions when you are in the office where every colleague that's working past expects that you're going to look up and say hello or there's more people that are constantly around you looking for you attention or you focus. And I also think that working from home. For me anyway has been. A lot less unfocused because I plan my day. I am in control of how I manage my day and I go out as it suits me. Not necessarily because someone is saying come, let's go grab coffee, you or you don't want to be rude. So there's that freedom where it gets a bit tricky I think is again sort of based on the number of meetings that you have back-to-back that even if you're tired. Like completely flat out after back-to-back virtual calls, you almost have to get into the next time and still try to be switched on so that can be quite distracting on its own, because then your body's tired and then you look around and start thinking about supper and blah blah and. So that also has an impact. I think if you could learn the balance of the number of meetings that you realistically can accept on a day, especially when you working alone at home, it would minimize the push to always be on and always attending these meetings even if you physically just don't feel like you need to be meeting people on that day.

**DN:** And what type of distractions are would you have at your office? And I know you have given me some, but is there anything else?

**Participant 18:** So I think it's mainly people type of distractions that you know I'm seeing you. So I want to connect. I want to say hello even though you obviously can see that I am

working which is understandable but can be quite distracting I think the. The. Sense of community that is at the office also creates the expectation that you need to be communicating and connecting with people, even though your intent of being in the office could be for something completely different. And I think the. The environment has a lot more stimulation when you are the office, because there's always stuff happening around you. There are always people talking about things and you obviously have a little bit of folklore in wanting to understand what everybody's talking about or what they busy with. So that can easily distract from focus our attention and especially when you're sitting in open plan type spaces, which is what office, our office workplaces becoming like. So you know, you also don't want to be rude and at the same time, even though you may be in the office, there's still the multiple meetings that you have that are virtual with other colleagues elsewhere and then being sensitive and aware of how much noise you're making and how you may be distracting other people and trying to find a room so that you don't interrupt people like it can get quite. Quite distracting I feel.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 18:** It depends on the type of work that I am doing, right? So for me, I said earlier on that being at home. Allows me to focus and be more in control of what is in my day and what will capture my attention. And sometimes it is as simple as putting myself offline so people can't ping me and I don't see the chats. If I really need to get something out as a matter of urgency, and then when I miss kind of chance encounters or want to just have conversations and catch up and find out where my colleagues are. What are they thinking about what they're working on? I go into the office for that. But what has been what's been curiously like an exciting thing for me is finding, like, these interesting coffee shops to go work from. And for me, that has been when I'm looking for, like, some creative stimulation when I feel stuck on something, I find changing the work environment not to go to the office or to be at home, but to be in a different environment that of my choosing. At a time also helps with just different ways of thinking and different ways of approaching problems. Just like being in a creative space stimulates you to think differently. Which I think has been the blessing for me in terms of working from home and then having to figure out different ways to reenergize. And I find that I think sorry that being able to take a brief walk, even if it's a 5 to 10 minute walk in between sessions, especially at home is like you

go out into the garden, you smell flowers, you enjoy a little bit of sun for a 10 minute break and it makes a difference to your energy when you come back.

**DN:** So what do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 18:** Not being in traffic and having to contend with other irritated, terrible drivers and, you know, being on high alert while you are on the road. I think the ability to integrate work life and find some semblance of balance, so like there is not this rigid structure of time, it's a bit more fluid. So things that sometimes I wouldn't be able to do like if my son who is at a school closer to home, gets sick at school and needs to be taken to the doctor. I don't have to go through the panic of it's an hour and a half to get there and then traffic and whatever. And it's a quick thing, get him to the doctor, come back home and still continue with my workday. So it is a lot more. manageable in the grander balance of things and I think also just for me personally, I've found that from a wellbeing standpoint, so like protecting my energy and my. time is a lot better when I'm at home. Like I don't have to engage with people unnecessarily as much as I am a people person and I enjoy being surrounded by people, I've appreciated and valued the ability to just lock myself in and do what I need to do or just recharge in a different way without having people interact or intrude so it protects my space and my energy and attention I think and that's been quite a refreshing thing for me.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 18:** So I think it is the, it's the ease of overhearing someone in conversation and kind of connecting the dots to something that might be helpful for you. And it is something happens differently when it's not like it's not a scheduled. Let us have a meeting to talk about this, but like a passageway encounter that results in something that is better than maybe what one or two people individually would have come up with. Also think that like shared meeting spaces in the office that are geared towards ideation. But like with people in the space together. quite helpful. And uh, yeah, I think that that for the most part, for me it it's more the connection and the human touch and being able to see each other face to face and having those. I guess undeliberate times of connection so that you can think beyond the day-to-day meetings. Also find that when you seeing people in person, there's a lot more kindness and compassion and care and just finding out about them on a personal level more than we do right now in in virtual set setups. But that could just be me.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 18:** Finding the off switch I find working from home has made me feel like I constantly have to be on. So like even after six, I'm going to be checking my WhatsApp on my work phone. I'm going to be wanting to see if anybody looked for me on teams or try to call me even though it's after hours and I feel like I'm obligated to respond because, you know, we have the flexibility, I suppose. So there is that. And there is an increased sense of guilt, I think, around not responding quickly enough. So I almost feel like there's a pressure in the rush to respond to things much quicker than I would if I was working a typical work day in the office. So like if you send me an e-mail at 5, you don't expect me to respond until the next day when I start to work after 9. But when I'm working at home, almost feel like as I see it, I must respond. I have to. Which creates. I think. The poor. Work practices in terms of being able to shut off from work and live the rest of your life differently, or the other aspects of your life. If I can call it that.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when you work from the office?

**Participant 18:** Interruption. And like lack of focus. So it is the feeling constantly disrupted, constantly interrupted and constantly expected to engage, even if my attention and my energy at the time needs to be on something different. And it is the pressure to be available and to be visible if you are in the office.

**DN:** What? Before COVID, what was your productivity like? And now, what is your productivity like?

**Participant 18:** So it is a bit. It is a bit tricky to answer it because I also started a bit of a different way of working as a member of a squad. As covid started and that working in that squad created a different dynamic and how I structured my days or the different ways we measured and tracked output so we started being part of an agile delivery squad and that has sprints and that has a different work ethic and a different way. of focusing on creating small value ads and incremental pieces of work over a period of time versus wanting to do one big project that's going to be a yearlong and. So because of that I can say I was more productive and more engaged with my work during COVID. Then I was pre covid and but it could be as a result of the kind of work that I ended up doing. As covid started. Right. So it is a bit tricky to quantify it, but for me personally, for the very fact that I was then on in a squad, had very deliberate and intentional. That puts a different focus and energy around what I was doing, and I got a lot more time, actually a lot more than I would have. I feel if I was in the office for three years even. I found a rhythm in the flow, and I found it easier to

connect and collaborate with people. Just because you work in squads and there's time boxed ways of working and things that you need to deliver every Sprint and so that focus, the attention that focused the output that focused the people on common objectives. So even if we were doing it online and virtually. you still have that focus. And I think it also made me learn how to be different in how I worked, and it energized me because I was then learning new things, new ways of working, interacting with new people that I wouldn't have in a typical just normal work context.

**DN:** How satisfied? Are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 18:** I could do with a less rushed and hurried way of working. And less like expectation. Unspoken or not, around being more available because I happened to be working at home. So like there's an increase in emails being sent on Sundays, for example, which I think is just downright rude, but it's now accepted because we are working in this increasingly digital construct where. Your work is your home. Your home is your work, and it just. Does not create separation and opportunity to just completely switch off.

**DN:** And in terms of your current work from home arrangements, how satisfied are you with that?

**Participant 18:** I am 100% satisfied. I am not in a hurry to go back to the office.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied with this work arrangement with work from home arrangement?

**Participant 18:** it works in the sense that I have freedom in how I manage my time. I have freedom in how I manage my focus and what I attend to or not. I connect I think a lot more with people outside of my immediate work environment and setup, whereas in the office you almost restricted physically to your four walls unless you deliberately choose to venture out to a different place. I think the flexibility of it actually is quite a big thing especially for me being a working mom. So I'm able to, at least when my son comes back from school, have a conversation with him, catch up on his day before he goes out to play with his friends. Whereas in the office you kind of come after the fact and your focus is on feed him, take him to bed and it becomes a lot less humanly connecting, I guess.

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement would you like? So if you had a choice. Would you prefer the same arrangement, or would you like to change the arrangement?

**Participant 18:** I think what I would want to change about it is the digital boundaries around working at home. By that I mean a tool based way that says if you are in this work

arrangement at a point in time, the system will alert people that I respond to emails from this time to this time, and it be an OK arrangement so that I feel less of the anxiety and the pressure of having to constantly be on and constantly responding.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything else that you would like to add that you think I may have missed or that you just, you know? Think that should be in my study.

**Participant 18:** So I think. Beyond just the work productivity, I think it would be a curiosity on. Has working from home, opened up other avenues for more productivity in other parts of your life. So for example, are people able to study more than they would have if they were working at the office and trying to study? Had people picked up, hobbies that have helped them to? Do different things than they would have been able to do having worked the normal way of working. Just a I guess a more like a whole overall impact in. Human flourishing, or lack thereof. That is it.

## 8.19 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 19:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Relationship Manager, Education - Participant 19**

**Date and time: 06 October 2022 09h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 19:** 41.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 19:** Sorry, female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 19:** I do one.

**DN:** Do they? Do they live with you?

**Participant 19:** Yes, they do.

**DN:** what industry do you work in?

**Participant 19:** Education.

**DN:** What is your function within this industry?

**Participant 19:** Relationship manager.

**DN:** And what level would you say you are within the organization, junior, middle, senior.

**Participant 19:** Middle.

**DN:** And what is the size of your organization? Is it a small medium or large organization?

**Participant 19:** I'd like to say medium, but we are growing by the day. When you say when you say medium or large, what number, what scale are we looking at?

**DN:** Medium would be anything that is like about 500 and above.

**Participant 19:** OK, let us say medium.

**DN:** Did you work from home pre covid.

**Participant 19:** I did, yes.

**DN:** How often did you work from home?

**Participant 19:** So there was a time when the pandemic had just hit that we were one of the people or organizations that were at home from the time that the pandemic started. Right up until I think when people started going back to the office in, in October that year, we started

coming back, but it was not, it was not cold Turkey. We were sort of being how can I say phased in. So you so we would we were kind of given the opportunity to come in two days a week, three days a week sort of ease into it.

**DN:** so my question is actually before COVID hit. Did you work from home?

**Participant 19:** No, no, I did not.

**DN:** Not even for special occasions or anything like that.

**Participant 19:** I did, yes. I would say if my daughter was maybe ill and she was off for two days then that that was it was sort of like an emergency not really a special occasion or if for instance there were meetings that would take place in the morning and it was on this location closer to home then I would go to the meetings and then go and work from home but it was very rare, maybe once every six months. **DN:** So would it be fair to say that it would have been approximately maybe once every six months or once?

**Participant 19:** Yes, yes.

**DN:** once or twice a year.

**Participant 19:** Yes, you could not. Not often, yes.

**DN:** And now, do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 19:** I work from the office but so I get into the office. mainly from eight to AM or 8:30 and then I leave at 12:30 in order to pick my daughter up and then I work from home for the remainder of the day.

**DN:** so you work from both home and office every single day.

**Participant 19:** Correct, yes. I do, yes.

**DN:** Do you have a when you work from home, do you have a dedicated workspace, or do you have a Home Office?

**Participant 19:** I have a dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is this dedicated workspace equipped with?

**Participant 19:** So it's a chair, table. UM, yes, basic chair and table. But not it's not, not a comfortable. I do not. I almost want to say it is similar to my work invite to my work office environment or seating work office.

**DN:** so you're not sitting at the dining room table or anything like that?

**Participant 19:** No, no, no, no, no.

**DN:** And then within the space, do you have like an extra screen?

**Participant 19:** No, I've only got my laptop I'm working off from.

**DN:** And then do you work off Wi-Fi, your own personal Wi-Fi, or do you have a company provided 3G?

**Participant 19:** I have my own personal Wi-Fi.

**DN:** And then you do not have a generator or inverter or anything like that?

**Participant 19:** I've got an inverter, yes.

**DN:** And So what are you currently working hours when working from home and then working from the office? So if you had to work a full day at the office for some reason, what hours would you work when in the office and then what hours would you work when you know, working from home if you have to work a full day from home?

**Participant 19:** The office hours is 8 until four. If you start at 8:30 or 9, then you finish at 5. So I mean, for the past few months I've literally been working half day from the office and then the remainder from home. But I find that when I work from home, it's very difficult to disconnect. Or finish off at 4:00 o'clock or 5:00 o'clock. Very difficult, I find that. I constantly am checking my emails. I am constantly saying I have not done this. I have not done that. Then sitting in front of the TV with the laptop on my lap. So yes. That has been my dilemma lately.

**DN:** And do you keep the schedule?

**Participant 19:** No, not really.

**DN:** You do not keep a schedule when you work from home.

**Participant 19:** Yes. No, no.

**DN:** And then when you work from home, are you usually alone?

**Participant 19:** So my daughter, I've obviously picked my daughter up, but she does homework and she's sitting in front of the TV, so she's completely on the other end of the house to where I am.

**DN:** so separate work environments and then there's no one else. that works in the in the house while you.

**Participant 19:** No, no, no. It is just the two of us, yeah.

**DN:** How have you changed the way you work from home from the time we have started working from home, you know from two years ago?

**Participant 19:** I would not say I have changed anything. I have not changed anything. No when I think about it, nothing really changed. My structure and everything are basically the same. From before.

**DN:** so it has not been like a huge adjustment for you?

**Participant 19:** No, no, not really, no.

**DN:** How does how do you think working from home influences your productivity?

**Participant 19:** So, uh, in terms of in terms of being in, in a, in a quieter environment. So you know with interruption. So when you have the office, I feel like this is a lot of interruptions where people are popping into your office to ask you a question, we really could have just been something that was sent on an e-mail, you know, so whereas if I'm working from home, then there's less interruptions. So I am focused on what I'm doing. I am not being interrupted when I'm sending an e-mail or I'm on the phone with a client. It's more focused, I would say I get a lot more done when I'm working from home and I think also because I've got more time so in the morning if I work a full day from home because my daughter's ill or for whatever reason, I'm not stuck in traffic. Trying to get to the office. I am not flustered because I there was road rage or frustration from the heat. Or you know, someone just not diving right and then getting home as well. I mean, also at the office, I don't take a lunch break the same at home. I don't take a lunch break, so that hasn't changed. And then heading home, getting stuck in traffic again, there's no interruptions. I feel like there is a lot of interruptions. Coming into the office, but it's like little nitty interruptions and I think those little ones are the ones that there's more time for me to be sending. I'm sending out more emails and interacting more with my clients because I have extra or additional time to do that.

**DN:** What type of tasks do you complete while working from home? And what type of task do you complete when working in the office?

**Participant 19:** No, it's the same. It is the same. So I'll have client meetings. I'll have a I'll do admin work. So most of the admin work I choose to do at home in the evenings and then in the office, I do my client meetings via teams.

**DN:** And is this because the connection is better or is it just you choose to get the client meetings out of the way in the mornings?

**Participant 19:** That's correct, yes. And I think when I'm busy setting and doing my admin, I don't have any interruptions and I'm focused on what it is and make a list and focused on what that list is and ticket off to say, you know. But this is what I have completed.

**DN:** so you prefer to do the client facing stuff in the office. And the collaboration in the office and the. The more focused tasks such as your admin at home.

**Participant 19:** Correct yes. Or vice versa, does not really matter whichever.

**DN:** But they yeah, so you can do both your both these necessary tasks from home or the office, but you prefer to split them.

**Participant 19:** Correct yes.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 19:** I do not really have any distractions. My daughter is old enough to do things for herself, so it's not a matter of me being a distracted by her saying. Mom, I need a snack. Mom, I need you to do this. I need you to do that. She is really old enough to do things for herself. No, I do not. I do not have any distractions. That's why, for me, it's better. Like I said to you, I get more done because it's more focused.

**DN:** And then what type of distractions do you experience in the office?

**Participant 19:** Just popping into your office. Can I ask you this question quickly? And I feel like when people see your face in the office, it's like, I'm not going to see good in for the rest of the afternoon. So let me go and hog her for the whole morning and see what I can get out of her, and then let her go when she needs to leave in at 12:30. And then walking to. I feel that when I'm in the office, I'm walking to the kitchen more often to go and make a cup of coffee to warm my food or whatever, and eat at my desk Whereas at home. I do not drink coffee. Can you believe it? Believe it or not. And home? I don't drink coffee at all. I will just have my water bottle with me on my table. If I have, if I'm snacking, everything is packed on my table and ready for me to focus for the rest of the day. So I find that I'm more structured when I'm working from home.

**DN:** Which environment is more effective for you and why?

**Participant 19:** Home, because then. It is. I feel like I get things done. I am more productive. I do not feel pressured if that's the word to use. I am working. I'm working at the pace that suits me. I meet my deadlines, I meet my deadlines. I am. I am in terms of my output, I am meeting that. So yes.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 19:** I think that the time, the time issue, so you have more time in order to set at in front of your computer and action stuff. There are no interruptions in between. it is more focused. I cannot think of anything else.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 19:** From the office There's more collaboration, teamwork. You. You interacting with that human interaction, which we do need, by the way. In order to function as well, we are not able to. I feel I'm not able to function. If I'm not working with people or having that human interaction, I think it's very important, especially in the environment that I work in. There are different departments. And different people in the organization that I need assistance from and they need my input. So in the office I would say the collaboration and the teamwork is, yeah, communication is very important.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 19:** My biggest struggle I think the office calling me the staff at the office calling me about five times a day to ask me something, whereas if I was in the office, they would just obviously then pop into the office and ask me something in 2 minutes. Whereas now they're saying oh, I forgot to ask Claudine this and then they'll pick up the phone and phone me. I forgot to ask this. So when the office it would be one conversation. 1 chat and now away from the office it becomes. More regular chatting.

**DN:** And what do you see as the biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 19:** Actually I have no idea. I do not know.

**DN:** And is it not constantly being disrupted, is it too much noise. Sorry. I'm just giving you some of the examples that have come up.

**Participant 19:** Yeah, maybe just use the interruption as one of them. So like now I am typically sitting in my office. I am the only one in the sales office. because the other salesperson Marietjie she that works from home on a Thursday. And so I am literally the only person sitting in my office, and I've got my doors closed and this is how I work. When I come in. And I feel like I'm in my own space, like I'm working from home. I have quiet. I am focused. I know what I need to get through from the time I got till until 12:30.

**DN:** What was your productivity being like before you started working from home and what is your productivity like now?

**Participant 19:** So when I started working from home, I think it's actually increased. So I've and I do not know why. But I maybe I do know why, so I've actually brought more clients on board. I've brought in more leads and I think because I've had extra time, I've have had that added time to sit and do research on new clients on LinkedIn, Google, I've had additional time to sit and actually go and search and research for people and get them and get new business from that whereas. In the past. Before we started working from home,

there wasn't time to do that. It was a constant rush for everything. And I think at some point we were going to get an admin person into assist with research and get new leads in for us. But now I'm able to do that myself. Because I feel like I've got more time in the day.

**DN:** so because you got more time in the day or because you working longer hours?

**Participant 19:** working long hours and more time in the day because now I'm not getting stuck in traffic. all of them to be serious.

**DN:** thank you for clarifying that. That makes sense, yeah. How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 19:** Yes, I am.

**DN:** Why? What makes you? What makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 19:** Because I am able to spend more time with my daughter. Even though we in separate parts of the House when I am working, but I am they if she does need assistance with her homework, I'm there if she does need something from me. So I'm spending more time with my daughter at the same time. I'm spending more time with my clients, I'm able to give them more attention.

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement would you prefer?

**Participant 19:** So at the moment, because I'm the I'm working until 12:30 every single day. But I do come into the office every single day. I am happy with that arrangement. It's been working brilliantly. They are some days where I would say so. Or maybe perhaps if it was one day a four day week, a four day week, that would work for me as well.

**DN:** So one day, completely from home.

**Participant 19:** From home? Yes.

**DN:** And the other four days worked half and half.

**Participant 19:** 1 or 2 days because yes, yes, because I see there's a lot of organizations or if you want to say overseas that have now implemented this four day week or three day week and they say that some people are actually more productive.

**DN:** You want an arrangement where you work four days out of the week and the one day is yours to do whatever with.

**Participant 19:** Well not to do whatever was still work but work the a full day from home.

**DN:** No, because there are organizations that are going into where people work for four days a week, but they work longer hours during those four days to cover up that last day.

**Participant 19:** OK, OK.

**DN:** And then that then they have like, a three-day weekend.

**Participant 19:** I hear you. So I actually used to work for an organization years ago. We used to have a duvet day. And what that was, and I actually, that was such a brilliant idea. But it was once some it was. It was we were. It was twice. Once a month. We had a duvet day. So like you just said now, but then you choose one day that you just going to do nothing, you're going to relax, and it makes it a four day week. Exactly that. And that incentive made people work harder. Because it was sort of incentivizing them to say you get, you'll get that one day of rest. You know, if you push hard.

**DN:** I know that makes sense. They should bring that back.

**Participant 19:** You called it? I called it a duvet day. I actually loved that.

**DN:** And it is quite an incentive, but I think. that is all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything else that you think of? You anything you want to add in that you may think I did not ask you or that you might have forgotten while you were answering the questions. Anything you feel that you want to add in at this moment.

**Participant 19:** No, no, I don't. I do not. I do not. Nothing comes to mind now that. I the only thing that I can think of is like I would really love to know what senior managers, you know, like CEO's and managers that report to what they take is on their staff working from home like half day or half day or four-day week or three-day week. Do they see that certain people are being more productive when working from home. But I guess you cannot answer that. But that is really something. I am interested to know, you know, it would be nice to, yes.

## 8.20 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 21:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Programme Manager, Education - Participant 21**

**Date and time: 29 October 2022 14h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** So I am going to start with some easy questions your age.

**Participant 21:** 41

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 21:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 21:** Yes.

