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**VOCATIONAL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES
ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY, AND
WELLBEING IN REMOTE WORK DURING
COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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ABSTRACT

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The Covid-19 pandemic effected and changed the world in the late 2019. Due to the worldwide pandemic organizations all over the world had to face new challenges and cope with the fact, that employees were forced to switch to remote work to restrain and prevent the pandemic from spreading. Educational institutions were similarly affected by the pandemic, and educational institutions were faced with a new challenge of remote teaching. This thesis concentrates on vocational education, and vocational teachers experiences during their time working remote.

This master's thesis aim was to research Tredu vocational schools' teachers on their experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research was conducted as a qualitative study, where the research material was collected through eight thematic interviews, which were conducted with Tredu vocational teachers in April 2022 through Microsoft Teams and in person.

The research material was then analysed through the principals of theory-based content analysis. The theoretical concepts of theory-based content analysis were based on previous research and Ramos (2008) model of wellbeing.

The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on information about vocational education, occupational health, safety and wellbeing aspects, and highlights previous research on remote work and wellbeing. The theoretical part of the thesis also introduces the most important legal context on the subject.

The results show that remote teaching in vocational education has both positive and negative traits and effects on teachers' occupational health, safety and wellbeing. Overall, the positive aspects outweighed the negative and the vocational teachers in Tredu have primarily seen remote teaching as a positive experience.

Keywords: occupational health, safety and wellbeing, vocational education, Covid-19, remote work, online teaching, teachers

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the world and the ways in which we work. Due to the worldwide pandemic that started in the late 2019 several organizations have faced great new challenges and obstacles. One of the largest changes has been the switch to remote work. In March 2020 the Finnish council of state recommended organizations to enforce remote work for their employees to restrain the Covid-19 virus from spreading. Inquiry in the year 2020 stated that before the coronavirus only 5,5% of Finns worked remote daily, and after the pandemic had started 60% of Finns had switched to remote work. (Eurofund 2020). Employees have needed to adapt to the new homeworking practices almost overnight. Additionally remote work has caused changes in workload and work design, ranging from unemployment for some, and increased workloads for others. Consequently, occupational safety and wellbeing has risen on the agenda for organizations, and they have gone to great efforts to support their employees on this transition.

Distributed working and remote work have brought new innovative ways and benefits to work, and thus the way of remote working will most likely continue in the future. Remote working has also brought new challenges and difficulties for the organizations and the employees to face and deal with. Remote work certainly has effects on occupational health, safety and wellbeing, especially as the Covid-19 forced organizations and individuals to remote work without any prior experience on remote working.

Education and teaching are one of the main pillars of this society and educational work had to continue despite the effects of Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers were one of the professional groups which were highly affected by the pandemic. The government in Finland declared a state of emergency on the 16th of March 2020 and decided that additional measures for containing the outbreak of coronavirus were needed. The government decided that the premises of educational institution facilities would be shut down, and in-person teaching would be temporarily suspended. Instead of contact teaching the educational units had to organize alternative teaching methods including remote teaching, use of digital learning environments and self-learning. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2020).

The pandemic situation and exceptional circumstances continued and varied over the year 2020. Even after the Finnish government revoked the state of emergency on the 15 of June 2020, the recommendations for remote work stayed and affected the educational units. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2020).

Research conducted by OAJ (2020) stated that the switch to remote work has had burdening effects on teachers' wellbeing and health. The research states that teachers have experienced growth in workload, sense of urgency and increase in interruptions during their remote workdays. The burden and challenge of remote work has especially affected the teachers in vocational education units, as vocational education has parts that cannot be taught remotely (Eduskunnan tulevaisuusvaliokunta 2020.)

Additionally, research on occupational health and wellbeing of teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic raised the teachers' challenge to establish good cognitive and social presence with their students during remote teaching. Also, previous research show that teachers' wellbeing is affected by the lack of proper pedagogical strategies and online teaching tools to use with their students causing stress and frustration. (Rannastu-Avalos & Siiman 2020). Previous research also highlights the importance of teachers' individual traits concerning stress resistance and problem coping mechanisms. Teachers with good resilience and problem coping mechanisms handled remote work better. (Ciuhan et al. 2022).

Remote teaching and its effects on teachers' occupational health, wellbeing and safety has been studied plenty, but I haven't found research specifically targeted and focused on vocational institutions and vocational teachers. Therefore, this research aims to find and describe vocational teachers experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work.

This research is conducted as a qualitative case study. The case I am focusing on this research is Tampere Vocational College (TREDU), and the aim is through semi-structured thematical interviews describe TREDU vocational teachers experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during Covid-19 pandemic.

1.1 Aim of this study and research questions

This study explores the phenomenon of vocational teachers working remote during the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers faced with the sudden change to adapt from their norms and accustomed work patterns and processes into obligatory remote work. The research focus is on occupational health, safety and wellbeing of remote workers, and the positive and negative experienced they have faced during their time working remote. The thesis will give more insight on the possible problems, difficulties and benefits the remote workers have experienced during their time working remote. The main aim is through phenomenological thematic interviews gain more detailed understanding of the difficulties and benefits of working remote as a teacher in a vocational education unit. The information gained through the experiences of the teachers can be analyzed and used by organizations and employers to enforce their safety management and leadership methods to ensure the health and wellbeing of their remote workers.

The objective of this research is to answer the research question: What are vocational teachers' experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Vocational education in Finland

The Finnish education system has a compulsory education requirement, meaning that compulsory education ends only after the person is 18- years old or has completed a secondary degree. (Opetus- ja kulttuurivallisuuslaki 2020). This means that compulsory education continues after elementary school, and the students must continue education in high school or alternatively in vocational institution, to achieve the secondary degree. This research focuses on vocational education. Vocational education and training can be defined as education, which purpose is to produce strong vocational competence and support lifelong learning and professional development. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2021).

Vocational basic degree gives competence to apply for employment after graduation and additionally grants the qualification to apply for postgraduate studies for example to university or university of applied sciences. In vocational education you may complete the basic vocational degrees as well as professional and specialized vocational degrees. Moreover, it is possible to only complete parts of a degree, participate in preparatory training or other vocational training. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2021). Vocational education consists of several different fields of study, and as of 1.1.2023 has 42 different vocational basic degrees, 64 professional degrees and 54 specialized degrees. (Opetushallitus 2023).

The basic vocational degrees are designed for young students after elementary school, or for immigrants and adults who may not have any formal prior degree or qualification, or they wish to change their profession. The basic vocational degree consists of compulsory parts, which contain mathematical and natural science skills, communication and interaction skills, social and working life skills, all to learn the basic skills for working life and postgraduate studies. The compulsory parts are mandatory for every student. In addition to the compulsory parts, the student chooses optional studies by which they specialize in one certain field or industry according to their own interests. The optional studies may then concentrate in for example healthcare, and the student graduates as a practical nurse. The voluntary degree parts will concentrate on the specialization. (Opetushallitus 2023) Further the professional and specialized vocational degrees are designed for people who have prior work experience or have completed the basic vocational degree and want to update their skills or specialize on a certain aspect in their field, for example a practical nurse may achieve a degree in

elderly care through professional or specialized vocational degree. (Cedefop 2019, Opetushallitus 2023).

The students have the possibility to choose and apply to these different degrees based on their interests, competences, and motivation. The degree programs will be individually built, and every individual will have their own individual study plan and path constructed to achieve the best outcome for the individual. The degree in vocational education can be completed in such fields as humanistic and arts field, business and administration, natural sciences, technical, agriculture and forestry, social services, health care and service industry. (Opetushallitus 2023).

The strength of vocational education is the combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application. The vocational education offers refined learning, training and experience on specific areas and emphasizes developing practical skills that can be applied in the future workplace. Students learn through classroom lectures, simulated events and environments, and on-the-job training. These approaches enable students to attain industry-specific skills and competence to effectively use in the future. (European commission 2019)

Furthermore, the vocational institutions and the Finnish national Agency of education work and collaborate closely with multiple employers and industries to ensure that vocational education and acquired skills meet the demands of the modern-day working life. (European commission 2019)

2.2 Teachers in vocational education

This chapter will define the eligibility and job description of teachers in vocational education units. Teachers are in a crucial role for enabling the students best possible learning experience and skills to succeed in postgraduate studies and working life. The vocational education teachers' job description varies from other teaching professions. Firstly, the qualification for vocational teachers is different compared to other teaching professions. The qualification requirement for teachers in vocational education is defined: the person must have completed a university degree that is suitable for the teaching task, who has completed at least 60 credits or 35 study weeks of teachers' pedagogical studies, who has at least three years of practical work experience in a position which is similar to the content of the teaching position, who has a qualification or a license, if the specific field requires a qualification. (Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista 14.12.1998/986, Opetusministeriö 2006). Secondly the vocational education special features arise from the fact that

the teachers must prepare the students for real life work meaning, that the education consists of practical and theoretical teaching. In addition, the vocational education consists of on-the-job periods, where the students are learning the working life skills in an actual workplace. This broadens the vocational teacher's role as an educator as they must establish connections and cooperation outside the educational institution. Moreover, the teachers have contact with the workplaces and the students during on-the-job periods to evaluate the learning outcomes, and to ensure the student achieves the proper education and skills at the workplace. This increases the workload as the teachers must negotiate and discuss with outside entities of the premises and learning objectives for their students, as well as keep contact with their students at the workplace. Also, frequently changing working habits and skills mean that the teachers must themselves keep up with the changes, methods and needs of working life by keeping their own expertise and skills up to date. The teachers may update their skills through in-service training, keeping up with the working life, and working and cooperating with outside enterprises. (Opetusministeriö 2006, Cedefop 2019).

Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta (2017) defines the basic frame for the purpose and duties of vocational education and the obligations the vocational education institutions have. The legislation also defines the student rights and defines the teachers work. The legislation states that the students have the right to receive teaching and guidance in different learning environments, which fulfills the requirements for the set objectives to complete the degree. Additionally, the students have the right to gain the needed counseling, feedback and support during the degree. The legislation also states out the obligations for safe and healthy study environment.

As the legislation states, the teachers' job description is manyfold, and they have a lot of responsibility to achieve these obligations. The main responsibility of vocational teachers is to teach practical and theoretical knowledge on the subject at hand in different teaching environments, for their students to gain the proper skills and learning to achieve the set objectives for graduation stated through the legislation. (OAJ 2018, Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta 2017).

The legislation on vocational education also states the important part of personalization of the studies. Besides teaching the vocational education teachers has the responsibility to prepare an individual personal study plan (HOKS) for their students. The personal study plan is prepared together with the student according to their interests and hopes for the studies. When planning the study plan the teacher and student should take into consideration the student's study objectives, career plans, prior experience and studies, and also the student's personal situation. (OAJ 2018, Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta 2017).

As the vocational education has experienced changes and reforms the teachers' job description has become more versatile and more student oriented. As the new changes in the legislation on vocational education came to force on the 1.1.2018 the work of vocational teachers has moved to more personal direction and the teachers may be seen as mentors to their students, and the teaching has become more personalized and work oriented. The teaching does not only happen in a classroom, but also at the workplace and through remote teaching. The vocational teacher's job involves preparing the personal study plan, assessing learning and skills of their students all the way to graduation, giving guidance, supporting and giving feedback throughout the studies. The personal study plan has forced teachers to understand and identify the personal traits of their students, so they may direct and support them until graduation. (Mäki et al. 2015, Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta 2017).

In summary vocational teachers' job description involves planning, preparing, implementing and evaluating teaching, preparing and evaluating the personal study plans, preparing and evaluating student work practice periods, having close contacts and networks with outside enterprises and work markets, and updating and keeping their own expertise up to date. (Opintopolku 2020).

Heinilä et al. (2018) research confirms and highlights the versatility of vocational teachers' job description in today's world. The research shows that the competence requirements for vocational teachers include competence in personalized study planning, work-network and customer service expertise, guidance skills and the capability to adapt into new ways of teaching. In addition, Heinilä et al. (2018) highlight the importance of managing one's own work and having the ability to develop and understand the changes in today's internationalization and digitalization.

Now the Covid-19 pandemic happened and brought new challenges into vocational teaching. This research will explore the teachers' occupational health, safety and wellbeing experiences during remote work during and after the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

2.3 Remote work

The possibilities for working have increased with the development of information and communication technology. Computers, mobile devices, and the internet are commonly used in every industry, and the work is no longer tied to time, place, or presence as it used to be. The shift from the industrial age to a more digitalized setting has changed the way we view things, moving away from more mechanical viewpoints to more organic ones. This has led to increased flexibility in organizational structures and practices. (Vilkman 2016; Pulley & Sessa, 2001). Even before the Covid-19 remote working was steadily growing globally across multiple sectors. Although remote work has been steadily growing, the decisions to work remotely have been voluntary. As the Covid-19 pandemic started and accelerated, organizations were forced to put their employees remote to detain the spreading. Even organizations that were not equipped with proper tools to promote remote work were forced to put their workers remote. (He et al., 2020).

The concept of remote work or distributed work has been defined in various ways and does not have a certain established definition. In English literature the term “telecommuting” and “telework” are largely used terms, and they are coupled also with terms like distributed work, virtual work, and homeworking. (Duxbury & Higgins 2002). The term “etätyö” is mainly used and accepted term for distributed working in Finnish literature.

Today remote work, according to Cambridge dictionary means: “the practice of an employee working at their home, or in some other place that is not an organization’s place of business”. Työturvallisuuskeskus (2017) defines remote work as flexible, voluntary work that is based on agreement and rules with the employer and is performed outside the employer’s premises.

2.4 Occupational health and safety

Occupational health and safety (OHS) can be seen as large entity affecting and concerning organization internally and externally. The main objective of OHS is to preserve and protect the human resource in the workplace by promoting and maintaining physical, mental, and social well-being of workers. OHS aims to ensure the upkeep and advancement of workers’ health and working capacity. In addition, it aims to improve working conditions and working environment which in turn promotes occupational health and safety. (WHO 2022). Worker health and wellbeing is defined also

as:” a state of individuals’ mental, physical, and general health, as well as their experiences of well-being both at work and outside of work”. (Danna & Griffin 1999)

The development of work organization, working culture and OHS is undertaken through voluntary and legal actions including for example: effective safety management, safety leadership, safety management systems, personnel policy, principles and instructions for processes and practices all aiming to improve the organizational occupational health, safety and wellbeing. (WHO 2022).

OHS is a comprehensive concept around the security and safety of the organization including the health and safety of the working environment, workplace, and individual employees. This thesis concentrates on vocational teachers experiences on the physical, social, and psychological wellbeing during remote work.

OHS in vocational education units have been studied in recent years. The safety and health features concerning vocational education have changed a lot and become more and more versatile due to the ever-growing job description of vocational teachers and employees. The most growing occupational health and safety risk in vocational education units is the growing threat and fear to personal safety. Research conducted by OAJ (2019) stated that 4% of vocational teachers had experienced physical violence during the last year. Research conducted by Mykkänen et al. (2020) also raises the issue of physical and mental violence against vocational teachers. The teachers in the research stated that the issues are growing, and they must deal with threatening situations and verbal abuse more and more during their workdays. Research also points out the burden of teachers and vocational institutions employees’ demand to intervene in misconduct, misbehaving students, and violent situations between other students. The research highlights the issue of teachers handling these cases alone or with a colleague without involving their supervisors nor the institutions. This may burden the teachers’ coping mechanism more as they try to deal with the issue alone. The teachers have learned to tolerate and accept this kind of actions and behavior. This kind of behavior may unburden the institution, but it does not necessarily fix the problem, as the institution may not be aware of these situations. In the long run it effects the coping and health of the teacher and ultimately affect the performance of teaching at the institution.

The reasons for the growing instances of physical and mental violence against teachers can be explained for example by the youths’ growing mental health problems, increased use of drugs and other intoxicants, growing challenges concerning multi-cultural issues and increase in harassment and hate speech coming through from social media. In addition, the vocational institution reforms have changed employee job descriptions to more versatile and more student and job-orienting meaning that the safety and security management has also shifted. (Liljeroos et al. 2018).

As mentioned, the vocational educational institutions and trainers have encountered a lot of changes in past years including reform to more personalized and job-oriented direction, diminishing of finance, digitalization and decrease in personnel. These changes have modified the teaching structures and procedures. (Tappura & Pulkkinen 2019). Research has shown that these changes have affected the wellbeing of the employees in vocational education as the job description, competence and development standards have shifted and increased, causing psycho-social risks due to stress and experiences of overburdening. (Tappura 2017) The stress, workload and role overload have negative OHS effects, which influences the teachers' ability to work.

