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## **Future of Work: Rethinking HRM Practices for Remote and Hybrid Working Models**

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Master's degree in Human Resources Management and  
Organizational Consulting

Supervisor:

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ISCTE Business School, Department of Human Resources and  
Organizational Behavior

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Department of Human Resources & Organizational Behavior

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*“What seems impossible today,  
will be the story you will tell tomorrow”*

- Author Unknown

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# Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic brought changes to the reality of work, accelerating remote work trends, and overcoming the previous scepticism in this direction.

Therefore, this qualitative research aimed at exploring how HRM practices can, from the employees' perspective, influence their well-being during remote work, allowing companies to leverage employees' well-being, as well as individual and organizational performance. In this sense, twenty-five remote workers were interviewed, using semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The data was then analysed following a thematic analysis from which three themes emerged: benefits and challenges of remote work, impact of remote work on HRM practices, and influence of HRM practices on employees' well-being during remote work.

The findings came to support and expand the existing literature, equipping organizations with important knowledge for their strategic planning. First, it was possible to understand that despite efforts to mitigate the challenges of remote work, employees still identify a greater number of challenges compared to benefits. In addition to that, the research allowed to understand that, for most of the practices being studied, participants identify more negative differences compared to positive differences when regards to the implementation of these practices in remote models. Finally, this study allowed to understand that, of the practices analysed, flexible job design, performance management, training and development and employee involvement and participation are the practices perceived by the participants as the most important for their well-being during remote work.

**Keywords:** HRM Practices, Well-Being, Remote Work, Hybrid Work

**JEL Classification:** M12 Personnel Management, I31 Well-Being

## Resumo

A pandemia de COVID-19 trouxe mudanças para a realidade do trabalho acelerando as tendências do trabalho remoto e ultrapassando o ceticismo anterior sentido nesta direção.

Desta forma, esta investigação qualitativa visou explorar como as práticas de GRH podem, na perspectiva dos colaboradores, influenciar o seu bem-estar durante o trabalho remoto, permitindo às empresas alavancar o bem-estar dos mesmos, bem como o desempenho individual e organizacional. Neste sentido, foram entrevistados vinte e cinco colaboradores em regime de trabalho remoto, utilizando entrevistas semiestruturadas para recolher os dados. Os dados foram analisados seguindo uma análise temática da qual emergiram três temas: benefícios e desafios do trabalho remoto, impacto do trabalho remoto nas práticas de GRH, e influência das práticas de GRH no bem-estar dos trabalhadores durante o trabalho remoto.

As conclusões vieram apoiar e expandir a literatura existente, equipando as organizações com conhecimentos importantes para o seu planeamento estratégico. Primeiramente, foi possível entender que, apesar dos esforços para mitigar os desafios do trabalho remoto, os colaboradores ainda identificam um maior número de desafios no trabalho remoto face aos benefícios. Além disto, o estudo permitiu perceber que, para a maioria das práticas estudadas, os participantes identificam mais diferenças negativas em comparação com diferenças positivas no que toca a implementação destas práticas no trabalho remoto. Finalmente, este estudo permitiu compreender que, das práticas analisadas, flexible job design, performance management, training and development e employee involvement and participation são as práticas percecionadas pelos participantes como as mais importantes para o seu bem-estar durante o trabalho remoto.

**Palavras-Chave:** Práticas GRH, Bem-Estar, Trabalho Remoto, Trabalho Híbrido

**Classificação JEL:** M12 Personnel Management, I31 Well-Being

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>HRM</b>	Human Resources Management
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>RHWM</b>	Remote and Hybrid Working Models
<b>IOP</b>	Individual and Organizational Performance
<b>NO</b>	Number of Occurrences

## Introduction

### 1.1. Research Background and Problem Formulation

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world that we knew changed completely. As a mean to prevent the rapidly spread of the disease, global and local governments limited physical contacts and issued workplace restrictions, demanding “non-essential” employees to work remotely.

Prior to this pandemic, working remotely was only possible for a minority of the population. In fact, in 2019, only 14.4% of the employees in the EU-27 were, partially or fully working remotely (Eurostat, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic brought a shift to this reality and, as of April 2021, around 42% of the employed population in the EU-27 was still working remotely (Eurofund, 2021). Even though things are now getting to the “normal” and organizations are coming back more often to the office, employees and employers start to believe that a long-lasting change towards remote work become an option. Furthermore, employees believe that the move to remote work has brought positive changes agreeing that they would like to continue working remotely even if it is no longer necessary (George et al., 2022).

In fact, researchers and practitioners have come to the conclusion that remote work brings benefits for both employees and employers. Namely, multiple studies have found evidence that employees working remotely may experience positive emotions and moods at work (Charalampous et al., 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012), higher levels of job satisfaction (Bloom et al., 2015; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Madsen, 2011; Vega et al., 2015; Wheatley, 2012) and higher levels of organizational commitment (Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Golden, 2006; Golden & Eddleston, 2020; Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). Likewise, remote workers tend to register higher levels of productivity and job effectiveness (Bloom et al., 2015; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Hill et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 2008; Noonan & Glass, 2012; Popovici & Popovici, 2020), as well as an improvement in retention (Golden, 2006; Golden & Eddleston, 2020; McDonald et al., 2008), absenteeism (Grant et al., 2013; Noonan & Glass, 2012) and job turnover levels (Bloom et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden, 2006). Notwithstanding this, researchers have also found evidence that remote work can bring multiple challenges and risks to employees’ well-being and health. Findings suggest that remote workers may experience negative emotions and moods at work (Charalampous et al., 2022; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012), work over hours (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Noonan & Glass, 2012) and find it difficult to divide their work from their personal life (Charalampous et al., 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013;

Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011). Additionally, they may feel their social well-being impacted by encountering multiple challenges in what regards professional isolation (Charalampous et al., 2022; Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Morganson et al., 2010; Tietze & Musson, 2010; Wang et al., 2021), difficulties in building social relationships (Grant et al., 2013; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012) and difficulties accessing and communicating with others (Dambrin, 2004; Madsen, 2011; Wang et al., 2021).

With this in mind, Human Resources Management (HRM) practices play a vital role in helping mitigate the negative consequences of these new ways of working and increase the workforce agility to face the new demands. However, the COVID-19 outbreak brought increasingly difficult challenges to the role of HR (Human Resources) managers and leaders. The prevalence of remote working has shifted organizations to new HR strategies and has forced managers and HR practitioners to rethink the practices in place. More than ever, it is important to understand new employees' needs and demands so that this process can be adapted to the new reality. By doing so, organizations can potentialize the role of HRM practices in the workforce, mitigate such challenges, and foster employee well-being. In fact, findings have supported that HRM practices have a positive correlation with employee well-being and individual and organizational performance (IOP) (Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019). Therefore, organizations should invest in HRM practices that positively influence employees' well-being, overcome remote work challenges, and consequently impact IOP.

In a world as the one we live in today, the real competitive advantage of any organization has been summarized in two aspects: its people and their well-being.

## **1.2. Research Objectives and Research**

With that being said, the purpose of this study is to extend and complete existing literature on how HRM practices may influence employees' well-being. It is intended to explore that relationship in virtual working models as well as consider a post-pandemic scenario, which has not been yet studied.

In the words of Wang et al. (2021, pp. 17–18) "existing knowledge on remote working has mostly been generated from a context in which remote working was only occasionally or infrequently practised, and was only considered by some, but not all or most, of the workers within an organization". Therefore, this research pretends to understand how remote work may explain the relationship between the application of HRM practices and the employees' well-being now that working from home has become a universal practice. Considering that, from the general research objective, three specific research goals outline the study: understand remote workers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of remote and hybrid working models (RHWM), understand the viewpoint of remote workers about the impact of remote work on the application of different HRM practices,

and understand which and how HRM practices play a bigger role in remote workers well-being while working remotely.

Fulfilling these research goals will shed light on how managers, HR professionals, and organizations could rethink their HRM practices in virtual work settings so that they can positively influence employees' well-being, performance, and consequently its organizational outcomes. Furthermore, this study intends to help researchers to deeply understand the basis of this topic and therefore facilitate further research and studies.

As Wang et al. (2021, p. 18) mentioned, "there is a need to shift the research focus from understanding whether or not to implement remote working to understanding how to get the most out of remote working.", and hence this is what this study intends to do.

### **1.3. Dissertation Outline**

With the above being said, this dissertation was divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 presents the literature review, looking at empirical research about the topics in study. The main goal is to create a clear picture of previous research status and highlight gaps that may be filled with this study. Following that, Chapter 3 introduces the research approach and methodological choices for the study, describing the means to collect and analyse the data, as well as ethical and quality considerations that support the study. Chapter 4, describes the data collected, presenting the main findings found. Lastly, Chapter 5, provides a detailed discussion of the findings, relating it to the empirical knowledge found before. Furthermore, this chapter intends to present the limitations of this study, overall guidelines for further research as well as practical implications that resulted from the research.

## Literature Review

### 2.1. COVID-19: Conceptualization and Influence in the Future of Work

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global outbreak caused by the coronavirus disease. According to World Health Organization (WHO), the Coronavirus disease is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, that in most people infected will be reflected in moderate respiratory illness, without the need for any special treatment. However, older people and those with special medical conditions may be more like to develop severe respiratory symptoms and become seriously ill (WHO, 2022a).

The first cases of the disease were first detected in 2019 in Wuhan, China, with the virus rapidly spreading over the globe. In January 2020, the WHO declared the Coronavirus disease a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and approximately three months later, in March 2020, the outbreak was declared a global pandemic (WHO, 2022b). As to prevent the massive scale-up of the infected cases, during the first months of the pandemic, many countries took several measures, including the complete lockdown of their citizens and isolation periods for those who were infected. These drastic measures accelerated many trends worldwide, including the exponential growth of virtual work settings. According to a study done by Eurofund (2020), early estimates suggested that around 40% of the employees working in the EU began to work remotely due to the pandemic.

Today, with the vaccination being carried out in most developed countries and a decrease in the number of cases detected, things seem to be coming back to reality. Even so, the impact of the pandemic on the workplace transformation is believed to persist after this crisis is over (McKinsey Global Institute, 2021). By the words of Carnevale & Hatak (2020, p. 186), “our focus must be forward-thinking, building on the assumption that the grand challenge we currently face is not a singular, anomalous event, but rather constitutes a “new reality” that offers new opportunities to which organizational scholars and practitioners alike will need and want to remain attentive”. Hence, companies must work towards to these new ways of working, by remaining attentive and addressing the challenges that the changing nature of this work may bring to employees and their well-being.

### 2.2. Well-Being: Main Concepts and Approaches

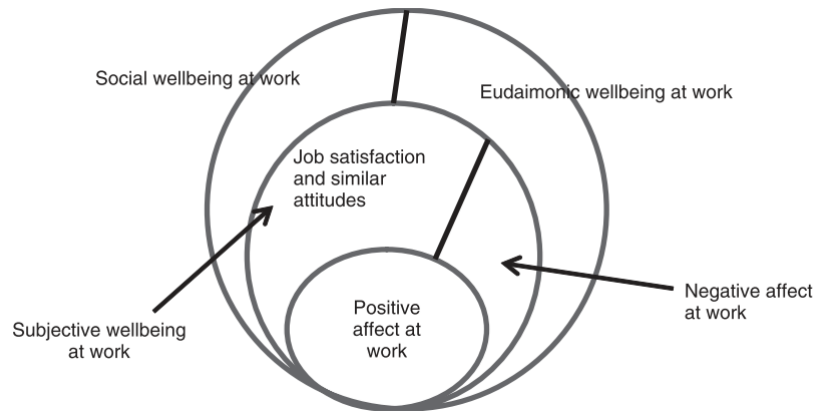
In the literature, well-being is often not clearly defined, being conceptualized in many ways. Due to its intangibility, the concept is difficult to define and to measure, which has often “given rise to blurred and overly broad definitions of well-being, with researchers using the construct of ‘well-being’ synonymously with ‘happiness’, ‘quality of life’, or ‘life satisfaction’” (Forgeard et al., 2011, p. 81).

Throughout time, research on well-being was commonly divided into two general approaches: the hedonic and eudaimonic views. The former defines well-being as subjective happiness and normally refers to life satisfaction, feelings of pleasure, joy, and exaltation and how one judges his or her life to be. For these authors, well-being is achieved through a balance between pleasant and unpleasant aspects of life, maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain (Diener et al., 1999; Disabato et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012; Kahneman et al., 1999; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff et al., 2021). Diener (1984) conceptualized one of the most widely used models for the conceptualization of hedonia, dividing subjective well-being into a three components model: positive evaluations of life satisfaction (concerning one's overall level of life satisfaction), the presence of pleasant emotions and moods and the absence of unpleasant or distressing emotions and moods. In contrast to the hedonic approach, the eudaimonic approach focuses on psychological well-being, where well-being is achieved through purpose and meaning in one's life, normally referred to engagement in activities that foster human growth and development, and excluding an affect component (Disabato et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989a, 1989b; Ryff et al., 2021; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). According to Ryff & Singer (2008) psychological well-being can be articulated in six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. Notwithstanding this, to complement both perspectives, there is also evidence in the literature that a third aspect may be important to contextualize well-being: social well-being. According to Baumeister & Leary (1995) social relationships and the desire for interpersonal attachments are extremely important to human well-being and motivation, demonstrating that deficits in belongingness may lead to several physical and psychological problems.

In the literature, the three concepts - hedonic, eudaimonic, and social well-being – are sometimes referred to as different and with low correlation, with researchers preferring equating well-being as a single construct and not a multifaceted approach. However, Gallagher et al. (2009) found evidence that the three factors are highly correlated and together indicate overall well-being in life.

### **2.3. Well-Being at Work: A Multidimensional Approach**

Regarding well-being at work, even though different definitions and ways of measuring this construct can be found, it is clear to most authors that the concept of workplace well-being is multidimensional (Grant et al., 2007; Page et al., 2009; Warr, 2013). With this being said, Fisher (2014) has conceptualized well-being at work in a six-components model (Figure 1). The author believes that the six separate aspects may fit together to comprise overall well-being at work, as they are representative of the three well-being approaches mentioned before – hedonic, eudaimonic and social well-being.