**DN:** And do they live at home with you?

**Participant 21:** Yes.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 21:** Banking.

**DN:** What is the function? Or title of your job in this industry.

**Participant 21:** So finance is the department.

**DN:** The function.

**Participant 21:** Function is financed, but it is, uh, a finance procurement.

**DN:** And then, uh, at what level would you say you are within the organization, junior, middle senior?

**Participant 21:** Middle.

**DN:** And you are at the size of your organization.

**Participant 21:** 29,000 employees.

**DN:** We're going to say large. Did you work from home, pre covid.

**Participant 21:** Yes.

**DN:** How often did you work from home?

**Participant 21:** Once a week.

**DN:** And now, do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 21:** It is a hybrid. Two days in the office and three days at home.

**DN:** And when you work at home, do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 21:** A dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And within this dedicated workspace, what exactly do you have it equipped with?

**Participant 21:** a desk. A work chair. a screen? A keyboard? An additional camera.

**DN:** Do you have a Wi-Fi? Your own personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 21:** Yes, fibre.

**DN:** And then do you also get a work 3G?

**Participant 21:** No.

**DN:** Do you have like an inverter or a generator?

**Participant 21:** Yes, and inverter.

**DN:** And what are your current working hours when working from home and then working from the office? So if you had to work a full day at the office for some reason, what hours would you work when in the office and then what hours would you work when you know, working from home if you have to work a full day from home?

**Participant 21:** Working from the office is 08:00 – 16:00 and working from home is 07:30 to 17:00/17:30

**DN:** What type of schedule do you keep at home? Or do you keep a schedule when you work from home?

**Participant 21:** Yes, I do keep a schedule when I work from home, shower and ready for work at 7:30am, to catch up on emails before the meetings start, Log off by the latest 17:30. I have no structured lunch breaks, snack breaks and take these when there is free time.

**DN:** And then when you work from home, are you usually alone when you work from home?

**Participant 21:** no. My husband's normally at home.

**DN:** So he does he share your dedicated workspace with you, or does he have his own?

**Participant 21:** He has his own. No.

**DN:** So there are no challenges with disruptions.

**Participant 21:** Nothing.

**DN:** So from the time we started working from home during COVID. How do you think you have changed the way you work when working from home?

**Participant 21:** Look, I think it was an adjustment initially because you went from working. I mean, you're working at home for five days, so you had to find your feet. But I think

initially the adjustment was not there. So I was working more hours at home than I was in the office.

**DN:** And now?

**Participant 21:** Thought, look, I think I work. I still work more hours at home than I do in the office. And I guess because the access is easy, your laptop's it. It sort of always you always on in inverted commas. And I don't think the organization has fully adjusted as well, so you still get meetings, you know, nobody's taking into account driving time and what have you. You still get meetings at 5:00 o'clock and what have you. So it is it. It needs to be an organizational shift.

**DN:** How does working from home how do you think it is influenced your productivity?

**Participant 21:** It is increased my productivity.

**DN:** Meaning you get more done or you work more hours.

**Participant 21:** I get more done and I work more hours.

**DN:** So when you in the office, what type of tasks do you complete compared to when you're working at home?

**Participant 21:** I think when we at the office it's, you know, a lot of the stuff that I do is around like social and you know, collaborating with my colleagues. which sort of does not give me the time to actually, you know, produce or, you know, an output. So the time at the office is for collaboration. And then? And socials. I do not think we must take away the social aspect as well. And then I find myself working harder at home on the days that I am not in the office than when I am in the office.

**DN:** And that is just doing like reports or is it like just routine tasks that you need to complete for the day?

**Participant 21:** So it is multiple things. It's reports, it's RFP's, it's contracts, you know all of that. And you can put it down to routine tasks, yeah.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 21:** And none.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working at the office?

**Participant 21:** Noise levels. Coffee chats. The collaboration, but that's part of the job, I suppose. And just let the time you know. Uh, driving time and all of that, you know is encompassed in in that whereas at home you can shower and start working.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective for you and why?

**Participant 21:** Home. I think, uh, there is less just, there is less disruption more focus. in terms of completing tasks and agreed objectives.

**DN:** What type? What do you see as benefits when working from home?

**Participant 21:** But it is increased productivity. I guess it is less chitchat and more focus in terms of actually doing the tasks. It is. It is also just it is convenient. You do not have to drive out to a workplace. So you know, home becomes the work environment, so there's no driving time associated with getting to the office. And I think the. Work life. Sort of balance and able. You know, being able to do more for the family as well, like picking up kids, etcetera, which is something that I could not do before.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 21:** Collaboration. working together in teams. Any in the well, you know, individual perspective versus peer perspective. Instead of calling somebody on MS Teams, you can, you know, literally walk up and talk to them. So the social aspect as well. I think that that collaboration is the big one for me, which is, which is what I said as point #1.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home? Or do you have a struggle when you walk from home?

**Participant 21:** No, because I mean we've got the inverter and everything. So even if there's like downtime and you know Eskom downtime and all of that load shedding, I'm not affected, so you know. And I have equipped myself so. I would say none.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 21:** Noise levels.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before you started working from home and now? So pre COVID too now.

**Participant 21:** So I would say at the office when I was, you know, fully office based, it was probably at like, you know I would say 70%, sixty, 70% productivity. And in terms of and that's because you know coffee chats, distractions, whatever you know and at home I can tell you it's up to like I would say between. 90 to 95%.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 21:** Very satisfied.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 21:** it is a blend of both. I realized that I cannot. You know, we as human beings, we're not meant to be alone. I mean, we are social beings, so I like the balance in terms of

going to the office and chatting with colleagues. And, you know, having that collaboration and the coffee chats, etcetera, and then, you know, also being able to work from home. So I could not the hybrid model works best for me because I could not be that person that solely works from home or completely goes to the office. The hybrid works best for me.

**DN:** Going forward, if somebody asked you to change your working habits to what you would like, what homework from home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 21:** So I think I would keep the same two days in the office in three days at home. It works well for me, and you know, I also get the people aspect in as well which I really enjoy as well.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have at this stage. Is there anything that you think, or you forgot to mention that you would like to add in that you think might be pertinent to the study?

**Participant 21:** I just think that leadership needs to be flexible in, in, in terms of a hybrid model. It cannot, you know it. It is. It also doesn't make sense to have a hybrid model where you're calling people to the office for defined times. You know, I think that they that they must be flexibility in terms of the hybrid model. I think the other thing that's important for me. is there is like in large organizations like Standard Bank? There needs to be sort of one message you know, even though these things are leader lead, there needs to be sort of 1 consistent message. From the bank in terms of how they intend? doing the sort of. Whether it is a hybrid model or you know where it is, and I think that's really my comments. I think my last point is that, sorry, just one more thing I need to add is that whilst like you know, people like me are equipped with the technology to be able to continue working from home, others might not be. So if you look at load shedding and all of that, it has had a quite a big impact in terms of people who. is part of a hybrid model? You know, and, but they are not able to fulfil that based on not having the tools or the equipment to be able to work from home. So I think that's the that's my parting comment because not I think majority of the workforce are on the other side were. They probably need to go to the office when it is loadshedding and things like that. So it's about how do you also equip, you know, if you if you are having this hybrid model, how do you equip stuff so that they are able to work from home? Don't need to go into the office and you know coffee shops or whatever you. So I think that's my parting comment because not everyone has the same backup system as myself.

## 8.21 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 22:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Learning and Development Consultant, Financial - Participant 22**

**Date and time: 14 October 2022 09h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 22:** I am 44 years old.

**DN:** What gender are you?

**Participant 22:** Male.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 22:** yes.

**DN:** And do they live with you?

**Participant 22:** Nope.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 22:** Financial banking industry.

**DN:** What is your function within the organization?

**Participant 22:** I am a learning and development consultant.

**DN:** What level would you say you are within the organization junior middle or senior?

**Participant 22:** junior management.

**DN:** What is the size of your organization?

**Participant 22:** Large.

**DN:** Before COVID did you work from home?

**Participant 22:** No, I was office based.

**DN:** Not even in cases of emergencies or anything like that.

**Participant 22:** No.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 22:** I currently work most of my time from home, but in office when required.

**DN:** And how often is that in a week.

**Participant 22:** I will see maybe once a month.

**DN:** When you work from home. Do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace at home?

**Participant 22:** I have a dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is that workspace equipped with?

**Participant 22:** it's equipped with the my electrical points for my computer my second screen. It is equipped with my first aid equipment. My firefighter my fire extinguisher and drawers for my notebooks.

**DN:** So do you have like a you said you have a second screen? Do you have a Wi-Fi your own personal Wi-Fi or do you have company 3G?

**Participant 22:** I have my own personal Wi-Fi.

**DN:** And you do not have company personal three company 3G.

**Participant 22:** No.

**DN:** And do you have like an inverter or generator at home?

**Participant 22:** No.

**DN:** What hours do you work from home and when you in the office? What hours do you work when you in the office?

**Participant 22:** So when at home probably online at about 7:30 and I log off around about 5:30 to 6:00 and when in the office. I am in the office by 7:30 and I tried to leave at about 3:45.

**DN:** And then you do not log on when you go home.

**Participant 22:** No.

**DN:** Do you keep a schedule? When you work from home.

**Participant 22:** Yes, I do keep a schedule.

**DN:** Can you can you tell me a little bit more about your schedule?

**Participant 22:** So basically my schedule evolves around. what tasks were done for the day and what hours I worked for the day so that it helps me when the time comes to apply for half a day leave here and there in terms of in lieu of overtime worked.

**DN:** so you so all that overtime you work, you get. You get time off or you take time off.

**Participant 22:** I do try to take time off, but it's not always the case. It's not always the case so like if I need a half a day or a day. They then uh just refer back to my schedule and see if I if I do have an availability of overtime. Hours then I chat to my manager, and I take the take that as in lieu of overtime leave.

**DN:** Do you log your hours when you work with your manager?

**Participant 22:** Not electronically, but I do keep a record of that.

**DN:** you actually keep a schedule in terms of how you work, and what you and what times you work, so that you can actually balance your life if I can say.

**Participant 22:** That's correct and my.

**DN:** Is that correct my understanding?

**Participant 22:** That's correct and my manager is also aware of the hours worked when we have our check in meetings.

**DN:** And then when you work from home are you usually alone.

**Participant 22:** Yes, I am.

**DN:** you do not share your environment with anybody.

**Participant 22:** No.

**DN:** So from the time we started working from home. Have you changed the way you work, and if yes? How have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 22:** I have not really changed the way I work. Because I mean, it's the same work that's coming in from time but it's just that the hours have become longer. Working from home.

**DN:** So you haven't done anything with regards to how you work, but you you've noticed your hours have gotten longer.

**Participant 22:** Yeah, and the only thing that I have changed is the locations at my place of residence so. change the environment that that I'm working in like I move from one room to the and set up my workspace in the lounge.

**DN:** Do you think working from home has it influences your productivity?

**Participant 22:** Yes, it does uh because as I said working from home actually has longer hours and you expected to deliver more and actually you having that quiet time and not having somebody stop at the desk and take up your time. actually increases productivity in a way But the negative of it is that you don't have a resource so that like when at the office. We were used to, if I had a query or I needed the assistance of somebody. I could barely walk over to them and seek that assistance whereas now I would need to, I cannot get hold of them via telephone. So I would need to set up a meeting with them. So it just has become more meetings than anything else.

**DN:** when you work from home. What type of task would you compete compared to the office when you work at the office with the tasks be different? Would it be the same.

**Participant 22:** The tasks pretty much the same and it's just that we have now taken on additional tasks working from home. Due to the changes in the business environment. tasks, pretty much remained the same.

**DN:** but your workload is increased.

**Participant 22:** Has increased correct

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 22:** One of the main load shedding power interruptions. Another is the neighbours uh mowing the lawn or the garden services on site and constructions that may be taking place. Nearby.

**DN:** and how is this different to the distractions you experience within the office?

**Participant 22:** in the office the only distraction that you we could uh was uh when somebody walks up to you and distract you when you are working. But other in terms of renovations and power outages and things like that. That was not really experienced at the office.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 22:** I would say working from home is A is a more and more effective environment in terms of deliverables because you have that peace and quiet and that less disturbance to actually deliver on your stuff for. At a quicker turn around and with less disturbances and you're focused time is actually much more when working from home on a specific project.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 22:** One of the benefits being that. Use you save on lunch money. And not having to go to the canteen or to the shops in the area to get lunch. you freely have your kitchen available to source your own food. Secondly is that you are saving on your fuel bill, which also. It helps you reduce your stress your anger levels when while striving to the office because when driving to the office. You spend an hour stuck in traffic load shedding arrogant drivers. Those kinds of things that can add can that can add to the negativity of your day and put you in a bad mood. So one of the things is being at home is that it's good that you don't have to deal with that.

**DN:** And what is the benefits you see is working in the office.

**Participant 22:** The benefits uh of working in the office is that your resources in terms of people are readily available and close to get the required outcome that you need as I said earlier you can just practically walk up to them and seek advice gain knowledge or get the required outcome that you need the other benefit is that? You know. You don't have any interruptions in terms of electrical or power outages or those kind of things. That was one of those are the benefits for me of being in the office.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when you work from home.

**Participant 22:** My biggest problem working from home would be. The. Current outages and also the work demand. In terms of timeline deliverables, they actually seem to get shorter than when you in the office. So the turnaround times or the demand on work actually becomes shorter when you in the way when you at home rather than when you in the office.

**DN:** Your biggest struggle when working from the office.

**Participant 22:** Traffic. having to worry about what time I am when I'm going to reach work on time and. What time am I going to leave to avoid the traffic? And how much can I get done in that day. That I mean, how much can I get done in the time that I'm going to reach the office and the time that I'm going to leave the office.

**DN:** So what do you think your productivity was like before you started working from home and versus your productivity now?

**Participant 22:** I would say productivity in the office was 100% because that is what always aim to achieve but I feel that working from home, we actually deliver on 110%. Due to the longer hours, the more greater workloads and things like that which has. encouraged us or should I say put us in the position to actually deliver more.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement.

**Participant 22:** I am very satisfied. As I mentioned that. You know you, you deliver and then you also have the? Yes, what can I say? The relief of not having to drive to the office. And sitting the traffic and be annoyed by the time you get to work. So, in my line of work it works well for me.

**DN:** What work from home arrangement, would you prefer.

**Participant 22:** So my work from home arrangements I would prefer full time. To be working from home full time and. Only if there is a need or for special projects that need me in the office then I will be there.

**DN:** So exactly what you have at the moment.

**Participant 22:** Correct.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have for you. Is there anything that you would like to add that you think I haven't covered, or you forgot to mention? Or you think might be pertinent to the study.

**Participant 22:** Nothing from my side, I'm pretty covered up or summed up everything that has been asked so nothing really from my side. Thank you.

## 8.22 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 23:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Skills Development, Financial - Participant 23**

**Date and time: 14 October 2022 14h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 23:** 40.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 23:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependent?

**Participant 23:** Yes, two.

**DN:** And do they live with you?

**Participant 23:** Yes.

**DN:** What industry are you do you work in?

**Participant 23:** Banking sector.

**DN:** The what function within this industry are you at.

**Participant 23:** Skills development.

**DN:** And what level would you say you're at junior middle or senior?

**Participant 23:** Middle.

**DN:** And the size of your organization medium small medium large.

**Participant 23:** Large.

**DN:** did you work from home before COVID?

**Participant 23:** No, I did not.

**DN:** Not even in cases of emergencies.

**Participant 23:** No.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or the office?

**Participant 23:** from home.

**DN:** And do you go into the office anytime?

**Participant 23:** Yes, once a month to have team meetings yes.

**DN:** Do you have a? When do you work from home? Do you have a Home Office or do you have a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 23:** Yes, I've got a dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is your dedicated workspace equipped with?

**Participant 23:** It's just basically a desk and a chair.

**DN:** So you do not have a screen or an extra screen or.

**Participant 23:** Yes, I do have an extra screen in case I need it, but most of the time I do not use it. I use it when necessary. Yes.

**DN:** and do you use see a 3G from work or do you have personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 23:** It's the 3G from work.

**DN:** and do you have an integrated not an integrator sorry? What's that thing they use for load shedding sorry. I completely forgot the word do you have a generator or a?

**Participant 23:** No or inverter no.

**DN:** Yes that's the word thank you Lydia.

**Participant 23:** You better no it's fine. No none of those yes.

**DN:** And you do not have anything else provided to you by the office.

**Participant 23:** no except for a can, we say aha? What a first aid kit together with an extinguisher?

**DN:** What are you currently working hours when you work from home?

**Participant 23:** They are longer, we started eight and we finish at 5, depending on what we need to complete times vary it could be 6 / 7 / 8. Up until 9:00 o'clock depending on what his. you know, we need to kind of uh cover in terms of deadlines.

**DN:** And how often do you work late?

**Participant 23:** so it would depend but recently I've been working late if I could say in the month of September. On the rather of the past two months. I'm not going to count October in the past two months. And probably in in a month I have been working plus minus about five or six times. So you could say one or two days in a week.

**DN:** and then we what working hours do you work when you work from the office?

**Participant 23:** So we would start at 7:00. I'll be at 7 at 7 at work and would leave around about 3:30 four o'clock.

**DN:** And then when you get home do you do you log on?

**Participant 23:** No, but then we did not have the 3G. kind of facility you know for us.

**DN:** and those days that you go into the office now. Do you log on after work?

**Participant 23:** Yes when we do get us so if we leave work around about 3. I saw when I get home around about 5:00 or 6:00 o'clock. Logon probably an hour or so and then yeah.

**DN:** And still working from 7 till three at the office and then coming home and.

**Participant 23:** Yes.

**DN:** when you work from home. Do you keep a schedule?

**Participant 23:** I tried to keep a schedule. But with my you know with family and kids. it's kind of it's a little bit difficult. But there is a schedule that is, you know in place in terms of the work that needs to be covered.

**DN:** So can you run me through your schedule just like a general generalized day?

**Participant 23:** OK, so it is basically. First things switch on when you switch on around about 7:45 or 7:30. It's basically looking at the meetings that you have for the day and working around those meetings with the work that you have then it's combating the emails that you received you know the day prior or you know the day before. Then it will most probably be a check in with the ladies. The team rather irrespective whether we have one that is scheduled that is in our Diaries, you still check in with the ladies. then it's basically you know looking through the SharePoint site in terms of the work that we need to still let's say quality assure for bankseta. It is speaking to being a skills development consultant. I'm continuously consulting with business and because we've got deadlines that they need to meet in giving us the information that we need to report to Bankseta. It's looking at what we call the master list that we have in that we have in the team. The master list consists of all the programs that are running in the bank whether it be Bankseta funded or not, but we but we I mainly look at the ones that are funded because we looking at programs that are coming to an end. So, therefore, we need to submit reports before that, that you know the due date of the program coming to an end. It's basically catching up also on uh with the skills development administrator and the consultant on what they are busy with so that I can if I need to submit reports or speak to business that I'm able to have a clear view of whatever. We are busy with its speaking to the skills development facilitator. This is the This is on a daily basis, we always. Catching up with each other because one can be busy with something and literally that you could be waiting for that information in order to submit but we are basically the liaison between business and Bankseta. And but yes, it is a lot of work because as much as you have the different work or the different reports and the different programs

that have been funded. It is different categories. You have to be aware of the timelines that Bankseta has your timelines and businesses timelines. Yes, it is basically that. And then yes.

**DN:** so basically, it's you work, according to what you and how it's due and make sure that it's you know done in time OK.

**Participant 23:** Yes, yes, yes because if we don't do that. We lose out on a lot of funds that business, or the bank could have benefit for benefited 2 or four other programs and other staff members in rescaling upskilling them.

**DN:** and then when you work from home are you usually alone.

**Participant 23:** Sometimes I am alone, sometimes I'm not. Depending on how my little one is but most of the time I try to be alone, and You know be closed off in in the in the sitting room and just you know continue with my work? Yes.

**DN:** and you don't you don't share your working environment with anyone else besides your kids.

**Participant 23:** no. Not at all.

**DN:** so from the time we have been working. From home. Have you changed the way you work? And if yes, how have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 23:** Definitely the Times before. We used to start at. Around about 6:30 or 7:30, depending between the Times of 6:30 and 7:30. The Times have changed and being a 6:30 or 7:30, you would literally count the 8 hours that you are in. And most probably not even take lunch. Because by then we weren't sure whether we were allowed to kind of take lunch. And then just pushed yourself in terms of you know, making sure that everything is done for that specific day. But nowadays we it's a thing of we started off at 7:45 or you know at 8:00 o'clock. You make sure that you take your one-hour lunch because it is part and parcel of the contract of the agreement that you have with the with the bank or your manager and literally would you know if you need to knock off at 5 you knock off at 5:00 if not. We would inform your manager that you need to work. You know longer hours because you're busy with a specific product project that you know that needs to be supported but yeah, it's definitely the working hours. what else has changed. Definitely in terms of the seating plan. You know before we used to sit in our rooms. You know in our in our bedrooms. or in our comfort zones. But then that's not working in terms of the you're back. You know, so you would set in a place that is comfortable convenient. Yet it's proper because you've got a desk and a table. I mean or rather a table. A desk and a chair to kind of you know a sit on as

opposed to a bed. That is not really conducive for your body if anything, so yeah, it's basically those two things yeah. that have changed.

**DN:** And how do you think working from home is influenced your productivity?

**Participant 23:** It has influence my productive in a good way because first of all you learn to. Be. You learn to be responsible. There is a whole lot of. A trust that is bold between the teams or that has been that we would like to have both between the teams to say that. You know we trust that. As much as we can't see you, but you are, they introducing in working as you know the work or you know, submitting whatever you need to be to have submitted so. There is a whole lot of trust benefits that come with it. also trusting yourself that you can do you know what is necessary and not? You know a chow, the banks time or use the banks facilities. You know take them for granted, and stuff, so it's that it's definitely that it has in it has. Because when we were in the office. I mean, you know your manager sitting right at the back of you or in front of you wherever and they are seeing you ins and your outs, but now it's the thing I want to say that you know what? Yes, you're not here, but trust me that I can still do the work trust me that I can still put in the hours trust me that when I say that I'm taking my lunch break. I'm taking my lunch break if I need to run an errand trust me enough to say that I am saying that I'm running an errand. I'm going for that hour and coming back within you know the hour, and when I'm saying that we having a load shedding issue and the signal has dropped trust me enough that after electricity has come back, I will cover those hours that I've missed. And catching up the work so yeah, it has increased productivity will.