Other OHS risks and effects concerning vocational education providers have been studied by Tappura et al. (2017). The study reviewed the possible workload factors among vocational education employees. The results state that the mental load was the biggest factor concerning employee occupational health and safety. The mental load was typically caused by excessive amount of work, sense of urgency, conflicts at the workplace, failed leadership, and constant changes at the workplace. Surveys conducted by the regional state administrative agency (AVI) in 2015 and by Lehto et al. (2015) show similar results. The reports state that employees and teachers suffer from mental burden caused by workload, insufficient support from supervisors, sense of urgency and from conflicts inside the workplace. Other OHS issues pointed in AVIs (2015) and Lehto et al. (2015) reports were problems with working environment, indoor air problems, accidents and issues related to machines and equipment. The research also raised the psychosocial issues caused due to harassment and from the threat of violence through students, parents, and colleagues.

2.5 Wellbeing, safety, and health

Theoretical basis for this thesis is built around health, safety and wellbeing of the employees, and the thesis aims to give the organization valuable information about the experiences the remote workers have experienced during working remote. The information may be used to improve organizations safety management and -leadership to ensure better OSH for their remote workers.

Research on wellbeing and health of employees has evolved greatly in the past hundred years. In the 1900 century the occupational safety and health was more focused on improving the conditions and working environment to reduce the number of work accidents. The concentration was on building safer equipment and working habits to prevent injuries. In the 21st century more and more organizations have concentrated on the working community, individuals, and promotion of wellbeing, and the research is increasingly based on psycho-social factors and stress. The employee's wellbeing and health is seen as a valuable aspect and a key strategic factor in the organization's success. (Manka 2012).

To improve well-being at work and remote work, we need to understand the basics of employee safety, wellbeing, and healthy work. This chapter will examine previous research, theories and models for individual wellbeing, health, and safety.

Several studies have been conducted on occupational wellbeing of teachers, revealing that teacher wellbeing is affected by various internal and external factors. Main components raised by studies affecting teachers' wellbeing has been associated with resilience (Beltman, Mansfield & Price 2011), personal characteristics (Yerdelen, Sungur & Klassen 2016), work engagement (Hallberg & Schaufeli 2006) and teachers' motivation and passion (Moe 2016).

Teachers' resilience has been recognized as an important part of keeping teachers in their professions. Studies indicate elevated rates of early retirement among educators, which has led to suboptimal student outcomes as a consequence of early retirements and lack of motivation among teachers. (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2005). Resilience can be seen as the mechanism of adapting to the impact of stress. Recent studies have shown that teacher resilience is a fluctuating concept which is influenced by personal, relational, and organizational atmosphere in which they work in (Gu & Day 2013). Personal factors play a major role in teacher resilience. These factors include teachers' motivation, moral, self- efficacy, flexibility, and sense of humor.

Additionally important factors on developing and maintaining teacher resilience are effective administrative actions and peer support. (Price, Mansfield & McConney 2012). These actions are important in ensuring teacher wellbeing, and further affecting the level of education.

Work engagement has also been researched to have a meaningful effect on teachers' well-being and coping at work. Work engagement is tied with instructional performance of the teachers. For ensuring teachers' wellbeing research has shown that creating challenging learning situations and successfully guiding their students in the learning processes has positive impacts on teacher wellbeing. Research also highlights important factors such as well-established and well-structured teaching environment with low disturbance levels and effective time management (Emmer & Stough 2001), enabling students to innovate and create new insights (Turner et al. 1998), have the skill to proceed at an appropriate pace in learning for students to learn and internalize and finally to have a supportive atmosphere at the classes (Ryan & Powelson 1991).

Teaching, studying, and learning during the Covid-19 amongst students, families and teachers have been researched, and the most relevant information has been collected and summarized by Gehrler et al. 2022. The concept of teaching and studying changed rapidly during the pandemic. Teachers were challenged to change and adapt their teaching styles and methods. The main aspects concerning wellbeing and positive outcomes highlighted the importance of regular contacts between teachers and students during the remote periods. Also, for teachers' occupational wellbeing the research highlighted the important aspect of organizational and colleague support, and regular contacts and discussions with other teachers. The research showed challenges for teachers to ensure students keeping up with the learning progress, and maintaining contact with each student, and making sure everyone was attending classes and paying attention. (Schneider et al. 2021, Spicksley et al. 2021) The research showed that teachers with strong collective identity could better cope with the lack of collegial support and the challenges of remote teaching. The research showed that teachers' wellbeing and job satisfaction was high during the early stages of the pandemic but declined as the pandemic and lockdowns prolonged, which highlighted the importance of resilience, support, and individual characteristics.

Considering the occupational wellbeing and health of vocational teachers and educators' professional competence was seen as one of the main factors effecting occupational wellbeing and health. The vocational educators felt that when their professional competence was on high level and updated, they felt more satisfaction in their personal and work wellbeing. Through high level of occupational competence, they felt that they were in control and was able to utilize and share their

knowledge and skills. This had a positive impact on the teachers' wellbeing. Additionally, the occupational teachers felt that the suitable demandingness of their work had positive impact on work wellbeing and health. The teachers stated that when the work was demanding and challenging but they were able to cope with it they felt most satisfaction. (Hyvärinen et al. 2017)

Factors influencing work wellbeing have been researched a lot and multiple different models and theories have risen to explain and explore the factors effecting work wellbeing. One of the most recent and highly used is the Job Demands-Resource model (JD-R). (Bakker & Demerouti 2007)

Job design, job demand, effort and job control have been considered as important factors in work-wellbeing and have led to multiple theories and models for improving work well-being, such as Job Demand-Control model and Effort-Reward model (Karasek 1979; Siegrist 1996). The JD-R model is a combination of these models and developed to consider all these factors as a whole interacting totality. The JD-R model starts by categorizing these different characteristics into job demands and job resources. Job demands are those which can be defined as physical, psychological, social and organizational aspects of the job that require physical and psychological effort such as workload, mental and physical demands, deadlines and work environment. Job resources are defined as physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects which are impactful in reaching the set goals, reducing workload and -demands, and help achieving personal and professional development. The JD-R theory portrays that job resource aspects can be affected by organizational and managerial aspects such as social and managerial support, autonomy, feedback and rewarding. (Bakker & Demerouti 2007).

The model depicts the correlation and discourse between the demands and resource of the job for better results to the organization. The model can be helpful in predicting burnouts as well as facilitate worker commitment and wellbeing in the organization. (Bakker & Demerouti 2011).

The JD-R model considers the process of how these characteristics effect the workers' functioning. The JD-R model can be divided into energetic process and motivational process. The job demand characteristics kicks off an energetic process, where the work efficiency and energy may rise through the job demands and pressure. However, in the long term the workload and pressure will start to effect negatively to the health and wellbeing of the workers. In contrary the resource characteristics kick off the motivational process, which motivates employees by the adequate organizational resource measures. In the optimal situation the energy- and motivational processes align, and the motivational resources buffer the negative effects of the energetic process. This way increasing the health, wellbeing and efficiency of the workers and additionally increasing the workers commitment to the organization. (Bakker & Demerouti 2011; Karasek 1979).

The model is not unambiguous, as workers experience the job demands and resources differently. Some may thrive from high workloads and find independency and responsibility motivating. In this way the JD-R job demands, and resources does not fully correlate, but it can be used as a helpful tool. (Feld et al. 2005).

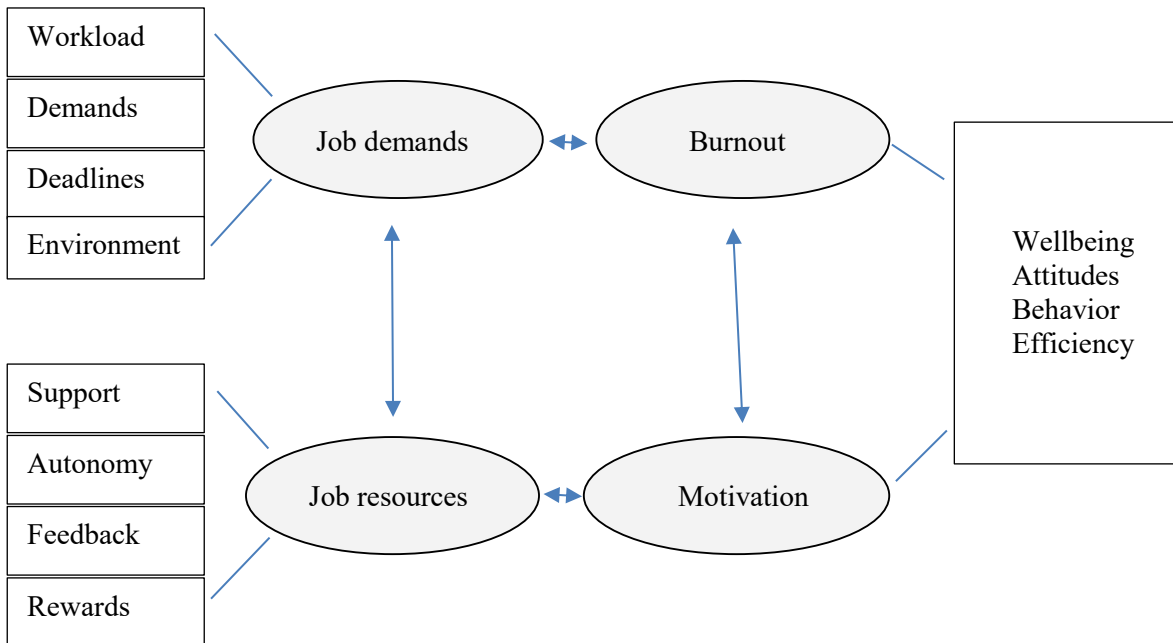


Figure 1. The Job Demands- Resource model (adapted from Bakker & Demerouti 2006)

In addition to the largely used JD-R model, Rauramos (2008) model for occupational wellbeing has also been highly used and researched in occupational wellbeing. The occupational wellbeing model will be used along with the JD-R model as the theoretical framework in this thesis to understand the aspects of wellbeing and safety.

Rauramos model for occupational wellbeing is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs which was published in 1940s. The model for wellbeing is a tool for comprehensive, sustainable well-being, safety, and health at work. The model takes into consideration the individual employee, the organization and in addition includes assessment and monitoring of the actions made for ensuring health and safety. The model is based on human basic needs in relation to work and is divided into five different needs: psychophysiological, safety, communality, appreciation, and self-realization. (Rauramo 2008.)



Figure 2. Rauramo (2008) model for work wellbeing

Step one- Psychophysiological needs

In figure 2 first shown psychophysiological basic need highlights the importance of suitable workload and work design. To achieve wellbeing and motivation the organization must ensure that the workload is suitable for the employee, and the employee has the energy to successfully handle their work. In addition, employees need to have energy to take care of their basic health after work through healthy exercise, nutrition and activities. The workload should be balanced to the needs of the worker so that the workload is not too challenging, neither too one-sided nor light. The work should fulfill its basic need in a way, that the employee still can be productive and feel spry after work. (Rauramo 2008).

Workload is an individual and subjective concept, meaning that every employee experiences the stress and workload differently. Every employee is an individual with own boundaries, objectives and requirements, and the workload strain impacts each and everyone's wellbeing and health differently. Some employees may handle much more workload than other. Therefore, employees should ponder the factors which are harmful for their own work, and the factors which give motivation and coping. Furthermore, it is the organizations and supervisors' task to ensure that the workload is not too much, and their employees are healthy and well. (Rauramo 2008; Mäkikangas et al. 2017).

Micklewright et al. (2014) have researched teacher wellbeing and found that workload is an important aspect in teacher occupational wellbeing. The results show that teachers have more weekly workhours compared to many other professions. Estimates indicate teachers working average of over 50 hours a week. (Walker et al. 2019). The key aspects explaining teacher's high workload included other tasks outside of classroom teaching including marking, planning, and preparing for lessons and overall data management. (CooperGibson 2018; Gibson et al. 2015). By removing unproductive tasks, reducing the data collection demands, and minimizing the frequency of meetings will promote the purpose of psychophysiological need and improve teacher wellbeing. (Techer workload review group 2016).

Mäkikangas (2017) presents recovery as a key factor in handling workload and strain, as cumulating stress and workload can lead to harmful effects on employee health. The recovery only starts after the harmful workload factors are no longer present. If the workload factors are not addressed, the employee starts everyday tired and must exert themselves to manage the work. This cumulates the strain and may develop more problems. Recovery happens on work breaks and on free time. To improve recovery the employee must have the possibility to self-determine how to use the breaks and free time. Research results by Sonnentag (2003) also highlights the importance of recovery, and its positive impact on work wellbeing and proactive behavior. The research also supports the notion

that both active and passive activities have positive impacts on recovery and thus on the performance on workdays. Sonnentag's (2003) research also supports the fact that experiences outside of work are important also for the feelings and behavior at work, meaning that employees should be active outside of work, doing activities they find enjoyable. In addition, psychological separation from work on free time promotes recovery.

Step two- Safety needs

Second step in the wellbeing stairs is the safety aspect. The safety aspects include factors in employment issues, work environment, work habits and work organization. Insecurity has increased tremendously due to insecurities on employment and changes in organizations. For example, temporary work contracts cause insecurity and uncertainty on employment and livelihood. In these situations, it is important that these employees get sufficient support and information about the situation at hand. (Mäkikangas 2017). Previous studies have highlighted increase in other occupational safety issues effecting the employee wellbeing and safety. These psychosocial risks include violence, bullying, harassment which have led to weakening of occupational health and decrease in occupational performance. (EU- OSHA 2014, Leka et al. 2011).

Example of sudden change was the Covid-19 pandemic which forced employees to remote work. This change was remarkable for employees and organizations, and the situation was made more difficult since there was no time to prepare or plan for it. In addition, the pandemic effected the organizational activities leading also into furloughs and insecurity about jobs and tasks, therefore affecting the safety need causing stress and decrease in wellbeing (Godfree et al. 2021). These sudden changes may cause insecurities and may affect the wellbeing of employees. For better adjustment the wellbeing the employees need to be taken into decision making and make sure that they have a word in the change. Furthermore, joint vision, open communication and co-operation are key factors in change. (Rauramo 2008).

Safe organization is not built by force but with co-operation and employee involvement which covers the whole organizational levels. Safety and its improvement rely heavily on safety culture, values, strategy, commitment, and actions, which are implemented through effective safety management and -leadership. In individual employee wellbeing the organization must understand that to improve and maintain individual wellbeing the first step is to make sure that organizations' safety strategy, safety politics and safety culture is well thought, meaning that the working environment is safe and hazard free. This also includes that all levels of organization are committed to safety and aimed to improve the safety culture. After the overall safety is handled can the organization and

managers concentrate on employee's individual psychosocial wellbeing and safety. (Rauramo 2008).

Rauramo (2008) also includes the importance of equality and respect in the safety aspect. The work environment should be equal and coequal, meaning that every employee and person is equal and treated the same way. Nembhard & Edmondson (2006) explains it as an objective to create an organizational environment where employees can engage in productive discussions without the fear of negative consequences. This can be also described as psychological safety meaning that employees mistakes, errors and failures are not hold against him. Tornau & Frese (2013) have researched the relationship between psychological safety and proactivity. The results show that when employees feel supported and psychologically safe, they are more likely to be more proactive, engaged, and motivated.

Step three- Communality needs

Step three on the model brings up the importance of communality within the organization and work environment. In a good work community individual and their personality blooms and is respected. Communality and functional community are shaped through shared objectives which are achieved through co-operation and shared experiences. Individuals are holistic, psychophysical beings which derive work motivation, wellbeing and performance through social interactions and relationships. (Rauramo 2008). Research conducted by Anderson et al. (2021) shows the importance of communality and teamwork. The participants valued working with respectful, approachable, and supportive colleagues and highlighted inspiration, support, skills, humor and friendship from community as key facilitators for work wellbeing and health. The research by McLellan (2018) extended the research to support provided by colleagues, supervisors as well as friends and family. The results show that all these aspects of support had an impact on participants wellbeing and coping. The interesting fact was the relationships outside of work had an impact on work wellbeing as well. The participants raised the importance of personal relationships, as they may receive emotional and non-judgmental support from personal relationships. The support from friends and family correlates positively to wellbeing at work.