*Figure 1 - Components of Overall Well-being at Work (Fisher, 2014, p.7)*

The first circle regards the presence of positive feelings and emotions while working. The second one refers to the negative feelings at work and to one's judgments of work satisfaction and similar attitudes. These two circles compose what we defined before as hedonic well-being (Fisher, 2014). In regards, to the positive and negative affect to work, it is possible to find in the literature a wide number of scales that measure these factors (e.g. Daniels, 2000; Fisher, 1997; Van Katwyk et al., 2000; Watson et al., 1988). These include references to emotions/moods like happiness, enthusiasm, relaxation, comfort, frustration, anxiety, boredom, tiredness, and others. Moreover, concerning job satisfaction, organizational researchers have once again pointed out various ways of measuring it (Cook et al., 1981; Fields, 2002). In such studies, job satisfaction is normally associated with pleasant and positive feelings that result from one's assessment of its job and experience (Locke, 1976). Adding to this construct, Fisher (2014) also points out organizational commitment as a commonly assessed job attitude. Through her words (2014, p. 8), "commitment based on personally identifying with the organization's goals and values (normative commitment), and/or feeling part of the organizational family (affective commitment), seem to represent affectively tinged judgments that may be important components of well-being at work." Again, the literature has shown to be well explored on this topic with multiple scales measuring such concept (e.g. Meyer et al., 1993; Mowday et al., 1979).

Finally, the third and higher circle of Fisher's (2014) model includes the eudaimonic and social well-being constructs. The former refers to the experience of growth, development, purpose, and engagement at work. Fisher (2014) decomposes this construct into six dimensions that include: job involvement, work engagement, thriving, flow and intrinsic motivation, meaning in work, and calling at work. The latter construct, social well-being, regards the positive feelings and satisfaction of the short- and long-term relationships and interactions with others at work. The measurement of such construct may include dimensions such as satisfaction with peers and leaders, social support (including



emotional support and instrumental support), feelings of belonging, affective and normative organizational commitment, and group cohesion (Fisher, 2014).

With the above being said, this model was used as a base for the conceptualization of well-being throughout this research.

## **2.4. Well-Being and Remote Work: Benefits and Challenges**

The concept of remote work has only now gained bigger importance and highlight now, however remote work has been highly discussed and researched over the years. Telecommuting, flexible working, teleworking, or remote work are just a few of the multiple terms that can be found in the literature, with different definitions coming along with those terms (Madsen, 2011). Nonetheless, for the purpose of this research, we will use the definition of Grant et al. (2013, p. 529) defining remote work as “work being completed anywhere and at any time regardless of location and to the widening use of technology to aid flexible working practices.”

Like many organizational practices, remote work has its benefits and challenges for employees-well-being. Over the years, researchers have studied the influence of remote work on employees' well-being, finding both positive and negative aspects that result from this influence.

In what regards to the positive and negative affect to work, multiple studies have found that remote workers tend to experience positive emotions/moods at work, including an increase in feelings of pleasure, enthusiasm (Felstead & Henseke, 2017), satisfaction, happiness, and relaxation (Charalampous et al., 2022) and a decrease on the feeling of emotional exhaustion (Charalampous et al., 2022; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012) as being away from the office allows them to avoid being exposed to distractions, manage their personal life commitments easier (Charalampous et al., 2022) and have a greater level of autonomy and control over their work (Charalampous et al., 2022; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012). On the other hand, researchers have also found evidence that remote workers may experience negative emotions/moods at work, including an increase in feelings of loneliness, boredom, sadness, anger, frustration, and stress as well as a feeling of guilt, by being afraid that co-workers and managers may create false assumptions of their work efforts (Charalampous et al., 2022). Adding to this, even though, lower levels of emotional exhaustion were registered in employees working remotely, researchers have, at the same time, found evidence of higher levels of emotional exhaustion in some of the study participants (Charalampous et al., 2022; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012). This may happen since remote work shows a tendency for employees to work over hours and put more effort than what is required (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Noonan & Glass, 2012), leading to difficulties in switching off from work and maintaining a well-defined line between work and personal life (Charalampous et al., 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022;

Grant et al., 2013; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011). This may affect and harm individuals' health (Bannai & Tamakoshi, 2014; George et al., 2022) as well as productivity/creativity, meaning, and levels of stress (George et al., 2022). Furthermore, when working remotely, the feelings of loneliness and isolation, as well as lower levels of social support may also contribute to higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Charalampous et al., 2022; Vander Elst et al., 2017).

Concerning job satisfaction, multiple studies have also found a positive correlation between remote work and employees' job satisfaction (Bloom et al., 2015; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Madsen, 2011; Vega et al., 2015; Wheatley, 2012) as well as organizational commitment levels (Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Golden, 2006; Golden & Eddleston, 2020; Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). Following this, researchers have also found challenges in the perceptions of remote workers over career advancement. Remote employees tend to perceive their growth opportunities reduced, as remote work can make them feel less visible within the organization (Bloom et al., 2015; Charalampous et al., 2022; Madsen, 2011; McDonald et al., 2008; Redman et al., 2009; Sewell & Taskin, 2015).

In what regards employees' social well-being, multiple studies have found out multiple challenges. Research has shown a tendency for remote workers to experience professional isolation (Charalampous et al., 2022; Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Morganson et al., 2010; Tietze & Musson, 2010; Wang et al., 2021), difficulties in building social relationships and networking (Grant et al., 2013; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012) and barriers in effectively communicating and accessing others (Dambrin, 2004; Madsen, 2011; Wang et al., 2021). Also, remote workers may feel their informal interactions reduced in what regards communication, mentoring, or training and development (Madsen, 2011).

Likewise, remote work has also shown to negatively impact employees' physical habits, with remote workers having a more sedentary lifestyle (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013). Nonetheless, in contrast, some employees have shown remote work positively impacting their physical well-being and a healthier lifestyle, as remote workers tend to find more time to exercise and have access to a healthier diet (Charalampous et al., 2022).

Finally, researchers and practitioners have found evidence on what regards employees' levels of productivity and job effectiveness, with remote workers registering high levels on one or both constructs (Bloom et al., 2015; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Hill et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 2008; Noonan & Glass, 2012; Popovici & Popovici, 2020). This may be justified by the fact that remote workers tend to register higher concentration and absorption levels as well as fewer social distractions (Boell et al., 2016; Charalampous et al., 2022). Furthermore, remote working shows evidence of securing retention, (Golden, 2006; Golden & Eddleston, 2020; McDonald

et al., 2008) reducing absenteeism (Grant et al., 2013; Noonan & Glass, 2012) as well as job turnover (Bloom et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden, 2006).

In light of this, it is clear that remote work brings both advantages and potential risks. Consequently, organizations must act quickly on finding ways to mitigate those challenges, increase employee well-being and face the current needs and demands that a context like the one we face today may impose. With this in mind, HRM practices may play an important role to reach such goals.

## **2.5. HRM Practices: The AMO Framework**

In the words of Wright and McMahan (1992, p. 298), strategic HRM can be defined as “the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable the firm to achieve its goals”. As a result of the dynamic of the corporate world, different factors can influence the HRM strategy of an organization, such as its external environment, the organizational strategy, and the organizational characteristics (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). In view of this, organizations must not see HRM as a “one-size fits all” strategy but rather be able to adapt their HRM to its specific context.

When thinking about their HRM strategy, organizations must look to three levels of deployment. As noted by Lepak et al. (2006) HRM activities are often conceptualized in the literature through three levels of analysis – practices, policies, and systems. The first one regards actions from the organization to achieve a specific goal. The second, at a higher level, reflects a specific program that influences the practices in place. Lastly, the systems, concentrate on different HRM policies supposed to achieve main organizational results. In light of this research, only the first level of analysis will be considered – HRM practices.

Over the last decades, HRM practices have been viewed as a very competitive important advantage for organizations when well implemented. Keeping this in mind, organizational researchers and practitioners have often studied the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance, with multiple studies documenting a positive relationship between the two constructs (e.g. Appelbaum et al., 2000; Demortier et al., 2017; Guthrie et al., 2009; Jiang et al., 2012; Knies & Leisink, 2014; Macduffie, 2016; Rabl et al., 2014). When explaining such links, researchers often considered the AMO framework. This framework suggests that three components together enhance employee performance: individual ability (A), motivation (M), and the opportunity to participate (O) (Appelbaum et al., 2000). This means that to increase employees’ performance and consequently organizational performance, three dimensions of HRM practices need to be considered: ability-, motivation- and opportunity-enhancing practices (Lepak et al., 2006).

Ability-enhancing practices aim to increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the employees, helping them with their continued development and expanding their promotion possibilities

(Tharenou et al., 2007). As a matter of example, the recruitment and selection as well as extensive training and development can be considered ability-enhancing practices (Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018). The former is related to the ability to attract and choose individuals who are aligned with the organization (Schimansky, 2014) while the latter helps employees develop new skills and abilities to perform their jobs and succeed in the organization (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Schimansky, 2014).

In what regards the motivation-enhancing practices, those have the main goal of improving employee motivation (Jiang et al., 2012) and directing employees' efforts to the achievement of specific organizational goals (Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018). Motivation-enhancing practices will tend to make employees feel valued and recognized for their efforts, which can consequently create an effect of reciprocation by engaging them in citizenship behaviours (Wayne et al., 2002). This set of practices may include practices such as, for example, performance management, compensation and benefits, promotion possibilities, and job security (Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018). Performance management is often related with "identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization" (Aguinis, 2013, p. 26). Furthermore, compensation and benefits is defined as an adequate and equitable way of remunerating employees for their effort and contribution to the organization (Flippo, 1976). Moreover, promotion possibilities may be defined as the opportunities to reach higher ranks in the organization and consequently achieve high levels and pay (Tharenou, 1997). Lastly, job security has to do with practices that allow employees to perceive their job, or an important part of it as safe and secure (Burchell, 2014).

As concerns the opportunity-enhancing practices, such practices take into consideration the individual characteristics and the work environment (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016) and are suggested as a way for employees to be involved in the organization (Schimansky, 2014). When in contact with such practices, employees may experience a higher sense of belonging and lower levels of stress, absence, and turnover (Boon et al., 2014). Opportunity-enhancing practices relate, for example, to flexible job design, employee involvement and participation, and transparency and information sharing practices (Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018). Flexible job design is often related to the ability of employees to organize their work. Therefore, they can decide when, where, and how they work (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012). Furthermore, employee involvement and participation is linked to practices fostering decision-making authority and flat organizational structures. Lastly, transparency and information sharing practices has to do with HRM practices that foster information sharing and transparency at the individual, team, and organizational level (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016).

Important to note that, for this research, the nine practices mentioned above were the ones covered during the study. These include recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, promotion possibilities, job security, flexible job design, employee involvement and participation and transparency and information sharing.

## 2.6. HRM Practices and Remote Work

The COVID-19 pandemic and the exponential growth of virtual work settings have increased the challenges for organizations, managers, and HR professionals. Most HRM strategies and practices defined before considered a different reality and hence were applied to different employees' needs and demands (Mala, 2020). Now, "new challenges for HRM arise, demanding it to be strategic, sustainable, and responsive in the face of unstable organizational and business environments" (Jaskeviciute et al., 2021, p. 118). Even though empirical research is still insufficient on how remote work is impacting different HRM practices, few academic and corporate research has shown already the impact that virtual work settings can have on such practices.

To start, it is important to highlight the impact and future recommendations when concerning attracting and selecting people for the workforce. Even though during the COVID-19 pandemic companies decided to recruit less to avoid excessive costs (Fraij, 2021), now, things are getting back to normal and, as businesses start recovering, online job interviews have become a new normality (European Commission, 2021; SHRM, 2021). Furthermore, the usage of such methods is increasing, indicating a bigger focus from companies in continuing recruitment efforts even if an on-site face-to-face interaction is no longer possible (Przytuła et al., 2020). Companies have realized that the use of online job interviews not only reduces time and costs for the employer and employee but also allows a more efficient and effective recruitment process (European Commission, 2021; SHRM, 2021). However, such processes create challenges including the reduction of non-verbal clues and difficulties in building rapport, which impacts first impressions (University of Oxford, 2022). Furthermore, challenges can be felt during the initial onboarding, demanding companies to be more creative to increase engagement and immediate buy-in from employees. Virtual coffee breaks, welcome videos, and virtual networking seemed some of the options available to avoid such risks (BCG, 2020a).

In what regards to training and development, findings suggest that one of the most important factors for employee motivation comes from the need for competence (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Gigauri, 2020), which was undervalued during the pandemic (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Training programs decreased due to budget concerns, limiting employees' opportunities to learn and evolve (Fraij, 2021). Adding to this, informal coaching and mentoring moments have also disappeared, as informal conversations with colleagues and managers happened less frequently during remote work (BCG, 2020a; Madsen, 2011). This demands organizations to find specific moments for check-in and feedback with workers for the sake of coaching and development (BCG, 2020a). Furthermore, and with those challenges in mind, during the COVID-19 outbreak, employees have promoted more self-directed knowledge seeking as organizations may have shown a lack of professional stimulation (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Moreover, the outbreak has reinforced the need for employees to feel they are developing and

growing, showing a workforce concerned with improving their professional and technical skills (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Oxford Economics, 2020). Hence, companies must focus on increasing their training opportunities so that they can boost employees' autonomy (Fraij, 2021), improve their workforce capabilities (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Charalampous et al., 2022), and increase employees' levels of motivation (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Gigauri, 2020).

Performance management was also highlighted among the evidence found. Managing employees' performance was found as a bigger problem during the pandemic as it had become difficult for employees to define short- and long-term goals due to the uncertainty of the situation (Fraij, 2021). Likewise, the performance focus shifted from the inputs to the outputs of work, and hence organizations are now forced to rethink performance metrics to ensure fairness and equity between remote and on-site workers (BCG, 2020a). Also, to promote virtual working models and skills, managers and HR professionals can consider introducing criteria that rewards employee virtual communication and teamwork to increase effort in working virtually (Caligiuri et al., 2020).

Following this, compensation and benefits, have also suffered a great deal of impact. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a deep economic impact, disrupting the way compensation was being managed, with companies laying off and reducing the number of employees and cutting salaries and incentives (Fraij, 2021; Mercer, 2020). Bearing this in mind, companies were forced to rethink compensation strategies so that they could face the financial and economic difficulties of the contextual environment (Mercer, 2020). Now, things are getting back to normal, but difficulties around measuring performance still persist. Thus, leaders are advised to review the process of how bonuses and raises are instituted and compared across the workers (BCG, 2020a).

In regard to promotion possibilities, employees may feel their career advancement diminished when working from home (Bloom et al., 2015; Charalampous et al., 2022; Madsen, 2011; McDonald et al., 2008; Redman et al., 2009; Sewell & Taskin, 2015). Furthermore, and again due to the difficulties measuring performance, leaders and HR professionals must rethink promotion criteria to ensure all employees are evaluated fairly and equally regardless of their working model (BCG, 2020a).