**DN:** What type of task do you complete while working from home compared to the type of task you would complete in the office so would they be the same would they be different.

**Participant 23:** Uh most definitely I'm thinking uh practical. One is that you're not running from one meeting to the next so you're not standing up from your desk and going to a DGF or you know a meeting room. You literally are at your table. In front of your laptop and you literally moving from one teams meeting to the next. I think that is the one thing that has changed. but if it is a task. Now it's a thing of we no longer going to the shops to go and buy coffee. A coffee and milk and sugar is bought within your grocery listing so therefore, you just get it. In the you know of your home in in in in you, you get it from home as opposed to going out there to buy coffee and stuff, so at work. You would stand up to go and buy coffee if you are one of those people that buys coffee or you would go to the you know

you'd go to the to the kitchen and get yourself a grab yourself a cup of coffee, so it's those things. I think that's the yeah, those are the only two kind of tasks that I'm. I'm thinking of uh webinars if you invited to one of the Nedbank webinars that they have conferences that they have it's no longer think of getting up from your desk and spending two or three hours at the at the auditorium. You literally are sitting at your desk and you there's a section that is taking place on teams and yeah, probably a Roadshow. It is taking is taking place. You are watching in the comfort of your laptop and in your own in your own space if anything, yes. Now, those are kind of things that I can think of literally. But with our job, yeah that's the yeah, Yes Bankseta. So before everything before COVID happened and. All our documents were paper, or paper based all our learnership agreements. I will skills agreements all these documents that all our learner signed used to be paper based and if business wanted to start a program or you know they applied for funding. irrespective whether they did apply for funding any program that was a learnership that was registered and everything we would need to submit all these documents to Bankseta. So because we were paper based we were still doing the paper base work. so we would be the people that would get all these documents and we would physically go and take these documents to bankseta drop them off have them signed a receipt of acknowledgement to say that they received the these. These documents nowadays it is a thing of. We do what is it? We we've gone digital, so all our documents are sitting on a SharePoint site. Learners complete their documents, and they sign they do digital signatures and complete all the information digitally and then we get the information that information is QA'd or checked by us and then we submit to bankseta through an external SharePoint site and how we acknowledge that this information has been delivered is you send an e-mail. Give them a link and give them the pathways as to where these documents are sitting and how to get them off the system and that system would literally be an information system, where they're not allowed to upload. It is just basically downloading the information. Then they would let us know that they've got the information. So yeah, that's another thing that would have changed.

**DN:** And in terms of when you work from home. What type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 23:** So yeah, we have you have a lot of distractions so my one main distraction? Is my little one who hasn't gone to cresh yet, which I am going to be putting into next year. And my second is the distraction would be my mom. Who listens to the radio sometimes it's

got the radio playing you know quite you know the volume up so you need to tell her that you know in a meeting so please play the music down or whatever, she's listening to. in 3rd the other distraction is most probably a dog barking because there's someone at the gate so you'd have to go and see who's at the gate. And the main the other fourth distraction. I think it's a huge distraction for a lot of us, especially you know you know you know with everything that's happening in the world, especially in South Africa is load, shedding you could be busy with a document that is sitting on. On the on the server. Now, with mine the extremities that irrespective would have charged my laptop to whatever percentage. Once the electricity goes the signal drops. I'm next to a tower, so once it goes. It literally drops the signal and whatever document that you were busy on it's it closes because there's no signal for you to get the information on the server so if you have not saved that information. And you probably spend like an hour putting that information together. Chances are if there's no autosave you won't get the information. But luckily with us. There is a bit of a backup that happens, so the information is saved. And I think that is, yeah, that has taught us to always save. The information doesn't matter how small you've started always save so that you get the information back when they electricity goes on as much as also there's a schedule. That is comma has got a schedule with us, they don't keep the schedule. They can switch off the electricity right now. If they want as much as they can say that they switched off at four, they can switch off right now. So yeah, that's the other big one.

**DN:** And then what is the biggest distraction you have when working from the office.

**Participant 23:** The biggest distraction working from the office is that when you haven't seen people. After we all were you know COVID hit us and now we all were working from home. We were forced to kind of. Work alone a little bit in silos, but you know if you if you're an introvert. Or rather an extrovert than young it would be a challenge because if you're a People's person you see someone that you haven't seen in a while. That is a distraction that hello becomes a how's everything? How are the kids? How is the family? Yes. So instead of literally. Speaking for five seconds. Or 10 seconds. You still you end up speaking for 10 minutes, 15 minutes. Let's go and grab coffee, so that is a big distraction when at the office. You have not seen the building in a while, you see the different changes like. Maybe let me just walk around and stuff, I think that's also another distraction. But I think seeing people that you haven't seen in a while and it's not a bad thing. It is just that. You know you want to catch up with the people that you used to see on a regular basis and

now all of a sudden after two years. You know that happened and then now you are meeting up against so that's a huge distraction actually yeah.

**DN:** which environment do you find more? Effective and why. Working from home or working from the office.

**Participant 23:** So before we used to say working from when we were working at the office. We used to say cannot. We all work from home and then covid hit us, and you were like cannot. We all work back at the office so we don't know what is what but what I? I think. You, your mind. And everything that you are doing and the work that you're doing, you kind of gives used to saying that you know what, if you if it's OK if you're a person that adapts easily in any atmosphere or any situation or any environment. Then it is easier. It is easier to adapt from when you're working from the office or when you're working from home. But I kind of as much as it was, it was a bit of a problem in the beginning, but after that. I became used to it, I adapted so I feel that working from home. Has got me to do a lot of things more. Because of the time, I guess. It does get a little bit tiring at times where you are knocking off at late. You are knocking off late but. Even if you are knocking off late there is something that you are literally are saying. Yes, I have done this and if I was in office. I would not have done this probably the next day or the next week or the next month, depending on the hours that you have in the office. But I feel that when I'm at home. I'm more productive because I'm able to log on anytime anywhere. And just continue. All you know quickly do something when you at the office and you didn't have 3G and you didn't have a laptop you know they you literally have to wait. And to uh or rather if you had a laptop, but you didn't have 3G literally have to wait for the next weekend, and next week in order to like Oh my God, that thing that I didn't do I didn't submit that report. So when you have a laptop now and you've got 3G now. The thing of OK. Let me submit it quickly because there's still time you know as much as it's there's also that thing that you need to balance the two between work life and home life. It does happen that your work life does kind of push its way into your home life. It's up to a person and how they kind of handle all of that imbalance all of that, but I feel that it's much more. I am more productive. I am able to think on my feet if I do want to run a? A solution or something to my boss I am more than welcome to do so, so but I get I get more productive. When I am working by myself. I have learned to do that and working from home. It's been great for me, it really has.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 23:** I get to think out-of-the-box a bit. I do not know how many. situations where I've been pressed to put to literally think out-of-the-box. I've had a lot of situations, what I've literally had to say you know what? I'm not going to rely on Antoinette to make a decision. I'm going to make a decision based on the information that I have. And. Probably send her an e-mail or WhatsApp to say this is what I've done in form of what I've done but also make a right decision for the team or for the bank because you know with our job. It literally is that you need to think on your feet. The sum is there's some situations where you can't reach out to your manager. You need to trust yourself, so much that whatever you're doing as much as it involves money and I mean, we're talking thousands and thousands of monies 10s and thousands of money that decision. It is going to impact everyone, but it needs to be a positive impact as well. And it needs to be a good it needs to be an 1 decision that you made that you not going to doubt yourself on so I've learned to also do that. I've learned to think on my feet, which is something that I never did. I've learned to kind of resolve issues quicker by thinking on my feet. Because when you in the office. You just like OK, my boss is here, So what do you think of this? Sometimes she is not available. She is in a meeting. You need to make a decision right now right there, so it's that's what it's done for me. I definitely learned to solve most solve more issues and have solutions to those issues. They're going to benefit everyone in the long run.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when working from home? I mean from the office.

**Participant 23:** benefits working from the office. I think because we got stuck. In this whole thing of working from home. With the one benefit OK, yeah, the one benefit is that at work. There's no 3G it literally when you walk into the bank when you walk into the building. You get that whole net call connectivity going. So, your 3G's not used or wasted should I say, and also. if the electricity switches off. There is a generator that kicks in so therefore, you continue in running a meeting in running everything. There is nothing if the signal drops or anything like that. Everything keeps on working. Those are the I think that's those two benefits that I've kind of looked at from a from that perspective to say from the time till now there's only two things that are kind of worked for me, yeah.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from home.

**Participant 23:** What is be my biggest struggle working from home? I cannot switch off. I could be on leave I cannot switch off. If I've taken a four day leave I will only switch off on the third day. When I say switch off I mean mentally. Because I'm so used to having my

laptop open or whatever, but it's very hard for me to switch off. That is the biggest struggle. And it is also that thing that one biggest struggle also is that? When you have so many things that are running concurrently parallel to one another and most of the time the deadlines are kind of upon themselves. You know they really are the next one the next one the next one is. You have that thing that you want to switch off your laptop switch on your laptop at 1:00 o'clock in the morning. To kind of get the information and you know start working my boss. Even has the same thing. So it's literally that that because your laptop is sitting here you can literally switch on anytime any day, no one will question that because it's work related. You know that it is work related. You do not search on your laptop for anything other than work related issues, but it is literally that that I struggle with switching off. Mentally, when going to leave. Or during the weekend, it's you are thinking, Oh, God, I could have sent that. But you trying to show you try to switch off as much as you are busy with the kids you busy with the washing or the whatever chores you might have. You still thinking at the back of your mind that Umm. I could have sent that e-mail I could have done that report. I could have done that so it's literally switching off. And yeah that's the biggest struggle that I think the team has that we that I've noticed the team has. And I am not going to you. I thought that I was, I was the only one but I'm not. I am not the only one.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before and after working from home?

**Participant 23:** Before working from home for the activity was the same in well, not the same as such because you've got certain hours to cover whatever work. And whatever you don't finish with that, you leave for the next day. All you need for the next week, so for the Friday, you literally need leave for the next Monday. But with now working from home. The thing is you push you push so much. You don't have to necessarily take lunch you, but you know that you have to take lunch, but you're like. Let me have a working lunch and then you are working literally every day. You start having a working lunch again. That is another thing that is it. That is a huge thing and you push so much. And by the end of the day. You literally are looking at your emails and you are like, Hmm. This is fantastic because this report. That was due last that was due literally next month. I've actually was able to submit it this month, so there's a lot of reports. Deadlines that I have. Met not even saying that I have met them. I've met them prior to them coming to an to expire because. I've submitted the information if I'm not sure of something I'm able to call whoever and kind of you know a persuade or negotiate for better days or for an extra day or whatever, so it's that

literally. It's that when you at home when you're working from the office and literally your laptop is in is locked in the cupboard. There's no way that you're going to make that call. You can't make that call because you switched it off. You're going to have to wait for the following week. If you have got that person's numbers. Most probably you can negotiate. But if you do not. It is literally. You have left it. It is Friday. It is 3:30. It is 4:00 o'clock. You are heading home. You will see the bank again on Monday, so with yes.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 23:** It works for me; it definitely does work for me. It allows me, I think. Especially if you if you are a mom and a mom, mom to a toddler or you know, or a new new-born baby after just maternity leave and everything. It has allowed me to bond more with my son and it has allowed me to see the growth. You know at times when you at work. Going back and forth to work you miss certain. Moments. In your children's lives, but it has allowed me to do that. With my work. Yeah, I have seen a whole lot of growth in the way that I deliver my work and the way that I section. My work, but it, it has really benefited me great. In in working from home and I to such a point that if we were told to go to back to the office. I think I would have a? I would end up in hospital first before I go back to the office because it is such a huge change as much as you. You, you one is used to. adapting that is also another huge annotation kind of. Cycle and also you know the money that is used in traveling is now kind of. Pushed to another specific point or budget you know, yes, yeah, so it's it would be a huge thing and if you would told tomorrow that we need to go back to the office. It would be a huge thing that definitely, but I love working from home. It really has it has opened up. It has literally in terms of learning new things. It has made me want to learn new things. I mean, I never thought that I'd be able to study but I have and I finished my one qualification, which is great, so it's shown you know it's shown me a lot of things that I could learn yet still be involved in the work that I do. And more involved in the work that I do.

**DN:** So what work from home arrangement would you like would you like it to stay the same would you like it to change?

**Participant 23:** For now can it stay the same until further notice.

**Participant 23:** That's all the questions I have for you and now is there. Anything you'd like to add that you think you haven't touched on or I haven't asked.

**Participant 23:** No. I think everything has been explained you actually made me reflect. Thank you for this because you've made me reflect as much as we, we, we, we think we've got the time to reflect but when a person asks you these questions then. It is a thing of mean ah. Really that's it, you know, so it's you reflect. It is I. I took this part as he's 35 minutes, 36 minutes in reflected and it's great. It is fantastic awesome, wonderful stuff.

## 8.23 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 24:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Sales Head, Financial - Participant 24**

**Date and time: 19 October 2022 13h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** Can you tell me what your age is?

**Participant 24:** So 34.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 24:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 24:** Yes, I do one small child.

**DN:** And do they live with you and because OK? What industry do you work in?

**Participant 24:** financial sector.

**DN:** Or what function are you within this industry.

**Participant 24:** I am a sales head.

**DN:** And what level would you say you are within this industry?

**Participant 24:** Senior Exec.

**DN:** And the size of your organization.

**Participant 24:** More than 10,000.

**DN:** A large organization.

**Participant 24:** Yes, large organization, yes, yes.

**DN:** You have did you work from home pre covid?

**Participant 24:** Pre-covid yes and so what would happen, we FNB started trialling work from home or working remotely. I think roughly I could say 2018 beginning of 2019 before COVID started. We are already piloting working from home. So what would happen is that you would have like, one or two days where you could choose to work from home and not going in the office, so they're tried it with different teams, and I was one of the teams that they tried I was part of the. team that was that they tried it with and then by the time COVID happened. It was just now a matter of just scaling it to the entire FNB because they were

already teams that were piloting. It just but a handful of teams. it was about once a week at the time.

**DN:** and then how often did you work from home?

**Participant 24:** it was about once a week at the time so pre COVID was about once a week.

**DN:** and now do you currently work from the home or the office?

**Participant 24:** Yes, I currently work from home so I'm only two days in the office.

**DN:** when you work from home. Do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 24:** No so I currently use my dining room table. Yes, in my lounge. So no dedicated office no.

**DN:** and then equipment to do your work is to just your laptop and company 3G.

**Participant 24:** Yes, so the company provides 3G but I use it as a backup. I have got fibre in the house. So I just use the 3G as like a backup if like the Wi-Fi is down or if there's load shedding and my router isn't working.

**DN:** and then do you have like an extra screen or anything else that's provided by work?

**Participant 24:** And no, I don't use an extra screen, no so there are those who do have extra screens. But in my role. I do not. I just use the one my just my laptop.

**DN:** and then at home. Do you have an inverter or generator?

**Participant 24:** no, I just have a UPS that usually provide like about when there's Load shedding. I think you can get like 3 to 4 hours of usage out of it when there's Load shedding, yeah, and it's just a plug in my router so if like load, shedding is extended and my battery dies for my laptop. That's because it can only plug in the Wi-Fi router.

**DN:** And what working hours do you work when you work from home and what working hours? Do you work when you work from the office?

**Participant 24:** Work from a home so if I'm in the office. It's usually I get there around like 8:30 to 9:00 and I leave it like 4 when I'm at home. I can start my day anything from like 7:30 in the morning and finish working anything from like 10 or 12 depending on what I need to get done. So it's not standard working hours and I'm working from home. I do tend to work longer when I'm working from home.

**DN:** And do you keep a schedule when you work from home?

**Participant 24:** No, not even close, so the only times I'll take gaps is if like I'm going to go pick up my son from preschool and then I'll sort him out for like for like afternoon snack

dinner and then I'll start working again? So that's usually I'll start working again around like 8, so when he's sleeping.

**DN:** when you work from home are you usually alone.

**Participant 24:** Yes, I'm usually alone, yeah, yeah.

**DN:** And then when you pick up your son.

**Participant 24:** Then then I have company So what I'll usually do is that I'll pick him up around 4:00. I'll get him settled like with an afternoon snack that usually takes me. About half an hour to do and then if I've got meetings. After that, maybe until five. I'll go back and do what I need to do. But if for example, I don't have anything urgent. I will get him settled and spend time with him. Then I'll start working around like 7:30 again once, he's sleeping.

**DN:** you keep that separate as such.

**Participant 24:** Yes, I try yeah, I try to keep it separate like literally only when there's like something urgent will I pick him up and then get him settled and then go back to work. If I don't have anything urgent or something that needs to be like submitted by 5:00 o'clock or by 6:00 o'clock or something I will literally just stop working spend time with him give him all my devoted attention until it's bed time. They're not get back into then I'll get back into working or doing what I need to do.

**DN:** And from the time you've started working from home. Have you changed the way you work and if yes? What have you changed?

**Participant 24:** So yes, I have changed in the way I work I work a whole lot more now that I work from home. You get flexibility of choosing your hours. I think that's the one thing I appreciate is that there's more flexibility. I sort of choose the times that I work, and I get more done. So I get to pick like maybe on days. I am not going to the gym. I start my day significantly earlier and that gives me just quiet time to do what I need to do without the travel of having to get to the office and in other ways, it is changed the way I work. I think not necessarily me myself changing, it is my teams or the teams that I work with in the business that have changed the way we work in terms of when meetings start. I think this is something that we had to address cause you had individuals sitting up meetings as early as 7:00 o'clock in the morning or 7:30 because there's no travel time right to the office so everybody thinks that you're readily available. So those are the things a lot of us had to suggest quite early to mention that look some of us have kids. That time before 8:30 it's us getting our children ready for school doing drop offs or going to the gym. So we can't really

be available that early and also people will set up meetings at like 5 till 6:00 o'clock and be like sorry that was the only time I could find in your diary and you're like what do you mean, that's after working hours it has to wait. I think I've enjoyed the flexibility because I can work early or if I feel like you know what my brain is a little tired, I can take a break and work until late. But the things that have been uncomfortable for me from a working perspective is individuals who start meetings like super early or random to like super late.

**DN:** And how does working from home influence your productivity?

**Participant 24:** So I think a more productive at home when I need to get stuff done so. I what I realized like on the two days that I am going to the office. It is strictly for my team. I don't get a lot done on those two days that are going to the office because it's usually meetings or me spending time with my team because they've got stuff that they need to ask for stuff that they need guidance on so if I really want to get stuff done. It works better for me to be at home because then it's quiet time I can block out my calendar. I can sit and work I can block out focus time in between meetings to work on my admin in the office is a bit difficult because, like my team will walk up to me and ask me things or something will come up so I think it's made me more productive. When I'm when I'm at home like home is been more productive and because I get to define my sort of work schedule. If I choose today. I am not going to the gym. I drop off my son. I come back, I start my day. as early as half seven by the time meeting starts around nine. I've knocked out like an hour, an hour and a half of emails and then I get some time to do that again. Maybe later in the afternoon. If I feel like you know what. I don't want to have emails running in until tomorrow, I then. And can set up time in the evening to work through my e-mail. So it has made me more productive, but also it's hard because there's no like that separation of work ends and your personal time begins cause. It's all just a bit of a mishmash and you just sort of decide for yourself, how you want to split up your time.

**DN:** What type of task do you complete while working from home and what type of task would you complete in the office?

**Participant 24:** The tasks that I complete at home. It is usually my presentations and reports. Those are usually preferred to complete at home because that definitely needs quiet time to go through the data to compile the information that sort of stuff I prefer to do at home because it's just quiet time I can block out my diary and have to worry about somebody walking up to me to ask me something and then I am suddenly distracted and I can't finish

that I'm doing stuff that I prefer to do in the office is my one on ones with my team, so all of those I leave for days, I've got weekly one on ones. With my team and individuals in my team and I leave those specifically for Tuesdays and Wednesdays when I'm in the office where we're all in the office because it gives me time to talk to them individually and then also it gives me time for us as a team to engage or like burning issues or things that have come up in the last couple of days where we all have been working remotely. So all my team one on ones are always at the office and me, and then the other meetings. It is a give and take right depending on what meeting is set up where and when. I will either join it virtually if I'm at home or in the office. But all my reporting and performance and reports and updates. I prefer to do that at home.

**DN:** And what type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 24:** Oh my gosh, load shedding biggest distraction biggest challenge and the gardening. The gardening, so it's the gardening services in that is a distraction because sometimes like you hear the noise like so close and you have to go. Try and find a quiet corner somewhere and to get some quiet time and other distractions is when I pick up my son from preschool and if he wants attention and I need to work that also does create some of it is a bit of a distraction also in maybe he's off sick. And I don't send him to school because what I've realized is that before when I used to. When you used to be in the office full time so like if my son got sick. I take the day off right and you're not working when you're at home, but now with working from home. You just keep your son at home. You keep I keep my child at home and then maybe we will step out for like half an hour to go to the pharmacy or You'll go to the doctor and then when we're back. I try and carry on with my days per normal and not change the things that I need to get done, or change my schedule because it's at home, so that also does. Creates a bit of a distraction.

**DN:** And how different is this from the distractions you have in the office.

**Participant 24:** Your friends in the sense it is distraction right. It is in the sense, I think. I suppose there is no garden service in the office. You don't have to worry about that. Load shedding is solved for because you have generators that come on, but the distractions are different in the sense that or similar in the sense that when I'm in the office. There's more people who want to talk. There are more engagements with individuals. There's more people want to come up to you and ask you things like. Hey, I didn't get a chance to pop. A message or set up a team session with you, but I'm catching you real quick and we have, like a quick

5 / 10 minute title and that pulls you away from what you're doing again similarly with my team. I got sessions that I set up with them, but things happened during the day and then maybe they need to come. Talk to me, so they will ask please. Can you have a look at this please? Can you run through this report together? Can you look at this data together then I have to stop what I'm doing and help them with whatever that they need to do so it's distractions just somewhat different, but they keep you away from the stuff that you wanted to do, I had planned to do for the day.