Work community is defined as a concept shaped through individual perceptions, which is molded by organizational atmosphere, management and leadership and the work community. Factors for good work atmosphere are good manager-employee relationships, good and open information flow, mutual objectives, and values. Also, justice and equality throughout the organization are important factors in building communality. Differences are valued and treated as an asset not as weakness, and nobody is discriminated due to their difference. (Rauramo 2008). The relationship between

work process involvement and employee satisfaction was researched by Macky & Boxall (2008). The results show that when employees are given high involvement in work processes, including knowledge, information, rewards and power, employees felt more satisfied and part of the community. In addition, the employees felt less fatigued and stressed.

Other important factor in communality and wellbeing is trust between the employees and organization. In a trusting environment everyone knows what is expected from them, and furthermore can provide work peace to each other. Mutual rules and regulations are basic elements when building trust. Without trust the working habits, processes and working atmosphere are negatively affected. Trust also enables work autonomy. This requires trust from the organization and managers, that the employee will handle their work without continuous monitoring and control. The most effective way of decreasing trust within organization is failure to perform agreed tasks, lying and making excuses. (Rauramo 2008). Research by McLellan (2018) also highlighted the importance of successful relationship between managers and employees. Participants of the research spoke about the importance of trusting relationship between employee and manager. The participants also respected knowledgeable supervisors who had confidence and trust in the skills and abilities of the employees, enabling them to develop as a worker.

Edinger & Edinger (2018) has researched the impacts of organizational support and collegial trust on teachers' satisfaction. The results show that there is a positive relationship between job wellbeing through both organizational and collegial support trust. Other studies have concurred this and additionally provided information that organizational and collegial support highly impacts and benefits particularly teachers at the beginning of their careers (Fox & Wilson 2009).

Step four- appreciation needs

Step four introduces appreciation need which means that the organization has sustainable healthy values and the compensation for work is just. In work community appreciation need means social appreciation and respect, which can be also lost. Self-appreciation includes self-esteem, skill level, achievements, leadership and independence. Self-appreciation is important for individuals as it feeds efficiency and wellbeing. It is in organizations best interest to nurture, respect and note the contribution of each individual employee. Respect and appreciation among employees and inside the organization supports social wellbeing. Appreciation and respect should be shown through feedback, positive recognition and giving responsibility. (Rauramo 2008; Ojala & Ahonen 2003). Responsibility and demands have been seen as a positive factor in wellbeing and health of employees. Despite this the organizations and managers need to be careful not to overburden their employees. As research has shown, impossible demands and unachievable goals hinder wellbeing. Employees

take more and more responsibilities and try hard to achieve these goals but leave feeling hopeless and unwell when not meeting the expectations. (McLellan 2018)

Salary may also have significant impact on the employees feeling of appreciation. The salary should be just and determined in accordance with the requirements of the work task, working environment and productivity. Through experience every employee creates an understanding about their contribution and importance in the work community, and does the salary compensate the input. The objective of salary and rewarding is to gain wanted, skilled, motivated employees. In contrary rewarding may have also negative effects such as experiences of injustice, envy, modest work performance or unwanted organizational culture. (Hakonen et al. 2014).

Step five- self-realization

Final step five in the model is self-realization meaning that the worker enjoys the work and can utilize their skills and knowledge and implement themselves freely and creatively. (Kehusmaa 2011). Field of positive psychology explains self-realization as movement that prioritizes individuals experience and self-knowledge. Employees are encouraged to use self-knowledge to personal fulfillment, enabling them to live and work up to their maximum potential. (Seligman 2011). Happy employee works and does meaningful tasks, which are connected to a larger picture. To improve wellbeing the employee should be given mental freedom to organize the tasks as they see fit. (Tiensuu et al. 2004). However, the concept of positive psychology is also criticized as Wright and Pascoe (2015) points out that:” the individualistic approach overlooks the situated and relational dimension of wellbeing.” They mention that wellbeing is more than an individual process and is also constructed through social context and external factors in set situations. Acton and Glasgow (2015) have synthesized wellbeing to include personal aspects such as satisfaction, professional development, purposefulness which is developed through collaboration with colleagues and clients.

Depending on the individual employees, research has shown that increasing learning and development opportunities has had a positive impact on employee wellbeing and work efficiency. Professional development opportunities are a key factor for work commitment and motivation. (Anderson et al 2021.)

Significance of work has risen to a more important position with the younger generations. Work is not just a job but is expected to bring experiences of relevance to the worker. The younger generation will seek workplaces which can provide opportunities in personal growth and improvement and will give employees experience of relevance (Salonen et al. 1970).

Wellbeing, safety, and health is largely a subjective concept, and different employees experience wellbeing differently than others. Individual values and expectations shape individual employees' sense of wellbeing. Employees working in the same place may have varying interpretations for wellbeing. Wellbeing is a complex totality, which is affected by the individual, work, work community, organization, and leadership. In addition, the individual's psychological capital, physical condition, and conditions outside of work play an important role in work wellbeing. Despite the feeling of wellbeing being subjective, it is notable that wellbeing is contagious, and the more members of the work community feel safe, happy, and healthy the more it adds wellbeing to other employees (Manka 2011). In addition, research has shown that employee wellbeing, safety and health has positive effects on organizations' efficiency and results (De Menezesin 2012; Boxall & Macky 2014).

2.6 Risks and benefits of working remote

It can be seen through previous studies that working remote includes both beneficial and harmful effects. The beneficial effects based on studies included better work-life balance, more flexibility to work, increased job satisfaction, reduction in psychological and physical stress. (Grant et al. 2013; Akiyoshi et al. 2021). Employees also have more time to exercise their hobbies and concentrate on their personal interests that cannot be fulfilled due to lack of free-time and flexibility at the workplace (Prasad et al. 2020). Despite all the benefits other studies point out, remote work may also have harmful effects on employee health and wellbeing due to work overload, social isolation, job autonomy, ineffective communication, and social support. (Charalampous et al. 2019; Wang et al. 2021). In addition, remote work has established the home as a permanent workspace for many, and thus challenges the balance between work and home as the employees feel both isolated yet constantly connected. (Godfree et al. 2021; Stawarz et al. 2013; Toch et al. 2020). Impacts on mental wellbeing and anxiety during remote work has also been researched. The results vary and show that working from home could have positive or negative impacts on mental health depending on various aspects including level of organizational support, work design and social connectedness external to work. (Anderson et. al 2015; Gimenez- Nadal JI. et al 2020; Grant et al. 2013)

Work-life balance

Work-life balance during remote work is a controversial concept depending on several variables. Some research emphasizes the positive effects of work-life balancing for wellbeing and job satisfaction, and controversially other results point out that it has decreasing effects for wellbeing and job satisfaction. According to research by Wang et al. (2020) remote workers face challenges in maintaining work-life balance. The home-based work environment introduces increased interruptions from family members leading to negative impact on both work effectiveness and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the remote workers feel that they should be always online and alert, ready to immediately respond to work obligations such as phone calls and emails even outside working times. Syrek et al. (2021) research supports this showing that work-life balancing effects negatively to employee wellbeing. The employees working remote presents the negative effects of distractions, and more specifically the burden of children being at home and making it complex and stressful to meet work expectations and obligations in the process of taking care of children. Also, participants note that it is challenging to change a space at home into appropriate workspace, as the conditions and space is limited. Eddleston & Mulki (2017) research associates remote workers having hard time disconnecting from their jobs, because of the convenience of working around the clock. This in turn leads to taking on more task which correlates negatively to employee wellbeing and health due to irregular sleeping patterns, unhealthy habits, and long working hours. This attached with a lack of support from management to assist in stress, results in unhealthy ways to cope. In addition, also Eddleston & Mulki (2017) point out in their research the importance of workstation ergonomics, and the harmful effects of noncompliance in working conditions and ergonomics. The neglect of good working conditions and ergonomics will raise the probability of musculoskeletal issues like disc slip, carpal tunnel syndrome or tennis elbow.

In the contrary, research also shows that a workplace at home is seen as a positive and beneficial concept, as remote workers mention flexibility as an asset for work. The remote workers can alter their working patterns to manage both work and family demands. Also, time saved was seen beneficial as time for work commuting and preparing for work diminished, giving more time for exercise and being outside due to the loss of commute and preparation (Suranyi 2022; Godfree et al. 2021). Remote work is also seen as a greater opportunity to concentrate and complete work tasks to schedule, because of less interruptions including meetings and co-workers' distractions. (Fonner & Roloff 2010). The flexibility of work and freedom in work times is highlighted also in research by Eddleston & Mulki (2017). Their research shows that remote workers see positive effects in balancing

work and home, as they have more time to family obligations and they may do the work responsibilities whenever needed, even during the night. Nonetheless the research emphasizes the importance of segmentation between work and family during remote work. Results also point out that male remote workers need more segmentation between work and family. Conversely female remote workers integration between family and work was seen positively during remote work and they preferred that the work and family boundaries are tied together. This way they can handle home-chores amid working and save time. On the other hand, Naz et al. (2021) researched the work-life balance of remote workers among university teachers. Their research showed that female teachers had more difficulties maintaining a good work-life balance than male teachers. The female teachers felt less satisfaction during remote work and more work- life conflicts compared to the male teachers. This new working arrangement increased the overall burden of home responsibilities for females, without the support from other family members.

The results show that working at home versus in the office was associated with both positive and negative implications. The focus has been more on negative effects, but research show that working remote may also have positive effects on wellbeing due to flexibility, freedom, and happiness during remote work. It is important to understand that the affective consequences of remote work vary highly between individuals and are affected by their personal traits. For example, people tending to ruminate or have families home during working hours, tend to have more negative effects on work-life balance than people without children. (Anderson 2014; Syrek et al 2021). The variables between working conditions at home and the extent of working remote influenced employee wellbeing. At the beginning of the pandemic remote workers saw remote work as exciting and new, which lead to positive wellbeing, but as remote work prolonged it showed negative effects in wellbeing and health. (Syrek et al. 2021).

Isolation

Despite the challenges of work- life balancing and distractions at home remote workers have experienced loneliness and social isolation during their time working remote. Working at home has meant less face-to-face interactions with their colleagues and managers, and this way not meeting the psychological need for communality and belongingness at work. This added with loss of social opportunities outside of work has indicated loneliness as a challenge in remote work. (Wang et al. 2020). The relation of wellbeing and social isolation on employees working remote during the Covid-19 pandemic has been also studied by Galanti et al. (2021) showing that social isolation was negatively related to wellbeing, health and productivity in remote work. The use of technologies to communicate and stay in touch only partially mitigates the experience of isolation by individuals. In addition,

the communication to co-workers and managers was seen often as professional and task related, missing the important informal discourse, which happens at work and coffee breaks. Orhan et al. (2016) study showed the correlation between virtual tasks and degrees of isolation. The results show employees doing virtual tasks, which require more interaction with other people had an impact on the feeling of isolation. The more interactions and discourse with other people the less they felt isolated. Their study also emphasized the fact that face-to-face interactions with people whose input is required for completing the work task was found correlated positively with social, physical and informational emotions. This was aligned with previous research which identified that when individuals have interactions with people who are important for their task, they feel supported and belongingness to the group. (Morrison 2004; Mulki & Jaramillo 2011). This meaning that worker meeting face-to-face with a client or a student meant more to the employee than meeting with a co-worker face-to-face. Although isolation is more probable during remote work, Golden et al. (2008) research show that some individual employees may feel professionally isolated even at the workplace when working alongside coworkers. This may occur when individuals do not have social connections nor access to resources, and this way not receiving necessary information. These implications have negative impacts on social feelings and the likelihood of isolation increases. This was highlighted with employees with least face-to-face interactions. (Golden et al. 2008). For preventing isolation and loneliness the importance of face-to-face interactions and even virtual interactions cannot be ignored. Anderson et al. (2015) extended the research finding that social connectedness outside of work indicates that social relationships outside of work had an impact on remote work wellbeing. This meaning that people that are socially connected outside of work experience higher levels of wellbeing during remote work, than people with less interaction and connectedness outside of work. Individual personality and traits effect the degree and vulnerability to loneliness. Wang et al. (2020) results show that workers also suffered from ineffective communication between colleagues, managers and clients, leading to low productivity and higher loneliness. ICT-mediated communications were not as effective and efficient as face-to-face communications.

Linked to individual preferences on remote work, research results also show that isolation is seen also beneficial, as employees can slow down, work in peace with more effective engagement and improved working experience. Nevertheless, the research displays that the beneficial effects decrease overtime if the work is done exclusively at home. This implicates that remote work is an effective alternative work arrangement, but it shouldn't be done exclusively. Furthermore, job resources, organizational support, and effective policies are key factors on successful remote work (SuraInyi 2022; De Klerk et al. 2021).

Workload

Research results indicate that in the early stages of the pandemic and remote work employees report decrease in workload compared to normal. This was mainly due to the practical issues, lack of hardware and software's at home. In addition, the organizations needed to put on hold several projects and tasks, because of the unprecedented situation, and moreover the employees needed to get used to working at home. As the practical issues were resolved and the employees used to remote work, the results show that the workload increased. (Syrek et al. 2021). The correlation between workload and psycho-physical strain in remote work was researched, and the results show that high workload in terms of time devoted and concentration used to handle the workload was seen as a difficult integration between work domain and home life. The main risk considered was the inability to recover from the stress generated through high workload days, as the work domain is integrated within the private life. Especially high workload increases stress and activeness, this way preventing the body and mind from recovering properly. Even after work employees ponder and think about work and can't separate their worktime from free time this way prevents themselves from relaxing and recovering. Working at home prevents moreover the separation between the work and home, as the workstation is always present and easy to access even when employees need to recover. The insufficient recovery from workload can have negative long-term impacts on health and working ability. (Falco et al. 2015; Syrek & Antoni 2014).

Workload, work design, and remote work were also research by Godfree et al. (2021) showing that remote work and COVID-19 pandemic has increased operational demands and thus causing stress and anxiety among workers and managers. The increased workload was caused by extra work due to Covid-19 related work, furloughs and co-workers being isolated or being off. This accumulated more work and responsibilities for others causing negative feelings and concerns. New responsibilities and tasks should have positive effects for employees as they get more responsibility and appreciation, but as the situation is new and stressful it is important to get feedback, support and advice. The employees raised concerns on the lack of coordination, management and prioritization of work, which leads to reduced flexibility and increased workload. The increased workload and new responsibilities without collaborative, and open group culture with high support has sparked the conversation of anxiety and impossibility of meeting work demands and schedules. A survey conducted by Loyd's Register (2021) showed that 69% of respondents reported high stress because of increased workload and changes in work design. The stress of meeting work demands and coping with the workload and high expectations from employers have been shown to lead to burnout (Hill & Curan 2016). Suranay (2021) research also follows the conclusion that remote work has increased the

workload of remote workers, effecting the health and wellbeing of employees. In more detail Suranay's (2021) research presents the interesting fact that the job description had relevance in the workload in remote work, as IT and telecommunication workers had a smaller change in workload than for example education and R&D workers. Only few percentages of the participants in the research reported decrease in workload.

Mental wellbeing and anxiety

The effects of remote work on mental health have been studied a lot after the pandemic started. The results have shown that remote work may have positive, negative or no effect on employee's mental health and anxiety. (Anderson et al. 2015; Grant et al. 2013; Galanti et al. 2021; Savolainen et al. 2021). Ogbannaya (2020) research results show that remote work may be positive or negative for an employee depending on the personal traits of the employee. The results show that people with tendency to openness experienced less depression and misery while working from home. Also, agreeable people and introverts reported that they felt less worried and depressed when working remote. On the other hand, neurotic people and people with low conscientiousness reported feelings of worried and depressed and were more likely to report mental health problems while working from home. The mental health of Finnish workers was also researched by Kestilä et al. (2021) showing that Finnish workers mental health has not decreased significantly during the pandemic, which is perhaps indication of the overall situation of Covid-19 in Finland and the stable society where workers wellbeing is taken care of. Nevertheless, the results show that the Finnish workers have experienced higher anxiety and distress because of remote work and Covid-19. The main risk groups for anxiety were people with new job descriptions and low social support from their work community. These findings were supported by Savolainen et al. (2021) by concluding the fact that anxiety and distress increased due to stressful and uncertain times. The lower wellbeing and anxiety during remote work is explained by the challenges of remote work such as loneliness, psycho-social factors, workload and insufficient support and connections from organization. The anxiety then affecting negatively to job performance and wellbeing (Trougakos et al. 2020.)

The results show that working at home may have varying effects on mental health and anxiety depending on individual and personal traits, the working environment at home, the level of support from the organization, and social connectedness. (Grant et al. 2013; Galanti et al. 2021; Savolainen et al. 2021).