Concerning to flexible job design, the pandemic enhanced the flexibility of employees in all its dimensions (work location, working schedule, and autonomy) (Mercer, 2020; SHRM, 2021). Furthermore, the COVID-19 outbreak has contributed to the importance of this practice for employees. More than ever, flexible job design will become more important to attract and retain talent, and therefore, must be seen by companies as a long-term investment (Oxford Economics, 2020).

Following this, findings also indicated that enhancing a sense of engagement and belonging among employees has also become a top priority during the COVID-19 outbreak (Deloitte Insights, 2020). According to a survey done by Igloosoftware (2020), 93% of remote workers felt their companies were making an effort to make them feel included, indicating that companies were putting this topic on top

of their agendas. Notwithstanding this, “the current crisis sheds light on the challenges of social and interpersonal ties between people” (Przytuła et al., 2020, p. 82). Therefore, companies must figure out how to improve social connections that are built and maintained in the office. Interesting suggestions included virtual coffee breaks, the use of communication tools such as Slack, and the creation of virtual rooms that can foster informal interactions (BCG, 2020b). Furthermore, when geographically distant managers can promote proximity, by allowing and communicating more frequently as well as sharing personal information with remote colleagues (O’Leary et al., 2014).

Ultimately, physical and mental health has also become a top priority for organizations. With employees having a more sedentary lifestyle due to remote work and with the uncertainty of the situation elevating levels of stress and anxiety, organizations are forced to rethink such practices (BCG, 2020b). Companies can offer health webinars, mindfulness or meditation sessions, virtual counselling (BCG, 2020b; Caligiuri et al., 2020) as well as fitness classes and benefits to promote employees’ wellness (BCG, 2020b). Furthermore, they can encourage healthier work routines, with regular working hours and breaks, promoting a better work-life balance (Adamovic, 2017; Chen & Fulmer, 2018).

In light of this, “even though restrictions are lifting, organizations do not need to return to all of their old ways of working. Rather than taking a ‘yesterday, forward’ approach that resets the clock to pre-COVID-19 days and reseats all employees at their onsite workstations, organizations can choose a ‘tomorrow, backward’ philosophy that embraces a future built on the lessons of these last few months of remote working” (BCG, 2020a, p. 7).

## **2.7. HRM Practices, Well-Being and Influence on Individual and Organizational Performance**

During the last few years, the interest in studying the relationships between HRM practices, employee well-being, and IOP has been growing among researchers and scholars worldwide. This relationship has been defined in several different ways, from which we can highlight three main perspectives: mutual gains, conflicting outcomes, and mutual losses (Peccei et al., 2013; Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019; Van de Voorde et al., 2012).

The mutual gains conceptualization argues that both the organization and the employee benefit from HRM practices. Within such conceptualization, some studies support the idea that the adoption of HRM practices is positively correlated with IOP through the full or partial mediation role of employee well-being at work, while other studies hypothesize a positive correlation of HRM to both IOP, as well as to well-being, however not proposing any link between employee both. On the other hand, the conflicting outcomes perspective assumes that the organization is expected to benefit from HRM practices, however at the expense of employees’ well-being. Within this perspective, some studies

support the idea that HRM practices influence positively IOP through the full or partial role of well-being, however, with HRM practices assuming a negative effect on well-being. Other studies hypothesize a positive correlation between HRM practices and IOP, and a negative correlation between HRM practices and employee well-being, however, again, not proposing any link between both. Finally, the third conceptualization, mutual losses, argues that HRM practices have a negative effect on employees' well-being and therefore are associated with lower results in IOP, meaning that neither the employee nor the organization benefit from the HRM practices in place (Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019).

In line with this, the results regarding the HRM practices, employee well-being, and IOP relationship have shown to be contradicting, with some studies arguing a positive impact from this relationship while others showing a negative impact between such constructs. Notwithstanding this, in this debate, there is evidence of the prevalence of the mutual gains' conceptualization over conflicting outcomes or mutual losses theories. Furthermore, very few empirical support and little systematic attention have been given to these last two approaches in contrast with the mutual gains' conceptualization (Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019). That being said, there has been particular support to the idea that HRM practices influence positively employee well-being and IOP. As a matter of example, it is possible to find below three studies supporting that conclusion.

Guest (2017) has set out an approach that outlines five sets of HRM practices that are expected to be associated with higher employee well-being and a positive employee relation, which will then impact positive organizational outcomes. The five HR sets outlined by the author include investing in employees, providing engaging work, ensuring a positive social and physical environment, giving employees a voice, and promoting organizational support.

Following this, Khoreva & Wechtler (2018) have studied the influence that HRM practices play on different dimensions of well-being and individual performance. Through their study, they have found evidence that ability- and opportunity-enhancing practices lead to higher levels of in-role job performance, as these practices have been seen to inspire employees to improve their in-role performance as well as provide them with opportunities to contribute and accomplish their in-role performance. At the same time, motivation-enhancing practices have been shown to lead to higher levels of innovative job performance as those practices promote feelings of encouragement among employees, contributing to their creative thinking and initiative. Adding to this, they have found that ability- and opportunity-enhancing practices have enhanced both physical and social well-being and that motivation-enhancing practices have been found to increase psychological well-being. Lastly, they have found that social well-being boosts both role and innovative job performance, that psychological well-being is positively correlated with innovative job performance and that physical well-being is positively associated with in-role job performance.



Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2020) have also found evidence of a positive relationship between HRM and employee well-being. The authors have found out that ability-, motivation- and opportunity-enhancing practices have a positive impact on the job, life, and psychological well-being, respectively. Moreover, in this study, organizational justice was found to mediate this relationship at the same time that integrity leadership played a role in moderating the HRM practices and employees' well-being relationship as well as the mediation effect of organizational justice within that relationship.

Hence, and in the words of Jaskeviciute et al. (2021, p. 127), "sustainable HRM practices that are focused on meeting employees' needs are particularly significant as they positively influence employee well-being. It must be emphasized that ensuring employees' well-being based on sustainable HRM principles stimulates critical thinking, demonstrates positive social behaviour, leads to good feelings and effective performance of employees, and increases organizational trust as a vital aspect of smooth organizational performance."

## **2.8. HRM Practices, Well-Being, and Remote Work**

In light of the above conclusions, it becomes crucial for organizations to keep understanding which HRM practices may affect employee well-being and consequently IOP. Furthermore, with the COVID-19 outbreak changing the nature of how and where work is carried out and with virtual settings becoming more common, organizations must understand employees' needs and demands further, so that they can define successful HRM practices that can positively influence such relationship.

When looking further in the literature, not much evidence was found in what regards to the relationship between HRM practices and employee well-being specifically in RHWM. However, several studies have highlighted potential recommendations and practical implications for HR professionals and practitioners to promote employees' well-being while working remotely, avoiding and mitigating the challenges this new way of working may bring.

Firstly, several studies have pointed out communication as an important aspect to have in consideration. Either communication from management or/and communication with colleagues was highlighted as relevant as both can decrease social isolation perceptions and consequently increase employee's well-being (Charalampous et al., 2019, 2022; Galanti et al., 2021; George et al., 2022; Gigauri, 2020). Regarding communication from management, studies have highlighted the importance of keeping employees informed about the organization and its performance (Gigauri, 2020), as well as pointed out the importance of discussing with individuals about workload, well-being, individual performance (Grant et al., 2013) and career opportunities (Charalampous et al., 2019, 2022) to diminish concerns about career advancement (Charalampous et al., 2019). Likewise, engaging in communication with colleagues, formally and informally, was also pointed out as important

(Charalampous et al., 2019; Galanti et al., 2021; George et al., 2022). Even though the technology can help a lot in communicating with both managers and colleagues, communication in person was proposed, even from time to time (Charalampous et al., 2019, 2022; Galanti et al., 2021; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013). Nevertheless, this communication must be done at moderate levels as well as at the right timings to avoid interruptions and distractions for remote workers (Galanti et al., 2021).

Following this, granting autonomy was also highlighted as important as it may represent a relevant resource for employees' well-being. (Charalampous et al., 2022; Galanti et al., 2021; George et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Autonomy has shown evidence to improve productivity (Galanti et al., 2021; George et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021), decrease feelings of emotional exhaustion, increase job satisfaction (Charalampous et al., 2022), and work engagement (Galanti et al., 2021) as well as other well-being related aspects (George et al., 2022).

Furthermore, social support was also pointed out by some studies. Researchers have found especially importance on this topic, as social support improves employees' well-being and plays a critical role in remote workers' success (Charalampous et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Researchers have also highlighted the importance of helping employees create boundaries between their personal and professional life (Charalampous et al., 2022; George et al., 2022). The creation of such boundaries may increase productivity, decrease stress and enhance health in general (George et al., 2022).

Lastly, training was also mentioned as important to maintain motivation (Gigauri, 2020) as well as promote a more effective and competence workforce (Charalampous et al., 2022)

With this chapter in mind, it is possible to conclude that even though there is already some existing knowledge on what regards remote work benefits and challenges, the impact of remote work in the application of different HRM practices and the relationship between HRM practices, employees' well-being and IOP, there is still a need to explore such topics, especially in a context like the one we are facing today. Furthermore, "there is an opportunity for HRM research to collect relevant and useful evidence to facilitate global work in the future, by examining the role of the HRM function during and after the crisis. Even large organizations with sophisticated pre-pandemic personnel policies are likely to be re-writing the rules" (Przytuła et al., 2020, p. 73).

Therefore, with the goal of extending and complementing existing literature, this research outlines three specific goals: understand remote workers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of RHWM, understand the viewpoint of remote workers about the impact of remote work on the application of different HRM practices, and understand which and how HRM practices, play a bigger role in remote workers well-being while working remotely.

## Methodology

Bearing in mind the specific research objectives proposed before and with the goal of obtaining a more in-depth understanding of the impact of HRM practices on employees' well-being while working remotely, has been decided to develop an exploratory research. As which, a qualitative methodology was used by the researcher to deeply explore the intended topics, using semi-structured interviews as a way of collecting the data and a thematic analysis to analyse the insights collected during the study.

The primary reason to choose such methodology had to do with the fact that few qualitative studies were found with similar research goals. Hence, by using a qualitative method, it was possible to focus on the perspective and experience of workers and enrich the data that has been collected through quantitative studies. In the words of Corbin & Strauss (2015, p. 36), "there are many reasons for choosing to do qualitative research but perhaps the most important is the desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants, to see the world from their perspective, and in doing so to make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge."

### 3.1. Research Participants

For this research, twenty-five individuals who have experienced a partially or fully remote work experience were interviewed with the main goal of exploring and understanding in detail their experiences and thoughts about what was being studied.

Of the participants involved it was possible to verify a very balanced representation between female (N=13, 52%) and male (N=12, 48%) participants, as well as a very close to balance representation in regard to Gen Z (N=10, 40%) and Millennials (N=15, 60%). Furthermore, all participants were working in the Consulting Services area (N=25, 100%). Even though most of the participants had not experienced remote work before the pandemic (N=20, 80%), at the time of the research, all of them experienced remote work in the last twelve months (N=25, 100%), with an average of 4,1 days per week working remotely. Moreover, all workers were, at the moment, working remotely, with an average of 3,6 days per week working in such model. Lastly, in what regards to their place of work, all participants have identified "Home" as their main working location (N=25, 100%). A detailed table with all the sociodemographic characteristics of participants can be found in Annex A.

It is relevant to mention that participants were chosen with an intentional nature, once interviewees were selected based on specific requirements. First, it was very important that employees interviewed were at the moment or before the interview fully or partially working remotely, so that the information collected was trustworthy and representative of real experiences.

Moreover, to set a ground reality for participants, it was important that the sector of activity of their companies was equal or similar. Thus, and having into consideration the professional experience and knowledge of the researcher, only participants working in the Consulting Services sector were invited to participate. Lastly, was also important for the researcher to target employees belonging to different age ranges. Considering the current intergenerational challenges at work, by interviewing different generations could be possible to reach richer conclusions and a better comprehension of reality.

The inclusion of new participants became more circumscribed once it was reached the data saturation point. According to Braun & Clarke (2016) the thematic analysis should be approached organically and flexibly, with the expected and appropriate sample size depending on the respective research, data sources, and goals. Also, according to Nelson (2016), researchers can consider theoretical saturation when the data collected shows richness, depth, complexity, and diversity and hence allows the study of the research goals. This means the concept of data saturation should be focused more on the quality of the data collected rather than simply on its quantity (Nelson, 2016). Therefore, after the twenty-five interviews were conducted, the researcher took the decision of stopping collecting information as the information collected has shown to be rich and allowed an in-depth study of the research objectives.

### **3.2. Data Collection**

As mentioned above, semi-structured interviews were held to collect the data. Due to the nature of this study, semi-structured interviews have been found to be the ideal method as they would allow the interviewees to develop their answers and increase the significance and depth of the data collected (Saunders et al., 2007). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview would also allow the interviewer to reorder and rephrase the interview questions as well as ask follow-up questions to understand in deep the participants' answers and further conclusions (Lune & Berg, 2017).

Interviews were conducted based on an interview script (Annex B), had a duration range from 60 to 90 minutes, and were held via Zoom in English language. In order to develop the interview script, three steps were followed: produce the script based on the research goals and previous literature findings, review and validate the script with the supervisor, and pilot with a convenience sample for testing with the goal of refining and validating the questions.

The interview script was divided into fifteen questions segmented into four sections. In the first section ("About the Participant"), participants were asked to talk about themselves and their workday, so that it was possible for the researcher to understand their current job responsibilities as well as to establish a rapport with the interviewee. In the following section ("Well-Being and Remote"), the questions aimed at understanding how the participants experienced remote work by exploring the

three dimensions of work well-being conceptualized by Fisher (2014) - hedonic, eudaimonic, and social well-being. Following this, the third section (“HRM Practices and Remote Work”), had as the main goal to explore positive and negative differences employees’ encountered when such practices were adapted to their remote work model. Moreover, participants were asked to provide suggestions on how such practices could be better implemented. To do so, the researcher used the AMO framework (Appelbaum et al., 2000) tackling nine practices belonging to each of the model dimensions – ability-, motivation, and opportunity-enhancing. To finish, the last section (“HRM Practices, Well-being and Remote Work”), focused on understanding the role these nine HRM practices played on employees’ well-being while working remotely, by asking participants to identify the practices they believe had a bigger impact as well as other practices that were not mentioned before. The sociodemographic data was obtained through a brief sociodemographic data sheet sent to the participants after the interview (Annex C).

### **3.3. Data Analysis**

The data collected during the interviews was analysed by conducting a thematic analysis and using MaxQDA 2022 as a support tool. The main goal of such method was to identify common themes that would come up repeatedly along the answers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to do that the interviews were audio recorded – with the consent of the participants – and transcribed afterwards. For those that did not consent to audio recording the interview, notes were taken by the researcher during the interview. A total of 197 pages of transcription resulted from such process.