**DN:** And which environment do you find more effective than why? Working from home or

**Participant 24:** So I both find I find them both productive for very different reasons right. If I need to engage with my team, I'm or have one on ones in my team office 100% because I don't like doing it over teams cause then I have to encourage my teams have please switch on your camera and or they also have distractions on their side network is giving them an issue or connectivity is an issue and we can't get the conversation going. But in the office. It is nice. We can sit across from each other. We can go through things, and we don't have to try and share things on the screen on teams, so that we can go through things I can write things down. We can I can talk them through things in a practical manner, so in terms of engaging with my team, the office works out of 100% better for that because I get to see the expressions on their face. If I ask you. Hey, are you OK and you say yeah? I'm fine but your facial expression or your body language is saying something completely different I can pick that up when I'm in a personal setting with you in the office. I am home. I find it productive for all the individual stuff that I need to do on myself like reporting admin. Performance tracking going through reports the doing feedback on some very detailed stuff. The home works out, so much better for that because then I can literally block out time in my diary. I can appear as away on teams and nobody will know the difference because even if I'm sitting at my desk. I can literally put on my do not disturb and I do not have to answer a team's call because I am busy completing what I need to do without disruption, so all my individual stuff that is on me to complete. Home is one hundred times better for that.

**DN:** what do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 24:** Benefit when I work from home. I can start my day earlier and ended later on the simple basis, that I don't have to sit in traffic alright. I do not have to sit in traffic. I do not have to. And try or deal with load shedding or whatnot on the road. I think that's convenient because then I can start as early as possible or as I want I can. Manage my own

breaks in the way that I need if I need to step away from my desk like from my laptop. I can do that. And just go for a walk quickly outside just to clear my head and then come back and do what I need to do that. For me, I think working from home has made it so convenient in that sense.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 24:** Benefits for working for the office collaboration, definitely makes it easier and when I'm in when I'm in the office like you. You can sit around the table. You can write down ideas I. I think for me. I really appreciate that creative process or that problem solving process of sitting around the table, jotting down ideas and producing solutions on teams. It does not feel as practical. In teams, Umm I think that that's the challenge so for me collaboration works. So much better, especially if you have to collaborate with the group of people. It's better in the office because nobody can get distracted. You know, everybody's is there because you can see them on teams. You're not entirely sure you're assuming that everybody signed on and nobody's busy doing other things in the background. When they should be paying attention to whatever it is that you guys are doing as a team.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when you work from home.

**Participant 24:** Ah, load shedding and connectivity issues that probably my biggest one of my biggest problems that cause this days where you can plan your schedule and cause in Fourways. We've been having this problem over the last couple of months where when the power is out. It's out for extended periods of time, so that's probably my biggest one is literally load shedding or power outages that just disrupts because you can plan your day and be like OK on stage two so the power is out from like 10 to like 12, so I have my battery charged enough to last me. during that time, but example like yesterday, even though I was in the office. The power went out at 10 came back at 12:30 switched off again at 1:00 o'clock and came back at 10:00 PM. So there's no way my battery would have lasted that whole time, but the good thing is that I had an EXCO session. I was in the office. If I was at home. It would have been so problematic because I would have assumed that load shedding is from 10:00 to 12:30 and I would have stayed at home, but then only to find that the power switches off again at one and then am I really going to get dressed now. And drive to the office at 1:00 o'clock do. I really want to do that because the powers out again? So yes, load, shedding for me? Is definitely like the pits.

**DN:** And your biggest struggle in the office.

**Participant 24:** Biggest struggle in the office is on days where. I need to get stuff done so on days where like there's something urgent that I need to do, but there are just so many distractions cause everybody wants to come and talk to you so sometimes reporting or things that I need to get done coincide with the days. I am in the office were. I would usually dedicate it to my team. But on those days. It's just something urgent that I need to get through, but now there's just so many distractions. There's so many stuff that I have to do in terms of engagements talking to people spending time with the team that I never get around to what I need to do so. That can be draining in itself, sometimes, especially if you came in with a very specific mindset or a very specific set of tasks that OK. I have team sessions and so like from 9 until 12. From 1:00 o'clock until four. It's just quiet time, but I need to focus on things and then that doesn't come together the way you'd hoped because now there's distractions that people coming through asking for things talking to you about stuff and then you're like OK. I'm not going to get to the stuff that I need to do.

**DN:** And what was your what has your productivity been like before. You started working from home compared to now.

**Participant 24:** Compared to now, I think it's there's been ebbs and flows to it right there's been high points where I'm like super productive, but they've also been low points where I feel like My energy is absolutely sapped on the simple basis of on, some days where I'm at home meetings, literally start from like 8:30 until 5:00 and it's back-to-back nonstop meetings. All the way with no gaps and no breaks so in those moments. I feel like my energies have dipped. But then there's days where I can block out the whole afternoon and dedicated to literally doing what I need to get the stuff that I need to get done so, it's I won't say it's been consistent in terms of it's been high energy and then like a year into it. It is dropped. Honestly, they've been moments peaks and dips where it's good energy levels cause you are in a good understanding of good understanding relationship with your colleagues around how we allocate time, but then there are times where it's just dips because. Your whole week is just been meetings because everybody's just setting up meetings from like 8:00 o'clock until 5:00 or 8:00 o'clock until six you have no gap to drink coffee have no gap to go to the bathroom or to grab something to eat so I think what I can say is that now. It was a lot tougher in the beginning and there was less consistency for us as a as a company. Holistically on the basis that you had teams where you can come to agreement with your business units around. We don't set up meetings. Before 8:30 and after five and on this

afternoon. We on like Wednesdays, Wednesdays, are meeting free afternoon so that everybody can get their admin done, but that doesn't necessarily apply to other stakeholders and other business units that you have to engage with they set up meetings as they wish, so in the beginning it was frustrating because we weren't fully aligned. But I think a year into it HR got more involved and they created almost a best principle guidelines to say we're working remotely because for the foreseeable future. That is going to be our life, please treat. Everybody's time with respect allocate time to breathe allocate time for people to be able to do stuff that they need to do so it created a bit more freedom. So I can say that in the beginning. It was good in the middle. It got a bit hard because everybody started just piling on work. But now it is better again because we are all aligned as a company around? How remote working should be applied in terms of meetings in terms of engagement in terms of working in a collective where you are working remotely. So I think it is definitely better at this point.

**DN:** And how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement.

**Participant 24:** At this point, I think on a scale of 1 to 10. I would say like 7 and simply because of load shedding if I didn't have any load shedding issues and electricity was like consistent. I would be like 10 out of 10. I'm happy with my work from home in situation because my stakeholders understand. I've been very clear all my direct stakeholders. I've made them made it very clear to them that I will not attend any meeting before 8:30, so please don't schedule that. If you genuinely need me, I am please try not to set up a meeting before half past 8. But if you have no other choice but to say to that before at 8:30 please. Give me efficient lead time to when that meeting is going to happen. So I can make arrangements for my son or plan around when I'm planning to go to gym so in that sense, I. I really think things are better and also how I manage my team in terms of when we're in the office. It is definitely better, so I will give it a based on that I will give it a 7 out of 10. The really the other 3% is just the other three pointers, literally load shedding because it doesn't only impact me impacts. My ability to engage with my team because I might be fine and not have load shedding today. But somebody else in my team might have load shedding now and I've set up time to engage with them. But they're not available because they've got load, shedding and now we have to reschedule things so I think that's probably where my biggest frustration comes in.

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement would you prefer?

**Participant 24:** What I would prefer so I am OK with working like 2 days a week. I think I would like to be. I think for me. It's having a dedicated space right for to work in like right now like I said, I work in my lounge. I sit at my dinner table and work from there, so I don't have like an ergonomic work chair so my back does feel it's on some days where you feel like you've been sitting for too long. And I don't have currently dedicated area to work in and I don't have necessarily the funds right now to create a dedicated working area within my home but I would genuinely like that, for myself. I think that would make a world of difference to have a private space where all my work stuff stays and I keep it there and I work. From there and when I step out. I step back into my house and when I close the door in the office. I have closed the door. I don't know I'm not thinking about right, but right now everything is sort of Mishmashed. When I sit and watch TV I can see my laptop on the table and sometimes I'm like flip. I forgot to do this and I run quickly over to the laptop and I type. Whatever I need to do and then I came back and sit with my son. So I think for me. It is having a dedicated work area. I think that will make the whole the world of difference and also. A quality I don't say quality reliable electricity that would make a world of difference for me in terms of working from her like those are the two things I think I would really appreciate or need to be able to effectively improve my work from home situation.

**DN:** Probably thank you. That is all the questions. I have but is there anything else. You want to add in and I know we running 4 minutes over. But.

**Participant 24:** I think in the context of working from home. I think for me has been the adjustment right. I think the one thing that everybody now is contemplating is this return-to-work sort of thing after we do it full time so for example, like I said with as we're still at two days a week, but that might change next year. So it's a matter of understanding the needs of your employees and the business, taking into consideration those needs. Also understanding that look these people are paying for rental space or they own the buildings. You don't want them to sit vacant but also understanding like does my staff feel productive when they're at home or do they feel most productive in the office right now? I can say my most productive time in terms of individual stuff that I need to do is at home. So I think I'd be interested to see what this new evolution or new phase of remote working will look like for businesses who own buildings and who have individuals who are saying that actually. I don't want to go back to the office full time, like me, I don't want to do that. I don't want to go back to the office full time and I would hate to have my company dictate to me and force

me and say look because you're paying for the space or we're paying for this task. We want everybody back in full time I would not want to do that because traffic alone. On some days. It takes you like an hour just to get to the office where you're like for example, when I'm working in Fairlands, Fairlands is like 20 minutes away from the house, but when I'm on passing by Monte Casino. When those robots aren't working, it's a good 45 minutes to get from there to the highway from the house. So I don't want to do that and live with that every single day so for me, I think that's probably. But I'd be interested to see is that as you continue to evolve. Now, with things opening up and companies wanting staff to go back to the office are they going to make it compulsory, and everybody must go back to the office or will we still have the freedom in terms of deciding what we want to do so. Yeah, I think that's probably the one thing that's currently sticking out in my mind is that are we going to get to a point where by 2023 or June 2023, where the conversation is guys COVID has subsided. enough, we feel comfortable enough with the levels of covid to say. Everybody should actually just go back full time because you are paying for these work areas as well. Yes, I will contact you yes. One other thing I would suggest also looking at is. Head space, right in term of your Individuals and one thing that we also realized and I think this is something that came up. I think we also chatted about it as a syndicated some point is all those individuals who maybe live on their own or their home environments isn't conducive to be working from home right? How has remote working actually impacted them and maybe doing a comparison of those individuals who wanted to work from home was not ideal have they gone back even though your company says only come back twice a week have they gone back like a full five day simply on the fact that I live with somebody who's genuinely abusive. At home or it's too busy at home for me to work. From there and the office is actually better, so while I would like to work from home three times a week. It just doesn't make sense just because of my working environment. It's just better for me to be in the office. It would be actually that is one of the other things, I think would be interesting to see is that have people circumstances force them to go back into the office even though they would have preferred to continue to work from home. Yes, cause a lot of stuff like I remember when we did our first. Annual review around like mental health and just checking like what job satisfaction. One of the things that really came up was around. That is around like individuals feeling like Oh my gosh. I'm isolated because my only human contact is when I'm in the office or people feeling like flip my work my home environment is just not

conducive for me to be able to focus on my job because there's just too much going on at home, so but because everybody was forced to work remotely just because of full locked down level 5. You were forced to stay in that environment, but now that there's a bit more freedom are those individuals going back to the office because they are more free to do that, and are they taking on that opportunity to go back full time I'd actually be interested to see that because then it also gives you an indication of what sort of conducive environment should companies be investing in for the employees because a lot of this stuff. I do not think we really paid attention to our thought about it because whatever happens to you at home in your own personal time is your situation and you come to work you come to work to work right. Until you are forced to say flip, I can only work from home. But there's like five other people in the House and it's just noisy. I cannot really work. That's when companies started having to get involved because it was impacting their ability to get productivity out of the employees.

**DN:** You know strangely enough amongst my participants that I've gotten nobody has ever told me that they've struggled to work at home.

**Participant 24:** But also maybe they have a look at the level. Of. I'm the people that you are you are interviewing right so for us. When we did our study. This came up a lot around like sales consultants' junior stuff junior admin like service consultant sales consultants a lot of those individuals who are like first jobbers or second time jobs, but they early on in their career. This came up a lot in those environments because you find that you're living at home with a massive family versus me? Who is like most senior in the company. I can afford to go rent my own place or I can afford to buy my own house. So I don't have to be worried that there's like 5 people that I'm living with at home. So I think maybe you would have maybe gotten that a lot more out of the junior staff cause also when we did. The survey it came out a lot around like junior staff who was struggling with and there are a lot of individuals at home, but stuff like abuse and unhealthy work environments because my husband doesn't work or he's just a problem and that came out just holistically. Just from like an unconducive home environment. But in terms of disruptive work environment. It came out a lot from our junior stuff.

**DN:** I'll look into it, I have interviewed some junior stuff, but I guess they're on A. Well people have interviewed maybe they've just done a different. Different trajectory.

**Participant 24:** it's weird right, yeah, it's it causes also cause. We I never thought about it right and so the survey came up. It was something that we and I never knew because it suddenly became like such a big thing because people were calling into ICAS and everything highlighted that flip you know working from home is just so difficult and not for the reasons that everybody thinks it's just my home environment isn't conducive right. The company has provided me with everything I need. I have got my modem. I've got my router. But it is just too busy at home. I can't get a quiet space to do what I need to do and that's just messing with my ability to work and actually being in the office would have been better for me and it will I realized it flip. I never thought of that because I don't have that struggle like my son is at preschool when it was full level Five he was at home with my mom and I still stayed at my pace because I needed to work and I needed quiet, but I had somebody who could take him on and look after him, and without me, having to worry that Oh my gosh, it's busy and even now. Even though I am working at home. I pick him up by full day is a normal day, where he is away and I am able to work versus if he was at home full time. So yeah, I guess it's just one of those things I think that's yeah that come up. teams that that are part of sales and servicing with their team leaders and their channel managers are highlighting this that. Hey this person is come to me and said Hey. They are struggling to connect because at home. It is just too busy. They can't talk to customers. They can't do their sales and servicing calls properly because it's just noisy and you like flip actually. I never thought about that because where I am I don't have that struggle so yeah, it's interesting.

## 8.24 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 25:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Administrator, Financial - Participant 25**

**Date and time: 17 October 2022 14h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 25:** 40 years

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 25:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 25:** Yes, 2.

**DN:** Did they live with you?

**Participant 25:** Yes, ma'am.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 25:** Finance.

**DN:** What is your function within this organization?

**Participant 25:** Administrator.

**DN:** What level would you say You Are?

**Participant 25:** Junior.

**DN:** At within this organization.

**Participant 25:** Junior.

**DN:** What is the size of your organization?

**Participant 25:** Very big.

**DN:** A small medium large.

**Participant 25:** Large.

**DN:** Before COVID did you work from home?

**Participant 25:** Not at all.

**DN:** Not even in cases of emergency.

**Participant 25:** Not at all maam.

**DN:** And now do you currently work from home?

**Participant 25:** Yes, permanent.

**DN:** Or from the office.

**Participant 25:** No, I am working from home permanent.

**DN:** Do you go into the office at any time?

**Participant 25:** Once a month now but in the past two years we never went to the office at all.

**DN:** so now you go into the office once a month.

**Participant 25:** Yes.

**DN:** Do you have when you work from home? Do you have a Home Office? Or do you work or have a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 25:** I have dedicated work space.

**DN:** And what is this workspace equipped with?

**Participant 25:** A desk and a chair.

**DN:** Do you have an extra screen or?

**Participant 25:** No nothing I only use my laptop.

**DN:** do you have personal want uh Wi-Fi?

**Participant 25:** No work they provide me with 3G.

**DN:** And you do not have any do you have an invertor or a generator?

**Participant 25:** I have to get a solar I do have an invertor

**DN:** You have an inverter.

**Participant 25:** Yes.

**DN:** What are your current working hours when you work from home?

**Participant 25:** It's supposed to be 9 to 5, but you can end up working up until late.

**DN:** How late?

**Participant 25:** Any time you can log on if you feel like you didn't finish something or if you realize something is urgent. Maybe it's coming and then you want to. Make sure that your work is on. You are more productive and then you do not delay or out of maybe you do not meet deadlines.

**DN:** how often do you work late?

**Participant 25:** It differs. The with the work that is available can be. Once a month or twice. It differs what I am supposed to do that month.

**DN:** so you would work late, maybe once or twice a month.

**Participant 25:** Yes.

**DN:** And that means going beyond six 7:00 o'clock.

**Participant 25:** Can be 10:00 o'clock even?

**DN:** And then when you work from the office what working hours do you work?

**Participant 25:** I used to start at 7:30 until 3:30.

**DN:** And then you never used to log on when you used to go home.

**Participant 25:** No, I was leaving my laptop at work.

**DN:** Do you keep a schedule when you work from home?

**Participant 25:** Only now, I I'm trying to yes.

**DN:** Can you describe your schedule for me?

**Participant 25:** I will make sure that I have to bath in the morning like I'm going to work. I start at, I started eight. What did I say 9 to 5 is 8 to 5. I started at 8 and make sure 6:00 o'clock. I wake up. Bath myself, bath my kids because they're leaving at 7. And an eight ‘o clock I start and make sure I work until. 1:00 o'clock to 2:00 o'clock. I will take not really lunch, but I will eat while I am working. And. My schedule is. For me working at home is. This advantage and disadvantage. It helps you in a way whereby. You can do more you can work more hours. If you did not finish and then you can be not more productive, but you can perform more. And then what I like is well. You are not stuck in the traffic but you are working hours can be long. Because you do not know exactly where to stop you realize oh there's something maybe this e-mail is coming. Now let me push you one to push more. But while working as well, you can. Put a pot and start cooking. Unlike when you go to the office. You have to come back late I can cook while I am working. So the schedule it can be. deur mekaar but it is manageable. For me to go to the office. I rather work at home, although at home. You do not know. Where to stop you have to make sure that you discipline yourself and tell yourself by this time. If I am going to work until 8:00 o'clock it must not be above that.

**DN:** And then when you work from home are you usually do you usually work from home alone?

**Participant 25:** Yes.

**DN:** So nobody shares your environment with you.

**Participant 25:** Not at all but before good question before remembering COVID when the schools, they were going two days a week or a month. My kids they used to be around me,

while I am working because I have to home school. That was yeah, it was hectic now at least they went back to school full time.

**DN:** then what time do they come home?

**Participant 25:** 3’o clock.

**DN:** And then when you are continuing working does this not become an issue for you.

**Participant 25:** Maybe if I work late. You have to check the benefits for yourself. At least you can cover work and then you can be able to deliver on time you're not you not behind its chances is like 50 / 50 I will say so. You can manage to be more productive and then your work will be. You will be sure that the next day. You can deliver un like if you leave the office at 3:30 and you not finish at times it used to be frustrating. but it's tiring as well to work late. Because at times, you feel that you don't spend much time with your family. Yes, and then you must make sure if you are working late. You prepare supper for your kids and involve them while the busy with Homework, now make sure that when you log on the right here and then make sure that their school work is on I think. all parties they must balance. Because you may end up pushing your work, but your kids may be schoolwork is not done. So you must have a schedule and then you must have a plan as well. How are you going to juggle everything? But I feel like people are more. I'm not going to say myself at times since I fall but you get more. Mental draining you at work. You still miss that touch of missing people but to go out. But when you at home. You feel like I am all alone and then it differs with your team. At least my team will do check-ins now and then but there was a time whereby when we started with COVID you didn't know what to do you all alone. You wish like you can see maybe D and talk to her. It used to help so it's all in your space people that don't check. You people that were going through a lot. You own your own as well. Some mentally you have to be sharp as well. Because if you not you can get depressed easily.

**DN:** From the time you started working from home. How have you changed the way you work and if you have? How have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 25:** You have to be more disciplined. One thing for sure, I realized no one is around you. No one will push you but the deadlines are there so if you not discipline you can hardly? Get out of the way. You must make sure you log on you must make sure that you are available at all times because I feel like when we are working at home, not really they checking us a lot. But. If you are not around, where are you? They will think maybe

she went out for shopping, she so you have to be here. So you must be more disciplined you have to. And report. If you're going out to buy bread. Maybe spaza shop or you are going to the shops report your manager your manager must know where you are. Yes, in the office we used to do that, but they know that oh it's 2:00 o'clock or 1:00 o'clock. Nomsa is going out here at home, they do not. Know what time you going on lunch unless you talk about it or inform your manager. But if you're going out or if someone is knocking at the door or is in the gate. You must make sure that you tell your buddies or if you're going out or if yeah, I think. What I learned about working from home is more it sounds nice and fancy you can work with your pyjamas and everything, but you may have to be more disciplined. If you not? it Can be frustrating? Work will not be done you won't be available and then you can create yourself some problems with your managers.

**DN:** So you you've become more disciplined in the way you work.

**Participant 25:** Yes, for me, I got, I was disciplined, but at home. It pushed I didn't have a choice was supposed to be more disciplined and then I just started in this department. I was still learning. So yes, a lot happened in the short period of space when I started working from home. I was in this department within 5-6 months or five months. I was still learning but I learned quite a lot. It was challenging for me, but it pushes me too. Learn as much as possible, because I won't be running to someone desk now and then I have to learn as much as I can. And in digital on its own because we used to do some other stuff paper by paper or face to face now take now we doing it. Online sometimes the system is jam is not working signal is bad reception. And. Load shedding. There was a time I didn't have electricity for three months. I have to wake up and go to Spaza Shop and log on and then covid it then was like yeah. At the Stage 5 or whatever totally you couldn't go to work so that's why I had a solar it pushes me to get a solar I didn't have. And in that was not in even in my plan. I have to take a loan to get that solar.