Summary

The complex picture of occupational safety and health challenges and benefits the previous research's show, paint a difficult situation for organizations to manage in. To make it more difficult the challenges are many fold and affect individuals differently. Firstly, the organizations need to emphasize the importance of organizational support and guidelines for their remote workers. Furthermore, when implementing guidelines, a one broad guideline may not be the most effective way, as employees are individuals and are affected differently. The organization and managers need to examine these differential individual effects and develop targeted interventions to address these specific needs. Also balancing the individual employee duties and providing constructive and timely feedback is important to cope with unnecessary overload. In addition, establishing timeframes, goals and limits help cope with work overload and feelings of anxiety. (Pelletier & Rocchi 2017). Support for adapting, autonomy and creating routines and processes to balance the demands at remote work and at home are important. (Syrek et al. 2021). In addition, the managers should identify the areas where employees are struggling and need support, and furthermore find areas in which employees are flourishing and could support others. (Cesar & Veena 2020)

Various research supports the importance of social support, because of its positive impacts on performance and wellbeing. The managers and supervisors should use more supportive measures to boost their employees' wellbeing. The managers should remember to share information, include in decision making, give feedback and motivate instead of monitoring and checking up. Results also point out the importance of work design as a characteristic for wellbeing and effectiveness in remote work. This meaning that managers should along with the employee's design an effective and high-quality remote work suited for the individual. Although monitoring is perceived as a negative effect, some employees may need monitoring and boosting to achieve effectiveness and decrease procrastination, in the other hand some employees seek for autonomy and responsibility and finds them important for wellbeing and effectiveness. (Wang et al. 2020; Madlock 2013; Grant et al. 2013). For overcoming isolation, engagement in communication plays a key role, as it is shown that informal interaction between colleagues is positively related to job wellbeing (Fay & Kline 2011.) Thus, organizations should encourage employees into open discourse and enable the usage of advanced social media platforms for informal and formal interactions.

For maintaining good work and life balance it is important to pay close attention to environmental factors and distractions at home. Making plans to prevent interruptions and planning the workday ahead is important. In addition, employees should determine the specific start and end to the workday, and segmentate work and personal time separately. The organization should also have specific

guidelines for worktimes, and breaks, and make sure it is obeyed to prevent employees working too much. Lastly the place of work at home should be specified and set properly to create an effective and organized working environment. (Okuyan 2021). These arrangements depend highly on individual preferences. Other individuals prefer flexibility and the opportunity to alter their worktimes to suit their personal interests, and free time activities. (Kossek et al. 2011; Eddleston & Mulki 2017). This highlights the importance of line managers knowledge and understanding of their employees individually, so that the right kind of actions and work design can be implemented. (Kelliher et al. 2018).

Wang et al. (2020) results underlined the importance of self-discipline for achieving remote work effectiveness and well-being. Self-discipline was seen as a key factor to overcome obstacles in work-home balancing, workload, procrastination and loneliness. People with high self-discipline indicated more control over challenges and effectiveness over remote work. Employees with low self-discipline needed monitoring and assurance from managers and felt anxiousness at remote work. The organizations and managers should encourage and motivate the employees for more disciplined approach for remote work as it results into wellbeing.

It is also important to create a healthy and ergonomically stable working environment at home, as employees spend a considerable time working. One option is to set the working environment similarly to what it is like at the workplace and make sure the working equipment is adequate. (Balogh et al. 2019). It is important to pay attention to correct balance between head/neck and hand/ wrist postures to prevent negative effects for health. In addition, sitting arrangements are important, and employees should avoid working from the sofa or a bed as it may cause tension and pain. Instead, employees should be able to use adjustable and ergonomic work chairs and desks. (Swartz et al. 2016) The organization should inform about the possibilities for correct working equipment and aid in the acquisition of the equipment. The organizations need to remember and understand the different situations at employees' homes effecting the OHS in remote work, such as individual conditions, space and background factors. These need to be evaluated with the employee to create the best possible working environment for the individual. The correct placement of equipment and ergonomic working position and environment is formed with the support of occupational healthcare practitioners.

2.7 Teachers' occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during Covid-19 pandemic

The wellbeing, health and safety experiences of teaching professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic have been studied a lot in the recent years. The profession of teaching changed rapidly during the Covid-19 outbreak and it forced schools and vocational institutions to switch to remote teaching. The research shows both positive and negative effects from this change to remote work. Overall, the research shows that the wellbeing and health of teachers and teaching professionals has slightly decreased during the remote work times. The main reasons being increase in workload, sense of urgency, lack of breaks, multitasking and tight schedules. Teachers also raised ergonomical issues as a negative effect, as they did not have proper working stations at home, causing ergonomical problems. (Tanskanen et al. 2021; Akava 2020; Salmela-Aro 2020).

Despite the slight overall decrease in health and wellbeing, remote workers have also experienced positive effects and practices. The positive effects raised through the research shows that teachers have respected the trust and autonomy they have received from their institutions and supervisors. In addition, they felt that they were more efficient at work, and had more free time due to less work commute. The flexibility and more relaxed work enabled workers to pursue and focus on their hobbies and interests more. Teaching professional also felt that they had gained new professional development as they had to learn new innovative teaching methods, which they felt had a positive impact for their professional development. (Tanskanen et al. 2021; Ala-Hiiri et al. 2021). The vocational teachers were more pleased to remote teaching, compared to for example elementary school teachers. In addition, vocational teachers felt that some parts of vocational teaching could be done through remote teaching also in the future. (Ala-Hiiri et al. 2021)

The main negative effects the teaching professionals raised was the sudden change to remote teaching. The mandatory rapid switch burdened and stressed the teaching professionals especially in the beginning of the Covid-19. The research shows that Covid-19 revealed the weakness of educational institutions which had no prior experience of remote work. The switch to remote work revealed that teachers did not have the right competences, tools, or instructions for full on remote teaching. (Chabott & Sinclair 2020). This led the teachers stressing and burdened on the fact that they had to adjust every subject and lesson to online teaching, adapt and find suitable ways to teach students remotely. (Wang 2020). This changed as time went on, when teachers and students found suitable ways to online teaching. Eventually many teachers felt that after the initial burden and stress, they

felt that online teaching and innovative solutions has given them development in professional meaning, and they felt that these new online teaching methods can be also used in classroom environment. (Ala-Hiiri et al. 2021).

Other negative effects and challenges teaching professional experienced during online teaching was the lack of connecting and establishing proper presence with the pupils, and this way also effecting the coping mechanisms of teachers, as they had to worry about their students, and is the necessary skills and knowledge conveyed to pupils. (Ciuhan et al 2020). The lack of connection and presence during classes was affected by the fact that the teachers were not always aware was the students listening or even attending the lectures, as they see only black squares on the screen. Although the teachers felt sense of accomplishment as they had to create new ways of teaching methods and saw the students participating and enthusiastic during lectures. (Ala-Hiiri et al.2021).

Teaching professionals also raised other the negative effects of doing remote teaching from home alone. The research points out the teachers state negative effects in ergonomical issues, social interactions and in sense of urgency during workdays. Teachers felt that they had challenges with workspace at home. Many had no proper room for a workstation at home forcing them to work in unfavorable positions causing risk to musculoskeletal issues in a long run. Teaching professionals who had families and children working and studying at home made establishing a proper working station even more difficult. (Eddleston & Mulki 2017)

Research also found that teachers felt a degree of loneliness during times working remote. This effect came even though they had online lectures with their students and staff meetings online. Despite these online interactions they felt loneliness, and they felt that informal chat and co-operation with coworkers decreased and was more difficult during remote work. They felt that it is an important part of wellbeing and successful work atmosphere to have informal coffee breaks in break rooms, where you may talk and laugh on matters not involving work. (Ala-Hiiri et al. 2021).

Research also states that constant working and leaving out breaks during remote work was seen as problem. The teachers stated that even without lectures they tend to sit on their computer and skip breaks as it is easy to just continue working as the workstation is right there, and no one is asking for coffee breaks. In addition, teaching professional felt that remote work has blurred the lines of work and free time, and this way effecting the work-life balance negatively. Many state that as the workstation and computer is at home it is easy to just work and continue working in the evening. This way they felt that they were all the time at work, and never really separated from work. This can be seen as negative effect, as prolonged urgency and lack of breaks may have effect of employee wellbeing in a long run. (Ala-Hiiri et al. 2021; Tanskanen et al. 2021). These same effects

have been research before by Eddleston & Mulki's (2017) stating that remote workers have difficulties to disconnect from their work, this leading on taking more tasks which correlates negatively to employee wellbeing as the employee neglects important rest and recovery. Self-leadership and supervisors support are main solutions to intervene. Palumbo (2020) research also show that remote teaching may cause difficulties in setting and establishing boundaries between work and family. Remote teaching had increased the control over work times and due to that family time, meaning that teachers tend to be working and not spending time with their family. These had negative effects of teachers' wellbeing, anxiety levels and emotional recovery. (Landolfi et al. 2021; Li et al. 2020; Kara et al. 2021)

Main positive effects regarding wellbeing, safety and health of remote teachers were said to be the more relaxed and peaceful working during remote work. Tanskanen et al. (2021) research shows that teaching professionals state, that they were more relaxed and recovered after remote workdays, and this way had more time and energy to have with their families and hobbies. This was explained due to less commutes to work and meetings, and this way decreasing the stress and time to get ready to go to work and to meetings on time. They felt that mornings were more relaxed, and they had more time to prepare for the day. After the workday they felt more energized as the workdays were not so urgent and stressed, and this way had more time and energy for free-time activities. This is a opposite conclusion to Ala-Hiirio et al. (2021) research where the teaching professional stated that they did not really have clear distinction between work and free time, and this way felt that they were on alert and in work even on their free-time. This may can be explained through individual traits and the norms and instructions through teaching institution and management.

Other positive impacts of remote was the trust and autonomy given through institutions. The teachers felt that remote work was more flexible, and their institutions gave them responsibility and trusted them to handle the work. This was seen as a positive aspect for work wellbeing. Research by Manuti et al. (2022) joins this result, that autonomy and responsibility may be seen as job resource and a motivating factor for teachers. Manuti et al. (2021) research reminds that the challenging work demands and responsibilities can fluctuate depending on teachers' personal resources such as resilience and self-efficacy. Due to personal traits many teachers may find the work demands as negative effects, and to turn it to resource the institutional unit and leadership play a crucial role in helping this. The managerial support and motivation to manage these new challenges are an important part to transform these demands into positive psychological and institutional outcomes.

In addition, remote work forced teachers to find new innovative ways for teaching. After the initial shock and uncertainty, the teachers felt that they gained professional development, wellbeing and

sense of pride, when they were able to create new ways of teaching and this way get students participating and excited. Remote lectures also helped more reserved students to participate more. Moreover, the teachers working remote felt that remote work has made working more efficient and productive, as remote working has decreased the unnecessary chat, interruptions and prolonged meetings. It was easier to set up a meeting, hop on and off the meeting. Teachers also felt that they were more efficient and could work more effectively without any unnecessary interruptions. (Tanskanen et al. 2021)

Other positive aspects raised was the positive impact on communality. The teaching professionals stated that they got a lot of help and support from co-workers and colleagues around the country. They all gave pointers and instructions for each other on proposed teaching methods, for example on technical and issues concerning teaching. The teachers also felt that remote work has cut down negative conflicts and interaction. Teaching professionals stated improvement in occupational wellbeing as the threat of violence decreased, nor they had to intervene in conflict situations during classes and recess. (Tanskanen et al. 2021).

The research shows both positive and negative effects on teacher wellbeing and health during remote work in the times of Covid -19. The main results reveal that in the beginning of the pandemic the teachers felt more stress due to uncertainty of remote teaching and its challenges. The teachers felt stress because of the uncertainty surrounding remote work, especially on the duration of remote teaching, lack of training and instructions on distance learning, and increased workload due to extra work from switching to remote teaching including extra bureaucratic tasks, planning, and executing lectures and managing everything in the online environments. Initially after the start of the pandemic teachers reported decrease in stress, higher levels of coping and wellbeing, and also found high levels of job satisfaction as they managed to cope with online teaching and found ways to ensure proper teaching. Contextual leadership and institutional support were found important factors in achieving teacher wellbeing and positive outcomes. This meaning that the managers, colleagues and institutions support, approach and investment into remote teaching and its structures have a significant impact on teachers' wellbeing, health and coping to remote work. (Herman et al. 2021)

2.8 Safety Leadership

Main issues raised from previous research concerning challenges as well as benefits of remote working highlighted the importance of support, co-operation, guidance, and work design as key aspects for safe and healthy remote work. Due to its importance in improving remote workers OHS and wellbeing leadership is worth discussing about. Safety leadership and leadership of safety are very similar to regular leadership and should be integrated in everyday leadership. In safety leadership the perspective of safety, health and wellbeing is highlighted. Often managers and superiors tend to think that safety leadership is different and leaves safety out of everyday leadership. However, managers have as representative of the employer the responsibility of the occupational safety and health of their workers, and the obligation to ensure the employees wellbeing, safety and health, and compliance with safety practices and legal requirements. (Tappura & Hämäläinen 2011). Leadership and safety leadership should be integrated, and the managers should acknowledge their role in promoting safety and health of their employees. Research has shown that effective safety leadership and culture have positive impacts on employee wellbeing, safety culture, safety atmosphere, safety levels, which in turn improves the overall performance of the organization. (Barling et al. 2002, Conchie et al. 20013, Hoffmeister et al. 2014).

Transactional and transformational leadership have emerged as key theories in occupational safety and health research. (Bass 1985, Burns 1978). Research has shown that transformational and transactional leadership styles have positive impacts on overall safety atmosphere, employee wellbeing and employee compliance with safety protocols and regulations. (e.g., Bass & Avolio 1990, Barling et al. 2002). Remote work has brought its own challenges to safety leadership, but research done by Nielsen et al. (2016) has shown that transformational and transactional leadership styles have significant impact also on occupational safety and health among distributed and remote workers.

In transformational leadership co-operation and communication between the manager and employee is highlighted. In transformational leadership the manager leads with example, inspires, motivates, coaches, supports and demonstrates interest in the individual employee. (Barling et al. 2002; Bass 1985). In transformational leadership the manager takes into consideration the personal traits and wishes off their employee and strives to develop the employee through motivation, challenging and cooperation. The manager listens, communicates, and designs the work through collaboration with the employees. Transformational leadership is seen positively affect employee wellbeing, motiva-

tion and work satisfaction. (Bass & Avolio 1990). This way of leadership has also affected and increased the respect and trust between employees and managers. This way the managers who showed interest in the wellbeing of an employee and communicated openly about health and safety issue were seen as role models for the employees. This way the employees strived to work according to the guidelines, adhere to safe practices and were more open to discourse and participation into wellbeing and safety issues (Smith et al. 2016). Trusting relationship, and managers commitment to OHS has been researched to improve employee safe operations and psychological wellbeing. (Törner 2011; Kelloway et al. 2012).

Transactional leadership is a leadership style where the manager sets goals, oversees work performance, gives constructive feedback and rewards for work done. Transactional leadership can be divided into two different features: contingent rewarding and management by exception. In contingent rewarding the manager for example gives a target or an objective to achieve, monitors work performance and then rewards for achieving the objectives. In turn management by exception means that the managers direct the employee to give up unwanted actions, monitors and reacts proactively. (Bass 1985). In safety management research transactional leadership is linked with lower accident rates and improved safety culture (Zohar 2002b).

Nielsen et al. (2016) research highlighted the effectiveness of transformational and transactional leadership for achieving occupational health, safety and wellbeing of remote workers. Their research highlighted the aspects of open communication, listening and understanding remote workers, support, co-operation and trust. The research showed improvement in wellbeing and safety when the managers understood the challenges and workload of the employees and were ready to listen and co-operate with the employees both with work design and safety issues. Main benefits raised related to transformational and transactional leadership style was positive feedback, trust, leading with example, treating employees as individuals, listening and involving employees in decision-making.

2.9 Management of safety

The concept of safety and health management is complex and does not have one exact definition. Occupational safety and health is a subject which covers numerous fields of health and safety aspects. Essentially OHS focuses on promoting and maintaining optimal physical, mental, and social well-being of employees in all the occupational categories.