When analysing the information, a template analysis was the methodology chosen among the ones available for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The template analysis combines an inductive and deductive approach to the codes’ definition allowing more flexibility in the definition, modification, and deletion of categories define *a priori* (Brooks et al., 2015; Cassell & Symon, 2014). For that reason, firstly, some categories were defined using a deductive approach based on the literature review as well as the interview script done before (Annex D). However, since the semi-structured interviews allowed a wide and in-depth vision of the remote workers' responses, other codes were raised during the process. Hence, after the data was collected and interviews analysed, an inductive approach was also employed. With this in mind, some new categories were defined while some of them were deleted. The final codebook can be found in Annex E with new categories added in italic. To ensure the quality of the study, a codebook dictionary has also been developed at this moment (Annex F). This allows the reader to evaluate accurately the quality of the study as well as replicate the research in case of interest.

As in what regards the approach followed to analyse the data, the researcher followed the six steps suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006). The first steps included familiarization with the data, which could be achieved by transcribing the audio, reading through the text, and taking initial notes. After that, phase two included the process of generating the initial codes. As mentioned before, the codes have been identified by using an inductive and deductive approach. The third step included generating themes, by grouping the codes together. At this stage, it was already possible to understand that some of the codes defined before were too vague or repetitive and hence they were merged with similar codes. The fourth step was about reviewing the themes, to make sure they were useful and represented accurately our data and research objectives. After that, in phase five, themes were named and defined. The codebook was made at this time. The final step was about writing up the analysis of the data. Each theme was then addressed in turn, describing it, and including examples of data as evidence (Chapter 4 – Findings). It is important to note that the number of occurrences (NO) found in Chapter 4 – Findings, represents the number of people that mentioned that specific theme or sub-theme, rather than the number of times those were raised during interviews.

### **3.4. Ethical Considerations**

As Corbin & Strauss (2015, p. 34) mentioned “in a research approach that blurs the line between researcher and participant, ethics become a central issue”. Therefore, it becomes especially important in qualitative research for researchers to adhere to certain ethical considerations that may guide the research designs and practices. Corbin & Strauss (2015) standpoint three major areas that call for ethical consideration: participants, research, and researcher.

Firstly, concerning participants, there are four ethical considerations to have in mind in. These include: voluntary participation, consent, anonymity, and confidentiality (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). That being said, all participants were given the possibility to opt-in or opt-out of the study, at any time, without any pressure or coercion. Furthermore, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and its goals, so they could decide whether they wanted to participate or not. All participants were also required to fill in an Informed Consent (Annexe G), consenting to their participation in the study as well as given time to ask questions that they could have before the interview started. Furthermore, the confidentiality of their participation was maintained at all moments, anonymizing any information about the participants that could reveal their identities or link them to their data. Each interview was conducted via Zoom, at home, without any access by outsiders. During the data transcription, all participants were referred to as Participant X, considering their order of participation. Companies’ names were also replaced by Company X to avoid any link to the participants. Furthermore, data transcription was conducted alone or by using headphones to avoid the possibility

of the recording being heard by people outside the study. The full transcriptions of the interviews were only available for the researcher and supervisor, and all recordings were deleted after transcription. Any documents which contain participant personal information (for example, informed consent and sociodemographic data) are saved on the researcher's computer and protected by a password.

In what regards to the research, again, several ethical considerations should also be considered. It is important to note that researchers must keep the integrity of the method, as well as acknowledge the time constraints of the research project and thus do not prejudice the quality of the study over the time available (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). For that reason, the qualitative method was used as a whole in order to produce the best results for the study. Furthermore, during the process of the research, all steps were taken with no rush or specific urgency to guarantee the quality of the work being done. Also, is important to have into consideration that all the process was developed under the supervision of the dissertation supervisor, guaranteeing the quality and viability of the research. It is worth mentioning that even though all the interviews were conducted in English and none of the participants speak the language natively, the researcher tried to ask follow-up questions when the answer given was not clear or fully understood. That allowed the interviewer to clarify specific topics where the language could be a barrier.

Finally, concerning the researcher, once a research project is undertaken, the researcher has ethical responsibility to do their work the best as possible. With that being said, the researcher should not do it because he/she needs to but because he/she wants to (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Therefore, was relevant for the researcher to choose a topic that would raise her interest so that her motivation and commitment to the topic would keep constant throughout its development.

### **3.5. Quality Assurance**

By the words of Bauer and Gaskell (2003, p. 344), “science operates in the public domain”, and thus it is important to consider two broad categories – confidence and relevance – in order to provide the foundations for quality assurance. Confidence ensures that the results of the study are the real representation of reality, while relevance guarantees that the research is viable as it links to the theoretical knowledge existent and/or it contributes to the existing theory and/or common sense. For that reason, multiple markers must be considered to ensure research quality.

Firstly, triangulation serves as a way of enhancing the validity and credibility of the findings, while reflexivity helps the researcher to take a critical reflection on his/her position in the research and about any prior experiences, assumptions and beliefs that may influence the research process (Bauer & Gaskell, 2003). Thus, in order to fulfil such criteria, the researcher has ensured the interpretation and validation of the research by its supervisor, reducing the risk of personal and professional bias.

Following this, transparency and clarity are as well crucial elements to ensure research quality (Bauer & Gaskell, 2003). That being said, the researcher has provided a detailed description of the research participants, as well as an in-depth description of the data collection and analysis methods. Also, the researcher has made available to the reader the materials used for the data collection (interview protocol and sociodemographic data sheet), the pre-defined and final codebook and the codebook dictionary. In the section dedicated to the Findings, it is also possible to find participants' citations, allowing the reader to validate the trustworthiness of the conclusions being taken.

Furthermore, corpus construction builds confidence in the research and emphasizes the relevance of the data (Bauer & Gaskell, 2003). With that in mind, interviews were completed until the saturation point was reached, meaning that when the content of the interviews was no longer a theoretical new, the researcher stopped collecting data.

Another important indicator of research quality is the ability to interpret and analyse rather than just observe and describe what is being found (Bauer & Gaskell, 2003). Thus, the researcher has provided the appropriate details so that the reader can understand the background and context underpinning the specific scenarios and support the conclusions being done, providing confidence and relevance to the study.

Moreover, the surprise value of any research is also an important indicator of the relevance of a study (Bauer & Gaskell, 2003). Therefore, the ability to complement the theoretical knowledge already existent by the researcher contributed to the relevance of the findings and consequently of the research in place.

Finally, it is important to note that the validation of the interpretation of the researcher can in some situations be beneficial for both the researcher and the participants, as it allows the researcher to clarify doubts that may arise while at the same time showing respect for the perspective of the participants. This contributes to the relevance of the findings and conclusions being taken (Bauer & Gaskell, 2003). That being said, during the interviews, participants were often asked to clarify what they were expressing or feeling. Such questions were made to confirm if the interpretation of the researcher was correct rather than to approve or refute any conclusions that could arise from that interpretation. As mentioned by Bauer and Gaskell (2003, pp. 348–349), “to take the actor as ultimate authority on the structure and function of his or her representations is to lose this opportunity for learning and critique from different perspectives.”



## CHAPTER 4

# Findings

As mentioned before, the main objective of this study is to understand how HRM practices play a role in employees' well-being while working remotely. Three objectives have been outlined as a mean to reach such goal: understand remote workers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of RHWM, understand the viewpoint of remote workers about the impact of remote work on the application of different HRM practices, and understand which and how HRM practices, play a bigger role in remote workers well-being while working remotely. After collecting participants' opinions and analysing the results, findings were compiled with such goals in mind.

In the following chapter, it is possible to find the themes and related sub-themes findings supported by the quotes of the participants. Interviews' direct quotes are presented with the goal of illustrating participants' experiences, providing the reader to understand such experiences through participants' narratives and words. Due to confidentiality reasons, participants' names were hidden. To make sure participants can be distinguished, each participant has been assigned the letter P and a number from 1 to 25 (e.g. P.9). The numbers represent the order by which each interviewee was interviewed.

### **4.1. Theme 1: Well-Being and Remote Work**

The first theme (“Well-Being and Remote Work”) allows the reader to understand the feelings and thoughts of participants in what regards the benefits and challenges experienced in remote work. Thus, theme 1 has been divided into two subcategories. The first regards the benefits for employees’ well-being while working remotely, while the second, regards the challenges of remote work for employees’ well-being while working remotely.

From a high-level perspective, by looking at Tables 1 and 2, it is possible to understand that participants have mentioned more often experiencing challenges (NO=115) rather than benefits (NO=55) when working remotely. A detailed overview of the benefits and challenges indicated by participants can be found below.

#### **4.1.1. Sub-theme 1.1: Benefits of remote work for employees’ well-being**

From the analysis of the results, looking at Table 1, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the participants have experienced positive affect at work (NO=19), higher productivity/focus levels (NO=16) as well as a better work-life balance (NO=15) while working remotely.

Sub-themes	NO
1.1.1. Healthier habits	1
1.1.2. Higher productivity/focus levels	16
1.1.3. Better work-life balance	15
1.1.4. Positive affect at work	19
1.1.5. Higher engagement with work	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

*Table 1 - Benefits of remote work for employees' well-being*

Respecting to positive affect at work, of the emotions/moods described, happiness, relaxation, and comfort were the ones indicated more often. Individuals have highlighted that compared to the office setting, they felt happier with getting a higher degree of freedom and flexibility: "Regarding remote work, I feel a sense of freedom, flexibility, and autonomy and that makes me feel happy with my work" (P.21). Furthermore, they felt more relaxed because they would have higher control over their work: "I think I feel more relaxed because by being remote I can control the way I do things at my own which allows me to be more productive and not stress so much with work" (P.18). Also, they felt more comfortable, as by working from home, they would feel more comfortable in their personal and family surroundings: "I would say I feel comfortable because when I am at home, I feel that I am at my place and that I have control over it" (P.18). Even though indicated less often, calmness, satisfaction, and energization were also indicated as positive emotions experienced by some of the participants.

In relation to participants' productivity/focus levels, they mentioned encountering fewer distractions at home allowing them to focus more on their tasks: "I think working at home makes the job easier because we have less distractions and we can be more focused on what we are doing" (P.24).

Concerning work-life balance, remote work has shown to help some participants save time for personal affairs as well as allow them a greater degree of flexibility to be closer to their families: "It is much easier to make it fit with other things of my life, like normal household stuff, but also other activities like going to run or going to the gym, etc." (P.12). "In my specific case, by having family abroad, being able to bring the computer and just go there it is absolutely important." (P.5).

Even if, less often, during the interviews, some participants have identified other benefits when working remotely, including a higher engagement with work (NO=4), and healthier habits (NO=1).

#### **4.1.2. Sub-theme 1.2: Challenges of remote work for employees' well-being**

From all the challenges mentioned, Table 2 allows to understand that the emotions/moods experienced at work play, again, an important role in employees' well-being while working from home.

<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>NO</b>
1.2.1. Blur between work and personal life	3
1.2.2. Tendency to work more hours	3
1.2.3. Less informal learning experiences	3
1.2.4. Negative affect at work	18
1.2.5. Difficulties reaching out to colleagues/supervisors	6
1.2.6. Less contact with people	10
1.2.7. Limited social networks	6
1.2.8. Difficulties bonding/building relationships	15
1.2.9. Difficulties establishing a more personal connection	15
1.2.10. Less commitment to work beyond what is asked	2
1.2.11. Lower levels of productivity/focus	7
1.2.12. Lower engagement with work	11
1.2.13. Lower sense of purpose and meaning with the organization	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>

*Table 2 - Challenges of remote work for employees' well-being*

The majority of the participants (NO=18) mentioned experiencing negative emotions/moods at work with loneliness being the most mentioned. Various individuals said that it was easy to feel lonely at home, because of the limited contact and interaction they experienced with other people: “When you are at home you miss the dynamics and the people you work with and that makes you feel lonely” (P.18). Moreover, some participants have also mentioned other negative emotions, including stress, frustration, sadness, awkwardness, boredom, and insecurity.

Adding to this, the majority of the individuals have also highlighted a lower sense of purpose and meaning with the organization (NO=16), due to the lower contact they experience with people: “As you are at home, and you have less contact with your colleagues and organization, in general, you also start forgetting what the true meaning and purpose of what you are doing” (P.9).

Furthermore, most of the participants (NO=15) have also found difficulties bonding and building relationships, as well as establishing a more personal connection with colleagues/supervisors (NO=15): “I feel that when is not remotely, I can create the connection faster and I think the bonds are stronger as well” (P.25). “I think the possibility to get to know each other personally is a plus that we do not get that much at home. I think is important to know the person behind the screen because you make video calls and you chat all day, but you do not really know the person behind their professional life” (P.20).

In what regards engagement with work, relationships have also been found to play a very important role. Almost most of the participants (NO=11) have identified lower levels of engagement

when working remotely: “As engagement is highly related to people, I think that by being alone at home that engagement that you would have in the office decreases a bit” (P.10).

Ultimately, other challenges were also identified: lower contact with people (NO=10), lower levels of productivity/focus (NO=7), difficulties reaching out to colleagues/supervisors (NO=6), limited social networks (NO=6), blur between work and personal life (NO=3), tendency to work more hours (NO=3), less informal learning experiences (NO=3) and less commitment to go beyond what asked (NO=2).

## 4.2. Theme 2: HRM Practices and Remote Work

The second theme (“HRM Practices and Remote Work”) allows to acknowledge the impact that RHWM have on HRM practices through the lens of participants as well as further suggestions that participants had to better implement such practices. With that in mind, theme 2 has been divided into nine sub-themes, referring to each of the practices being studied.

From a macro-level perspective, by analysing Tables 3 to 11, it is possible to conclude that from all the practices covered, only compensation and benefits and flexible job design have registered a higher number of positive differences over negative differences when implemented in RHWM. In all of the other practices, participants have identified a higher number of negative differences over positive differences, with promotion possibilities, performance management and training and development showing the biggest gaps. A detailed overview of each of these practices can be found below.

### 4.2.1. Sub-theme 2.1: Recruitment and Selection

Based on Table 3, it is possible to infer that, when regards to recruitment and selection, even though negative differences (NO=19) were more often identified by participants, positive differences (NO=16) were shown to be identified quite often as well.