**DN:** How do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 25:** I'm more productive, I won't lie. The hours of sticking in the traffic going to Sandton from Krugersdorp. It's about 2 hours or so it can be bad because I use Main Reef Road. So I am more productive. But it's not an easy thing up until you set your mind and time management and do what is expected from you? There's lot of traffic yes.

**DN:** So now that that traveling you've converted into working hours.

**Participant 25:** Yes, it's much better.

**DN:** So what type of task do you complete from home compared to the type of tasks you would complete in the office?

**Participant 25:** A similar the same task.

**DN:** Same task no difference.

**Participant 25:** A similar the same tasks. But now most of things is digital. Yes, others it used to be paper. People they will come and deliver manual application to me or whatever agreements that I'm busy with, but now they load it in the system. I must make sure that I have enough data electricity's there. And signal because signal can be something else. Reception is affected as well by load shedding. But not always what frustrates today. You will experience whatever load reduction. You tell your manager maybe global protect is not connecting other days, it does. It connects very well. And then you can predict and say OK by today, it will be working well or not. So now is much better if you know your schedule? What is happening you can go to the office if you know that? Maybe it is stage four of? Load shedding or reduction is going to be much better for you, not to get frustrated be prepared.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 25:** Children. Knocking people that will be knocking selling stuff in locations no and. You don't know whether you want to avoid them or so because at times, you in the meeting and then they will keep on banging the gate. And at times, you think it's not important to find out. It is important. Maybe it's municipal people they come to check the meters or it is Eskom people so yeah, distractions. So you must make sure and then television as well. Make sure that you don't see it in the room without this television for me, I don't know other people because once you start watching television movies. Whatever you got you want to know other people. They say multitask I believe in multitask. But when you deal with figures and numbers and checking QA'ing you have to concentrate. You'll end up doing one thing same time, so cut television cut movement of go through the separate room and then wake up as if you go to work apply that I don't say put your makeup and dress up, but go to bath go so that even during the day if electricity just went off you know that I already bath you can just change and go. To the campus or in the place where you can be able to work. So chances is 50 / 50 how you look at it is good that's disadvantage for both.

**DN:** And what is what is the distractions you experience in the office?

**Participant 25:** In the office colleagues, they will come and talk to you. Let's go to lunch let's go for tea breaks and unnecessary tea breaks. Yeah, and then people they will come to your desk now and then others are passing others are old friends and everything so. That is when it is also distraction. But at least as well you were seeing people. Unlike staying here at home because for the whole week, you can be alone and be. Unless you're going to pick up the phone and call. Your friends or your colleague so. Check in meetings it really helped a lot.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective working from home or working from the office?

**Participant 25:** Working from home, it is effective for me, but you have to be disciplined. I have to mention that. You have to be very disciplined and focus because distraction at home as well is a lot.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 25:** Productivity if you didn't finish your work you can log on anytime. And complete what is expected from you? But if you do not want to be too exhausted do. Everything that is expected from you during the day on your working hours, so that you do not have to log late and do all unnecessary stuff and then you can log on Sundays, which is frustrating but is nice. If you have deadline for Mondays and everything you can log on and do your work.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits when you work from the office?

**Participant 25:** Not much. You stuck in the traffic. Your managers there, I am kidding, Yeah, but. No much wasting money for petrol money as well. We are saving I won't say saving the petrol money that we using is what we use now for electricity at home because at times. You deal with a lot of files and folders. You have to log on your laptop must always be 100% that is electricity that you didn't spend during the day because there's no one in the house so. 50 / 50. You are saving on the side on this side also you're using? But time is well, I think it's time. You are saving time.

**DN:** In the office. When you work from home.

**Participant 25:** At home wake up thing and get yes and get stuck in the traffic and come back and the time you traveling you should do something else push something else with your work. But emotionally straining as well working at home. It can get lonely. You are here. If there's no bread or milk or whatever, they call you. They remind you something is

not here, so you see everything what is happening at home. Unlike if you were at work. At times they will try to call you or get hold of you they know that you're busy in the meetings but at home. Mummy this Mummy that. Mama I'm hungry, but now at least they're not here. It is much better. During covid. And then during covid maybe sometimes you are having a meeting like this one your kids are coming. They screaming now you wondering what's happening. Maybe they cut themselves anything can happen with small kids at home while you watching them and then it's like they were right here? What happened. So you panic.

**DN:** What is the biggest struggle you are experiencing when you work from home?

**Participant 25:** It was emotionally. draining at first. That loneliness. You miss people I do not want to lie; you miss. That interaction that you have with your colleagues, although it can get to distraction, but you miss personal touch. Thus only that, but thanks to teams and all these meetings. Everything went well afterwards.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when you go to the when working from the office.

**Participant 25:** Is to start to get stuck in the traffic? And wake up early. Only that to get stuck that 2 hours to stuck in the traffic you have to leave the house at 5:00 o'clock. To get to work at 7:30 that was something else. At times, I would say OK, maybe covid, it was working on my favour at times, I was like but whatever that was happening. We don't know much but God knows. But now working at home is fine, we adjusting emotionally. We know we talk to your colleagues. You know what to do you talk to people and then you have to check people that must not check on you always you have to check on people, even in your busy schedule, because you get to your computer you get hooked you get busy the whole day give it time and if you take that 5 minutes break. SMS someone check on your family as well. There were a time people they could not travel. Remember your families far you do not see them. That was frustrating. But working from home, it will teach you more discipline. You have to adjust whether you want to or not. but you work more hours. You have to know where to stop and then how to push time management and Managing Yourself is important.

**DN:** What do you think your productivity is like? Pre covid. And now

**Participant 25:** it improved a lot after COVID working from home. Because of more. Hours. And having access of the system. I wont to say it was bad when I was working in the office. But yes, it improved a lot. But more hours are being put as well.

**DN:** So how satisfied are you with working from home and only going into the office once a month.

**Participant 25:** Happiness ma'am, I'm happy very satisfied.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied?

**Participant 25:** At least I do not have to wake up. In the mornings and gets stuck in the traffic I can wake up only that one day once a month. Which is, OK?

**DN:** And what work from home arrangement would you like so if they gave you a choice? What type of arrangement would you like would you like to keep it the same or would you like to change it?

**Participant 25:** I don't mind keeping the same but I prefer like 8 to 5 and then it was not eight to five. I do not know what happened. I didn't clarify that I still have to clarify it now, it's 8 to 5 for me. five is it takes forever what I can do is just to change only maybe Friday start at 7:30 finish at 3:30 or 4:00 o'clock that is OK. Only that I can change is for Friday time for Friday because Friday after 3:30 / 4 o'clock you exhausted. You're tired already at least if I can start at 7:30 and finish at 3:30 or 4:00 o'clock that will be much better.

**DN:** That is all the questions I have for you at this stage is there anything else that you would like to add.

**Participant 25:** Yes, but this thing of for working at home and going to the office is how you view it. But yeah, I prefer to work at home. I do not want to lie. But it can be emotionally draining. It needs a lot of discipline. When you in your desk in your desk like at work because just imagine now you calling means 2:00 o'clock. I am not available. Teams is here. I'm supposed to be available you'll wonder. Where is it Nomsa she does not report so I think not really red tape or checking but working at home? You have to be here and communicate with your with your colleagues. Now and again. If you in the office. They know, she went out. You tell them that at home. They do not know where you are, they cannot see you.

## 8.25 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 27:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Business Development Partner, Education - Participant 27**

**Date and time: 21 October 2022 09h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 27:** 54.

**DN:** What is your gender?

**Participant 27:** A female.

**DN:** do you have any dependents?

**Participant 27:** And not in age. No. Well, yes. How would I look at that? I mean.

**DN:** So do you dependents live with you?

**Participant 27:** No.

**DN:** so you have dependants, but they don't actually know they self-sufficient, aren't they?

**Participant 27:** Well, one of my daughters live with me, but she is not sure at the moment. But yes so. But she's like 28 years, so.

**DN:** what industry do you work in?

**Participant 27:** Education.

**DN:** Your function within this industry.

**Participant 27:** And so I am a business development partner in the sales environment.

**DN:** And you, what level would you say you are at in the organization, junior, middle, senior?

**Participant 27:** Middle to senior.

**DN:** And what is the size of your organization?

**Participant 27:** We about one hundred employees.

**DN:** A small organization.

**Participant 27:** No, it is big for us, but yes, it is a small in context to.

**Participant 27:** A companies out there.

**DN:** I have. Did you work from home before COVID hit?

**Participant 27:** And yes, we did have a structure way. We were allowed to work, I think one day a month or something like that, yes.

**DN:** so you used to work at least one day a month from home. And now currently do you work from the home or from the office?

**Participant 27:** So at the moment it's on a hybrid system where on a Monday and Friday I'm at home and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. So I was saying at the moment, Monday and Friday we are at home, we work from home and then Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, I work with at the campus. I work from there.

**DN:** And when you work from home. do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 27:** Yes, I do have a dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is what is what have you equipped your workspace with?

**Participant 27:** It has my desk, my chair and basically my laptop second screen. You know all the accessories as far as your headsets and that we used to have a hands free phone, but now they've implemented the VIA system onto our laptop. So we can call directly from there. we work on a. Database system called HubSpot so also our calls can be made directly from HubSpot. And we've been equipped by the company as well with UPS, which is I think about 2 hours, 3 hours. But I've also installed and got an inverter. So it gives me, you know, much more. time.

**DN:** They provided you guys with the UPS for all your for all your staff was just wow.

**Participant 27:** All employees, all employees and anything we needed, and I had my own study desk, so I used it, but they when we went into COVID, they transported desks, chairs. All equipment as per individuals. There was like a structured checklist where we did a thing of what was required and everything that we required basically was provided also obviously have a router as well which I mean I have fibre. So I don't really use it much, but everyone's also provided with the. A router to connect and that.

**DN:** And a what? When you work from home, what are your current working hours?

**Participant 27:** I usually work at about 8:30. And then I. finish off at 656U M sometimes if I do something at 4 then I come back, I take an hour then I come back at 5. You know, doing some work till about 6:00. So it varies. It depends because with my nature of work, the day hours are critical because we in communication with students and we won't want to call them like after work hours and that it's just respecting their time. So during that later hours when we and I'm working or doing any tasks that will be more around admin or more

around I'm also. Responsible on tenders and RFP's and RFQ's, then I would actually, you know, spend time on that which as you know those things take a lot of time too. So yes. That is a bit of a of a of a look of what happens.

**DN:** And then. When you work from the office. What working hours do you work?

**Participant 27:** So at the office basically also like 8:30 / 9 get the latest by 9 and. And would at the moment would the load shedding and that happening. It's basically a what I would say a give and take situation where we've arranged with our head of department that say for an example if we want to get away before that time because of the traffic then we leave at about 3 / 330. When I get home and it takes me like 10 minutes, 15 minutes to get home, then I'll continue at home rather than working till five and being sitting in the traffic for an hour and a half.

**DN:** And do you keep a schedule when you work from home?

**Participant 27:** No, at the moment it is basically every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, unless we have an exhibition or have a meeting or something that we go directly out, then we don't go to campus, we go there. But that is the arrangement at the moment.

**DN:** What were when you work from the office, you said you finished at about 3:30, right? Do you log on when you get back home?

**Participant 27:** Yes, I do. And I do not. I don't finish 330 all the time. It is from time to time. So we have that arrangement with work like for an example. Yesterday I was there, but then I only left it 5:30. And you know, with the storm and rain I got here so late. And then and then I had info session at 7, so it was chaotic.

**DN:** And so you don't work late hours every single day. It maybe. It depends on what is happening. Like if you have. I know this time of year a lot of universities and business schools and education specialist will have open days and info sessions. So that may go over. But. But you don't generally work long hours, or do you?

**Participant 27:** No, not over those. Like I said it’s just intermediate like when there is a specific tender to be done and when we crushing on a deadline. Yes, that is different. You know, we might work whole weekend or weekend to get stuff together, but other than that, from BD sales point of view like I was saying is I was our customers. Our students are basically at eight to five times slot, and we don't want to call them either earlier than that in the morning or later than that in the evening because of respecting their time. So I would say a general 9 to 5 is. This is really what the time will we should look at.

**DN:** And then when you work from home, are you usually alone? Do you work from home? Is in? Is there anyone that shares your space?

**Participant 27:** No, only me.

**DN:** And nobody else works in the house with you or anything like that?

**Participant 27:** so my daughter that was here, she does as well, but she has. So this is a double story. I'm upstairs and when she works, she has her desk downstairs. so we're very separated and you know we I mean we don't have interference, we have headsets and you know I can close my door and yeah.

**DN:** Have you changed from the time you started working from home? Have you changed the way you work and if yes, how have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 27:** Like we are saying is. I mean I tried to. I think we will do this at work at office or at home. For me, it is like it's just basically being in that different space. Sometimes you don't even feel it because you're so busy working. You know you lose, you know. Essence of like you know where you are because you it's more about what you're delivering on, but you know obviously in the beginning stages because of COVID you know there was changes that you had to make you know. Initially I had like my desk upstairs. You know, a part of my bedroom was partitioned and I and I and I and I made it for my office area. but then I it was like it became a lot because what I had to do was is, you know, I think psychologically it was like you slept. You woke up, you worked in the same space in the same room you went to bed again and it was it was over and over again. So I eventually then moved my desk out of here into another area. When my daughter wasn't here, I moved it downstairs. And now I'm moved it back upstairs because it. You just feel like a change because I'm not sure the whole week. Like I said, I'm you know that time I was here the whole week. So you know, changes like that which I think comes more from an emotional level. So affects you move from an emotional intelligence level. You know I think obviously literal changes would be the little things that you do you know make sure you angle properly make sure you getting light make sure you know you look you know from a zoom perspective you know your peer that you have proper equipment and all that but I think you know the deeper things was. Was that level like I am saying? And. Yes. I think also, you know, initially I don't know if this comes in here, but initially like going back, you know talking about home and going back to the office I had covid last year, July and it was quite hectic because it was a delta variant. And when I say I almost died, I literally mean that. So

being in that having that experience and then going back and that not that you don't want to be back in the environment, but you look at life totally from a different perspective. You know, again from an emotional intelligence point of view, it really it really it's just a whole new world. So you you're very aware you're very. There's that level of anxiety, you know, and a host of things.

**DN:** how do you think working from home and has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 27:** I think it has hugely influenced it because what happens is when we start the day, there's no break. There's no like, I mean obviously you have a break, have a you know, get something to eat and then. But what I'm saying is there's, you know, we just continuously we just on that roll and you just work and. The amount of if I'm doing a student calls and follow-ups and that I find that I'm able to get to more of them. Then when I am at the office. I think it's also because at home as well, you don't as much as I'm very open, friendly and very social person and I like people around and I find that, you know, obviously at the office you have a lot of interruptions and that what else now then at home you don't have that. So you know it counts for that. The other thing as well is that. We have this. A platform that we use HubSpot for sales and you know you can clearly see on a daily basis on a monthly or do whatever weekly basis and you can see on the days that. I am from working from home and how much the productivity level from sales part of it is or how many connections I've had you. It's always usually when I look at higher than the when the days I am at campus.

**DN:** So what type of task would you complete at the office compared to the type of tasks you would completed home? Is there a difference?

**Participant 27:** At the moment, you know. Look, I'll do it at work, but The thing is, I sometimes prefer to do it at home because I found that a home was much quieter and gave me the time like to work on tenders, you know, when I'm looking at individual details on tenders because, you know, on submitting on that, you know, we need to pay attention to detail. And I am usually very good with that. It's because I go through it in detail. So I think sometimes that that is something I would look at. for home rather than work. You know, if I had to do it at work, it would be that I'd have to be locked behind a closed door situation if I wanted no interruption as such. Otherwise, if I'm just there, there's always interruption, even though I use an office, there's a glass window and people come in and they wave and then you know where you're busy with on the tender and just. Interrupts your trail of thought

where you are. So that's just a typical example, but they could be many others that we're working on and exactly the same thing happens, you know.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 27:** When I work from home, the distractions that I have is sometimes, you know, OK, somebody's cutting the grass, the grass or, you know, there's all the basically some outer environment noise levels. But basically then I just use my headset, you know, because usually we saw used from being on these calls and just talking through the laptop. So we don't really, you know, want things on your ear all the time. So usually we do it that way. But if and when that does happen, that is only when. I have that I use my headsets and usually solves a problem. Otherwise. And to none other than, you know, maybe bad connectivity, because maybe load shedding or something, but I must be honest with my fibre that I've had. You know, I've even through COVID and everything. I've I I've once touch wood. I actually been very blessed.

**DN:** And what type of distractions would you experience in the office?

**Participant 27:** In the office. It is social, it is group chat. You know the team. And which you know when we away from work we also talk on WhatsApp and that and here then we talk in person and as much as yes that is important and we do that it does take up the time as well so. Time equals productivity, so you know if you taking that time then that they are. Like I said, if you in your offers people going past you haven't seen you, it's interruptions and then sometimes when you can say hi then it leads to further conversations. It can be business; it can be personal. So I think that and then. I think also like with would you know if we have a meeting, if we have a group session at work? It just seems to go like over the time. So if something scheduled like say for an hour it's OK like you know, it just goes on for longer and for some reason when we have it on zoom it's like a more. kept to the time that and then. Yeah, I do not. I think at home as well you go like for example, if you go to eat, you go, you complete the task kind of thing and if it finishes at one, you'll go there and if it finishes at 12:30, you'll go then then you'll make that break in between accordingly. Now, like I'm just saying at work, yes, you can. Would we? They have also provided us with lunch, which is very, very nice and very appreciative of, but it's you're also during a set time to a set time. So we need to go in that time. Not complaining, but I am very appreciative. But I'm saying is, you know you need to go in that time, you know. And then. Yes. I just think you know, it's. It is that. It's like little things when things are not in order

or something is missing. Maybe in the room, maybe in the office, you know, sorting it out. It's just so it's really, really like kind of time consuming, you know? So if you say Shakila, what really is that? So I'm saying for an example we in business development sales it's critical for us to have a printer nearby because of tenders, because of stuff that we you know we print we don't print from our student connection point of view on. As much, but I'm talking from that perspective and then the printers doesn't work and it's only going to be fixed. For example, in a month, month and 1/2 because specific part has to be imported, then you have to go and print in another building at another printer. You know it's just really, really like time consuming. So and that's just one example and saying if something you need and you have to say, it might seem petty. But for me like I said, time is productivity. So all those little things. That I have to go to place AB and C for and come back over and get it done has equal to the time taken from my schedule.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective and why?

**Participant 27:** I find the home environment more effective. And the reason why is that my productivity levels are higher. like, you know, like I was saying as well and as much as you know, I was asked a question as well. You know, do you want to be on campus or do you want to work at home and? I'd love to work and I would love to be on campus, but if I have to say that's personally me. But if it is, I'm there to do a job and the job that I do. The work that I do, I would be more productive at home. So I need to look at it from that perspective, you know. So it is like not it is. It's not like what Henley as Henley wants me to do or would like me to be. But what I in my business development role sales would be able will need to do. We'll need to do you know that kind of thing. So it's like a parent it's like not what you want to do also for your child it's what your child wants to do. So that would make best, uh, you know, uh or achieve best results. So for me to be that and I've seen it, so it's not something that I'm just saying we have looked, I've looked at. at our productivity from when I did at work and home, and that's what I've seen. And besides from actual stats and actual feedback, that has been the norm for my side, discussing with the team, they have also felt the same way.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 27:** And the benefits from home, I think is again time because you know you don't have the time to travel to work and back and that and should you be you know. And you know, should they be congestion or extended time and that so you haven't lost that?

And also you know like when you get up and yes, you get ready and that and you start your day you know. So I think it's much quicker and for me everything equals to and you look I'm keep saying it is time and the other thing is. Yeah, I think because you don't have that interruptions, you don't have all the people around you, you know you just. You take your break if you need to, whether it's you go and read for half an hour or take a walk in the garden or come back or refresh yourself, which you can do and. And you know, continue with what you need to do.

**DN:** And what do you see as the benefits when working from the office?

**Participant 27:** Yeah, the benefits of working from the office is that you know. We have. I think it's people. You know we have, we have our team, we have other people that we can connect with as much as I said yes time and that. But that is a benefit when we are there. the other benefits are. You know when I have large? Or large scale documents to be printed, and that because at the moment I do have a printer at home that I print. But you know for tenders and things like that, you know how much of documents it is. So I think from that perspective, yes. But at the moment with me working from home when I am there, I print it and then bring it through and that's how I work with it. I mean, there is always a plan because, you know, if in case there's an emergency, I can always get it printed. But that and then. I can't really say about accessibility because as I said, I have fibre here and I haven't really had much problems, you know, so. So if that was, then I would have, but no. So I think it's just people just mainly that we connect and that. You know, I can't even also say, you know, usually just for you in is we have sometimes walk in students that come in and want to see people in sales because they would have not sure what they want to study and that and usually we would meet with them. But at the moment on HubSpot we have we have implemented the system even during COVID and now people are using where they just book an appointment with you and usually we meet on zoom and we have a one to one session with them answering all the questions guiding them and that so. That has been working well as well so. You know, even with that we have that through our website as well where they can book so.

**DN:** And then what is the biggest struggle when working from home?

**Participant 27:** I do not know. I haven't really had a, you know, huge struggle. I think it's only if you know that they the only thing really is if nothing or everything doesn't work for whatever reason because of my area. Just say, you know. is like if my fibre goes totally and

my router doesn't work or just say if we get to that nothing works, then I still have the option of getting in my car which I have and getting to campus and that is the arrangement we have with Henley so I'm. I cannot say anything else.

**DN:** What has your productivity been before? Compared to now. So pre COVID too now.

**Participant 27:** So I would say. You know, this is just speaking on the top of my head without looking at stats and things like that. So I would say about 70% eighty between 70 and 80% before COVID you know that. But now we are about hundred, 110%. I don't know if I'm allowed to say more than 100, but yeah, but that's how it is.