Safety management is defined as systematic and continuous process to ensure the safety and health of the employees by controlling the security and mitigating safety risks (Kuusisto 2000). The overall aim is to achieve safety and protect people, the environment, equipment and property from risks and harm. (Li & Guldenmund 2018). Managing safety is a series of comprehensive actions to determine safety requirements and designs to achieve safe management structures and processes and implementing these actions into process. (Strutt et al. 2006). Harms-Ringdahl (2004) explains that functioning safety management systems are usually created by combining several management processes and actions into one functioning whole.

Overall, safety management is comprehensive and systematic actions to enhance safety. Safety management is work including the safety, health and security of the company and the employees. Safety management is voluntary and legal improvement of work, work conditions, work environment ja environmental issues. The main goal of safety management is a safe, healthy, and environmentally friendly work and production environment. (Työsuojeluhallinto 2010). Traditionally safety management is thought only to include occupational safety and health. The field in safety management has evolved to also include the security aspect of management. Safety management can be divided into two main categories: safety management and security management. Safety management includes managing the methods and procedures of the company to mitigate and evaluate risks and ensure a healthy and safe working environment. The security aspect of management includes the organizational safety. (Työsuojeluhallinto 2010)

In more detail safety management includes two different aspects, the management side, and the leadership side. The management refers to legal and voluntary procedures, planning, organizing, and monitoring of the safety and risks. Through safety management it is possible to attain policies, discipline, and continuity in the environment of safety for the organization and work. Safety leadership on the other hand focuses on the health and wellbeing of the employees (Simola 2005).

Further safety management can be divided into safety politics, organizing safety measures and hands-on actions. The organizational politics portrays the attitude on safety and security inside the organization. The safety politics can be seen as a statement on the importance of safety in the organization (Leppänen 2006). The organization must have well written safety principles and politics, which define overall safety goals. The safety politics also include the main concepts, responsibilities, strategies, and goals of the company's safety and security functions. (Leppänen 2006; Mietinen 2002). Hands-on actions means the organizations actions made on the risk factors ranging from individual work tasks to the risks threatening the whole organization and business. The safety management side of the risk management focuses on the individual risk assessment and evaluation

inside the organization. Through risk management the occupational safety measures are taken into consideration to minimize accidents at work. (Työsuojeluhallinto 2010). The hands-on actions mean risk identification, risk analysis, risk evaluation and risk treatment. The main idea is to through communication and consultation find and establish contexts that need evaluation and risk control. After that proper risk assessment is completed to mitigate the risk. (Pursiainen 2017).

Safety management systems (SMS) have gradually been developed and used by organizations to ensure that the proper actions and protocols are followed after risk assessments, to ensure the safety of procedures, activities and employees. SMS can be defined as:” systematic control of employee performance, machine performance and the physical environment”. The SMS is a collection of safety management activities and procedures, which are combined in orderly manner for companies to use for ensuring the health and safety of their employees, machines, property and environment. (Thomas 2011; Heinrich et al. 1980). In addition, for the legislation defining standards for safety laws and regulations, also number of international standards have been published. Additionally, many organizational sectors have distinct standards and regulations specific to their operations. These standards and regulations are typically issued by national governments and industry organizations. The norms and standards are essentially a creation of common operating and safety methods. The main goal is to increase safety, product compatibility and to protect consumers and the environment. These standards further help facilitate domestic and international trade, and help the authorities to monitor, control and supervise the compliance with the safety standards and measures. The main organizations publishing these standards are International Organization for Standardization (ISO), European Union (EU), Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the British Standards Institution (BSI). (Yuling & Guldenmund 2018).

3. LEGAL CONTEXT

3.1 Legislation on occupational safety and health

The basis and premises for Occupational safety management and leadership comes from the Occupational Safety and Health Act. In occupational safety and health management the employer must consider the obligations and responsibilities imposed by the legislation (Occupational Safety and Health Act 2002). The Occupational Safety and Health Act defines the minimum requirements for occupational safety and health that the employer must comply to. After the legal obligations have been met, the organizations management can decide and set the final target level for the organization's occupational safety. (Laitinen et al. 2013). The main laws and regulations concerning the health and safety of employers are Occupational Safety and Health Act, Occupational Health Care Act, Health Insurance Act, Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement and cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health at workplaces. In addition, there are multiple regulations concerning special standards throughout different professions and trades to ensure safety and health. The main legal regulations concerning vocational education and teachers are the Act on Vocational Education and Training. In this chapter we will go through the main legislations on occupational safety and health, and in addition how safety management is portrayed in the legislation.

3.2 Occupational Safety and Health Act, L738/2002

The primary objective of the Occupational Safety and Health Act is to enhance the workplace environment and conditions, ensuring the wellbeing and capabilities of employees while preventing occupational hazards and accidents. Furthermore, the act imposes an obligation on employers to eliminate factors that pose a risk to the physical and mental health of their employees. (Occupational Safety and Health Act 2002).

The employers' main obligations are stated in chapter two of the act, as:" the employers are required to take care of the safety and health of their employees by taking necessary measures: pre-

venting the creation of hazards and risk factors, eliminating and/or mitigating hazards and risk factors, adopting safety measures, and taking account of technological developments.” (Occupational Safety and Health Act 2002).

To prevent workplace hazards, employers must conduct a thorough analysis and assessment of the risks associated with the job. It is the employer’s responsibility to systematically identify and analyze hazards and risk factors arising from the nature of the work, workplace, environment, and working conditions. Necessary actions should be taken to mitigate and eliminate these hazards. The legislation also mandates employers to monitor the work environment and assess the effectiveness of implemented measures in reducing risks to safety and health at work. (Occupational Safety and Health Act 2002).

The Occupational Safety and Health Act also has its own sections concerning ergonomical, psychosocial and social strain. The sections go through the ergonomics on workstations, avoiding and reducing workload and actions for lone working. (Occupational Safety and Health Act 2002). Employer must also provide training and guidance to employees and provide an occupational safety and health policy for the organization.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act the employer must also ensure that all their legal obligations and responsibilities on safety and health are ensured for remote workers. The challenge for employers to fulfill their OHS responsibilities on remote workers comes from The Constitution of Finland (731/1999) which states the right for privacy, meaning that everyone’s private life and sanctity of their home is guaranteed. This means that the employer does not have the legal right to come to employers’ home to ensure the safety and health of the working environment. This raises the importance of employer’s individual commitment to safety issues as well as the company’s skills in safety management and leadership to ensure the health and safety of the working environment, despite the challenges.

3.3 Occupational Safety and health management in legislation

The Occupational Safety and Health Act does not require a safety management system for the organization, but the legal obligations and responsibilities however must be handled and are based on the idea of safety management. The fulfillment of the obligations and regulations requires systematic and long-term monitoring and development of safe working practices and environments.

(Työsuojeluhallinto 2010). According to the occupational safety and Health Act (2002) the responsibility for occupational health and safety belongs to the person leading and monitoring the work and has the mandate to intervene. The responsibility for health and safety can be delegated to the supervisors by the employer. The supervisor acts as a representative of the employer and has the employers decision-making mandate over safety and health issues.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act promotes safety management and leadership by giving the framework for occupational safety and obliges the organization to write the occupational safety and health policy. The policies' objective is to promote safety and health and maintain working capacity. The development and planning must be discussed together with the employees and their representatives. (Occupational Safety and Health Act 2002).

In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health Act also requires the company to have a platform for OHS enforcement and cooperation on occupation safety and health at workplaces. The collaboration aims to enhance interaction and cooperation between employer and employees, making it possible for employees to influence and participate in matters related to safety and health. Issues handled in the cooperation includes the discussion of matters concerning the safety and health of any employee, principles of investigating risks and hazards, development and programs, training, guiding and cooperation between the safety and health authorities. (Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement and cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health at Workplaces 2006).

The cooperation between the employer and employees on OSH is highlighted during remote work. In remote work the employer does not have all the information about the working conditions and capabilities of the employee working remote. For this it is crucial for the employee representatives to raise issues and concerns related to remote work safety and health for the employer to consider in OSH management and leadership.

3.4 Act on Vocational Education and Training 531/ 2017

The Act on Vocational Education and Training is the main legislative framework for vocational education in Finland. The act defines the main goals of vocational educational and training ensuring that the education and training provides students the needed skills, knowledge and competence for future work market or further studies. The act defines the structure of vocational training, require-

ments for content, learning outcomes and assessment, and also includes the qualifications of organizations responsible for providing vocational education training. (Act on Vocational Education and Training 531/2017)

The Act on Vocational education and Training (531/2017) also defines the various responsibilities of these vocational institutions, its stakeholders, teachers, and students. Main responsibilities mentioned in the act is the organizations obligation to prepare and plan a personal study plan for every individual student and update and review it together with the student along the studies. The institutions must also plan the students' goals identifying and mirroring the prior experience, skills and desires of the student.

Other main responsibilities of the vocational training organizer is to ensure that their students gain the professional skills and competence in environments which enable the fulfillment of the set educational requirements and goals. In addition, the act states the students right to gain needed study guidance, feedback and support to achieve the best possible outcome of the studies. (Act on Vocational Education and Training 531/2017)

4. SUBJECTS AND METHOD

I have chosen to use qualitative research methods in this thesis, as it is the most suitable for this type of research. The data collected in this research is collected through semi-structured theme interviews and a theory-based content analysis is used for analyzing the data. The next section will introduce the research subject, the research methodology used in this research and lastly shortly about the data collection and implementation.

4.1 Research subject

The research was conducted for the Tampere Vocational College Tredu. Tredu is a regional upper secondary level college in Tampere, Finland. Tredu is Finland's second largest vocational education organizer, and has activity in eight different municipalities including Tampere, Kangasala, Nokia, Lempäälä, Orivesi, Pirkkala, Virrat and Ylöjärvi. Tredu has over 17 000 students studying annually. Tredus' educational provision includes education and degrees in basic and professional degrees, special vocational degrees, apprenticeships for all professional degrees and training aimed for companies and working life.

Tredu organization was chosen for this research as their safety manager pointed out interest on the research, and employees of their organization had done a lot of remote work during Covid-19 pandemic. The organization had not had extensive experience on remote work in the past, so the research has the opportunity to give valuable information regarding the future of remote work in Tredu.

The study, and interviewees conducted included teachers at Tredu. The purpose of the study was to get interviews from teachers who had worked remote during the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim was to also get a deeper understanding about the experiences the teachers have noticed during their time working remote.

4.2 Research methodology

Qualitative research is the methodology used in this thesis. The objective of qualitative research is to find answers and experiences through words, stories, and sentences rather than using numbers as in quantitative methods. Qualitative research is chosen when it is desired to get deeper understanding of a phenomenon and how people experience a certain phenomenon. (Kananen 2017). “All phenomena cannot be explained through mathematical formulas” (Puusa & Juuti 2011). The basis of qualitative research is not as such to find answers to a hypothesis or theory but to examine the researched phenomenon comprehensively (Hirsijärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 1997).

Qualitative research can be seen subjective, concentrating on specific instances within the chosen research context. The key emphasis lies on individual experiences and perspectives, as well as the interaction between individuals and the researcher. In qualitative research, the goal is for the researcher to collect individualized information about the experiences, and it's the researchers' responsibility to provide a meaningful interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated. (Puusa & Juuti 2011).

The primary goal of qualitative research is to provide a detailed description, understanding, and interpretation of the chosen phenomena. Qualitative research aims to describe the issue in more specific cases than in more general level. (Puusa & Juuti 2011). To gain the most in-depth information and experiences of vocational teachers experiences of remote working, qualitative research is the most appropriate research method to use.

Interview is a typical method used in qualitative research. Interview is a flexible research method, and suitable for various kinds of research. The interview situations give opportunity to interact and direct the conversation and data collection deeper, to gain knowledge even of the motives and thoughts behind the answers. Interviews have many beneficial aspects as a research method. During the interview the person is heard and given the opportunity to give their own insight and thoughts on the subject at hand. Interview also gives the opportunity to clarify, deepen and explore the more difficult aspects, together. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008).

Interviews also have downsides. The interviews demand knowledge and experience from the interviewer, and without prior experience or training the process and interview situation may be difficult and stressful. In addition, the interview processes are time consuming as you need to find the inter-

viewees, arrange, and conduct the interview. After the interviews the data collection and transcription also take time and effort. Also, there is always a possibility for mistakes, which may affect the reliability and credibility of the research. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008).

4.3 Data collection and implementation

The research began by contacting the Tredu organizations safety manager. The subject, idea and practicalities of the research was introduced shortly to the safety manager. Tredu and their safety manager approved the research idea and expressed interest in participating to the study. After this a formal research permit was asked from the city of Tampere. After getting the research approval from city of Tampere, the next step was to gain participants for the research. The participants for the research were requested by sending an email for the employees through the safety manager. The employees willing to participate to the study were asked to reply straight to me if they were interested to participate.

The email for participation was sent to teachers inside Tredu. The aim was to get the most diverse description of the teachers' specialties and with different subjects to get a more complex and comprehensive picture of the matters concerning remote work wellbeing, as the factors influencing remote work wellbeing may vary differing the speciality or subject the teacher is teaching.

As mentioned before, this research was conducted by using semi-structured theme interviews. The basis of semi-structured interview is that the questions are the same for each of the interviewee. In addition, no ready-made answers or options were given to the interviewees. The interviewees could give their open answers and the interview can be seen as a conversation which adapts during the interview. (Eskola & Suoranta 2018).

There were a lot of responses for the email requesting participants for the research. From the responses eight participants were selected to participate to the research. The interviews were conducted either on Teams or in person. Only one participant wanted to do the interview in person, the rest of the interviews were conducted through teams, with or without the camera on. The interviews were conducted during April 2022.

The interviews were conducted respecting the privacy of the interviewees. Before the interviews a permission was asked for recording the interviews and noted that the recordings will be deleted after transcription. The interviewees name, gender, age, or other personal traits will not be mentioned

in this research. The participation for the research was voluntary, and every participant informed their willingness to participate.

The interviews were divided into three different themes, and the themes were selected based on the research question, previous theory and research on occupational health, safety and wellbeing. The themes' objective was to find out the experiences of the vocational teachers during remote work, and the best and logical way to find this was to categorize the interviews into three different themes which can be simplified as negative effects, positive effects and the wishes for future. To answer these themes the interviewees were asked the following interview questions.

1. What problems and difficulties have the teachers' experienced during remote work from a occupational health, safety and wellbeing viewpoint?
2. What benefits have the teachers' experienced during your time working from home?
3. What support and actions should the employer do to ensure OSH of remote workers?

As stated before the interviews were conducted only as semi-structured interview. The interview considered only these three themes, and each theme had only one question. After asking about one theme the interviewee gave their open answer based on their experiences. when handling the specific theme, I may have asked follow-up questions to get more in depth and in detail answers to the phenomenon and theme at hand, but I did not have any preconstructed questions. The interviews took from thirty minutes to one hour. After all the interviews were conducted, the recorded interviews were individually listened and transcribed. After transcription the recordings were deleted.

4.4 Data analysis

After the interviews were conducted the interview material was analyzed using theory-based content analysis. Content analysis is a highly traditional way of analyzing content in the field of qualitative research. Content analysis means analyzing the written text with the aim of creating more simple and condensed description of the phenomenon under study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). Content analysis is also described as a method, which can form repeatable and valid conclusions of the research material, while maintaining the most important content of the material. (Krippendoff 2013; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009).

The first step in content analysis is to divide the content into concise and clear form, maintaining the most important contents. After this the content is divided into parts, conceptualized, and built again back into a clear whole. Already in this stage the similarities and differences in the content is differentiated, collected, and combined. (Latvala & Vanhanen-Nuutinen 2003).

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) point out that through the content analysis the researcher only organizes the material, and therefore the material cannot directly be presented as research result. Content analysis should then be analyzed through perspectives of the previous theory and information collected. These perspectives can be divided into three different categories: material-based, theory-based or theory-bound analysis. These different perspectives then affect the factors which then guide the analysis into research results. The research material in this research was analyzed through theory-based analysis method. This means that the researcher can rely on the research theory and information obtained, but it does not test the validity or compare the results on the previous theories on the subject. Instead, the aim is to create new patterns, and gain new information on the subject. The results can be reflected with the previous research, but the final results are formed through the information gathered through the conducted interviews. Theory-based content analysis has received criticism since the results of the study are easily obtained as a list of material, and this way fail to make decent conclusions or empirical reviews on the matter (Eskola & Suoranta 2007).

Through the content analysis the most relevant and interesting pieces of each interview was collected and organized. After the information and most relevant answers were gathered on every theme, I compared the answers between each other to find the similarities and differences in the content. After this I could composed the information back to whole finding out patterns and new information which are composed to results.