Sub-themes		NO
2.1.1. Positive differences identified	2.1.1.1. Easier logistic wise	10
	2.1.1.2. Lower levels of stress/anxiety	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>
2.1.2. Negative differences identified	2.1.2.1. Lower sense of initial engagement/motivation	2
	2.1.2.2. Difficulties perceiving certain aspects	9
	2.1.2.3. Difficulties connecting with the interviewer	5
	2.1.2.4. Tendency to limit the process	2
	2.1.2.5. Higher levels of stress/anxiety	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>
2.1.3. No differences identified		2

2.1.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.1.4.1. Include in-person moments	15
	2.1.4.2. Provide more information about the company	2
	2.1.4.3. Increase the number of interactions with supervisors/team colleagues	2
	2.1.4.4. Rethink the recruitment process	2

*Table 3 - Recruitment and Selection*

Concerning the positive differences identified, on one side, some participants have highlighted the easiness of the logistics of the process (NO=10): “It was super good and super convenient, much easier. Actually, in the first two interviews, I was in Brussels, and in the last one, I was in Portugal. So, if it would not have been remotely, it would have been very difficult to be there, or I would have to change a lot of things in my life to be able to be there” (P.12). On the other side, some participants (NO=6) have highlighted the fact that by doing it remotely and consequently at home, they would be less stressed and hence they would perform better: “When you are on-site, you have not only the interview pressure on you, but you have the pressure of being onsite on the shoulders” (P.7).

In what regards to the negative differences, there were a couple of differences pointed out. The most mentioned concerns the difficulties in perceiving certain aspects during the interview (NO=9): “I feel there are still cues that there is no way to understand remotely. So, in terms of posture, even body language, and all of those things that we even notice subconsciously, you are not going to get that” (P. 23). Furthermore, some participants (NO=5) have also mentioned difficulties in connecting with the interviewer and building a rapport, which can often lead to misunderstandings regarding the company, role, or person: “Is difficult to create empathy with the other person, which can lead to false assumptions about the work and the company” (P.24). Few participants have also pointed out a lower sense of initial engagement/motivation with the company and role when doing all the process remotely (NO=2), as well as a tendency for companies to limit the recruitment process (NO=2) in what regards time and competencies being assessed. Moreover, even though some participants mentioned lower levels of stress/anxiety during the process, one participant (NO=1) mentioned feeling higher levels of stress/anxiety when doing the interview remotely.

Most of the participants (NO=15) have highlighted the necessity for the recruitment process to include in-person moments, even if not at all times of the process: “I guess an in-person interview may help to complement the remote touchpoints. I guess that could be important for you to take deeper insights about the interviewer and the company” (P.10). Also, some participants have mentioned the need for companies to provide more information (NO=2), in what regards the company offices, team colleagues and people, as well as increase the number of interactions with different people from the company (NO=2). Finally, some participants have also mentioned the need for rethinking the process rather than just adapting it to the remote model (NO=2).

#### 4.2.2. Sub-theme 2.2: Training and Development

Table 4, regarding training and development, allows to understand that negative differences were more often identified when compared to the positive differences.

Sub-themes		NO
2.2.1. Positive differences identified	2.2.1.1. Higher productivity/ focus levels	5
	2.2.1.2. Higher number of opportunities	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>
2.2.2. Negative differences identified	2.2.2.1. Less informal training opportunities	4
	2.2.2.2. Lower training quality	2
	2.2.2.3. Difficulties defining priorities	1
	2.2.2.4. Difficulties perceiving training needs	3
	2.2.2.5. Lower productivity/focus levels	9
	2.2.2.6. Lack of opportunities to interact/exchange ideas	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>
2.2.3. No differences identified		6
2.2.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.2.4.1 Define clear training plans	1
	2.2.4.2. Include in-person moments	2
	2.2.4.3. Include final evaluation moments	2
	2.2.4.4. Create training groups	3
	2.2.4.5. Make trainings interactive/dynamic	8
	2.2.4.6. Invest more in training	4
	2.2.4.7. Make people accountable for their development	1
	2.2.4.8. Reduce duration of trainings	4
	2.2.4.9. Have everyone remote	1
	2.2.4.10. Have fewer people per session	2
	2.2.4.11. Understand employees needs	3

*Table 4 - Training and Development*

Regarding the positive differences identified, some participants (NO=8) felt that the shift to remote work allowed them to have access to a higher number of opportunities: “Nowadays, every training session or workshop is online. It makes it much easier to gain knowledge than before. Before, we had very few training sessions, and there was a common belief that training needed to be done physically” (P.1). Furthermore, some participants (NO=5) have also registered higher productivity/focus levels as, especially in what regards to e-learning opportunities, the possibility to

go through their own pace, allows them to be less distracted and hence retain more out of the training: “I really like it being remote, because I can focus, I can have my breaks, I can pause the training and think about it” (P.13). Notwithstanding, by analysing participants' experiences, seems that the levels of productivity/focus are affected by the nature of the training. Some participants (NO=9) have registered lower levels of productivity/focus, as in what regards live trainings, because they do not have the possibility to pause when need it, and trainings tend to be more expositive, less engaging and more boring: “People tend to distract themselves much easier, so it is difficult to keep people engaged especially in very crowded, extensive, and only expositive live sessions” (P.18). Moreover, some participants (NO=7) have identified the lack the opportunities to discuss/exchange ideas as most of the trainings do not allow that: “Is much difficult to promote interaction and create dynamics between the people” (P.24). Some participants have also highlighted that when remotely they learn less from their informal interactions with colleagues (NO=4), managers tend to have more difficulties perceiving their training needs (NO=2), training quality is prejudiced (NO=2) and it becomes difficult for them to define their own training priorities (NO=1).

In light of this, some participants have suggested (NO=8) companies to make trainings more interactive/dynamic to promote higher concentration levels: “It’s important that the person that is giving you the training, interacts with you and creates that dynamic so that we pay attention and learn something from it” (P.6). Also, some participants have suggested reducing training duration (NO=4), including in-person moments (NO=2), including evaluation moments (NO=2), and having fewer people per session (NO=2) as a way to promote higher focus levels and engagement with the sessions. Likewise, some participants have also pointed out the need for higher investment in training (NO=4) and a higher need for managers to try to understand their trainings needs (NO=3), as well as suggested the definition of clear training plans (NO=2), the creation of training groups (NO=3), the possibility for making everyone remote (NO=1) and make people accountable for their own development (NO=1).

#### 4.2.3. Sub-theme 2.3: Performance Management

Looking at Table 5, regarding performance management, it is possible to understand that again, negative differences were more often identified when compared to positive differences.

Sub-themes		NO
2.3.1. Positive differences identified	2.3.1.1. Easier/quicker to set up the feedback process	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
	2.3.2.1. Difficulties evaluating performance	6
	2.3.2.2. Higher transactional feedback	9

2.3.2. Negative differences identified	2.3.2.3. Fewer feedback moments	3
		<b>Total</b>
		<b>18</b>
2.3.3. No differences identified		10
2.3.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.3.4.1. Rethink/clarify the evaluation criteria	5
	2.3.4.2 Include more moments for feedback	12
	2.3.4.3. Ensure effective/engaging ways for feedback	1
	2.3.4.4. Include in-person moments	3
	2.3.4.5. Higher communication between managers	1

*Table 5 - Performance Management*

That being said, it is possible to see that only a few participants (NO=3) have highlighted experiencing a positive difference when working from home. By being remote, participants have highlighted that feedback sessions and evaluation moments become easier/quicker to set up: “On an online basis, sometimes it is easier because normally it involves a lot of people at the same time. If it is project feedback, it is easier to get everyone available at the same time” (P.16). “For example, you can schedule feedback sessions with more frequency because you know that in terms of logistics is just about getting in a call and speak.” (P.18)

However, some participants (NO=9) have mentioned that feedback becomes more transactional: “When you do it physically you feel a closer connection. You also tend to speak longer and hold a more inspiring conversation” (P.8). At the same time, some participants have also mentioned that managers have more difficulties measuring remote workers performance (NO=6): “I think it becomes very difficult for managers to evaluate your performance. In the end, your performance will be evaluated by your outputs and not the input of your work” (P.24). Furthermore, some participants highlighted that feedback tends to lose importance and therefore happens with less frequency (NO=3).

To mitigate some of these challenges, almost most of the participants (NO=12) suggested the inclusion of more feedback moments during the process, as feedback is often forgotten, and work is less visible: “I think a good practice would be to have more regular and periodic feedback meetings, that would contribute not only for us to create greater visibility over our work but also for us to have a greater visibility over what managers think about that work” (P.24). Furthermore, some participants have suggested companies to rethink/clarify evaluation criteria (NO=5), include more in-person moments (NO=3), as well as a higher communication between managers (NO=2) to increase visibility towards employees' work and effective/engaging ways to provide feedback remotely (NO=2).



#### 4.2.4. Sub-theme 2.4: Compensation and Benefits

Table 6, concerning compensation and benefits, allows to conclude that, even though during the pandemic some differences were felt, with salaries and bonuses being reduced or cut, most participants (NO=17) have mentioned no differences at the moment of this research.

Sub-themes		NO
2.4.1. Positive differences identified	2.4.1.1. Higher number of incentives	3
	2.4.1.2. Higher adaptation to employees' working model/needs	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>
2.4.2. Negative differences identified	2.4.2.1. Difficulties measuring performance	2
	<b>Total</b>	
2.4.3. No differences identified		17
2.4.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.4.4.1. Rethink/clarify the criteria	1
	2.4.4.2 Personalize benefits to working model/needs	13
	2.4.4.3. Higher number of incentives	2

Table 6 - Compensation and Benefits

Notwithstanding this, a short number of participants have identified positive and negative differences. On the positive side, some participants (NO=3) have mentioned that companies are providing them with a higher number of benefits, either to help them with their home expenses or by providing them with material for them to work at home: “I do receive a short compensation for the days I work remotely. It is a support that they give me with the expenses I have. They also provide me with all the equipment like a computer, monitor, and desk, which is also important” (P.12). Also, some participants (NO=2) have pointed out that companies start adapting their compensation and benefits packages to their working model/needs: “In my company, they have adapted some of our benefits. Before we would receive like a daily ticket for us to go to a restaurant to have lunch. Now, they give us the choice to choose if we want to receive that or if we want to receive the money for the groceries, so that is more flexible and more adaptable to our needs” (P.19).

On the negative side, some participants (NO=2) have highlighted that companies may experience difficulties evaluating performance which can then impact their opportunities to be raised: “When you are at home the company has more difficulties in assessing your work and your performance so it may be even difficult for them to understand if you should be raised or not” (P.24).

Lastly, participants have pointed out three suggestions that companies may implement. Most participants (NO=13) have suggested a greater level of personalization of their compensation and benefits package to their working models/needs: “I think it could be important to personalize your

benefits to the place you work the most. So, for example, if I work mostly at the office, it could be nice to have access to a parking slot in our building. But, if I decide to work mostly from home, then I would like to have access to better equipment or material, like a more comfortable chair, a bigger desk and/or a monitor” (P.4). Moreover, some participants have suggested a higher number of incentives for those working remotely (NO=2) as well as the possibility to rethink/clarify the criteria from which raises are being decided (NO=1).

#### 4.2.5. Sub-theme 2.5: Promotion Possibilities

When talking about promotion possibilities, it is possible to see in Table 7, that participants have not highlighted any positive difference felt when working remotely.

Sub-themes		NO
2.5.1. Negative differences identified	2.5.2.1. Lower visibility toward employees’ work	16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>
2.5.3. No differences identified		9
2.5.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.5.4.1. Rethink/clarify the criteria	7
	2.5.4.2. Include in-person moments	3
	2.5.4.3. Include regular touchpoints	3

Table 7 - Promotion Possibilities

In contrast, most participants (NO=16) pointed out lower visibility from managers towards their work when working remotely, which can, in turn, influence their possibility to be promoted: “I think in some way you perceive it [promotion possibilities] differently, because some managers that maybe are more at the office, will unconsciously perceive people that go to the office as more present. That can somehow influence your visibility and the way your effort is perceived” (P.18).

To overcome such challenge, some participants (NO=7) have suggested rethinking/clarifying the criteria so that the decision can be taken more objectively: “They need to define more appropriate criteria that people need to fulfil to be promoted. That is very important to avoid subjectivity in the process and false assumptions regarding that topic” (P.12). Moreover, some participants have suggested the inclusion of in-person moments (NO=3) and regular touchpoints (NO=3) between managers and employees, so that managers can gain different visibility towards their work.

#### 4.2.6. Sub-theme 2.6: Job Security

By looking at Table 8, it is possible to understand that, in what regards to job security, again, no positive differences were identified. Notwithstanding this, only some participants (NO=4) have identified

negative differences, with the majority of remote workers (NO=21) not identifying any differences in their perceptions of job security when working from home.

Sub-themes		NO
2.6.1. Negative differences identified	2.6.2.1. Difficulties perceiving job security	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>
2.6.3. No differences identified		21
2.6.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.6.4.1. Create moments to update employees on such topics	4

*Table 8 - Job Security*

Of the few participants that identified negative differences (NO=4), they have mentioned difficulties perceiving job security when working from home: “There are some differences because if you are at home, you don’t have a big awareness of what is happening in your company, and you are just limited to your job and to your work. When you are at the office, it is different. You hear people talking and you know what is going on. Those moments help you perceive things in a different way and because of that, you have a better awareness, and you can feel more secure” (P.22).

To avoid that, the same participants (NO=4) have suggested the creation of specific moments for the company to update employees, ensuring that they feel safer when working from home: “I think is pretty much about creating more moments where the company shares a little bit about how the business is going and how we position ourselves in the market. I think it should be the company looking to that than us trying to understand proactively that” (P.20).

#### **4.2.7. Sub-theme 2.7: Flexible Job Design**

Based on the data shown in Table 9, in relation to the flexible job design, it is possible to infer that the majority of the participants (NO=21) have mentioned that, when working remotely, they register a higher degree of flexibility/freedom: “I think the remote work brought a very big shift to our mindset, not only in what regards the place of work or the schedule of work but how the things are done. Now we have more freedom to manage our work in our own way” (P.24).

Sub-themes		NO
2.7.1. Positive differences identified	2.7.1.1. Higher flexibility/freedom levels	21
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>
2.7.2. Negative differences identified	2.7.2.1. Tendency to work longer hours	3
	2.7.2.2. Lower trust levels	2

		<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
2.7.3. No differences identified			3
2.7.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.7.4.1 Standardize the process		2
	2.7.4.2. Provide a greater sense of trust		2
	2.7.4.3. Match people with the same working habits		1
	2.7.4.4. Allow a greater degree of flexibility/freedom		3
	2.7.4.5. Create mechanisms to avoid working too many hours		2

*Table 9 - Flexible Job Design*

In contrast, only a few participants have identified negative differences. On one hand, some participants (NO=3) have mentioned that by registering higher levels of flexibility/freedom they also tended to work more hours than they would do before: “I am having my breakfast in front of the computer while reading my emails and some days I am also working in my lunch hour. Now, the limits that we have are much more blurred. I think we are more flexible now, but in this relationship of flexibility, I think the company is winning more than we are” (P.14). On the other hand, some participants (NO=2) have pointed out that this higher flexibility/freedom, brought a lack of trust from managers in their work: “I do feel they judge us a lot when we are home, and that they don’t trust us enough, so they control what they do and how we do it quite often” (P.17).