**DN:** so how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangements?

**Participant 27:** I am very satisfied.

**DN:** Why?

**Participant 27:** would you mean the days that I have for home?

**DN:** yes. So you said you work two days at home in three days in the office.

**Participant 27:** Three days that. Yes. So I am very satisfied for the days that I have. If the question is, should it be changed? And then how many, whatever, then that is a different conversation. So for the days that I have and that I am at home, yeah, I'm very satisfied. I have everything that I need from equipment point of view setup point of view, home point of view support point of view in the sense of like you know family. In the sense that you know, I have info sessions from 7 to 8. Every two weeks for undergraduate postgrad program. So I mean support from my family. You know that they know I'm busy and you know also those nights are not available. So you know those things, like I said, we have all equipment from either Henley or myself we've done. There's nothing that we've asked that we didn't get. Upgrades, updates. I have just got a new laptop. I am actually very comfortable. I have my car. If anything that I need to go out to get or get to campus. And I have a good space and good mindset. And yes, I am very happy.

**DN:** What work from home management would you prefer?

**Participant 27:** What you this is the question we are saying like whether we looking at?

**DN:** Yes. So if you if you are not happy with your work, well, you said you are, but is it the ideal solution for you? What would you ideally prefer?

**Participant 27:** So what? You know, we have discussed this as a team as well we will. First prize would be basically to look at. maybe just one day a week being at the office, uh opposed to three days, and on the one day is to say that on a different kind of one day is one

of our team members is at the office. So at any given time there is one salesperson at the office. So should they be any requirement or anyone that walks in that is, you know really, you know, want to see someone or that. So there is someone that would be first prize, the second would be at least two days a week, then at work and then the other three days at home. I mean if we could have it, we would, we would like all days and like I said, you know, with the walk-ins we have that appointments where they can book. But you know, we'd have to let that phase in properly, completely and. In the interim, then you know we as a team we have, we were talking to say you know maybe then to accommodate for that is that we ensure that on the any one day some one of us is here there's no need for all of us to be on the same day. Yes. So that is, that is the thing. The other thing is that  You know, with going back to the office as well, you know, I mean, say for example if the whole team is there, it sounds silly that sometimes you know, meetings are still held on zoom while we're at the office. When the reason for getting to the office was so that we'll be together to have an open meeting. So that is another thing. All right. Yes, lots of things, yes.

**DN:** Thank you. That is all the questions I have. Is there anything else that you think you would like to add or you know?

**Participant 27:** No, no, thank you. Thank you. I think you know we have we been talking about this. At work. And I think Henley as well, they're looking at it as well and it will be, I think it would be decided per department head because and that's that, that that is how it should be. Because work is different you know like I was saying for Exec Ed, you know, because you're delivering on programs, it would be something that you maybe have to be the everyday because that's how we used to be there, you know, but because of like for example where I am now, we actually don't even need to be they will need. Maybe need to go in if like for me, if for example if there is. A tenders and that that needs to be prepared by files and if they need to be delivered by hand then you know specific dates can be selected to go and work on them and do them to get submitted. But other than that, yes.

## 8.26 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 28:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Learning Consultant, Financial - Participant 28**

**Date and time: 21 October 2022 15h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** Your age, please.

**Participant 28:** 41.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 28:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 28:** Yes, I have three.

**DN:** Do they live with you?

**Participant 28:** Yes.

**DN:** And what industry do you work in?

**Participant 28:** Financial industry or the banking?

**DN:** And what function are you within this industry?

**Participant 28:** I am learning coordinator.

**DN:** And what level would you say you are within this industry, junior, middle or senior?

**Participant 28:** Junior.

**DN:** And the size of your organization?

**Participant 28:** Plus 10,000.

**DN:** So a large organization. Did you work from home pre before COVID?

**Participant 28:** No.

**DN:** Not even in cases of emergencies.

**Participant 28:** No.

**DN:** Do you currently work from home or from the office?

**Participant 28:** I work from home.

**DN:** Do you go into the office at any time?

**Participant 28:** I do go into the office from time to time.

**DN:** How often would you say in a in a week do you go?

**Participant 28:** I would say once a week.

**DN:** And when you work from home, what is your working hours?

**Participant 28:** When I work from home. So you want total number of hours or you want frequency? Because I can say I work from say. 6 to 12 with about two breaks in between and then. maybe. In fact, that's it. Maybe from 6 to one and then I have two hours where I'm could be working, but I could not be working. Depending on my dependants and then I'm working in the evenings again. So from about 8:00 to 12:00. Catching up. Yeah, if I don't log on sooner. So those are my working hours.

**DN:** so it's from 6 to one and then from 8 till 12. In the evening.

**Participant 28:** Yes.

**DN:** And then your hours when you work from the office?

**Participant 28:** Are eight to five.

**DN:** And then you don't log on when you go home in the evening?

**Participant 28:** So is this like post COVID? Or is this?

**DN:** Current working hours. Post-covid now.

**Participant 28:** So if I'm in the office, I will work. Umm, I'll do a normal 8 to 5. And then I log on. In fact it is not eight till 5. I'm like it's more like 8:00 to 3:30. And then I will log on again in the evening. So after 8:30 until about midnight, because I don't sleep before then.

**DN:** And do you keep a schedule? At home.

**Participant 28:** a schedule of what?

**DN:** So like so I know a lot of people will say, get up at 7:00. I have breakfast, I have my coffee, and then I'll I'm logged on by, say, 8:00 o'clock the latest. And then I will take a T break at 10. Or maybe from 10 till 11, I'll go to the gym and then I'll come back and I will start working again. You know it, it varies for people. So do you keep a schedule?

**Participant 28:** I have one Yeah, like a rough one. it is more it's more regulated when the kids are at school as opposed to when they're not. And it's, but it's not like it's not written down. It's just like my body clock kind of thing. Does that count?

**DN:** So you've got a schedule, but it's more like you just you listen to your body. So if you need to take a break, you take a break.

**Participant 28:** Right.

**DN:** And then when? At when you work from home. Do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 28:** I do. Home Office.

**DN:** Which is it? Home Office or dedicated.

**Participant 28:** Home Office.

**DN:** Home Office and what is your Home Office equipped with?

**Participant 28:** built-in desk chair. I take my laptop with me, and I've got a screen. I have got cupboards, I've got a window.

**DN:** Do you have your own personal Wi-Fi?

**Participant 28:** I do.

**DN:** Or do you use company 3G.

**Participant 28:** I use the company 3G, but I also have my own personal Wi-Fi.

**DN:** And then do you have an invertor, or a generator?

**Participant 28:** No, none of the above.

**DN:** And then when you are working from home, I usually alone. Or do you share your working environment?

**Participant 28:** I know I work alone in the office. But on occasion I will share the home space with somebody else. But who's working in a different room?

**DN:** So there's no. Challenges there with disruption and.

**Participant 28:** No. I can close the door when in this space when I need quiet. And that is of course, before 1:00. O'clock.

**DN:** And then after 1:00 o'clock.

**Participant 28:** At one after one o'clock my dependants come and make themselves. Known. So it is not so easy to close the door when they are around.

**DN:** So those are your challenges.

**Participant 28:** Yes, those are my challenges.

**DN:** So that is why you do not work between one and eight again until they go to sleep.

**Participant 28:** Yes. Also because I mean, they come home, they want to talk to me about their day and then it is homework. And then I am also facilitating homework, and then it is dinner time. So, I mean, like, now it's 3:00 o'clock. I can catch a meeting between two and three because they've calmed down, settle down already. And they are doing their own thing. Fridays are easy because they do not have homework, so I am not watching. They can like,

watch TV or play outside. And pretty much, you know be by themselves. But Monday to Thursday. It is quite busy because on Friday they've got tests on Thursdays. I must also make sure that they are ready for tests. And yeah, and make sure that you know everything is needs to happen for Friday. So Thursdays are potentially the most hectic afternoons. And so in, in all honesty, I mean, I can sit. I mean, I could, I could probably work if I have meetings, I will prioritize the meetings, but if I don't, if I can catch an hour and actually do some work, I do. But it is not as stable as the morning session. And it's picking up children and it's lunch also because I don't have a helper anymore. So yeah, if I'm not properly organized, like with the lunch routine also it throws me off.

**DN:** And then from the time you started working at home from home, have you changed the way you work and if yes, how have you changed the way you work?

**Participant 28:** So I'm funny enough, I still do enjoy the flexibility that I have having changed the way that I work. So I have changed in the sense that I log on earlier. But I am also able to then do other stuff. You know, when the kids are around. And so I am not. Like as opposed to when I am sitting in the office, and I am fully in the office, and I've got office distractions at home. I do have my working time, which is strict, and then I have the time when I'm working, but distractible. So it has changed, but I'm not complaining. Like I wouldn't go back to the way it was before covid. As much as it's crazy as it sounds.

**DN:** And how do you think working from home is influenced your productivity?

**Participant 28:** Uh gosh, so I have I have. productive moments. So for me, for example, if I had an option to do flexy. And I meant to talk to somebody that I've worked with before. So you know, there is this new policy at our work were. And I know it is not offered to us, but our seniors can like work for a certain period of time in the year and then take their leave for like. Only a certain like two or three, two or three months, for example, when they are not so productive. I feel like that that kind of system would work for me because I do have. Times when to work like focus on work and then the times where I am not so needed in the office. And so I would like if I had, if I was to, to design my own working. Schedule for me to have times where I'm fully focused on work and I don't really have to focus and I don't really need to spend time away from the office and do what I need to do in the office and then when I'm not so busy at work, I can then take less time in the office and more time away from the office. If you get what I am saying. So that would be my ideal.

**DN:** I am not sure if you did answer. I was asking how does working from home influence. Your productivity.

**Participant 28:** how does working from home influence my productivity? So I would say that I am productive. But I am I could be more productive if I was able to design my own. Schedule work schedule. And when I'm in the office for example, Umm, I'm forced to work between 8 and four or eight and five. And but it doesn't necessarily mean that an on a Monday I'm as productive as on a Thursday or a Tuesday, for example.

**DN:** so it would depend on the day and the time of the day. That you are you feel you are productive.

**Participant 28:** Yes. And also project based.

**DN:** so you know, so you don't feel like working from home as necessarily increase your productivity or decrease your productivity?

**Participant 28:** Yes. Exactly.

**DN:** What type of task do you compete when you're in the office? Compete to what type of task where you would complete while at home would be? Would it be different tasks or would it be the same?

**Participant 28:** So it's the same, pretty much the difference is when I'm at the office I can print stuff, and when I'm at home and not so easily. But otherwise we are performing the same tasks.

**DN:** And then what type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 28:** When I'm at home, I've got the kids. Uhm, coming in when they come in. I have got. So those are my real, my distractions that I really cannot control. Anything else would still be there. For example, preparing dinner. getting the laundry out of the way? Everything else would still be there, it is just that I would factor it in differently into my day. Whether I was driving to the office or not. And I think I do not know if you call me if you would call my phone like the work phone ringing and distraction because that's part of work. And my cell phone could be distraction, but it still is a distraction. Distraction at work. So in the when I'm in office or not, my cell phone is an equal distraction.

**DN:** And then what type of distractions would you experience in the office?

**Participant 28:** People are coming to say hi, people, you know, coming to say hi for longer than 5 minutes. The so I would walk to the kitchen to also take a break from my desk. I do that at home, but I didn't have people distractions. And so at the office said, yeah, it's people

bumping into people. So ideally if I go to the office and I know there lots of people, I will go to the floor if I need to work properly, I will go to a floor where I know nobody is bound to find me. but at the same time, sometimes it is nice to go to the office and see people, but yes, people are my biggest distraction.

**DN:** And which environment do you find more effective working from home or working from the office?

**Participant 28:** Working from home.

**DN:** Why?

**Participant 28:** Except when I need some like practical training on something so. So I found working from a home better because I am function better at night I so I can get more stuff done at night, which is why before COVID I wanted to work from home because it just worked for me. yeah, so I'm more productive at nights as opposed to during the day I stay at I take like maybe an hour to get to wake up in the morning. That's like when I'm sitting at by my desk. So you know, if I was sitting at my desk in the office back at the workplace. Yeah, it's still take me an hour to, like, settle down, get into everything. Whereas if I'm working in the evening, I know by the time I'm sitting at 6:00 o'clock and I'm dishing out dinner, I'm in my mind the really prepare myself that when I sit down to do my work, I've got to cover 123. and it generally gets done. I am a night owl. Home works best for me.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 28:** So the benefits is I spend less on petrol for one. Yeah, as much as I was just complaining about people as they like to see people. So that is the disadvantage. And the benefits are that I get to. Use my time. More effectively to meet my own needs. So I can work when I am most productive I can work and when I know that I'm being these productive, I can actually use my time better. When I am at home so it allows me that flexibility. And if I need to like. Do a couple of push-ups to wake my body up from sitting at the, you know, at my desk for like 3 hours flat. Then I do not have anybody judging me. If I were to do that. So I think it is just that flexibility. That works.

**DN:** And then what do you see as benefits from when you work from the office?

**Participant 28:** benefits is definitely the human factor so. If I for me there are certain things that I would like to see, like with my own two eyes, and to feel so, for example, if I'm being shown a new way of doing something, I'd like to see it and touch it and feel it. And obviously on a laptop you sharing screens and that's like the best kind of experience that you can get.

So it's nice when you get to that opportunity. And attending stuff with people like, you know, when we have a big meeting in the auditorium, it's nice to be with people and. share laugh together. As opposed to the screen time where we, you know, you might, you might be, you know, laughing at somebody's joke. But because you have got your mute. On I cannot hear that the person's actually enjoying the same joke. So yes, it is those little things. And I don't think had I started my job. working from home. I would have had the same experience. As of a company, the company that I work for, for example, as I do now. I probably would have found it very cold. And very. Delivery like? Based on what, what your outcome, what is your deliverable? So that that I would have probably felt very cold.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 28:** So when it's crunch time. And I have got all my distractions. And that is my biggest challenge. Which is L and also load shedding right now. So that is my biggest challenge right now. So when I when I do have those challenges, then I have to go to the office.

**DN:** And then your biggest struggle when you work from the office.

**Participant 28:** So my biggest struggle right now is probably just getting to the office. Because usually when I go to the office, it's because I'm stranded because of load shedding. So chances are it is going to take me longer than usual to get the office because I'm driving through load shedding. And the traffic lights are a mess. so getting to the office would be my biggest challenge right now, but once I am there. I just focus on what I need to do. And it gets done usually. That's of course, when I make sure that I don't have any distractions like people, so I have to find a corner where nobody finds me, and then I will.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like? Pre covid to now?

**Participant 28:** I'm definitely working longer hours. I am. I am definitely finding that there's more expectation. Not. And I think maybe this is not necessarily on me. Maybe it's just like a psychological thing that I think people don't think you're working, so you got to work extra hard. Or extra-long or just like you know. I am definitely shutting off later if, if at all. So I have to like. And make a conscious decision like now I am shutting off when I do. And I look forward to the Fridays, because that's when I properly shut off, like during the week. I can like half shut off like because I know I work at night, so the only time I actually shut off. It's when I finish, when I close my laptop, whenever in the wee hours of the morning or whatever. And even then, it is like asleep. I do not actually switch it off. I

can you know, when you, you know, you have R.E.M. Sleep and then you have like a deep sleep. Well, I'm not sure what the technicalities are, but the different levels of sleep. So I think there's this middle like the lights shallow sleep and then the middle sleep I start dreaming about left my laptop stuff like spreadsheets and stuff. And I probably only really don't get, you know, enough quality sleep. before I have to. I have to wake up in the morning and get kids ready. So it is not very good. But that's why the weekends work best for me. So on a Friday, when I shut off, at least I shut off and then I'll come back on Monday morning. That is my real downtime. Otherwise I am pretty much working for 40 hours. No, I am lying. But it feels like that.

**DN:** So you said. You have productivity has increased because you are working longer hours now.

**Participant 28:** Productivity, so probably yes. Yes, I would say that because I am working longer hours. But especially now during covid not so much because I didn't really have that. my Portfolio kind of. dwindled a bit? But yeah, now differently working I need I need to do some work. I need to. I also feel like I need to catch up or I feel like you know I need to do it in order to feel that I'm on top of my game. Again, I don't know if I answered your question. You can ask me again, then let me see if I can do it properly.

**DN:** So what has your productivity been like before? Working from home and compared to now.

**Participant 28:** I would say I am definitely more productive at home. My productivity has increased from. Before working from home to now. But so have my hours.

**DN:** And then how satisfying is you with your work from home arrangement?

**Participant 28:** I am happy with it.

**DN:** What makes you happy with it?

**Participant 28:** that I'm not forced to go into work into the office when I don't need to.

**DN:** And then what work from home arrangement would you like? Or would you prefer?

**Participant 28:** So ideally if I could have it my way, I would. Arrange my working from home that when I know that I am I've got like it's peak time in terms of my project which I know now it might change but previously. you know when My Portfolio hadn't changed, I knew that there were times where I'd be and a lot of pressure. And then there were times when I wouldn't have so much pressure. So I would like to then know when I have pressure. Then I know that I'm going to working. A 12 hour or yeah, 12-hour day perhaps. but then

also have the flexibility that when I know I'm not under so much pressure, then it's just a normal 6 or an 8 hour day. and I can take. I would you know more time to do things for me. So that would be great for me. That would be my ideal.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

**Participant 28:** No, not really. That flexibility and working from home, you know it works for some of us. And so if we can have those, the flexibility of pushing our work to certain times in the year. And having less, less pressure when there is less pressure, less pressure to work when there's less pressure at work. Then that would be best. Project wise, it is not, it's not always. It is not for me anyway. My new role it might not necessarily work.

## 8.27 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 29:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Project Manager, Construction - Participant 29**

**Date and time: 25 October 2022 15h00**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age?

**Participant 29:** I am forty.

**DN:** your gender?

**Participant 29:** Male.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 29:** Yes.

**DN:** Do they live with you?

**Participant 29:** Yes.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 29:** Engineering and construction.

**DN:** Your function within this industry.

**Participant 29:** Project manager.

**DN:** that's within the IT sector, right within the IT, no.

**Participant 29:** No technical materials apply, so mechanical equipment.

**DN:** your level within this organization?

**Participant 29:** Middle management.

**DN:** And size of your organization.

**Participant 29:** in what aspect? People?

**DN:** How big is the organization made? A small medium large.

**Participant 29:** large

**DN:** Large over one thousand. Employees.

**Participant 29:** And in in our division now we've got about 300, but Groupwide We've got over 20,000 thing.

**DN:** Have you worked from home before COVID?

**Participant 29:** just from time to time, yes.

**DN:** So approximately once a year, once a month.

**Participant 29:** maybe two or three times a year. It was largely around home requirements. For example, if the kids were sick or something to that effect, so not frequently.

**DN:** Currently Do you work from home or from the office?

**Participant 29:** Mostly from the office three days a week in and two days a week from home.

**DN:** Do you have when you work from home? Do you have a Home Office, or do you have a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 29:** Or both. I suppose I've. I have got to study which is a fitted for. Work and study whatever I needed for its. That's a proper study space just for our computers and our books, etcetera, etcetera.

**DN:** so within your study, you have your laptop, your desk, your chair. Do you have any other? Equipment that is required for work.

**Participant 29:** printer. I've got multiple monitors and speakers, earphones that sort of thing. in trays which I keep my paperwork on.

**DN:** And do you have personal Wi-Fi or do you use a company 3G?

**Participant 29:** Personal Wi-Fi and in load shedding or not actually I have got a UPS for the Wi-Fi as well. See no, there's load shedding I am still on. But if it is an extended power outages and then I'll use my 3G card.

**DN:** And you said you have a UPS.

**Participant 29:** Correct.

**DN:** So when you work from home, what hours do you work and when you work from the office, what hours do you work?

**Participant 29:** At home don't generally keep any specific hours? As soon as I've dropped the kids off now at school and I get back home, then it's pretty much bang away. There can be anywhere between 7:00 o'clock and 8:00 o'clock. And I work until I am done, I suppose, and that can be anywhere between four o'clock 6:00 o'clock last night, for example, I was working until about 10:00 o'clock. There are no set hours I go as I need to and then when I am in the office it's typically from 8 to about 4:15, half past four.

**DN:** And then you do not log in when you go back home.

**Participant 29:** Not generally

**DN:** so when you work from home where and you work till like ten at night, is that A is that a? Does that happen often or is it maybe once a week maybe once a month?

**Participant 29:** I would say maybe 2/3 times a month. It is not very frequent. I try not to make a habit of it because it is easy to just carry on working because you've started. You don't have to pack anything up, you don't have anywhere that you have to rush off to. And when you do work from home, you're obviously make use of that flexibility to do the in between things that you wouldn't ordinarily be able to do. So silly example, if I if I need to get a load or two of laundry done, I'll get up and just pop it in the machine or something like that. So you to try and manage it within reason.

**DN:** And then do you keep a schedule when you work from home?

**Participant 29:** Not, not intentionally, no. We have to book our time in the office. On the team software. So there is an application where you book your desk, and you have to check in and check out etcetera. So on that you can retrospectively check. How much time you spent in the office but. I do not have a set schedule that I go into the office. It varies depending on. whatever I may want to do that following week or the week thereafter.

**DN:** And at home, do you keep a set schedule?

**Participant 29:** No, like I said, the two are interlinked, so. home or office? It depends on whatever my requirements are. So I have a I have a general. They are. I have general days in the office, so usually I would be in the office on Monday or Wednesday in the Thursday. And then a Tuesday and a Friday I work from home.

**DN:** when you work from home, are you usually alone?

**Participant 29:** most of the time, yes, uh. When I work from home on a Tuesday, I do so because I've got my domestic care and the gardener here, so it's just easier than come here. We do not have to leave keys anywhere. I don't have to rush from the office to come and let them out, et cetera. So it's more for convenience and the Friday I'll either interchange with the Friday or Wednesday and on those are on those days. I will be working alone.

**DN:** How do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 29:** Is a bit of a difficult one to answer. It is improved it. If anything, just because when I'm working from home, there's no interruptions, there's no chit chat. Generally that is limited. I get a lot of my admin caught up in little tasks that you never seem to find the time for when you're in the office. I managed to get done at home because. You know, I can sit down and it'll be 3-4 hours before I realized that I haven't even gotten up

from my chair, which isn't healthy, I suppose, but it just means you can get stuck in. You can focus and. Get all of those things out of the way. So in that regard it is helped. you do get a bit more focused on when you're working alone?