In more detail the theory-based content analysis can be divided into three different parts, firstly the content is simplified, then the simplified parts are clustered into groups and finally the end results are presented as theoretical concepts mirroring the chosen theory.

At first, I explored through the research material and tried to find occurring answers to the interview questions and themes. Concerning every theme, I divided and picked the different answers and placed them into a different file. Already at this stage I tried to group similar answers into same file, for easier clustering. After this I scanned through the different answers and formed more simplified expressions of the statements. An example of the simplifications of the interview answers below:

Figure 3. Example of simplification

Answer	Simplified answer
“I felt that I didn’t have time to prepare for meetings and lectures, as I had something always coming up or somebody asking something through skype”	urgency/ sense of urgency
“Sometimes I felt that needed a friend or a co-worker just to chat with about non-work related stuff”	loneliness
“I felt professional growth as I invented new ways of teaching, and the students enjoyed, which fulfilled me with sense of accomplishment”	professional development
“I wish the upper-management would treat us as people, not as a statistic, and also involve the employees in decision making”	involvement in decision- making

The next step in the data analysis was clustering, meaning that similar answers and concepts would be grouped together and combined into classes, which can be referred as subcategories. These categories can be named after the content of the concepts. (Tuomi ja Sarajärvi, 2018). In this thesis the concepts were categorized as “difficulties and problems”, “benefits and positive effects”, and “wishes for future”. These categories were also used as themes and the results were displayed in these three different categories.

Figure 4. Examples of clustering

Simplified answer	Subcategory
Sense of urgency	difficulties and problems
loneliness	difficulties and problems
Professional development	benefits and positive effects
Involvement in decision-making	wishes for future

At the last stage of data analysis, I implemented the theory-based content analysis. Meaning that the theoretical concepts formed does not come from the research material but from the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework used in this research was Rauramos' (2008) model of well-being. The categories formed from the model were: psychosocial needs, safety, communality, self-realization and appreciation. The answers given by the teachers were then divided into these different unifying classes based on the simplified answer and subcategories. The unifying class included both negative and positive aspects raised by the teachers. The results part of this research will display the experiences of the teachers in these three themes mentioned above, and the main results are reflected through Rauramos' (2008) model of wellbeing.

Figure 5. Example of conceptualizing

Simplified	Subcategory	Unifying class
Sense of urgency	difficulties and problems	psychosocial need
Loneliness	difficulties and problems	communality
professional development	benefits and positive effects	self-realization
Involvement in decision-making	wishes for future	communality

5. RESULTS

This chapter reviews the results of the thesis based on the analysis of the conducted eight thematic interviews. The interviews were divided into three different themes. The results chapter is built around these three themes. The themes were based on the idea of answering the research question of what are the vocational teachers experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic. These three themes are built to gain the overall in-depth experiences of the vocational teachers. The experiences and answers of the vocational teachers were reviewed and reflected through Rauramos' (2008) model of wellbeing and the concepts formed through theory-based content analysis. At the start of every paragraph the theme and results are introduced shortly, proceeding to a more in-depth analysis of the results. There is a summary of the results at the end of the chapter.

What are vocational teachers' experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic?

5.1 Difficulties and problems of remote work

The main difficulties and problems the employees faced during their time working remote were linked to psychosocial needs, safety needs and communality needs. The main problem areas in psychosocial category included sense of urgency, lack of breaks and high workload. The safety needs employees raised as problems were related to ergonomics, poor working environment and the lack of information about insurance and information security. Communality needs raised by the employees' included difficulties in social connectedness, co-operation, insufficient support from their supervisors and tension in returning to the office. Employees also raised the difficulty of job orientation during remote times. In addition, new workers in the organization did not feel as welcome and could not join the existing work community as easily because of remote work.

Psychosocial needs

Negative effect of remote work raised by some of the employees was the sense of urgency as a difficulty in remote work. The remote work has changed the ways of work, and everything happens online. Employees spoke about the issue of meetings being scheduled hourly meaning that they hop

from meeting to another without having any breaks or time to process information. In addition, they felt always connected because of the continuous meetings, phone calls and emails.

“Before remote work you had time to process and reflect on the information about the meeting, now you must stress that will you make it on time to the next meeting, which is starting already. Therefore, I don’t have many breaks working remote” Interviewee 5

This instead resulted into stress and harm in concentration as you are worrying already about the next meeting, and how you had no time to prepare. On the contrary the employees appreciated the swiftness and ease of meetings online. The online meetings took away the unnecessary transits to places for a short meeting, and in addition the employees felt that online meetings were more efficient and more to the point.

Most of the interviewed employees noted the fact that they have far less breaks than when working from the office. The employees also stated that often they eat their lunch while working. The reason for this was the sense of urgency and the ease of working simultaneously as the workstation is there. At the office there is a designated breakrooms and usually co-workers would come and ask for coffee or lunch, so the breaks happen more naturally. Despite the lack of breaks and sense of urgency the employees felt that they did not need as many breaks because remote work was more relaxed and did not cause as much strain as working at the office.

Two interviewed teachers also stated that even though they felt more relaxed during remote days they still felt sometimes difficulties disconnecting from work. They continued and resumed working at the evening after workhours to for example check their emails. The teacher felt that this way they were ahead of tomorrow’s work and could plan it ahead. On the contrary they noted that sometimes this causes stress and intervenes with their night’s sleep as they worry for the next day.

“When I had free time at evenings, sometimes I hopped on the computer and finished my undone work and prepared for the next day. This gave me a feeling of control and readiness for the next day”. Interviewee 6

“When I checked my emails at night and found out that a big project was coming, I really couldn’t sleep that night, as I pondered and stressed for the next day”. Interviewee 7.

Other teachers interviewed did not have problems disconnecting from work, as they complied with the working times, and they had made personal decisions that they work only at appointed working times. This way they could decompress and fully commit to their free time, and be recovered and ready for the next day.

Some interviewed employees also felt that the working culture at Tredy is a bit old-fashioned in the way that people do not think remote work is real work. In addition, the working culture has got to a point that keeping breaks and taking care of your wellbeing and health is a bit frowned upon. Some interviewees felt that they needed to work all the time or else they were seen as bad workers, or if they are on a walk during an online meeting it is seen as negative thing. They felt that they did not receive acceptance or appreciation from their co-workers, which lead into frustration. This also affected to the sense of urgency and neglection of needed breaks.

“Because of the current work culture, it feels like its self-evident that you don’t take breaks during work.” Interviewee 2

“It feels like you need to be present at the office, and always working on the computer. If you are not, you are seen as a lazy worker.” Interviewee 4

“Sometimes even our supervisor sends emails at the evening, and because of this it feels that you should also be working at the evening.” Interviewee 7.

The change in workload and working methods especially at the start of the remote work was seen as a difficulty for some employees. The workload problems mentioned was the difficulty of teaching online as they did not know if the students were paying attention or even present at the classes. In addition, things are harder to show through online teaching, and after saying something, twenty students ask the same question again. Also, the teachers have found difficulties teaching foreign students as it is not same as teaching in class, because of the language barrier.

“In a classroom I can walk to the student and show them how to do it. With online teaching it’s much harder and takes twice as much time”. Interviewee 8

The working methods challenged the teachers, because the switch to remote work happened so swiftly, that they did not have time to get proper instructions and training for online teaching, so the teaching was done through trial and error. This took additional effort and work. Nevertheless, the employees felt that as time went on the workload did not increase and hasn’t changed much from working from the office except for the difficulties in the start of remote work.

On the other hand, some employees stated that their workload and obligations had even decreased or altered. Before they had to drive a lot to meetings such as to meet students in internships, which took a lot of work time. Now during remote work, it is easy to schedule a meeting that suits both the student and teacher and carry out the necessary discussions online, making it easier and it does the same thing. Although interviewed teachers pointed out that difficult situations and issues cannot be handled through online meetings, it requires face-to-face meeting and discourse.

Safety needs

The difficulties the employees raised concerning the remote work from the perspective of safety needs were problems in ergonomics and working environment. Employees said that the ergonomics were worse than working at the office as they did not have electrical tables, or room to set a proper working station. Most employees stated that there was no instructions or advice on preparing a safe and healthy working station, nor any kind of risk assessment was conducted, or asked about their working conditions at home. The employees stated a wish that the employer would have taken interest in the working conditions at home, as some may have for example a very small apartment shared with children and other people, this way making remote work stressful and difficult to perform.

“My supervisor could have called and asked how I am doing and how are my working conditions at home. The feeling of being supported and listened takes you a long way.” Interviewee 7

Although the issues on ergonomics and working conditions were left to be handled alone it was not seen as a major problem as they had a chance to get work equipment such as chairs, keyboards, displays from the office if they wanted. In addition, they felt that they did not have much physical problems despite the working conditions were not the best. The freedom of changing the working station such as working on the couch, kitchen table or outside was seen as a more positive attribute.

Many interviewed employees also raised the issue of information security. The employees felt that information security on IT- issues was handled very well. The connections worked and help for IT-problems were accessible and easy to get. Also, the safety and security mechanisms on login and operating systems were sufficient. The employees' concern was on secrecy and information security concerning personal and sensitive information in discussions and at home. The concern was that they did not have any training or advice on handling sensitive information and information security. This way they did not always remember or take into consideration the issues they were talking or what can they discuss and where. In addition, during online meetings they did not have information about who other could be listening the conversation or where the other person was.

Other issue most of the interviewees pointed out was the lack of knowledge on insurance issues when working remote. The employees stated that they did not get any information on insurance policies concerning remote work. The employees felt that they were unsure of the procedures in case of an accident at home. They felt unsure at what is considered as worktime and what not. They felt that it would be necessary to get information from the employer about the key aspects on insurance concerning remote work. Is it the same as working in office or is there differences?

Communality

One of the biggest difference and difficulty compared to office work was the difficulty in communality needs. Many of the employees felt that remote work affected the working community as they did not feel as close to their colleagues than before. Even if they had online meetings where they met their colleagues, it was not the same as meeting at the office face-to-face. The main downsides pointed out was lack of informal discourse, which happens spontaneously at the office. In addition, the employees pointed out the issue of brainstorming and opinion asking was more difficult and took much more effort to call or set up a meeting for a small consultation issue. The employees stated that the connectedness has suffered, but they really haven't felt isolated or loneliness.

“During the lockdown I missed the communality, and the coffee breaks where you could chat non-work stuff face-to-face” Interviewee 5

Despite the lack of proper communality most of the employees felt that the remote time and keeping the co-operation and communality up was easier if the colleagues were familiar and the work community was tight. This helped the transition as they already knew the people. This way calling and being in meetings was less stressful as you knew the person and could sometimes tell jokes and keep it more casual. Most difficulties came when a new person or an outside entity was involved in the meetings. This is where you needed to be more careful, and they felt it is an important factor that you know and have seen the people you are doing online meetings with.

This raised concern also about new colleagues which joined the teams during lockdown and remote work. The employees felt that they did not know the person, because they had never seen or talked to them before making it harder to co-operate with them and include them into the community. They felt that being together and having face-to-face gatherings are necessary for new colleagues to fit in. The employees also raised the concern that new workers were harder to orientate for the work. New employees felt the same and stated the difficulty of getting proper orientation and had difficulties joining the work community. Despite these difficulties a new employee interviewed stated that for the first contact and for getting to know co-workers it was easier to join during the lockdown, because they did not have the stress and mental strain of meeting all the new people at once and familiarizing to everyone, instead they could do it through online meeting from home.

“As a new employee I could introduce myself, and join the work community from home, where I felt the safest.” Interviewee 2

Few employees interviewed raised the concern of returning to the office from remote work. They have been doing merely remote work for so long, that they are a bit afraid to return among the people and the hustle. They felt that they had got used to working alone and in peace without any contacts or crowded places. Therefore, they feel nervous for the return to the office and to the crowded atmosphere. They wish the return would happen gradually and they wouldn't need to meet lots of people at once. The idea of returning had caused stress and anxiousness.

The employees also raised the importance of supervisor support during remote work. The interviewed employees said that overall leadership cannot be criticized, as the supervisors were available, answered as needed, did their part and informed them about necessary instructions concerning Covid-19 and remote work. The improvement the employees felt they needed from their supervisors was concerning wellbeing, safety and feedback. The employees felt that they did not get the necessary support and assurance from their supervisors. The employees said that their supervisors felt afar and did not really know what the employees do. Employees felt that it is a norm, but appreciated the fact that supervisors give autonomy and trusts the employees to do their work. In the other hand some employees felt, that during remote work it would have been good that the supervisor would have listened to their individual employees, supported, led by example, and would have asked about the working conditions and general wellbeing. Employees said that the common informal online meetings with the team were good, but every individual does not dare to tell their real feelings because everybody is listening. Employees also felt that the supervisors should be more interested about their employees' work, come and interact more with the employees also at the office. The issue raised was that the supervisors have so different work descriptions and a lot of employees, they do not have time to dismount among the workers.

Interviewed employees felt that the feedback of their work has stayed practically the same as before remote work. They felt that positive feedback or even some feedback is necessary for development and motivation.

“It would be motivating to get more positive feedback, or even feedback that you are doing your job correctly. If you don't get any feedback, you can't change anything, and you don't even know are you doing your job good.” Interviewee 10

“You can never get too much positive feedback. It gives a lot of motivation and strength, and you remember the positive feedbacks for a long time.” Interviewee

“The supervisor should ask and really listen to their employees. Everyone is an individual and have different situations in life, and things that create wellbeing and motivation.”

Interviewee 5

5.2 Benefits of working remote

Despite the negative aspects raised by the interviewed employees, generally all the interviewed employees felt that working remote has gone well- many even stated that they have enjoyed working remote even more than working at the office. The overall wellbeing of the employees had stayed the same or increased due to remote work. This can be partially explained with the fact, that the Tredu employees have switched to hybrid work, meaning that they do both remote and office work. The positive aspects the employees said included fulfillment in psychosocial aspects, self- realization and appreciation needs. The positive attributes in psychosocial needs pointed out was freedom of arranging own work, more effective and concentrated working, and more free time due to less travel and commuting. Employees also felt less strained after days working remote. The appreciation needs fulfilled during remote work included autonomy, trust and appreciation. The self-realization needs employees felt fulfilled was the possibility to effect own schedules and improve professionally as a teacher through finding and developing new ways to teaching.

One of the biggest benefits many employees stated was better effectiveness and concentration on work at hand when working remote. At the office there is always noise and someone interrupting the workflow. The employees felt that at home they were more effective and got more work done, because there was peace, and no one was interrupting. On the other hand, the good concentration and workflow was complicit to the fact that the employees had fewer breaks during workday.

“At the office we work in an open office and there is always noise and someone coming to ask you something. At home I could focus and concentrate much better.” Interviewee 5

Other positive side the employees stated was that the commute to and from work was left out. Employees stated that this gave a lot more free time during the day, which increased wellbeing through the fact that they had more time to do more meaningful leisure activities. In addition, the preparation for work in the mornings was left out, which made the start for the day more relaxed. This was reflected to the whole workday, and the employees felt less strained and more relaxed during and

after remote working days. The more relaxed feeling at remote work and more free time had positive effects on the mental strain, and the employees felt more energetic after work, and were able to recover better. The employees pointed out that the feeling of being home in safe and familiar place helped cope with the additional stress and strain. In addition, employees stated that if they had a short or bad night's sleep, they could sleep a bit longer and then be efficient at work, rather than going to the office tired, and then getting less done.

“It has been nice that you can be in sweatpants and more relaxed at home. At the office you always need to be so formal and appropriate.” Interviewee 1

“At home you can be totally yourself, and don't need to think what others think of you or participate into discussions if not necessary. Remote work is much less intense to your mental strain.” Interviewee 5

Most of the employees stated that remote work had also benefits in flexibility, work-life balancing and working arrangements. The employees said that they could arrange their days inside the set limits. Employees said that they could start work earlier by going straight to the computer after waking up. Also, if they wanted to take a walk during the day to freshen up, it was possible during remote days. These kind of little benefits and things were stated as big factors considering their health, and wellbeing.