That being said, multiple suggestions were raised by participants on how to better implement this practice. Some participants (NO=3) have mentioned that even though they have a good degree of flexibility now, they would appreciate an even greater degree of flexibility/freedom: “There is still a greater level of flexibility that we can have. For example, if next week I do not want to work Thursday and Friday, I cannot do this. I am not saying that you can be completely spoiled and that you need every single thing to be done. But there should be a consideration for it” (P.8). Adding to this, some participants have also mentioned the need for a higher standardization of the process (NO=2), a greater sense of trust by managers (NO=2), and the creation of mechanisms that could help them avoid working so many hours (NO=2). Finally, one participant mentioned an idea that included matching participants with the same working schedules in order to increase collaboration (NO=2).

#### **4.2.8. Sub-theme 2.8: Employee Involvement and Participation**

In Table 10, regarding employee involvement and participation, is possible to understand that negative differences were more often identified when compared to positive differences.

Sub-themes		NO
2.8.1. Positive differences identified	2.8.1. Creation of specific moments	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>
2.8.2. Negative differences identified	2.8.2.1. Lower number of opportunities	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>
2.8.3. No differences felt between remote versus office setting		7
2.7.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.8.4.1 Create strategies to promote everyone's involvement and participation	1
	2.8.4.2. Give priority to those moments	1
	2.8.4.3. Create smaller forums	3
	2.8.4.4. Increase the number of opportunities	11

*Table 10 - Employee Involvement and Participation*

Only a few participants (NO=4) have highlighted positive differences, mentioning that companies have created more moments for them to be involved and participate: “Before the involvement was much more about being proactive and sharing your ideas when you wanted to. Now, the company has created moments for people to feel even more involved and for people to feel that they still have a safe place where they can talk and share their ideas” (P.7).

Nonetheless, the majority of the participants (NO=14) have identified a lower number of opportunities when they work from home, as going to the office allows them to have access to informal moments where this involvement and participation is promoted: “For the informal part, there were fewer windows for informal interaction and involvement and participation” (P.8).

Having said that, almost the majority of the participants (NO=11) mentioned that they would like to see an increase in the number of opportunities they have at home: “I think that if you want to have the inputs of your team in a formal or informal way, in an anonymous or non-anonymous way about specific decisions, you should still, as a manager strive to do it. So, you need to create more channels, formal and informal ones, for that to happen” (P.8). Furthermore, some participants have suggested the creation of smaller forums to do that (NO=2), as well as the creation of strategies to promote involvement from everyone (NO=1) and, the necessity for managers to prioritize such moments.

#### **4.2.9. Sub-theme 2.9: Transparency and Information Sharing**

Finally, looking now to Table 11, in relation to transparency and information sharing practices, it is possible to infer that, again, more negative differences were identified over positive differences.

Sub-themes		NO
2.9.1. Positive differences identified	2.9.1.1. Higher number of information available	2
	2.9.1.2. More standardized process	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>
2.9.2. Negative differences identified	2.9.2.1. Less access to information	11
	<b>Total</b>	
2.9.3. No differences identified		8
2.9.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM	2.9.4.1 Standardize the process	1
	2.9.4.2. Create more channels for information sharing	6

*Table 11 - Transparency and Information Sharing*

In regard to positive differences, remote workers have identified two main differences. On one side, some participants (NO=4) mentioned that a more standardized process was created by the company during the shift to remote work: “I think it is better now. We weekly share our results, and we have biweekly meetings with our partners to talk about our service lines, so I think that kind of information inflows easier now that we are remote, and we have created a structured process to do that” (P.14). On the other side, some participants (NO=2) have also pointed out that due to remote work, now the company is sharing more information that they would before: “I think remotely we have a lot of information about what is going on, even more than we would have if it were physically. I think that when you are remote, companies feel more pressured to let you know about what is happening so that you keep engaged and motivated with it” (P.13).

Notwithstanding this, almost most of the participants (NO=11) still mentioned that they feel they have less access to information when working from home, especially, because of the lack of informal interactions they experience with both colleagues and managers: “When you are at the office, you can always talk to people informally. If you are at home, you do not have that availability and you do not have that disposition to call someone just to do that. So, I think the fact that you are close to people in the office is the key to have access to more information” (P.9).

In light of that, some remote workers (NO=6) have suggested the creation of more channels for information sharing and transparency: “It could be interesting if they could create specific forums where they could update employees about business aspects, or anything related to that. They could also just create a platform where we could have access to those things” (P.10). Moreover, one participant pointed out the necessity to standardize the process (NO=1).

### 4.3. Theme 3: HRM Practices, Well-Being and Remote Work

The third theme (“HRM Practices, Well-Being and Remote Work”) allows to understand which and how HRM practices play a bigger influence on employees’ well-being while working at home. With that in mind, theme 3 has been divided into two sub-themes: most highlighted HRM practices influencing well-being and other practices influencing well-being.

From a high-level perspective, and looking at Tables 12 and 13, was possible to understand that flexible job design, performance management, training and development and employee involvement and participation, were the HRM practices identified as more important to employees’ well-being when working remotely. Other four dimensions of practices were also identified by participants as important, with social interactions/teambuildings as the one identified more often. A detailed overview of that can be found below.

#### 4.3.1. Sub-theme 3.1: Most highlighted HRM practices influencing well-being

In the last section of the interview, participants were asked to answer the following question: “Looking now at the whole set of practices could you highlight those that are more important to your well-being, specifically when you are working remotely?” Table 12 provides insights into the answers given.

Sub-themes	NO
3.1.1. Training and Development	12
3.1.2. Performance Management	13
3.1.3. Compensation and Benefits	6
3.1.4. Promotion Possibilities	5
3.1.5. Job Security	3
3.1.6. Flexible Job Design	20
3.1.7. Employee Involvement and Participation	10
3.1.8. Transparency and Information Sharing	4

Table 12 - HRM Practices influencing well-being

From the data collected, it was possible to conclude that most participants (NO=20) mentioned flexible job design as one of the most impactful practices on their well-being. Remote workers have highlighted that, when working from home, the ability to have more control over their work makes them feel happier, less stressed and register higher engagement levels with their work and organization. Furthermore, they have highlighted a higher work-life balance and productivity levels: “If I am at home, I want the possibility to manage things at my own way, I do not want to be controlled and I do not want to feel that people do not trust me. That makes me feel more relaxed, improves my productivity, and makes me more engaged with my work” (P.24). “It is really important for me to have

flexibility to manage things by my own, so it will obviously take a special role on my well-being. It makes me feel that people more productive because it impacts positively the way I perform my tasks” (P.21). “When you are working remotely you want to have a greater control over your life and your work and therefore a flexible job design is very important so that you can achieve that. That makes you feel happier, more relaxed and with a sense of a better work-life balance in general” (P.8).

Moreover, they have pointed out performance management (NO=13) as a very important practice for their well-being. Participants have mentioned that by being at home, their sense of development can be diminished. Furthermore, they can register higher levels of stress/anxiety as feedback tends to happen less frequently. Hence, performance management increases their confidence levels, improves their motivation to keep evolving and ensures their feeling of professional growth is felt even if they are not regularly working from the office: “It is very important to know that even if I am not in the same physical space as my supervisors, they can still be aware of my performance and help me improve it, when possible. When that happens, I feel they care about me and that consequently influences my motivation as well” (P.12). “It is about me feeling that the company is contributing to my professional growth and that it creates the opportunities for me to understand what and how do I need to grow” (P.18). “As I have fewer interactions and I am less surrounded by people, I feel more that I do not know if I am performing well because I kind of start living in a bubble. That really affects my engagement and my motivation” (P.5). “I think it is the way that you have to feel more confident with your work, and to understand if you are doing it right or not, especially when you are at home and you don’t have that feedback so often” (P.9).

Following this, training and development was also often mentioned (NO=12). Participants have pointed out this practice as very positive to their well-being as, again, it allows them to feel more confident with their work and consequently register lower levels of stress/anxiety, as well as it gives them a sense of professional growth that due to the nature of the job sometimes can be diminished. That seemed to contribute to their engagement and motivation with the work as well as their retention within the company: “Especially when I am at home, I feel less supported and guided so I want to feel confident enough to do my job well and feel that I don’t need to reach out to my colleagues or managers so often. Otherwise, I will feel extremely stressed and anxious because I will just think I am not capable of doing my work” (P.17). “It is very important for my development, my sense of competency and for me to feel that I am improving my skills as a professional. I think is very important for you to not feel stuck and feel that remote work has a negative impact on your development” (P.15). “When you are at home you do not have as many opportunities to learn with others, which means you feel that your growth is not as fast as it would be in the office. The company must invest more on this practice for you to feel that you have the same level of development as you would have in the office. That influences not only your motivation but also you retention in the company.” (P.24)



Finally, employee involvement and participation was also quite often mentioned (NO=10). Participants have highlighted these practices as important to their well-being as they tend to give them a voice and contribute to their sense of involvement/belonging with the company as well as their engagement levels and hence contribute to their willingness to stay working with that company: “I think is important because it makes you feel more integrated, part of an organization and a team and not just someone that is working alone at home. You also feel more engaged with your work and organization” (P.2). “If you are at home, you lose connection with the company, so, in order for you to feel connected with your company you need to feel that you belong to it and that you are involved, and that people hear what you have to say” (P.18). “It makes me feel involved and part of something, it is what makes the difference between working in this company or in any other” (P.24).

Even though less mentioned, compensation and benefits (NO=6), promotion possibilities (NO=5), job security (NO=3) and transparency and information sharing (NO=4) were also mentioned by some participants as important for their well-being. In what regards to compensation and benefits, participants have mentioned that this practice makes them feel more recognized, engaged, and motivated as well as increases their willingness to stay working at the company. They have highlighted that even though that helps also when they are at the office, it plays a particularly special role when they are at home. Promotion possibilities, seem to go in line with the above-mentioned. Participants have pointed out this practice as important for them to feel recognized and motivated, especially when they are at home. Concerning job security, some participants have highlighted the importance of feeling safe and secure for their engagement, motivation and lower stress levels. As that perception may be difficult to feel when at home, this practice plays an important role as well. Lastly, transparency and information-sharing practices, seem, as well, to play a role in employees’ engagement. Furthermore, they have highlighted the importance of this practice for their sense of belonging especially when they are working remotely. Recruitment and selection was not mentioned by any of the participants (NO=0).

#### **4.3.2. Sub-theme 3.2: Other practices influencing well-being**

During the interviews, participants were also asked if any other practices could influence their well-being at home. Table 13 allows to take an in-depth look at the answers given.

<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>NO</b>
3.2.1. Social Interaction/Teambuildings	9
3.2.2. Wellness/Health	6
3.2.3. Work Boundaries	4
3.2.4. Recognition/Appreciation	2

*Table 13 - Other practices influencing well-being*

From the answers given, four main dimensions of practices have emerged: Social Interactions/Teambuildings (NO=9), Wellness/Health (NO=6), Work Boundaries (NO=4) and Recognition/Appreciation (NO=2).

In what regards to social interactions/teambuildings, some participants (NO=9) have mentioned that these practices can help them build stronger relationships with colleagues while avoiding isolation and increasing their sense of belonging to the company: “One thing that I believe is very important for my well-being, especially at home is the contact with people. So, I truly believe that companies need to promote moments for social interaction so you can get to know your colleagues in a different way, and you can create stronger and last longing relationships” (P.9). “I think that [teambuildings] are very important for people to not feel isolated but to actually feel they belong to a company” (P.12).

Furthermore, some participants (NO=6) also mentioned that wellness/health programs, like yoga classes, mindfulness sessions or fitness classes, for example, could contribute positively to their mental and physical well-being: “We spend a lot of time in front of the screen, and I think that has a great deal of impact on our mental and physical health. So, I think the company could try to promote some activities to make us exercise more or go outside more so that we could relax a bit and refocus on our job later (P.20).” “With us being seated in front of our laptops all day, it can be difficult for us to exercise and be active. With is in mind, companies could provide free online fitness classes so that we can be exercising during our working schedule” (P.24).

In what regards to work boundaries, some participants (NO=4) have also pointed out the need for the company to define rules that could help employees manage their work-life balance better as well as lower their stress/anxiety levels: “I think companies need to help employees create clear boundaries between. I think there are some moments, where you may feel this line a bit blurred. I think for example limiting your working hours could be an important thing to do. I do not know how they could do it, but I really think it could help you find that balance easily” (P.7). “I think it is very important that we can better divide the work from our professional life. Also, receiving emails late in the evening makes me feel super stressed because I will then spend the night thinking about it” (P.1).

Lastly, some participants (NO=2) have also mentioned recognition/appreciation-related practices that contribute to their sense of belonging and commitment to the company, as well as make employees feel rewarded and recognized for their work: “I am remembering a moment in my previous company, where we reached a revenue goal, and the company organized a lunch to celebrate that goal. So, I think is very important that companies have these appreciation and celebration moments to show they care about the team and to recognize the work they did to achieve such goal. I think it creates a commitment and engagement with the company. Again, as I said before, when you are at home you tend to focus mostly about your work and sometimes you forget to pause and think about these little things” (P.25).

## Discussion

The main goal of this research was to understand how HRM practices play a role in employees' well-being while working remotely. To do so three specific objectives were outlined for the study: understand remote workers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of RHWM, understand the viewpoint of remote workers about the impact of remote work on the application of different HRM practices, and understand which and how HRM practices, play a bigger role in remote workers well-being while working remotely.

### 5.1. Well-Being and Remote Work

Regarding the first study objective, it was possible to identify both benefits and challenges for employees when working remotely, with challenges playing a more central role, thus indicating still a need for companies to mitigate remote work challenges, while promoting remote work benefits.