**DN:** From the time you started working from home, from when covid hit, have you changed the way you work when you work from home?

**Participant 29:** And how do you mean changed? What specifically?

**DN:** So I found that some people have told me they have. When they started, work was not too intense. It was bit more a because everybody was on you know, everybody's most companies weren't working and so forth, so work was a little bit more LAX. So they were a bit more lax in their attitude towards work. Some people have said no, they've what they've done is now they've set exact schedule so from. 7 till eight, they'll get up in there, do gym and whatever needs to be done, and then they'll start working from 8:00 till 10, then 10 they'll take, get up, take a walk around the garden and have a cup of coffee or something. And then 15 minutes later they are back at work, you know, things like that. Have you changed any way that you have worked?

**Participant 29:** No, not really. I am. When I work from home, I work much the same way I work at the office and for example, I do not. I do not smoke, so I don't take smoke breaks. I do not take a formal lunch break, ever. I eat when I am hungry, so whenever there could be anywhere between 10:00 and 1:00 o'clock. So whenever I feel peckish, then I'll go either go pick something up to eat, order something in and then I usually eat it at my desk. I do not even go elsewhere. And then the only difference is when I am at home. Like I said, there is less people around so. I am less likely to get up from my chair and take a walk around. And do odds and sods at home. Funny enough. You would expect it to be in the other way around, but. Generally, sit, sit still. No, I do not know what to do in the office.

**DN:** So when you work from home, is there a difference with the type of tasks you'd complete when working from home compared to the type of tasks you'd completed the office?

**Participant 29:** Yes. As I said, look, when I'm at home. It is. I catch up on a lot of admin, so it so it would generally be a lot of. going to say mail driven type work, filing, organizing. Catching up with tasks that I that I hadn't addressed in the when I was in the office, whereas at the office I'll do more of the practical stuff, so I'll get up. I'll go to the stores, I'll see what's

going on there and get some of the physical aspects of the work sorted out and I'll also do more customer visits and supplier visits whilst at the office.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you normally experience when you work from home?

**Participant 29:** very few, you know, like when I'm home and the staff are you have. They carry on doing their own thing, so it's very little. Uh. In the days that I work alone, even less. It is quiet, so there's very little and in the ways of distractions, like more distractions in the office than at home.

**DN:** So what type of distractions do you experience at the office?

**Participant 29:** Yes, it could be formal and informal. And you know, you can sit and have a chat with your colleagues and. It will just think of something and someone will make a joke or you'll get talking about something. You'll branch off and that topic will turn into something else, and that'll turn into something else and you find you. Wasted about 15 minutes on chitchat before you get back to whatever you were busy doing before that. Or it could be. More formal well, by formula mean actual work-related things where people know you're there so you get queries you get asked like you get called into random discussions about work, might not even be related specifically to what you're doing. You are just. Required for some assistance somewhere so you get a lot of bothers Interruption.

**DN:** Which environment do you find more effective than why working from home or working from the office?

**Participant 29:** I think the way it is structured now with the 60/40 split, is nicely balanced, because I can do the things that I need, the time and the focus for at home. And that will leave me a little more freedom to do the more. I do not want to call it social aspect, but more the interaction type work with your colleagues and things when you're in the office. So it is a nice balance, I've found that it works well when I don't linger long on things I can get done sooner and more effectively like administration. As well as make sure that I have touched base with suppliers, customers and my colleagues while I'm in the office.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 29:** The biggest one I would say is the focus time. Lack of distraction. The ability to sit down and get your work done. And then you are free to just plod along with that in anyone coming to bug you.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits when you work from the office?

**Participant 29:** Having the people around you know when locked down, hit with us, working in the power generation industry, we were deemed an essential service. So although we were allowed to get up and go see customers and things, a lot of them didn't allow it. And the offices were closed so. By virtue of that, we were working full time from home anyway, and after a while and when I say a while I mean literally a. Few days, maybe a few weeks. I found myself very starved for company. It is lonely. It gets quiet and I am the kind of person I need interaction. I function very well when I have. People around me and when I can have conversations and talk things out and. So I am more of a social worker, says. Being at home five days a week did kind of get to me and I found myself pulling my colleagues. For the most mundane little queries that could take about 2 minutes and then end up talking nonsense for 15. And I do that more and more often than eventually we got to a point where we could go back to the office. Umm and I started going back more frequently and that's why I say the balance we've got now works well because it's. It is a nice split. I get more than interaction time, but still a bit of time to. Knuckle down and focus in in my own space.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home?

**Participant 29:** Probably the availability of food. I find myself, eating a lot more than I should. Then when I am at the office. Yeah, the struggle is that the lack of people. I've said that the way it's structured now works it doesn't affect me as much anymore. It was it was a big struggle in the beginning, but not so much anymore. Sometimes you know you. You do have a bit of. Convenience in terms of space and office equipment that you would not ordinarily have. At home. Access to a nice big printer and scanner. I've got one at home, but it's obviously not near the quality that you would in that you would have in the office. Various stationary items. Sometimes you short something you need something. Wouldn't be typically found at home that you would find in the officer a binder? A lever arch files that something to that effect. That is about the biggest, but I mean. It has happened so few and far between. But that it does not really bug me.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 29:** The biggest struggle in the office has been interruptions. Because there are times you want to focus or you've got something to do and people demand a lot of your attention and time and. When you're in the office, it's very easy to schedule meetings. And

you get called into meetings left, right and centre and that does tend to. Happen. More. in the office.

**DN:** What has your productivity been like before COVID, to now?

**Participant 29:** I do not know. I suppose if you if you look at time spent. It has probably gotten a bit better. Before COVID, when you're in the office, you try and maintain that work life balance and you try not to work excessive hours, but. The work still needs to be done. so before COVID I would more frequently than what I do now have to work later or longer. There were many because you've got all those usual daily interruptions. The things that you go into the office planning to do, you don't always get done. Say you've got four or five tasks that you need to do that day and you only get to three of them. It doesn't change the fact that they still need to be done. So you come home and then you do whatever you need to do at home. You do whatever you need to do. You come home. Make food. Feed the kids. Get them bathed. Get them into bed and then tackle it after that. Whereas now that happens less. Because you've got that focused on, you don't run out of time as much as what you would before because you've got a bit of a split between your focus time and your Interaction time. Yes, it is not. If anything, the workload itself has increased. But it is a bit easier to manage.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 29:** And I'm very happy with it. It works nicely. If anything, if anything, just the traffic alone. Those two days. Working from home saves me about five hours a week worth of travel time. And because the trip home from work is. it has been half an hour to 40 minutes, depending on the. The level of the traffic congestion. Into the office in the mornings because I do it in peak time and have to do the school run as well. And that is minimum an hour. sorry, no, it is not five hours. It is about four hours.

**DN:** What work from home arrangement would you prefer? Would you prefer to keep the same or would you like to change it maybe three times a week we get home.

**Participant 29:** No, the way I have got it now is it suits me. Yes, because up until about. I will when? When the COVID restrictions were lifted. Now for the. final time. We were only in the office two days a week. So after they lifted the restrictions they made it, they changed it from a two day in the office, three days at home to a three day in the Office, 2 day at home structure. And that works fine for me.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have. Is there anything that you would like to add that you think I might not have touched on or you might think is relevant?

**Participant 29:** no, I do not think so. They're quite a comprehensive set of questions, covered all the aspects that I can think of. You know the psychology behind it, the practicality and. Efficiencies. That's all been dealt with that, I think.

## 8.28 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 30:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Research Manager, Education - Participant 30**

**Date and time: 07 November 2022 12h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** What is your age.

**Participant 30:** I am fifty-five.

**DN:** Your gender.

**Participant 30:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 30:** No.

**DN:** What industry do you work in?

**Participant 30:** Education.

**DN:** What is your function within this industry?

**Participant 30:** And my research manager.

**DN:** What level would you say you are at in the organization?

**Participant 30:** I have no idea.

**DN:** Junior Middle senior management.

**Participant 30:** Middle.

**DN:** What is the size of your organization? Small, medium, large.

**Participant 30:** Medium.

**DN:** Did you work from home pre covid.

**Participant 30:** No.

**DN:** Not even in cases of emergencies or anything like.

**Participant 30:** Yes, yes, yes.

**DN:** And that would happen. How often?

**Participant 30:** Now and again, if you were sick or something like that.

**DN:** Maybe once a year or twice a year.

**Participant 30:** Twice a year maybe.

**DN:** Do you work from home or from the office?

**Participant 30:** Currently I do both I have I work mostly from home remotely and I need to go to campus once or twice a week.

**DN:** So it's about three to four times a week at home and once or twice in the office.

**Participant 30:** Yes.

**DN:** Do you have when you work from home? Do you have a Home Office? Or do you have a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 30:** Dedicated workspace.

**DN:** And what is your dedicated workspace equipped with?

**Participant 30:** Obviously, a desk chair. Extra screen. Everything I need to work.

**DN:** You have a 3G provided by your company.

**Participant 30:** Yes.

**DN:** Do you have home Wi-Fi?

**Participant 30:** Yes.

**DN:** Do you have a UPS or an inverter?

**Participant 30:** No.

**DN:** What are your current working hours when you work at home? Compared to the hours you work when working from the office.

**Participant 30:** Depends on, what I am busy with, I can sometimes work 10 hours a day. When I am at home. In the office you work four to five hours.

**DN:** So on a given day, you would start work at maybe 8.

**Participant 30:** Yes.

**DN:** From the office. And then you would leave like about 1/2.

**Participant 30:** yes.

**DN:** And do you? Do you still come home and work after that, or is that the end of your day?

**Participant 30:** Yes, yes. No, I work.

**DN:** And then then do you stop like at 5:00 or do you continue working till late?

**Participant 30:** I can work until 7/8 o'clock depends on what I am doing. So with the MBA I was working till eight, but most times I try to make sure I'm finished by 6.

**DN:** Do you keep a schedule when you work from home?

**Participant 30:** No.

**DN:** When working from home, are you usually alone?

**Participant 30:** I am always alone.

**DN:** Have you Change the way you work from the time we started working from home.

**Participant 30:** Say that again.

**DN:** So you know, when we started initially all working from home and we just had to get into working from home. So we weren't prepared, and we did the best we could. So now, two years later. Looking back at that initial beginning, have you changed the way you work when you work from home?

**Participant 30:** I am still going to work, so you get up in the morning, get dressed, get ready. Prepared for go to work. So my mindset is, has not changed. I am still going to work, whether I am working from here. or whether I work from the office. The saving grace is I don't spend 4 hours a day in traffic. We much more organized. Then what we were

**DN:** Can you and can you tell me more about the organization organized? Can you expand on that a little bit?

**Participant 30:** But when we when we move. Everything online, we will all scrambling for what works online, what can be done online. We how do you have meetings and all of that. Now everything is structured you have, I am structured. Let me put it that way. you know exactly when. Meetings are planned for in the. Checking on each other and making sure everybody's fine, blah blah blah, which became quite irritating after a while, but now. You are much more structured in that. You know exactly. I've got so many days, and this is whatever I've got this to do. This must be planned and cut back on all the. Excuse me a second. All the online meetings. And we are much more productive now, I think, than what we were in the beginning, we. Because we were always online in meetings trying to see if everybody's fine and everybody's coping, which was obviously. Lock down pandemic. Everybody was freaking out, which made sense. So the freaking is over. And everybody seems to be much more relaxed. I like working from home.

**DN:** How do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 30:** Spent all that time in traffic. This is confidential.

**DN:** Yes.

**Participant 30:** And so for me, office politics does not for me. I cannot stand the office politics. So there is cheery cheery when you ever on campus doesn't bother me. So the least meetings you have to have, and the less people are. Campus itself. I was on campus on Friday, and I couldn't wait to leave.

**DN:** So for you are working from home is influenced your productivity because you haven't in a positive way because you don't have to listen to the office politics and the gossip and interact with people. You can just get on with your work.

**Participant 30:** Especially the traffic, yes.

**DN:** And interact with the traffic, yeah.

**Participant 30:** Yeah, the traffic is the nightmare especially. You know traffic lights.

**DN:** What type of task do you complete with while working from home compared to the tasks you would complete in the office? Is there a difference between the tasks?

**Participant 30:** No, it is the same work.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when working from home?

**Participant 30:** I am quite disciplined so. I think they are the biggest temptation is Netflix. And the coffee pot. But otherwise I work as if I would be at work. I take lunch. I never used to. I used to work straight through every day, and I realized three days later actually had not seen what it looks like outside. So I much more disciplined regarding that. I leave my laptop alone, I walk away. I go for a little stretch outside or something. I am much more disciplined than that, and I would not do that on campus or campus. All I do is sit in front of the laptop and work. Do not do lunch, do not take a break other than to go to the bathroom.

**DN:** And how is this different from the distractions you would experience at the office?

**Participant 30:** The office is this forever somebody wants to talk to you and I'm not a I'm. I want to work there are times to play like I would my times to play. It sounds so naughty and there is a time to have a lunch and whatever, but for me I just referred not to mingle. There were some, some people that you would mingle with. But to me work is work, so I do the same at home. Work is work. I don't even have my family over. I got work leave me alone.

**DN:** Which environment is more effective for you and why?

**Participant 30:** I think working from home. Because I can be a grumpy old cow. If I haven’t had coffee, then I don't have to be nice to anybody. And pretend, I am you. You know me well. Extremely straightforward and honest, and I don't have time for fools, and I don't do stupid. So for me, being alone at home is much more productive and less distraction. Being in the office. You have got to be nice and smile and be pleasant. I don’t have time for that.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 30:** Benefits. Number one, I do not have to be in traffic. For me, because by the time I get to the office after you've been in traffic for two hours, I'm already moerig. So then you don't want to still sit with other people's cherry cherry. So for me, I have a set discipline. I get up and make sure I start work at 8:30. Unless I have meetings that start at 9 and I work until I'm done for the day, which can end at 6:00 o'clock. Distraction is myself, so if I feel like taking off 2 hours, I take 2 hours off or whatever, but I make sure that my productivity is delivered for the day and that is the my manager as well with I'm in the office or out of the office. As long as I am productive and achieve what is expected of me, I do not need to give an account for any of my time, which I appreciate that makes my life much easier. So if I work till 8:00 o'clock tonight I know I can start at 10 tomorrow morning.

**DN:** And what do you see as benefits working from the office?

**Participant 30:** I Have become very selfish with my time. And living alone now. These four years already that I am on my own. So I have become extremely. I am good. I think selfish would be the word. In that I like being by myself and my own space and then going to the office. There are some people, obviously you still want to see. And if you can go if I can go in. To. And so the only benefit I think would maybe keeping myself sane and meeting people. But not everybody. I do not want to meet everybody.

**DN:** What is your biggest struggle when you work from home? Struggle. Or challenge.

**Participant 30:** I do not think I have any. Now and again it gets a bit lonely, but otherwise I'm cool. Maybe explain a little bit more what you mean.

**DN:** So some people have told me the biggest struggle is load shedding. Others have said exercising some have said.

**DN:** Waking up in the morning.

**Participant 30:** One thing that I. Work around the schedule so it is not really a problem. I make sure your batteries are charged and check the schedule my I do not exercise anymore. That's the if that is the biggest all I do. I literally sat behind the laptop 24/7 so. That is, I think would be my biggest. Like. Like another cup of coffee. So by the time you looked at it you have had ten cups of coffee, that type of thing. So yeah, I don't look after myself. I just work.

**DN:** And what is your biggest struggle when working from the office?

**Participant 30:** Getting to the office. I think the interruptions. Is what frustrating me the most and always has, even before I moved. To this department and is you go there to work,

you do not go there to be interrupted. That is my opinion. So that was so I think my biggest. Issue struggle.

**DN:** What? What do you think your Productivity was like Pre COVID. Compared to now.

**Participant 30:** It was much different because it because you spend so much time in a classroom. And then you actually never realized how much work is in literally, takes up your time by doing all the funny planning and whatever. And you will pursue when we switch to online, we were I found myself more productive because you spent less time running around because everything is now online. Like almost like we were, we were worrying about too much before. And then when we switched online, everything sort of fell into place much faster.

**DN:** So you say your productivity has improved because you spend less time running around planning and. physically getting stuff.

**Participant 30:** Yes. So now everything when everything is online, it is not physical. Running around is now. Everything is at the tip of your fingers. It is there if you need something, you e-mail, somebody something. You find, you pick up the phone.

**DN:** How satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 30:** Hey, very.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied with this arrangement?

**Participant 30:** I work my time, my hours, and I deliver what needs to be done. I do not have somebody standing over my shoulder and micromanaging me. And I enjoy that.

**DN:** What work from home arrangement would you prefer?

**Participant 30:** In what sense?

**DN:** So if they had to ask you, so if your manager came to you and said I know you come in once or twice. A week. We would like to change that. What would you prefer? It could remain the same as well if you wanted.

**Participant 30:** It can remain the same. I do not need to go in every week with that's arrangement. I have my both my boss, so I go. Did to be who they were the presentation. And if there is an extraordinary workshop. So my working arrangement is when needed. And I am quite happy with that. So once a week is fine, if I'm if I'm needed. Yeah, from Copenhagen. So you know, it depends on what is needed from me.

**DN:** Sorry I didn't get that line from Copenhagen. What happened there?

**Participant 30:** I spent a week on campus in August because we had a visiting professor from Copenhagen. And the boss was teaching that week. So I took over and managed the professor and all the arrangements that needs to be done for the week. But that is an exception beyond. The call of duty. Yes, just beyond the Call of Duty sort of thing. So that is not part of my job description, but Marianne was teaching.

**DN:** And that's all the questions I have. Is there anything else that you want to add?

**Participant 30:** I am working from home. You need to be disciplined. I do not think it's for everybody. I'm extremely disciplined with regards to my work ethic, so I think it works for people who are like that. I don't need people around me to make me function. And so I think. The twice a week suits everybody else that goes to campus. Has been much more productive. The only thing that downside, I think is I have become except like a hermit sort of thing. But I am I think it's also got to do with the trauma that I've been through the last few years, so. But otherwise the work from home productivity for me is. An absolute pleasure.

**DN:** I know your personal circumstances can influence you in in ways that you never thought. And thank you for bringing that in.

**Participant 30:** 2019 was the disaster, and then we went straight into lockdown. And isolation. I was alone for six months before you could see another human being. So it was extremely difficult. And coping mechanisms were coffee and bread, you know? So it also was not good. And the stress affected the disease. So it was for me, it was a. Pain in the ***. And you do not realize how much your actual health impacts your mental state. So yeah, I think people, I I'm not sure other people responded. I know I had a hard time emotionally I think I. But the side effects are still obviously they, but we will get there.

## 8.29 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PARTICIPANT 31:

**Interviewer: Daiveshni Naidoo (DN)**

**Interviewee: Financial Manager, Financial - Participant 31**

**Date and time: 24 November 2022 09h30**

**Location: MS Teams**

**DN:** what is your age?

**Participant 31:** So I am just turned forty-six.

**DN:** And your gender?

**Participant 31:** Female.

**DN:** Do you have any dependents?

**Participant 31:** Not no, no.

**DN:** What industry?

**Participant 31:** My parents, well, my parents are like dependents to me, right? I do support them and provide for them wherever I need to, but they are more dependence to my brother because they live with my brother.

**DN:** so they do not live with you then, then it's fine.

**Participant 31:** No, no, they don't live with me, no.

**DN:** what industry are you? Do you work in?

**Participant 31:** Banking.

**DN:** Of your function within this industry.

**Participant 31:** Of the financial manager within the Group Technology Finance Department.

**DN:** what level would you say you are within this organization? Junior middle senior.

**Participant 31:** with middle management

**DN:** As you use the size of your organization.

**Participant 31:** approximately 30,000 people, I would think. but GT itself, group technology is lack about just under four thousand people group technology. Where I am based, but the whole of Nedbank is like. Plus minus 30,000.

**DN:** Big organisation. It is a large organization. And pre COVID. Did you work from home?

**Participant 31:** I did work from home on odd occasions when I had stuff to be done at home and there was, you know, a I had to be there and obviously monitored the guys etcetera. But it was a very rare like probably. Once every six months or so. Once or twice.

**DN:** And now currently do you work from home or from the office?

**Participant 31:** Currently working from home. We only need to go to the office if there's like a meeting or something important or like we had a team building thing yesterday, so the whole team was at the office, but predominantly we working from home.

**DN:** And how often would you say you would go into the office? Once a month, once in two months.

**Participant 31:** Not, I would. Let us put it down to once a month and the reason why I'm saying once a month is. like I went in yesterday. Obviously to meet the team. We met last month as well, just at the office I am going in to meet my Henley Group A little bit more often, but that is additional that is not work related, right? That's just the course, but we can put it down to maybe even like. If anything, once a month.

**DN:** once a month. Do you have when you work from home? Do you have a Home Office or a dedicated workspace?

**Participant 31:** I have got a dedicated workspace, but I kind of like move around. So my nephew lives with me when he's not around. I've actually set up my desk and chair. It had my desk and chair set up in his room, but if he's not around I generally sit there or I've got a table in my kitchen that I've got my big screen set up, etc. And I sit there so I think yeah, I'm. I am comfortably set up at home. There is no issues with that.

**DN:** You're dedicated workspace. What is it equipped with?

**Participant 31:** A table. I have got my screen there, it's close to a plug point, it's. it is just simple. Just. I mean I know I've got a proper office chair, so I've borrowed the chair from the office, so I'm using that chair, so that's very comfortable as well. Yes, it is pretty much that. Just yes.