“Remote work enabled certain freedom. Sometimes you could stop working earlier if you had something planned, and then you could continue in the evening if necessary. The freedom and flexibility of remote work definitely increased my work wellbeing.” Interviewee 8

In addition, the online meetings have been a positive change. Employees state that before you needed to drive and take time for meetings. It was a lot of wasted time and energy to drive far to have a short meeting, which could have been done online. The online meetings have also been more efficient and on the point, meaning that there is not a lot of meaningless chatting. Also, teachers have found that online meetings are a good and sufficient way to check up on students at internships around Finland. Many employees stated that before they had to drive two or three hours to meet students at internships, and a trip to meet as student for one hour meeting, could take the whole day. Through online meetings you can do the same meeting online whenever its suitable for both. This way the rest of the day can be used for much more useful professional development and for work, rather than sitting in a car for multiple hours. Contrary few interviewed teachers pointed out the fact, that face-to-face meetings are always better, and many times necessary if for example the student has difficulties or challenges at the on-the-job period. Difficult situations and conversations are

always better handle in person to really get a better understanding of the person and the issue at hand.

Safety

Two interviewees also wanted to raise the change in conflict and threatening situations at vocational institutions due to remote work. They stated that conflict and threatening situations has decreased a lot since they had switched to remote teaching.

“When I taught full-time at the campus I remember I had to solve conflict situations maybe even once a week, now after switch to remote work those kinds of situations have decreased a lot.” Interviewee 5.

They stated that before remote work and online teaching they’ve had multiple situations at work and during lectures where there would be conflict situations between students, where they had to intervene. One interviewee also mentioned about fears of even physical confrontation between a misbehaving student. Interviewee stated that these situations have started when a student would be misbehaving and shouting at a lecture, and when confronted the situation has become threatening. The interviewee has had no physical confrontation, but they have felt threatening situations where there was a possibility for physical confrontation. They felt that the decrease in these kinds of situations, and the fact that during remote work, they do not even have to worry about these kinds of situations have increased their feeling of safety and boosted wellbeing.

Appreciation

Mirroring to the appreciation needs the employees have felt the most positive attribute has been the trust and autonomy the employers have given the employees. They feel that in this way their work is appreciated, and they are trusted to do their work. The feeling of autonomy and trust has increased the employee motivation. The employees feel that as they are trusted they want to continue and better themselves to be trustworthy. They have not felt that they are being monitored or assessed, which has increased their motivation and feeling of appreciation.

“Despite the uncertainty and chaos at the start I feel that the trust and autonomy given to me by my supervisor and institutions has motivated me to do the work as good as possible.” Interviewee 4.

The answers on trust and autonomy were similar through all the teachers interviewed. They felt that at the beginning of remote work, the lack of instructions and support was weak, but they understood that this was an unprecedented situation also for their supervisors and institutions this way helping

the teachers coping. They felt that everybody was in the same difficult situation and for that wanted to handle the situation as good as possible for themselves and also to maintain the reputation of their institution. After the uncertainty and errors at first, the teachers felt that the trust from the employers increased their motivation and work-wellbeing. As they had and could find new ways of teaching, interacting, and engaging their students.

Self- realization

The appreciation and trust given to them has also benefited the self-realization need. Even though they have annual working time and schedule, the employees felt that remote work enables them to have more control over their work, how they do it, and when they do it. Employees also stated that remote work has brought new joy into working, since you needed to learn new things, develop new teaching methods, and improve them continuously to attain and keep student interest. Remote work has also affected positively the professional competence and development of certain employees.

“It feels satisfying and motivating that I can still learn new things and develop as a teacher through creating new teaching ways in online teaching.” Interviewee 3

“Remote work has helped me advance on my career. I am nervous in front of people and audiences. Because of remote work and online meetings, I have had the courage to take responsibility and have my voice heard.” Interviewee 2

The employees stated that the benefit of working remote is the combination of several small different things, what makes a huge positive difference in work wellbeing. Overall, the employees felt that working remote has been beneficial for their wellbeing and health. The fact the employees note is that remote work should be their own choice, as it has its downsides and people are different individuals, and it may not suit for everyone. Employees feel that the hybrid model is a great tool, and it should be continued in the future. Almost all employees felt that forced remote work is not a good way and would cause more problems. The hybrid model, where the individual has a choice to work remote when wanted was said to be the key factor. The employees said that when they wanted more socializing and interaction they can go to the office, and when they need to concentrate and get more work done, they can be remote.

5.3 Wishes and development ideas for the future of remote work

The employees felt that Tredu has handled the complex issue of remote work adequately. They understand the fact that the change was sudden and there was not a lot of time to prepare or give advice on achieving healthy and safe remote work due to the fact that the pandemic started so sudden and forced the employees to switch to remote work over night.

The employees felt that the hybrid model where Tredu has transitioned is a good method and they hope it will continue in the future. The main wishes the employees had for ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety concerning remote work was developing the work culture and different aspects of remote work. Employees also stated that supervisor support and showing interest towards employees is very important. In addition, the employees felt that ergonomical, insurance and information security aspects needed to be taken into better consideration, as well as paying attention to the orientation and taking care of new employees. On the general basis the employees gave criticism on the multiple projects undertaken at Tredu, which ties resources and increases workload without any long-term benefits.

The largest wish multiple employees stated was to develop and improve state of remote work and the working culture at Tredu. Employees stated that they feel like remote work is not valued and thought as real work. This is not perceived primarily from the organization, but from other employees and this way affecting the community. They hope that the culture is improved and the benefits of remote work is seen throughout the organization and employees. The employees feel that remote work has beneficial effects on work wellbeing and improves work efficiency and effectiveness, and therefore they do not want to lose it. Employees also reminded that remote work may not be for everyone, and it effects individuals differently. Therefore, the support and individual interest is important. They do not hope overall one-fits-all instructions and rules on remote work, but that teams and individuals have a chance to discuss and effect the different possibilities of remote work.

The employees also raised the issue of remote teaching as an option also in the future. They feel that it would be beneficial to continue remote teaching especially on adult students. As now due to lack of space the teaching happens in two shifts, the morning and evening shift. This produces more workload and strain both for the students and teachers. Most of the interviewed employees felt that remote teaching shouldn't be done to younger students, as everything cannot be taught remote and additionally younger students need the communality and friendship which develops in school environment. On the other hand, adult students may already have work and family, so remote teaching

may be more suitable for them. This way the teaching could happen on more suitable hours which benefit both the teachers and adult students.

“I hope that Tredu ponders the possibility that the teaching for young students would be primarily at the school, and teaching for adult students remote, so that there wouldn’t be two shifts.” Interviewee 6

Most of the employees interviewed also wished that the supervisors were more interested, supportive and gave more feedback and encouragement to them. The employees felt that there was improvement to make both at the office and especially in remote work. Although the annual work time and individual employee principles can be helpful in controlling remote work, wellbeing, and workload, the employees felt that it would be more effective if the supervisors and the organization would show example, listen, and be interested of their individual employees. They stated supervisor example and encouragement for pauses, controlling the workload and social aspects is important.

“It is important that the supervisor really listens to the employee and makes the employee feel valued, not treat as just one statistic among others.” Interviewee 6

“It should be the organization which takes care of the health, safety and wellbeing of the employee, not the other way around.” Interviewee 2

On the other hand, few employees stated that they would feel awkward if their supervisor would start asking questions and supporting suddenly. They felt that they are gotten used to certain kind of culture and leadership. They said that they did not want or need any different leadership or support from their supervisors.

“It’s enough for me that I can contact my supervisor when I need. I appreciate that my supervisor gives me autonomy and doesn’t bother me needlessly.” Interviewee 1

Summary

In this short summary I will raise the most significant points the employees raised on the different research themes. In Tredu remote work was seen as a very positive method, and all the employees interviewed would like to continue doing remote work in the future especially when it’s by their own choice. Employees also highlighted the benefits of hybrid model, where there is best of both methods. You may choose to work remote when you desire to do so, inside the set parameters.

In summary the beneficial effects the vocational teachers pointed out were better work efficiency and concentration on work, and more overall flexibility during workdays. They also felt the trust and autonomy from their organization and supervisors were a positive aspect for their occupational

wellbeing. Other positive aspects of remote work raised by the teachers were the feeling of professional development through inventing and accomplishing new ways of online teaching. Additionally, teachers appreciated the flexibility and ease of online lectures and meetings. The online meetings and lectures gave them more free time, less commutes and meetings were more efficient. Teachers also felt that remote work improved their work life- balance meaning they had more time and energy to pursue their own interests outside work. Teachers were also thankful that they did not have to fear or stress about threatening situations and altercations as remote work had diminished these kinds of situations all together.

Vocational teachers experience on the difficulties theme revealed that remote teaching had its own difficulties and challenges. The main difficulties teachers had experienced were the sense of urgency and lack of breaks. The continuous online meetings and lectures caused a feeling of urgency and the teachers felt that they did not really have time to reflect and ponder the meetings and lectures. Additionally, workstations at home and lack of coworkers near meant that breaks were skipped, and lunch and coffee breaks were taken as they were working. Vocational teachers also mentioned lack of social connectedness and co-operation as a negative effect. Remote work had decreased co-operation between colleagues. Furthermore, some vocational teachers felt that the organization and managers did not respect the remote work and felt that remote work was not seen as “real work”. In addition, the teachers felt that managerial support and support for new employees were insufficient.

The third interview theme was meant to give the teachers the possibility to reflect their experiences of remote teaching and point out wishes and development ideas for the future of remote work. The interviewed teachers felt that the culture of remote working hadn't been accepted or developed inside Tredu. Additionally, the online teaching methods, procedures and instructions were not sufficient. They hoped that the organization would nurture, develop and appreciate the possibilities of remote work and online teaching. They felt that remote work and online teaching is a valuable asset and the positive sides of it should be used and integrated into teaching. The vocational teachers in Tredu also announced the importance of managerial support during remote work. Remote work and teaching easily converts into lonely working, and it is important that the supervisors and managers support and communicate with their employees. Additionally, the vocational teachers did not have any formal training or information about information security or insurance issues concerning remote work. They wished more information and instructions concerning these issues.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Qualitative rigor of the results

Qualitative rigor is an important part of the research for evaluating the quality, value, and trustworthiness of the research. For achieving the best quality and trustworthiness of study the researcher must choose the right research methodologies for the given research and commit to rigor from the planning stages to the results and discussion. The rigor in qualitative research can be divided into four different criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. (Xun 2017)

Credibility can be defined as the true experiences of the phenomenon explained by the participants in the study. For the researcher to achieve the most honest experiences from the participants it is important to have adequate and relevant material and data. In addition, the interview situations should be conducted in adequate way and used as much time needed to gain the most in-depth answers and honest experiences from the participants. (Xun 2017). In this study my goal was to use as much relevant data and previous research material for theoretical background to gain understanding of the phenomenon, and to be able to ask follow-up questions from the participants at the interviews to gain more detailed experiences and answers. In the interviews I tried to not be in a rush and gain a trusting relationship by talking casually at first and explaining about the research and for what the results are used. The participants were voluntarily willing to join the research and informed that they were pleased to participate as the results may change and improve their occupational wellbeing and health at work. For improving credibility, I cross checked and compared the results to previous research.

Transferability denotes the applicability of the results compared to other similar situations or similar context. In other words, can the research results be used outside of this research. Transferability can be obtained by using up to date and relevant data on the theoretical parts of the study. In addition, the participants of the study should be selected accordingly, and the study should have an adequate and sufficient number of participants. (Xun 2017). In this study my focus was on vocational institutions and vocational teachers. The occupation of teaching and education is quite similar regardless of the educational unit or institution. However, in this research the focus was on vocational teachers. Vocational teachers job description differs quite remarkably from other teaching professions. As a result, this research transferability is limited and can be mainly used to develop and utilize in

other vocational institutions. Teachers informed that they teach remotely both young and adult students, which expands the transferability. Additionally, the occupational health, safety and wellbeing aspects raised can be used as guiding information in other educational units, and possibly as a comparison point in future research. Interesting research in the future would be to research the differences of occupational health, safety and wellbeing experiences between for example. vocational educators and high school educators. Additionally, I did comparison to other relevant research on teachers' health and wellbeing factors at remote work, and found both similarities and differences, which confirms transferability.

Dependability refers to the consistency of the results, meaning that would the findings be consistent and similar if the study would be done again with same or similar participants. To achieve dependability the study and results should be replicable. (Xun 2017). In this research the dependability is achieved by closely documenting all the procedures; data collection, analyzing and interpreting of the data. Moreover, for qualitative study I conducted several interviews to get the most consistent data and experiences from the participants, and this way cover and minimize the differences.

Confirmability can be described as the trustworthiness and objectiveness of the results. The results and the study should not be affected by the bias, motivation, or interests of the researcher. The findings should be solely from the participants and the conditions of the interviews. (Xun 2017). In my study I achieved confirmability by using open ended questions, meaning that I did not have any leading questions or assumptions beforehand. I gave the participants the time and possibility to tell their own experiences and feelings about the themes handled. In addition, I do not have any connections to the Tredu organizations and nothing to personally gain by this study. I also randomly picked eight participants to gain the most broad and versatile experiences minimizing the possibility for own interest of the participants.

6.2 The main results and practical implications

There has been a lot of previous research concerning the wellbeing effects of remote work especially in the last few years because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The previous research has been specifically focused on the wellbeing of full-time remote workers. This thesis has enlightened the subjective experiences of vocational teachers working fully and partly remote. The objective of this thesis was to find answers on the complex issue of wellbeing and health during remote work in the

profession of vocational education. For the thesis employees at Tredu Vocational college was interviewed to get their perspectives and experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during Covid-19 pandemic.

The results of this thesis are quite consistent and similar to the previous research conducted on the issue of wellbeing at remote work. Although previous research has portrayed remote work to be more negatively associated with wellbeing due to isolation, anxiety, and problems with work-life balancing (Charalampous et al. 2019; Wang et al. 2021). The result of this thesis yields different interpretations and effects of the negative parts of remote work. The varying effects may be partially explained due to the certain professional group in question, and due to the fact that the interviewed employees work remote because of their own will and have the opportunity to work hybrid model, meaning that they may go and work at the office if they wanted to.

The beneficial effects emerged from the previous research matches with the results found in this thesis. Previous research raised flexibility, freedom, and personal opportunity to influence their own work as positive attributes of remote work (Grant et al., 2013; Akiyoshi et al 2021). Results in this thesis raises the same positive aspects of working remote. The employees felt that they have certain freedom and personal chance to influence their working patterns and work for better work-life balancing. In addition, previous research also highlighted the beneficial aspect of peace, efficiency, and the possibility of better concentration during remote work. (Suranyi 2022, Godfree et al. 2021). Previous study conducted by Tanskanen et al. (2021) regarding remote work of teaching professionals display similar results. The research states teaching professionals also felt that remote work was more peaceful, and they could get more done. Additionally teaching professionals felt that remote days were more stress free, and they were able to recover better after remote days. The same aspects were raised by the interviewees in this thesis. They appreciated the peace and quiet at home. This enabled them to get much more work done, and this way feeling more accomplished in their day. Also, they mentioned that after remote days they had more energy to concentrate on free time activities.

The results of this thesis show that almost all the employees interviewed has enjoyed working remote, and the positive effects exceeded the negative effects. Despite the positive totality of remote work, the employees also pointed out negative areas in remote working.

The first interview theme “What problems and difficulties have the vocational teachers experienced during remote work from an occupational health, safety and wellbeing viewpoint?”

The first issue the interviewees pointed out was the sense of urgency and lack of breaks during their days working remote. Previous research has raised up results on the issue that employees have a hard time disconnecting from the work, being always alert and working throughout the day also at the evenings this way affecting work-life balance. (Syrek et al. 2021; Charalampous et al. 2019; Wang et al. 2021). This is usually since there are family or children at home distracting the workflow, and also the fact that the work equipment is always on sight and available. The same result is confirmed by research done by Ala-Hiiri et al. (2021) as teachers interviewed stated that during remote work days they had a hard time disconnecting from work, and they easily neglected breaks due to the fact that the equipment was right there and no colleague was asking them for a break, so they felt that it is easy to just continue working.

Despite the similarity compared to the previous research on urgency and being alert, the results of this research show no difficulties with work-life balancing or working around the clock. The employees stated that they have a limited annual working time which prevents from doing overtime. In addition, the employees had set individual principles, that they will shut down the computer and do not work in the evenings. The issue raised by the employees on being connected and alert all the time was mainly limited to the time when working, and more specifically they pointed out the sense of urgency at remote work while working. They felt sense of urgency due to all the meetings and hopping between classes without the time to reflect and take breaks. The answers reveal that this urgency is partially self-created and formed by the culture of the organization. The employees are used to the hurry and felt that the norm in the organization is to work all the time without breaks. In addition, the some interviewed remote workers felt that remote work is not as appreciated in their work, and because of that they needed to prove for their colleagues and organization that they are hard workers, this way neglecting their own wellbeing and breaks. To improve the culture the organization should develop the concept and approval towards remote work by accepting and encouraging their employees towards the new way of working. The organization must remember to invest into employee wellbeing through safety leadership, supervisor example and support. It is important for the employees to gain approval and appreciation for their remotely done work. This way the employees understand and feel encouraged to work remote as they see fit and take care of their breaks

and wellbeing. Another option to tackle urgency is to investigate and eliminate the possible unnecessary meetings for the employees to have the possibility for more peaceful work conditions. This may also improve the overall effectiveness and wellbeing of work.