Firstly, in conformity with the literature found, this study allowed to understand that the majority of the participants have experienced both positive and negative affect at work. From the positive side, it was possible to understand that remote workers have experience feelings of happiness, relaxation and comfort as well as calmness, satisfaction and energization. Similar findings were found by Felstead & Henseke (2017), Charalampous et al. (2022) and Sardeshmukh et al. (2012) in their studies. On the negative side, this study has also contributed to the understanding that when working remotely, employees may experience negative affect to work, including feelings of loneliness, stress, frustration, sadness and awkwardness as well as boredom and insecurity. Again, this was also founded in Charalampous et al. (2022) research. Important to note that even though there is evidence to support such findings, we have not found evidence of, for example, feelings of calmness, comfort, energization, awkwardness and insecurity in the literature. However, it is quite important to highlight that research participants from different studies come from different contexts and realities, and hence may reflect differently positive and negative feelings at work.

Following this, and, again, in line with what was found in the literature before, it was also possible to understand that for the majority of the participants, remote work positively impacted their productivity/focus levels (Bloom et al., 2015; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Hill et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 2008; Noonan & Glass, 2012; Popovici & Popovici, 2020), as they experienced fewer distractions at work and hence higher concentration levels (Boell et al., 2016; Charalampous et al., 2022). Notwithstanding this, it is still interesting to note that in contrast with that,

seven participants have highlighted lower productivity/focus levels at home due to the distractions they also found and the lack of proper equipment to perform their work.

Adding to these findings, it was also possible to verify that the majority of participants felt having a better work-life balance when fully or partially working remotely. This goes in line with Charalampous et al. (2022) study, however, not supporting clearly other empirical research that states a tendency for remote employees to work-over hours (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Noonan & Glass, 2012) and feel their personal and professional lines blurred (Charalampous et al., 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011). In fact, only three participants from this research have highlighted a tendency for working over hours as well as a blur between their work and personal life.

Concerning employees' engagement at work, opinions have seemed to be divided. While almost most of the participants registered lower levels of engagement at work, only four registered higher levels of engagement. Furthermore, some participants have mentioned less commitment to do beyond what was asked, which expands and contradicts existing literature on such topic (Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Golden, 2006; Golden & Eddleston, 2020; Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). Finally, and complementing what was found in the literature before, most participants in the study highlighted a lower sense of purpose and meaning with the organization while working remotely.

Looking at remote workers' social construct, this research has also allowed to validate and expand existing theoretical knowledge. Participants have highlighted lower levels of contact with people (Charalampous et al., 2022; Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Morganson et al., 2010; Tietze & Musson, 2010; Wang et al., 2021), limited social networks, difficulties bonding and building relationships (Charalampous et al., 2022; Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Morganson et al., 2010; Tietze & Musson, 2010; Wang et al., 2021) as well difficulties reaching out colleagues and supervisors (Dambrin, 2004; Madsen, 2011; Wang et al., 2021) and establishing a more personal connection. Adding to this, and even though Madsen (2011) have shown that remote workers may feel their informal interactions reduced regarding communication, mentoring and training and development, only three participants in the study have shown to feel that difficulty.

Likewise, the presence of healthier habits supported by the findings of Charalampous et al. (2022), was only highlighted by one participant in the research.

## **5.2. HRM Practices and Remote Work**

Meeting now the second objective, this research allowed to understand the differences that participants have felt in the application of HRM practices when working remotely, as well as suggestions on how such practices could be better implemented in such working models.

On a general note, it was possible to understand that, for most practices covered, participants have identified a higher number of negative differences over positive differences, indicating a need for companies to further invest in improving the application of those practices in RHWM so that they can promote employees' well-being. Promotion possibilities, performance management and training and development have shown to have a bigger gap between negative and positive differences identified, which naturally signalizes these practices as a priority for the future.

In what regards to recruitment and selection, remote workers have felt an easiness logistics-wise as well as lower levels of stress/anxiety when going through such process remotely. Only one participant has mentioned an increase in the level of stress/anxiety by doing such process virtually. Furthermore, the recruitment and selection process seemed to increase the difficulty in perceiving certain aspects of the interview as well as building a rapport with the interviewer. Such finding goes in line with what University of Oxford (2022) has made available regarding job interview main challenges. In light of this, the majority of participants have suggested the inclusion of in-person moments during the remote process to mitigate such challenge. Furthermore, two participants have also tended to feel the process to be limited in time and number of interactions due to the virtual setting. Suggestions from participants included the increase in the number of information provided by the company as well as the number of interactions with different people to overcome such challenge. Finally, two participants registered a lower sense of engagement/initial motivation with the company, which goes in line with the BCG (2020a) report. Even though no suggestions were made on such topic from research participants, BCG (2020a) suggested companies to create virtual coffee breaks, welcome videos and virtual networking sessions to increase employees' engagement as well as initial buy-in. Also, as a general and final suggestion, some participants mentioned the need for the company to rethink the recruitment process from scratch instead of adapting it to the new work working models.

Following this, in what regards to training and development, participants have pointed out a higher number of training opportunities as well as higher levels of productivity/focus in a remote training setting. This may be underpinned by the findings of Boell et al. (2016) and Charalampous et al. (2022) which show a tendency for remote workers to register higher concentration and absorption levels as well as less social distraction. In contrast, on the negative side, some research participants have still identified lower productivity/focus levels, especially in regard to more expositive, less engaging and more boring trainings. To overcome that, some participants have suggested making trainings more interactive/dynamic, reducing training sessions duration, including in-person moments as well as final evaluation moments and having fewer people per session so that employees can register higher focus levels and engagement with the sessions. Furthermore, some participants have also identified a lack of opportunities to interact/exchange ideas and hence suggested the creation of training groups that would allow such interaction. During the study, four participants also mentioned

registering fewer informal training opportunities, either coaching, mentoring moments or shadow work. Similar findings were both highlighted by Madsen (2011) and BCG (2020a), stating that remote work may play an important role in informal conversations and therefore may affect the informal training component. BCG (2020a) has highlighted the need for companies to be available for regular check-ins and feedback moments to promote coaching and development. Yet, in what regards training and development, some participants have also pointed out difficulties for managers to perceive training needs. Participants highlighted a higher need for managers to try to understand their training needs through regular touchpoints. Also, one participant mentioned difficulties to define training priorities, as too many opportunities were made available. That being said, the definition of clear training plans was suggested. Moreover, the possibility of making everyone remote during remote training sessions as well as making people more accountable for their development was also suggested by one participant. Lastly, some participants have highlighted a lower training quality in general as well as a need for higher investment in training from the company. As literature findings suggested, during the COVID-19 outbreak opportunities to learn and evolve decreased, mainly due to budget concerns (Fraij, 2021). Thus, is very important that companies restart investing in this practice as it is critical for employees' autonomy (Fraij, 2021), motivation (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Gigauri, 2020) as well as to improve workforce capabilities and competence (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Charalampous et al., 2022).

In relation to performance management, three participants have highlighted an easiness/quickness in the process remotely. Nonetheless, some participants have identified that, in RHWM, feedback becomes more transactional and often forgotten, being as well difficult to evaluate performance. With that in mind, participants have identified multiple suggestions on how to mitigate those and other possible challenges. Those involved the inclusion of more moments for feedback, the inclusion of in-person moments, as well as a need to rethink/clarify the evaluation criteria, have higher communication between managers and ensure effective/engaging ways to provide feedback. The need to rethink and clarify the evaluation criteria was also mentioned by BCG (2020a) report, highlighting that due to the mix of different working models in the workforce, companies must ensure fairness and equity for both remote and on-site workers concerning their evaluation.

In what regards to compensation and benefits, the majority of the participants have pointed out that, even though bonuses and salaries were cut during the pandemic (Fraij, 2021; Mercer, 2020), now they do not feel any differences in such practice. Notwithstanding this, some participants have highlighted a higher number of incentives for employees working remotely as well as a higher adaptation from companies to employees' working models/needs. Furthermore, some participants have mentioned difficulties from the company to assess their work and performance, which could in turn influence their raising opportunities. With that being noted, some participants have suggested the company rethink/clarify the criteria from which raising opportunities are being defined. That goes

in line with BCG (2020a), highlighting the need for companies to review such processes. Furthermore, participants have also suggested the company to personalize benefits to working models/needs as well as to provide a higher number of incentives when people work from home.

Concerning promotion possibilities, most participants have identified their perception of career advancement diminished as they felt managers had lower visibility towards their work and thus that could influence their promotion possibilities. Indeed, multiple studies founded have supported that tendency (Bloom et al., 2015; Charalampous et al., 2022; Madsen, 2011; McDonald et al., 2008; Redman et al., 2009; Sewell & Taskin, 2015). To overcome that, some participants have suggested companies to, again, rethink/clarify evaluation criteria (BCG, 2020a) as well as include in-person moments and regular touchpoints to boost the visibility of their work. In fact, it was highlighted by the empirical research that for employees working remotely communication plays a very important part. Thus, it is critical that companies discuss with their employees about workload, well-being and individual performance (Grant et al., 2013) as well as career opportunities (Charalampous et al., 2019, 2022) to diminish concerns about career advancement (Charalampous et al., 2019).

In what regards to job security, even though the literature seemed yet scarce regarding such practice, this research allowed to understand that, nowadays, most participants do not identify differences in their perceptions of job security when working from home. Nonetheless, some participants have validated feelings of difficulties perceiving job security when they are working remotely as well as lower levels of awareness of what is happening in the company. To avoid that, they have suggested the creation of specific moments to update employees on such topics.

Moving towards the flexible job design, employees have mentioned registering higher levels of flexibility/freedom when working from home. The findings go in line with SHRM (2021) and Mercer (2020) research. Notwithstanding this, three participants have also pointed out a tendency to work longer hours, especially when working from home, which was supported by the literature (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Noonan & Glass, 2012). Furthermore, as participants were more distant and hence gained a different level of autonomy, lower trust levels from their managers were also felt. Suggestions from participants included companies to implement an even greater degree of flexibility than what is imposed now, a higher standardization of the process, the need for a greater sense of trust by managers and the creation of mechanisms that could help them avoid working so many hours. Furthermore, one participant mentioned matching participants with the same working schedules to promote effective collaboration within teams.

In relation to employee involvement and participation, even though few participants have mentioned the company has created specific moments for that to happen more frequently, most of the participants have mentioned a lower number of opportunities on what regards involvement and participation when working from home. With that being said, participants have suggested companies

to increase the number of opportunities available, as well as to create smaller forums, give priority to those moments and create strategies to promote everyone's involvement. Findings indicate that enhancing a sense of engagement and belonging with the employees is indeed very important and has become a priority for organizations, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak (Deloitte Insights, 2020).

Finally, in what regards to transparency and information sharing, again, even though, few participants have mentioned a higher number of information available as well as a more standardized process, almost half of the participants have mentioned having less access to information when working remotely, especially due to the lack of informal interactions. Again, Madsen (2011) research supports such findings highlighting that remote workers may feel their informal interactions reduced in what regards to communication. Therefore, to mitigate such challenge research participants have suggested the creation of more channels for transparency and information sharing as well as a more standardized process overall. Gigauri (2020) has highlighted the importance of keeping employees informed during remote work, including about the organization and its performance.

### **5.3. HRM Practices, Well-Being and Remote Work**

The last research objective, aimed at understanding which and how HRM practices play a role in employees' well-being while working remotely. With that in mind, it was possible to understand that four main practices played a central role in most participants' well-being: flexible job design, performance management, training and development and employee involvement and participation.

Concerning flexible job design, participants have mentioned that such practice allows them to have a greater degree of control over their lives and hence they felt happier, less stressed and registered higher engagement levels with their work and organization, consequently having a better work-life balance and higher productivity levels. Such findings go in line with Guest (2017), inferring that, opportunities for control, skill use and variety at work are crucial for employees' well-being. Also, family-friendly and flexible work arrangements can play an important role. Adding to this, employees' autonomy was pointed out by multiple studies as a relevant resource for remote workers' well-being (Charalampous et al., 2022; Galanti et al., 2021; George et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Flexible job design can be seen as a way of granting such autonomy and thus contributing to their work well-being.

Following this, performance management was also pointed out as one of the most important practices for remote workers' well-being. Participants have said that, by working remotely, their sense of development could be reduced, and they tended to register higher levels of stress/anxiety as feedback tended to happen less often. Therefore, performance management plays a role in improving their confidence in their work, as well as boosting their motivation and ensuring a feeling of professional growth. Similar to this, training and development, was also often mentioned by



participants. This practice allows them to feel more confident about their work and consequently register lower levels of stress/anxiety. Moreover, it gives them a sense of professional development that can sometimes be reduced while working remotely. This was highlighted as a positive contribution to their engagement and motivation as well as their retention within the company. In line with what was found in the empirical research, again, Guest (2017) has pointed out that practices that enhance competence as well as provide a sense of an attractive career future play as well an important role in employees' well-being. This support both performance management and training and development findings. Furthermore, empirical research has found training as an important motivational factor (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Gigauri, 2020), which in turn validates the mentioned above findings.

Finally, the fourth practice most highlighted by participants concerned employee involvement and participation. Such practice was often mentioned by participants as it allowed them to have a voice in the company, contribute to their sense of involvement/belonging with the organization and increase their levels of engagement, promoting hence their retention and willingness to stay in the company. Again, Guest (2017) has mentioned the opportunities for individuals to express their opinions and have a voice in the company as important for both well-being and employment relationship.

Following this, and considering now a bigger picture, it is possible to draw some conclusions on how ability-, motivation- and opportunity-enhancing practices play a role in employees' well-being. Even though points of interception were founded in studies mentioned in the literature (Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018; Zhang et al., 2020) there were still different findings in some of the dimensions. These research findings allowed to understand that all three clusters of practices seemed to influence both job and psychological well-being. Nevertheless, Khoreva & Wechtler (2018) have only found a connection between motivation-enhancing practices and employees' physiological well-being. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2020) findings have only pointed out higher levels of job and psychological well-being in ability- and motivation- practices respectively. In what regards to life well-being, this research has found a connection between motivation-and opportunity enhancing practices and that type of well-being. Even though that goes in line with what Zhang et al. (2020) pointed out for the motivation-enhancing practices, no relation between opportunity-enhancing practices and life well-being was mentioned. Lastly, this research has also shown evidence of opportunity-enhancing practices having an influence as well in what regards to social well-being, going in line with what was mentioned by Khoreva & Wechtler (2018).

Adding to what was mentioned above, participants have also highlighted practices that even though were not raised by the researcher, looked to contribute to their well-being while working remotely. Answers included practices regarding social interactions/teambuilding, wellness/health, work boundaries and recognition/appreciation.