**DN:** So do you have a company 3G.

**Participant 31:** I have got company 3G, but I am using my Wi-Fi fibre. I have fibre.

**DN:** Yes, not all. And then you said you've got an extra screen, do you have like an inverter or a generator or UPS?

**Participant 31:** I have got a UPS. So what happens is the UPS only uh only basically supports the. The Wi-Fi. The fibre. Yes. So I am that doesn't cut off during load shedding,

etcetera. I haven't installed any inverters or anything. I am looking into it but not there yet. I mean it's working for me now. I'm working around the load shedding times and things like that so it's OK. Before I got the UPS, I have to tell you it was a nightmare. Because. When work gets hectic, you do not actually monitor, you know, like you forget to monitor the load shedding schedules, etcetera and thereby. you know, you get cut off or thrown off the Wi-Fi and you know, like I don't I was not very quick and not quick, but because of the, you know like the intensity of the work and being so involved etcetera, I forget to change over from Wi-Fi to 3G at that point. But with the UPS, it's such a smooth transition. I mean it just happens, you know, you don't, it's not like it drops and then connects or whatever. It is just staying on permanently. Big change.

**DN:** When you work, when what are your hours? When you work from home and what are the hours when you work from the office? What working, what hours do you work?

**Participant 31:** So before covid. It was from. 8 to 5. And you know, on the odd occasion, like during our budgeting periods and stuff like that, I come, I come back home and obviously log on because that's our busy time and you know assisting everybody etcetera, etcetera. But that was like now and then. During covid. We worked, we just worked flat out. I mean if I remember like the start of COVID, there was so many, so many things that I implemented. At that point and I ran with it through covid, and it ran so well, you know, and all of that. But I found myself. Working longer. And much harder. Working from home. Am I felt that? you know, because you are home and you, you know, you are eliminating that whole travel time. You, you know you comfortable at home. You don't have to rush around and all of that because I must say you know, although I don't look far from work but it took me at least about an hour or an hour and a half some days and to get to work and then even back you know that much longer so cutting out that time I felt like I could give back more. But giving back more. I set a precedent and. It, it became more like an expectation, you know, and yes, so I found myself working like late hours. Starting from like 7:30 in the morning, finishing like 8 / 9 / 10 / 11 / 12 sometimes and you know you, yes, the productivity was there, right? I mean things were happening you know getting acknowledged, getting recognized, winning Nedbank Award, Achiever award, all of that. But I just felt like. You know, not because you working from home and because you are allowed to work from home, you feel guilty Not putting in that extra time. I do not know. I felt a little bit guilty. I do not know about others, but I felt a little bit guilty like, you know. I am logging off. You

know, whenever I say I am, I'm like saying to myself, you know what, I am at home. I could do this. I could carry on. And that is where I lost it. You know, it just became my key focus. And I just drove, drove, drove and just carried on and right now. You know, I mean still in the same similar situation, you know like still working long hours and. I want to change that sort of.

**DN:** So what? How many hours a day do you work?

**Participant 31:** On average. I'm going to give you an average right and that's recent and like I said you, there's a bit of a changeover or transformation happening within me where I'm wanting to start at a certain time and finish at a certain time and that's it, right? I'm not quite there yet, but on average 10 to 12 hours a day.

**DN:** 10 to 12 hours, and yet in the office you were working 8 till 5.

**Participant 31:** Yes.

**DN:** And when you work from home, do you keep a schedule?

**Participant 31:** I do so I when you say a schedule, I actually. I've got this habit of, you know, and it started like. Pretty much during COVID where I keep like a like a like a like a schedule like you say and I document each of my tasks that I do for the day on that schedule I got my, you know on that same schedule on the side. I have got all my deliverables. You know, cause as I build on like I do the JSE stuff, I do the GRIR procurement report, the losses recall the Capex mandates, VIM Ariba mandates branch structure, I manage the timelines and send it out to the team. Capital commitments, suspends, accounts, losses it's just a whole lot and clean ups in between. So and as I keep a list of that on the side but day-to-day every single day I document exactly what I did do. If I had to change a mandate, I document it that I changed the mandate. If I completed the losses recons and submitted it already by then documented. So I do keep like a schedule just for my purposes. And also I'm doing so much right that I don't want. I could forget to even mention something, you know, in my whether it is my performance review or whatever it is, you know. So I keep track of every single thing that I do.

**DN:** So you and then, uh, in terms of any other schedule, so in terms of work, you've got the schedule, but in terms of like personal?

**Participant 31:** No.

**DN:** Commitments like I need to go to gym. I need to have a break at the same time. I need to do this set time. You do not.

**Participant 31:** No. I do not, but you listen, right? It has been on the cards. It's been something that I've been talking about and I want to develop like a plan to say I'm going to gym from 7 to 8. Eight I start work. I continued till about twelve. I take my lunch from 12:00 to 12:30 or whatever the case. Then I continue. I want to develop a schedule. I mean, that is my plan. That is what I'm in the process of starting to put up. Just trying to find time to get to that is an issue. But I have to have to do that. That is very important for me right now. I've been talking about it for the past few weeks, never got around to it, but, nevertheless. I am starting to make time for myself in between this business whereby. I'm making time to join like this morning. I spent 30 minutes when I got up, did a bit of exercise etcetera, etcetera, had a shower, got ready for work, sorted. So I am trying to build in that, but I want to. I want to like to formalize it like you saying have a schedule. Does this? Yeah, I want to. That is were. That is my intention to get there.

**DN:** When you work from home, are you usually alone?

**Participant 31:** Yes, usually alone.

**DN:** So your nephew lives with you, but he works from the office.

**Participant 31:** My nephew lives with me, but he goes. He was going to campus. He goes to campus; he comes back at the end of the day and there are days that he also has online lectures. Remember, with them also they transitioning right from. Purely online to being online for some courses that they could run online and others you have to be in class. You know you got to be, yeah. Present in class. So he goes for those and there is some days that he would be at home. But he sits in his room and he's out of my space. So there is it is not a disturbance. So yes. Anything.

**DN:** And then from the time you started. We started working from home, right? The way you worked then cause you alluded to it and the way you work now. Have you changed anything?

**Participant 31:** A must see it has just been. It has been hectic, hectic, hectic, hectic, hectic and I think I reached a point of burnout a couple of times but just continued. But recently burnout hit me quite bad where I'm actually. I'm actually thinking of a full all round 360 lifestyle change and that then will incorporate my schedule, etcetera. So I am looking to change. I'm not quite there yet. It's still very hectic etcetera, but my intention is to create that work life balance and that's what I'm working towards right now.

**DN:** but in your previous, in the previous question when you answered, you said you have kind of like tried to tone down your working hours. Have you succeeded in doing that, or is it just?

**Participant 31:** I have not have not succeeded in that. I'm getting there slowly but surely I'm cutting, you know, and if I'm like tired, I'm just shutting down. Unlike previously I'll go on and on and on and on until I'm like I can't really anymore and just have to shut down. But recently when I reach a point where I'm like OK it's enough now. I can pick this up later or even wait till tomorrow. Whatever the case, and I go on. You know if there's something very important, yes, I will go the extra mile and whatever. But like, like I said to you, I'm. I am working towards. Just you know, doing 8 hours a day and that is it, you know, for work purposes.

**DN:** And then how do you think working from home has influenced your productivity?

**Participant 31:** It has, you know, it has definitely influenced my productivity right that much. I am going to tell you because we put in more time and more effort and got more done. In a day that could have been stretched for a week, for example. Right, so I found myself being very productive. Very, very productive, like overly productive. You know, in terms of when COVID started and all of that, it was just because you just sat, you just focused you, you know, and you will try to shut out everything. And although this pandemic was getting to you and you know, paranoia and all of that, you just tried to. Focus on work and keep yourself busy. That was that. That was where we all where were at right. Most people were at that point were. Be just you can't forget covid or you can't. Just like you can't shut it out, but because the reality it was happening, people were dying. You were hearing of deaths and then it became closer to home and stuff like that. But I think just I didn't want to watch the news. I did not want to hear. I did not want to know. I just focused on work And that's what I think got me more consumed into work also and that's what you know, you know, you just, you just felt like, you know, like you've got all these boxes to tick and you're just ticking and moving along. OK. Done. Done. Done. I got this. I got that and it was it was so productive. Like I am saying you know. Because there is no Disturbances. If I think of the office and do not get me wrong, I'm not saying I don't like being at the office or whatever, but remember, somebody will come grab you for a coffee break. There you gone for a walk, having a coffee, having a chat. 15 / 20 minutes later, you come back to your desk, you keep going. Whatever, whatever. Lunchtime, somebody else comes and says, let

me what we having for lunch? Let us go. We go. We end up spending that hour. You are entitled an hour. Lunch break. I don't even know where a lunch break is. You know, I eat when I eat, I eat. I just carry on, even if I'm like busy, I just continue. So I think I missed that interaction. But at the same time, I just felt like, you know, like you, it made me more productive because I just focused on work, shut everything off and just kept going and just got things done. Yes. So it made me much, much more productive, definitely.

**DN:** what type of task do you complete when you work from home, compared to when you work in the office? Is there a difference in the tasks?

**Participant 31:** No.

**DN:** It's exact same.

**Participant 31:** No. So with the with the I work at home or whether I work at the office. My function, my tasks are all the same. Maybe taking on a little bit more, maybe new stuff, maybe you know, yeah, getting involved in other stuff and whatever, whatever, but that that doesn't change whether I'm at home when I'm working at work. Same thing.

**DN:** What type of distractions do you experience when you work from home?

**Participant 31:** There's not many distractions. should I say there is not many distractions. I would even feel guilty to even like go and load my dishwasher or whatever. I will wait till you know. Maybe like, uh, at a certain point where I've got a lot of work done and got, you know, it's like that was not a priority. Work was a priority. I would like sometimes just. you know, do stuff in the evening rather like I'm saying like, you know, cleaning and whatever I needed to do. So yes, I do not think distractions. No.

**DN:** so you have not experienced anything?

**Participant 31:** No, cause. Remember I'm alone right when my nephew's here. He's not even much of a distraction, right? It is it. It doesn't make much of a muchness whether he is here or Not here. Whatever. I do not. Yeah, I do not have any distractions per say, no.

**DN:** how is this? What type of distractions would you experience in the office?

**Participant 31:** Like I said, you know, like somebody coming to have a conversation with you. be it work related or non-work related. and that's conversation could go on from like 15 minutes, 20 minutes to half an hour to an hour, you know? And whatever. I am not. Yeah, I do not want to say. It is distractions. Because sometimes, like, you know, you engage in conversations and you know, you could be work related. It mainly works related and then you just start talking and talking and you know like I said your time just runs out. It is like

A and like you know like somebody coming and just grabbing you, you know, going for a coffee and then you got down to the canteen and half an hour later you back up and whatever. But I was always that person to try and catch up that time. If I felt that, do you know what, I spent too much of time there. I need to go home and catch up or whatever. And this and that and whatever, I'll do that. You know because I know. It was company time, you know. I do not know if I answered that question.

**DN:** And then in which environment do you find more effective homework?

**Participant 31:** It would depend right? I find for me now working from home is effective because like I said, I can focus, you know, no distractions, etcetera and just keep on going but I also feel sometimes like. we've got teams and we've got we have our meetings on teams and stuff. But I'm saying sometimes like you know, to just get to that, get to the office, have that meeting collaborate, clear out issues, get to the point and it's quicker easier. You know, sometimes you don't, you know, like. I know teams' meetings works right? And it works very well. But sometimes you can go around in circles. You know you're not getting the point of trust. But if you in a room in in person. Get your points across. Make it known whatever the case and get the feedback and whatever. Then you're able to also see body language and how they receiving it and all of that because on teams you're not always on camera, right? So it's difficult to see all of those things. So I think it depends on what if there's a big issue to be resolved. I think. Meeting in at the office with the team or whoever it is that you need to resolve, I think that's a better option. But if it's your normal day-to-day activities you much more effective at home. That is why I am saying. It depends on, you know, the situation.

**DN:** You know what you are doing and what you are trying to achieve.

**Participant 31:** Correct.

**DN:** What do you see as benefits when you work from home?

**Participant 31:** there's a lot of benefits like I'm going to repeat some of the things that I might have said earlier, right. Are you able to focus right? Another thing is remember we I spoke about the travel time. So take out the travel time. I mean the most frustrating thing for me was sitting in traffic I. That is the most, most frustrating thing I can ever do. Is sit in traffic. So for me there's a big benefit to work from home. Very, very big benefit. And then remember it's you saving the costs with petrol price going up. So we are saving on petrol. You know when we out there as well, we tend to like, go out for lunch a few times in the

week. That is also costs involved. I am. I'm not saying that I don't order will be easier at home or whatever I do that still. So maybe there's still that cost, right. But I think from a focus perspective. cutting out the travel time? Big, big benefit for me and I feel, you know, like you know, that whole rush of like having to, like, get up early to beat the traffic and to get out there and then you know you still end up sitting in traffic by the time you get to work, you got to go and set up yourself and all of that. I think it's such a big benefit being at home you already got yourself set up in a certain spot all you need to do is go to that spot and. Continue. Well, have your shower wash your face. Do whatever you need to do in the morning. Exercise. Whatever. Like I did this morning and then. Straight to your laptop and thereafter you continue. I tried to like take breaks every now and again but at some point it was so hectic. My nephew will even tell me I don't know how you do that because he'll see me not even coming to have lunch. He will make something. and you know, lucky he's been around also, so it helps with, you know, like at least still go and cook. You tell me. I'm going to take out mince, take out this, take out that and at least he cooks. And it's good for him also, because he's UM. He has to become independent and it's a learning thing for him and he loves cooking. He loves watching the master chef and all of that. So that's good thing and yes. I think Like I said you it there are lots of benefits, lots of benefits. But I think with the way some of us work. The how can I say? The burnout outweighs the benefits. You know, with the way you know, we work in extended hours and the extent like I know sometimes you come, he will tell me. It is so late now. You should log off, you know, and. Like some of my friends will come to visit and I'll be still, you know, online or just wrapping up something. Some of them are almost want to like take my laptop and shut it off because they're telling me you work too hard. You just need to you need to switch off. You cannot go on like this. And that's why I said to you, I'm getting to a point where I need to create this work life balance and I'm I will get there before the new year. I will get there.

**DN:** And then what do you see is benefits when you work from the office?

**Participant 31:** I think you know; you know what I find as a big benefit right at the office that I cannot that there. I think it's a little bit harder at home. Is let us say you busy with something. It's so much and you need some sort of guidance or even input or want to have a discussion with somebody. Be it your boss or be it your boss's boss or. One of the managers in the office or you know whoever it is? I think that that's a big benefit because you would just walk up to them right and ask them, you know, can I do you have 5 minutes for me?

And if they do not, they'll tell you come back. If they do, they will say. Yes, yes. Come, let's chat, you know. And then you, like, put your point across and discuss what you need to do. Get the clarification, get the feedback, whatever and move on. What I find that's a big benefit. From working at the office. Why? I'm saying it's a big benefit from working at the office is. I find that working from home, you obviously looking for somebody because you want to ask for advice so there you go, you go onto teams, is Daiveshni available, let me see, no she is in a meeting. Is Colisha available No, she is in a meeting, Iolanda? in a meeting. And then you kind of like. Want to know? Something about whatever the topic or whatever you looking at that point, you want to know about it they and then, right, but you obviously looking in you seeing everybody's busy or not or they're away or whatever the case and can't get a hold of them. It kind of delays me because now I need to put that aside until I could speak to somebody you know or when somebody is available and then you know like you just get on to something else and keep on moving and then maybe check later if the person is available. It is just for me. That's. Yeah, that's the only thing that I would say is a big benefit that you could walk up to somebody and just get an answer out of them. There and then because sometimes even if you call somebody on teams and even if they green and they are available, they don't necessarily answer, right. They could be in the middle of something or whatever. So I yes that that for me would be one of the biggest benefits of working from the office.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when you work from home? From everything that you said, is switching off.

**Participant 31:** My biggest struggle is. Switching off. You took the words out of my mouth. I was just about to say my biggest struggle with working from home is switching off. It is just putting that laptop off and putting it away. but you know I have to tell you OK, on the course the on the days we were on the course, right. I tried to shut off work, which was something that I could not do in the first two blocks. Right. so there was a little bit of a change where I said I'll deal with that when I need to. But when I was in a break and if I had time and something came through because remember certain things that I deal with there's SLA's that are. basically attached to them, right? So if it's not done in a day, you get escalated or 24 hours, 48 hours or whatever. So approval of mandates and stuff like that, those kinds of things I'm talking about. So if I saw you know, I shouldn't be having my emails open, but. I did have it open on the side and when something important came, I said no, I need to

deal with that during the break. I didn't focus on it because I wanted to be present in class, right, but. During the break, I'll go and I'll do whatever I need to do and that then also got added to my task list. You know, I told you, I keep a task list, so I added that too because I'm on day one. ACMP block 3. That's exactly what My thing is, for the whole day, but then below that as I did stuff. And like I said, some of them were like SLA, uh, you know, related and some of them were like deadline, you know, they were deadlines attached to them and had to be done by a certain thing. Time like suspense accounts recons. And that was slam bang in the middle of my first day, first two days of classes. So there was that element where I had to like after hours do XY and Z or get my team to actually just follow up for me and make sure everything is done or whatever. It's not the ideal, but yeah that, that, did happen, you know. But I must say, I've been better this block. it was long days. It was tiring days. Yes, we met with our Henley Group for a short while. Couple of days for a long. Couple of you know for a long time, maybe an hour and a half some days, but after that was done, I shut down I didn't even want to go back and say, I got this. I got that where things were not urgent. Previously urgent or not urgent, I would deal with it. Now I just look at the urgent stuff and take it from there.

**DN:** And then what is your biggest struggle when you work from the office?

**Participant 31:** Biggest struggle? You know what Division I don't think there's any struggle as such, but I think that that, that frustration of sitting in the traffic and you know, you get to work and you all are flustered. Now if you there was an accident or something or you traffic build-up or whatever the case that you sat there for an hour and a half or two hours. Sometimes I think that frustration, you know, obviously now you need to go to the office. Calm yourself down from being sitting in traffic and what but. I cannot think of any struggle. But see. But like I said, you are maybe the build-up of the traffic and sitting in there before you get to the office then yeah, I can't think of any. Any struggle Because remember, it was easier right? When it is 5:00 o'clock. You are shutting down and you have gone. There is no saying no. I need to wait. I need to do this. I need to. Now. You have gone. Gone. So I don't know. Struggle per say. I think being in traffic and then that build-up of like getting to the office and you know that was struggle.

**DN:** The so the frustration of traffic. As such we could say. And then. Pre-covid what was your productivity like compared to now?

**Participant 31:** My productivity was also very high, pre-covid. still worked a lot. Still worked very hard. And all of that, but not to the extent that it. That it happened during COVID and like I said to you. There was like a there was so many things implemented. Slam bang in the middle of COVID hard lock down and having to like manage all of those things and all of that so. Definitely the productivity was there. always been. A hard worker and that never changed right, but I think this having that flexibility of working from home and stuff. We took it to another level. Took it to an absolutely another level, so like I said to you, I have always been productive, always got things done, always met deadlines and whatever. Even prior to covid. You know always that go to person, you know. Lot of reliance placed on me by the team, et cetera, et cetera. But covid, yeah, we took it to another level and you know at that point in time it could be also used as a as a as a as a distractor. because remember. COVID was like new, and it hit us and it was like. You know, like at point we felt, are we going to come out of this? You know? I mean, I'm stuck here. I am not even with my family. And, you know, it was it was scary. But I think the distraction was just to focus on work. Just focus on work and get your mind occupied. Like I said to you. In doing that, we took it to another level, to an extreme level. Some of us. I'm not saying everybody, but a lot of people took it to way beyond where they went. Some people maybe even went from like zero to 100, you know. like with me? I've always been productive, but covid made me. You know it. Yeah, it went extreme.

**DN:** but you increased your working hours too.

**Participant 31:** As well, Correct. So the more working hours, the more productivity obviously right, so yeah.

**DN:** And then how satisfied are you with your current work from home arrangement?

**Participant 31:** Very satisfied. Very, very good.

**DN:** What makes you satisfied?

**Participant 31:** I think the comfort of being in my own space. like I said, you not having to be out there being the traffic and get frustrated and all of that and get hot and bothered and all of that. I think being in the comfort of my home. I could. I am like, so comfortable.

**DN:** And then what work from home arrangement would you like? So it could be the same, it could be less time in the office, it could be more time in the office. What work from home arrangement would you like?

**Participant 31:** I think I would like to continue as is but build in my work life balance now. That's where I need to transition now you know and that's what I'm working towards. But currently the situation I'm in, that's where I want to be just creating that work life balance that's my main goal now. Moving towards that. And I'm not saying it's going to drop my productivity. But you know, I feel like you sometimes become like a like a, you know, I have always been a workaholic, right? But to become like a zombie because you eat. Think dream work. And that should not be the case, because you doing so much of work and it's like so many hours a day that you just sitting in front of that laptop. And you know. You even start dreaming it. You know, like this excel that excel it is. Yes, it becomes crazy.

**DN:** That's all the questions I have. Is there anything that you would like to add?

**Participant 31:** Not really. We are pretty much covered. Everything relating to their working from home and stuff. I do not, I. Yeah, no, there's nothing else. And I mean now with Nedbank. You know, with this whole hybrid. way of working. they now obviously, you know, making people more comfortable at home. this started from the beginning where they, you know, allowed people to borrow chairs to buy chairs or whatever the case. And now they even providing, like fire extinguishers and. What you call this safety kits, first aid kits or whatever the case. So they actually making it more conducive for you to work from home. You know, I mean, fortunately. I am not client facing, right? So I do not, I don't need to see clients and stuff. So ideally working, yes. Yeah, I don't know where I stopped, but I'm saying Nedbank, I don't know where I stopped, but let me just repeat it. Right. So Nedbank now is like making it more you know like for people that have chosen the hybrid model, they actually make it more conducive for people to work from home. They've now giving people like first aid kits and fire extinguishers and even from the beginning, like I said they like allowed us to borrow chairs from home. From work you know to, to be able to be comfortable because not everybody had comfortable chairs at home. And remember, you cannot sit on a normal chair and work the whole day. Any like a normal dining room chair or whatever the case, you can't. It is not ideal. You end up with back pains and whatever and whatever, so I think overall I think Nedbank is trying to, to, to make it more comfortable for people as well from a safety perspective and all of that. Fortunately for me, I'm not in, I'm not client facing. So I don't need to go into the office, you know. That's I think that's it for me.