Second difficulty the interviewees raised was the working environment and ergonomics at remote work. The working environment and equipment were not ideal in remote work. Many employees stated that they do not have a proper working station, nor the organization have implemented any risk assessment to their home office. The employees did not see this as a problem as they usually had a chance to change working positions, or places to work. Despite the lack of proper workstation and ergonomics they've had no negative physical effects. Nevertheless, the employees wished that the organization and managers would have done something to ensure that the working environment at home is adequate. The Occupational Health and safety act (2002) obliges the employer to assess the work environment and the psychosocial aspects of the work to be safe, healthy and hazard free regardless the location. The Tredu organization should take into consideration the risk assessment and evaluation in home offices, even though the employees have the opportunity to work at the office. The individual employees and their managers should have an open relationship and proper interactions about the wellbeing and the environment at home. In addition, the organization should produce written query for remote workers, and proper instruction for healthy and safe remote work. The most important aspect is to have one-on-one discussion with the employee about their opportunity to work remote, and what can the employer and manager do to create a healthy and safe environment for remote working.

As Rauramo (2008) has stated safety and appreciation are key aspects in work wellbeing. The interest in the wellbeing of the employee, enabling the possibility for remote work, and providing adequate equipment and environment has an impact on the employee wellbeing, which in turn shows that they are cared and supported. Many workers may enjoy remote working far more than office work, and it should be organizations who enables this wish and further encourages this, which may increase the individual's motivation, commitment, and work efficiency. In addition, Eddleston & Mulki (2017) have researched workstation ergonomics, and results show that neglecting good working conditions and ergonomics in the long run will run raise the probability of musculoskeletal issues. The employees also pointed out the difficulty of work orientation for new workers during remote work. The reason being, that you do not know the person in any way, which makes communication, co-operation and team building much harder. In addition, it is much more difficult to show proper working habits and procedures remote. Also, it is more difficult for a new employee to get into the work community because the employee may have never seen their co-workers. As Rauramo (2008)

model of wellbeing points out the community is a big part of work wellbeing. The individual motivation and wellbeing reflect to the work community, and collegial trust and support nourishes wellbeing. The employees raised communality as a key aspect in their wellbeing, and during remote times it has helped that the work colleagues are familiar and known. This helped the transition to remote work for the reason, that because they know their co-workers it was much easier to call and have also informal meetings with them. Previous research has raised the issue of isolation as negative effect in remote work and employee wellbeing. The research states that remote work has meant fewer and fewer face-to-face interactions and this way the employee hasn't met their psychological need for communality and belongingness at work. (Galanti et al. 2021). Additionally research conducted by Ala-Hiiri et al. (2021) on teachers remote work experiences state that teachers have felt a degree of loneliness and urge for more face-to-face contacts through informal sessions and coffee breaks. They felt that it is crucial for good work atmosphere and wellbeing to have even opportunities to talk non-work-related issues with co-workers and not all the time about work-related issues. This thesis has portrayed different picture in the isolation aspect, and the employees interviewed hasn't felt loneliness or isolation during their time working remote. The employees stated that they missed the informal coffee breaks and interactions, but they haven't felt isolated or alone. This may be resulted from the fact, that the teachers and employees interviewed had the opportunity to work at the office if wanted and also because the work description involves a lot of interactions with their students through lectures and consultations. Employees also stated that they have social interactions on their free time, which according to Anderson et al. (2015) research has impact also on work wellbeing, and individuals connected outside of work did not need as many interactions during work and has less loneliness during remote work.

The employees also raised the issue of information security as a concern during remote work. The main issue was that they haven't received proper training on information security, and because of this they did not always remember to take information security into consideration during meetings and online classes. In addition, the employees pointed out the uncertainty of insurance issues during remote work. These issues have not been raised up on previous research, and this thesis gives new information and raises the importance of information security to the table. The information security and insurance issues are an important part for the remote employees to feel safe and knowledgeable at their work. The organization should remind and guide the employees on the correct procedures concerning information security. In addition, the organization should inform the employees on the procedures and issues concerning insurance while working remote. For better understanding of the important informational security issues the organization should draft and compile training for the

most necessary security issues. In addition, the organization should have information package available and an appointed employee who has the knowledge and responsibility of the informational security issues.

Second interview theme: What benefits have the workers experienced during their time working from home?

As stated before all of the interviewed employees have enjoyed working remote, and they have appreciated the time working remote. The employees feel that working remote should be continued in the future as a hybrid model, so that they have a chance to individually decide when to work remote and when at the office. The teachers interviewed informed that as a viewpoint for teachers the teaching has went well, but they understand that every class and subject cannot be taught remote, nor it should be. The teachers highlighted the importance of student comradery, communality, and friendship in addition to the teaching which are important aspects in a young person's life. Also, the presence at the lessons, concentration and learning is transcendent compared to remote.

The main benefits the employees stated about remote work included better concentration and efficiency. They felt that at home they had less distractions than at the office, and that way had the chance to get more work done. This matches also previous research on the subject, that remote work has positive effects on work efficiency and peaceful working (De Klerk et al. 2021; Taniskanen et al. 2021).

The employees also enjoyed more free time and flexibility because of remote work. One of the enjoyable benefits the employees stated was the time saved from all the reduced commutes to and from work and to all the meetings. In addition, the employees had the chance to influence their working schedule to an extent meaning that they could have some free time during the day if needed, and then continued working later if necessary. This way managing their work- life better. The previous research on the subject states that flexibility had positive effects on work-life balance and reduction in psychological and physical stress. (Akiyoshi et al. 2021). The result of this research paints a similar result, as the employees stated that they feel more stress free and relaxed during and after workdays. This in turn results in more energy on free time and better ability to recover for the next workday.

Every employee also enjoyed the trust and autonomy of remote work. They had the feeling that their supervisors and organization trusted them to do their work. In addition, they felt that remote

work made them come up with new innovative ways to teach and work, which boosted their personal growth and competence. Research by Tanskanen et al. (2021) also highlights the importance of trust, professional development. Research raises the importance of professional development and resilience as an important factor for health and wellbeing of teachers. Teachers feel pride about their work, and as they find and learn new innovative ways for teaching, and see students participating and engaging they feel professional growth. Results from this previous research highlights the importance of trust, autonomy and support from managers and institutions to nurture teachers to innovate and freedom to gain motivation and wellbeing for their employees.

The wellbeing model created by Rauramo (2008) highlights the importance of psychophysiological, appreciation and self-realization as key aspects in work wellbeing. The results of this research can be reflected through Rauramos' model, as innovation, trust and personal development occurred during remote work and this way increased work wellbeing. The employees enjoyed the freedom and autonomy they were given and valued the chance to do the work in their own way. The organization should understand the new ways of working, and the individual differences employees have for work wellbeing. By giving the employees opportunities through autonomy and freedom the employees may find the best suitable techniques and protocols for motivating and effective working. Safety leadership and particularly transformational leadership has traits for supporting employee wellbeing and bringing up the best out of the employees at the office and at remote work. The main aspects transformational leadership highlights on supporting wellbeing are related to trust, listening, communication, collaboration between employee and manager and treating employees as individuals (Smith et al. 2016). Nielsen et al. (2016) research displays the functionality and effectiveness of transformational leadership on remote work. The main aspects are related the managers understanding on the work, workload and challenges their employees face during remote work. This and previous research enhance the organizational and managerial importance on including safety leadership in everyday leadership.

The employees also mentioned that the new ways of working were a good change, meaning, that before all the work meetings and student meetings were face-to-face, and during remote time they realized that remote meetings are a much better, faster, easier and more efficient in many situations. The remote meetings were in many cases enough, and usually they were to the point, and less unnecessary time was used. Online meetings and teaching should be used as a resource in the future at the organization. The online meetings have the potential to save valuable time and effort both for the employees and the students, and this way leaving more time to other work-related tasks. As the

employees mentioned all the meetings and lectures cannot be done online. Some meetings for example including new students, or new employees should be done at the office. During the face-to-face interactions you get to know the people better, can elaborate better and form a better connection. The employees stated that remote meetings with new people are always harder, and uncomfortable because you haven't seen the person before and do not even always have a face to the voice. The employees say that it is always better to have face-to-face contacts with people first. The organization and managers should always prefer face-to-face meetings with new employees and students. In addition, if the remote work or times prolong, get together are a good way to boost the wellbeing and moral of the group.

One big aspect in vocational education has been the physical and emotional safety concerning vocational teachers. Mykkänen et al. (2020) research shows the growing occupational health and safety risk of vocational teachers is the increasing volume of threat to physical and mental violence between students, and also against teachers. Similarly in this research interviewees raised the issue of violence and mentioned about the risks concerning their physical and mental safety. They stated that switch to remote work has diminished this risk, and decreased the number of conflict situations. The interviewees also raised the aspect of not having to worry about possible violent situations has increased their mental health and wellbeing. Interviewees mentioned that the decreased risk has boosted their wellbeing and they hoped that the organization and managers remember and take the threat and conflict situations seriously as teaching switches to hybrid model and back to physical lectures and learning. The main aspect is to intervene accordingly and seriously always and every time there is a situation. The best way is to inform you manager, safety manager and institution, so that the situation will be gone over. In more serious situations it should always be evaluated that should the social workers and police be informed. This way the students understand that it is not right and every violent act has consequences and they will understand that it is not tolerated.

Third theme: What support and actions should the employer do to ensure OSH of remote workers?

The employees interviewed enjoyed working remote, and their biggest hope was the possibility to keep working remote. Most of the interviewees informed that remote work has increased their work wellbeing, efficiency, and work motivation. The employees noted that it was affected with the fact that remote work was no more mandatory, and they had the chance to have office days also. They enjoyed the hybrid-model and wished it would continue in the future. The teachers' interviewed had also enjoyed the time and work during remote times. Their wish in the future was that the lectures

on the young students should be done in the classrooms, but the adult students and off lecture work could be done remote on personal choice.

The main hopes the employees stated is that the organization improves and enforces the culture of remote work. The employees felt that it was not yet fully supported and enforced through the organization. The organization and managers need to work on the fact that remote work and the working culture is developed and encouraged. This thesis points out positive impact remote work has had to the employees, and why it should be encouraged. The results implicate some difficulties in remote work, mainly because the employees are so conscientious, they work all the time and this way predisposing them to harmful effects. The managers should take safety leadership and support into more consideration in everyday work and especially remote work. Social support and managerial support have an important impact on wellbeing and safety, as the employees feel supported and listened.

One tool to implement safety and wellbeing to the organization is to use for example the Occupational safety and health standard ISO 4500, which creates a framework for better wellbeing, safety, and health of the personnel. In addition, the standard concentrates risk management and for ensuring healthy and safe working conditions. The standard highlights the importance of top management commitment, employee participation, risk management and implementing occupational and health associated aspects into organizational processes. (ISO 45001: 2018).

The best way for implementing safety and wellbeing through the organization and the organizational culture in an effective way is to create a safety policy, and in addition ensure that safety management and -leadership is embedded throughout the organization from top-to-bottom. Safety leadership and -management is a comprehensive implementation of safety. The tasks and responsibilities related to safety of supervisors are different at every organizational level. It is important to ensure the flow of information between these levels. The task of the top management is to guarantee that the safety is included in the management systems and decision making according to the chosen strategy. The top management brings out the importance of the safety by actively participating in safety activities, acting as an example, communicating on the importance of safety and launching for example safety campaigns. In addition, the top management supports the subordinates in front-lines in ensuring the wellbeing and safety. (Tappura et al. 2015).

The middle management has also several safety tasks and obligations. Middle management has the task of creating and maintaining uniform operating methods through the organization. In addition, the middle management conveys the goals and expectations of the top management and organiza-

tion to their subordinates and support their safety work. Middle management also maintains and supervises the compliance and maintenance of the safety instructions and policies. In addition, they have to have the knowledge of the risk factors in the work environments and supervise the implementation of risk assessment and needed corrective measures. Middle management plays a significant role in encouraging into safe and healthy work, and in addressing possible safety deviations. (Tappura et al. 2015).

The immediate supervisors play the most important part of the top-to-bottom safety chain. The immediate supervisors need to monitor the state of the working environment, work community, and compliance of safety instructions. They also need to monitor the employees' workload, work ability, and overall wellbeing and safety. They also need to intervene in unwanted and unsafe practice. They also initiate the immediate measures following an occupational safety and health incidents. In addition, it is important for the immediate supervisors to report the safety, health and wellbeing matters and development needs in the organization. (Tappura et al. 2015). Best ways in to ensure and develop the employee wellbeing and working environment safety and health is to listen to the wished of the employees and make an effort to affect the change into better. Open communication and effort on wellbeing affects the employees positively as they feel important and valuable.

This chapter highlighted the main results of the research, compared to previous and existing research and suggested practical implications for the future of the remote working in the organization. The research confirmed and revealed new data about the phenomenon of working remote. These results should be taken into consideration and help pave the way for healthier, safe, and affluent remote worker.

The results discovered in this thesis can be mostly used by vocational educational institutions as the main results and interviewed were vocational teachers, and their job descriptions differs from other professional fields even other teachers. For future research it would be interesting to research and interview Tredu employees or other educational institutions after this Covid-19 pandemic to see what they have learned and has the organizations and managers developed on safety and health concerning remote work. Additionally for future research it would be interesting to research different educational institutions on remote work, so we could compare and find the best possible operating methods and procedures through cross-comparison.

6.3 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore and find answers to the phenomenon of wellbeing and health of vocational teachers during their time working remote. The research aimed to find the answer to the research question of: What are vocational teachers experiences on occupational health, safety and wellbeing in remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic?

I feel that the study answered the research question. The study clearly captures the phenomenon and displays the subjective experiences of vocational educators on the complex issue of occupational health, safety and wellbeing during remote work. The experiences display the challenges, difficulties and contrary the benefits and wishes of vocational teachers in the complex profession of vocational education. The research results highlight and match previous research results, but in addition brings out new information and aspects in the complex issue of remote work and online teaching in vocational education.

The overall results show that vocational teachers experience on occupational health, safety and wellbeing during remote work has been positive, highlighting the fact that remote work is voluntary, and there is the possibility to work at the office when needed. As remote work was an unprecedented issue at the organization the research also found difficulties and problems concerning health, safety and wellbeing of the employees. Finally, the research found out the aspects the employees wished from the organization and their supervisors to improve and develop remote work and its health, safety and wellbeing issues in the future.

Overall, the employees enjoyed their time working remote, and the positive factors exceed the negative factors. For the positive aspects the employees highlighted flexibility, work efficiency, freedom, extended free time and better work-life balance as positive effects of remote work. Additionally, they appreciated the trust, responsibility and autonomy of the organization and their supervisors. The trust and autonomy boosted their motivation and improved wellbeing, as they felt they were trusted. These were similar aspects which have been raised through previous research on teachers' wellbeing in remote work.

The issues employees found negative and wished improvement from the organization and supervisors were concerning the organization overall culture on remote work. They felt that the organization hadn't accepted nor appreciated the employees working remote. They also felt lack of managerial support, and insufficient instructions for remote teaching particularly at the early stages of Covid-19 and the switch to remote work. They felt that the overall adaptation to remote work was

not ready. They wished that the organization would develop the culture, and health and safety of remote work by taking more concern on the ergonomics, social support and informational security of remote work. Additionally, they hoped for better support from the organization and their supervisors. In addition teachers pointed out sense of urgency and lack of breaks during days working remote as a challenge

Although the employees felt that remote teaching needs development and better guidance and support, they felt that remote work is a highly positive concept, and it should be continued in the future as a hybrid model. As an important matter the employees brought up the important fact that every subject cannot and shouldn't be taught remote. As many subjects at Tredy need hands on learning, and it cannot be taught remote. Moreover, the employees wanted to raise up the wellbeing of the young students, as they are in vulnerable situation as remote education lowers the social interactions. The young students need face-to-face social interactions and relations as it is important part of growing up.

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