Looking at the social interactions/teambuildings dimension, participants highlighted that these practices promote their sense of belonging to the company by helping them build stronger relationships and avoid isolation. In line with Guest (2017), opportunities for social interaction at work tend to have an important role to improve employees' well-being, which in part intercepts with such findings. Furthermore, communication was pointed out in the literature (Charalampous et al., 2019, 2022; Galanti et al., 2021; George et al., 2022; Gigauri, 2020) as important to avoid social isolation and consequently increase employees' well-being. This can in turn support such findings, by justifying why such interactions may play a central role for participants and their well-being.

Following this, participants have pointed out wellness/health practices has important for their well-being, as seemed to contribute to both their mental and physical well-being. Such findings go in line with what was found in the literature before, highlighting that health webinars, mindfulness or meditation sessions, virtual counselling (BCG, 2020b; Caligiuri et al., 2020) as well as fitness classes and benefits to promote employees' wellness (BCG, 2020b) can have an impact in employees' well-being.

In what regards to work boundaries, participants have mentioned the need for the company on implementing practices that could help them define their work boundaries better and therefore increase their work-life balance and promote lower stress levels. Similar findings by Charalampous et al. (2022) and George et al. (2022) support the importance of such practices, as such may increase productivity, decrease stress and enhance health in general.

Lastly, and expanding the empirical knowledge found before participants have also pointed out the importance of recognition/appreciation related practices, which promote their feelings of reward and recognition and increase their sense of belonging and commitment to the company.

Summing up, overall, the findings suggest reaching the three objectives of the study. Findings supported in some moments what was found in the literature, while in some moments have expanded and complemented the information. Therefore, this research has contributed to complementing empirical knowledge and set the basis for future research being developed.

#### **5.4. Limitations and Future Research**

Adding to the discussion done above, it is equally important to understand and outline the limitations that this research may have encountered as well as future research guidelines.

Firstly, one important point to consider may be the fact that this research has been developed in a very unique period of our history. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented challenge and therefore some of the conclusions may be affected by that. Once the effect of COVID-19 is diminished, conclusions may take a different role. With that being said, any conclusions for the future must be

taken carefully and consider this limitation. Further research may benefit from repeating this study once the effects of COVID-19 are reduced so that differences can be analysed.

Secondly, due to the qualitative nature of such study, the number of participants and interviews done were itself limited, which is why any generalisation from the findings should be done wisely in the future. Furthermore, the research considered participants from only one sector of activity which could, as well, restrict the generalisation of the data to a wider population. To avoid this, a broader number of sectors could be considered in further studies, as this would allow researchers to draw general conclusions with more certainty and even explore the differences that different sectors and realities may have for employees' well-being while working remotely.

Furthermore, and even though the weight between Gen Z and Millennials participants was close to balance, there was a very low gap between participants' ages which did not allow the study to produce any particular intergenerational conclusions. With that being said, future research could further investigate the differences between intergenerational groups by ensuring an equal representation of different generations as well as looking forward to research participants with a wider range of ages. This could in turn allow researchers to take solid conclusions for each generation as well as to get a better understanding of the differences between the experiences in each cluster and draw practical implications for companies, managers and HR professionals on such matters.

Moreover, another limitation that can be considered is that because individuals' experiences and perspectives are the basis for qualitative research, is important to note that information becomes more difficult to analyse and interpret. Nevertheless, the method still seemed to be the most appropriate for the research as it allowed to understand in-depth participants' experiences and realities of such topics. Adding to this, interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom, which limited the possibility to consider and interpreting non-spoken rules that could arise from body language. Notwithstanding this, it has been recognized that this method has allowed a greater sense of privacy and confidentiality to the participants and make them feel more comfortable talking via such channels. Still, in what regards to the data collection method, interviews were conducted in English, which given not being the native language of participants could somehow limit their answers, impacting the way participants expressed their thoughts. With that in mind, participants were allowed to express their experiences and feelings in Portuguese, whenever they struggle or need.

Following this, another limitation worth mentioning is the absence of validation of the codification of the interviews by an independent researcher, as well as the fact that the results and main findings were not presented to participants for their own validation. As a way to minimize such risks, a codebook dictionary was created, and participants' direct quotes were outlined throughout the study.

Finally, it is important to consider that the study has outlined a very wide range of well-being dimensions and HRM practices, which only allowed the researcher to highly explore such topics instead

of developing in-depth research on each of these topics. With this in mind, future research could focus on specific well-being dimensions or HRM practices to get a deeper understanding of such topics and allow researchers to draw more specific conclusions from the study. Hence, it is worth mentioning the possibility of complementing such study with quantitative research on such topics. This will allow researchers to validate or reject such conclusions, ensuring greater data validity on the findings.

## **5.5. Practical Implications**

In the theoretical scope and, as mentioned before, research focused on the relationship between HRM practices and employees' well-being while working remotely is still insufficient, as this relationship was yet poorly studied in the light of the virtual working settings. Also, there was a clear opportunity to study how HRM practices could play a particularly important role after the pandemic crisis so that organizations could effectively understand how to manage such practices in the times forward.

With that being said, this research allowed to validate and complement existing literature on remote work benefits and challenges. On one side, the study provided practical insights to managers and HR professionals on the benefits of implementing such working models in their companies as well as an in-depth understanding of how to leverage such benefits to increase employees' well-being and IOP. On the other said, it also promoted an understanding of the potential barriers that these work settings may arise, equipping them with highly valued information to make anticipated plans and strategies to overcome and mitigate such challenges and risks.

Secondly, this study has also allowed expanding existing knowledge on how remote work has impacted HRM practices, shedding light on employees' perceptions of the differences felt for the nine practices studied as well as providing insights on employees' suggestions to overcome challenges and ensure better implementation of such practices in remote and hybrid working models.

Finally, this research allowed to understand which HRM practices are mostly valued by employees while working remotely, allowing organizations, managers and HR professionals to understand the most crucial needs of employees and create strategies to promote well-being at work by potentializing such practices. Moreover, for companies with limited budgets and financial restrictions, such insights can provide companies and organizations with strategic insights on which HRM practices to prioritize, allowing quick wins that can leverage employees' well-being as well as IOP.

Briefly, this study has empowered business stakeholders so that they are capable of taking informed decisions on their business, transforming their companies into high-performing organizations and creating a competitive advantage in the face of their competitors. With that in mind and to the words of Oxford Economics (2020, p. 2), "Remote work will be a talent magnet in coming years—and must be viewed as a long-term investment."

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## Annexes

### Annexe A – Research Participants Sociodemographic Data

Categories		N	%
Gender	Female	13	52
	Male	12	48
	Other	0	0
Age (generation)	Gen Z (1997-2012)	10	40
	Millennials (1981 – 1996)	15	60
	Gen X (1965 – 1980)	0	0
	Boomers (1946 – 1964)	0	0
Education Level	High School	0	0
	Bachelor	11	44
	Post-Graduation	4	16
	Master	10	40
	PhD	0	0
	Other	0	0
Nationality	Portuguese	22	88
	Italian	2	8
	Romanian	1	4
Residence	Lisbon (PT)	18	72
	Braga (PT)	2	8
	Porto (PT)	1	4
	Aveiro (PT)	1	4
	Santarém (PT)	1	4
	Milan (BE)	1	4
	Milan (IT)	1	4
Companie's Sector of Activity	Consulting Services	25	100
Company's Size	< 10 employees	2	8
	10 - 49 employees	12	48
	50 – 250 employees	1	4
	> 250 employees	10	40

Job Function	Trainee Consultant	2	8
	Business Analyst	2	8
	Junior Consultant	1	4
	Associate Consultant	4	16
	Consultant	14	56
	Senior Consultant	2	8
Leadership Role	Yes	0	0
	No	25	0
Type of Contract	Fixed-term contract	7	28
	Contract of employment of unspecified duration	0	0
	Contract of employment of indefinite duration	18	72
	Short-term duration contract of employment	0	0
	Part-time contract of employment	0	0
	Temporary work	0	0
Previous Experience with Remote Work (before the COVID-19 pandemic)	Yes	5	20
	No	20	80
Days, per week, working remotely (in the last 12 months)	1 day per week	0	0
	2 days per week	2	8
	3 days per week	6	24
	4 days per week	5	20
	5 days per week	12	48
Days, per week, working remotely (nowadays)	1 day per week	3	12
	2 days per week	3	12
	3 days per week	4	16
	4 days per week	6	24
	5 days per week	9	36
Place while working remotely	Home	25	100
	Co-working spaces	0	0
	Others	0	0

Table 14 – Research Participants Sociodemographic Data

## **Annexe B – Interview Protocol**

Good morning/ good afternoon. First, thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. My name is Natacha, and I will be guiding our interview.

As I mentioned to you before, the purpose of this interview is to understand the role HRM practices play in employees' well-being while working remotely. Let me give you an outline of what is going to happen. The interview will take between 60 to 90 minutes, and during that time I will ask you a series of questions. It is important to highlight that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. I am doing interviews like these to hear things from your perspective, so I would like to ask you to be as honest as possible.

Do you have any questions or comments so far?

*[If audio recording accepted]* As agreed by you in the information consent I will audio record this interview. I will start recording now. Please remember the information you will share will only be used for the purpose of this research and everything you will say will be kept confidential.

*[If audio recording not accepted]* As you did not agree before to audio recording the interview, I will take notes during our interview. Please remember the information you will share will only be used for the purpose of this research and everything you will say will be kept confidential.

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

Then let's get started! If at any point you need to take a break or stop the interview, please let me know and we can work around it.

### **[Section 1 – “About the Participant”]**

To start, I would like to hear a little bit about yourself.

1. Can you briefly explain to me what you do during a typical workday?
  - *[If not mentioned]* What do your main tasks look like?

### **[Section 2 – “Well-Being and Remote Work”]**

Thank you for that context. Now, let me ask you about your experience while working remotely.

*[Hedonic Well-Being]*

2. To start, how do you feel while working remotely?
3. Which emotions do you experience when you are working remotely?
  - *[If not mentioned]* What are you thinking when you say [emotion X]? Can you give me some examples of when you felt [emotion Y]?



*[Eudaimonic Well-Being]*

4. How engaged do you feel with your work while working remotely?
  - *[If not mentioned]* Is it different from what you feel when you are at the office?
5. How would you describe your sense of purpose and meaning with the organization while working remotely?
  - *[If not mentioned]* Is it different from what you feel when you are at the office?

*[Social Well-Being]*

6. Could you please describe the relationship between you and your co-workers while working remotely?
  - *[If not mentioned]* Do you think those relationships could be different if you were every day at the office?
7. What about the relationship between you and your supervisor?

**[Section 3 – “HRM Practices and Remote Work”]**

*[Ability-enhancing Practices]*

Thank you so much for your answers. You are doing great. I will now share my screen with you so you can see a list of HRM practices that I would like to discuss. If at any point you have any doubts about what a specific practice means, please let me know, and I will be happy to explain it to you. To start, I would like to focus on the first set of practices: recruitment and selection and training and development.

8. How do you experience these practices while working remotely?
  - *[If not mentioned]* Were you recruited remotely? If yes, how did you feel about that experience being remote? If not, did you experience any remote recruitment of a member of your team? How would you describe that experience remotely? Do you feel any differences compared to an on-site recruitment process?
  - *[If not mentioned]* How does your organization foster your skills development and learning while working remotely? Do you feel any differences compared to when you are at the office?
9. What do you think your company could do to improve the way these practices are being implemented remotely?

*[Motivation-enhancing Practices]*

Great! Now, let's focus on another set of practices. In this case, we are going to focus on: performance management, compensation and benefits, promotion possibilities and job security.

10. How do you experience these practices while working remotely?

- *[If not mentioned]* In which way does your organization manage your performance while working remotely? How is it different from when you are in the office?
- *[If not mentioned]* While working remotely, are your compensations and benefits managed in the same way? What are the differences to when you are at the office?
- *[If not mentioned]* In what regards to promotion possibilities, how do you perceive that while working remotely? Are there any differences from when you are at the office?
- *[If not mentioned]* What about job security, how do you perceive that while working remotely? What are the differences to when you are at the office?

11. What do you think your company could do to improve the way these practices are being implemented remotely?

*[Opportunity-enhancing Practices]*

Thank you. Lastly, I would like to focus on a final set of practices: flexible job design, employee involvement and participation and transparency and information sharing.

12. How do you experience these practices while working remotely?

- *[If not mentioned]* How would you describe the flexibility of your job design when you are working remotely (e.g. hours, work location, way work is carried, autonomy)? Which differences do you feel from when you are in the office?
- *[If not mentioned]* Which opportunities does your organization give you to be involved and share your ideas when working remotely? Are there any differences from when you are at the office?
- *[If not mentioned]* How would you describe your company's transparency and information sharing when working remotely? What are the differences to when you are at the office?

13. What do you think your company could do to improve the way these practices are implemented remotely?

**[Section 4 – “HRM Practices, Well-Being and Remote Work”]**

Thank you so much for your insights so far. We are almost over. Now, I would like to talk a little bit about how these HRM practices play a role in your well-being while working remotely.

14. Looking now at the whole set of practices could you highlight those that are more important to your well-being, specifically when you are working remotely?

- *[If not mentioned]* Why did you choose those practices?

- *[If not mentioned]* How does [practice X] influences your well-being? Can you give some examples?

15. Besides these practices, there are any other, HR practices or others, that you believe can positively influence your well-being while working remotely?

- *[If not mentioned]* How do you think they can positively influence your well-being?

From my side, I have covered all questions. Would you like to add any additional information or make any comments?

Great! Thank you so much for your help and collaboration.

Let me add some final notes. Following this interview, I will send you a quick sociodemographic data sheet for you to fill in. Please note that it is not mandatory for you to fill it in, however, I would appreciate it if you did as this is an essential part of the overall characterization of the sample. Additionally, if you have an interest in following my research, feel free to let me know and I will be happy to send you the results as soon as they are available.

Again, thank you so much for your time and availability. It was a pleasure. I wish you an amazing day.

## Annexe C – Sociodemographic Data Sheet

Following up the interview, it would be important to collect some of your sociodemographic information. Please note that it is not mandatory for you to fill this, however we would appreciate if you did as this is an essential part of the overall characterization of the sample. Please remind that all the information shared is confidential and will exclusively be used for the purpose of this research.

Please read the items below carefully and answer the questions. For questions with multiple options please choose only one answer.

1. With which gender do you identify the most with?
  - Female
  - Male
  - Other
2. In which generational group do you fall into?
  - Gen Z (1997-2012)
  - Millennials (1981 – 1996)
  - Gen X (1965 – 1980)
  - Boomers (1946 – 1964)
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - High School
  - Bachelor
  - Post-graduation
  - Master
  - PhD
  - Other. Which?
4. What is your nationality?
5. In which city do you currently live?
6. What is your company's main area of activity?
7. How many employees does your company have?

< 10 employees

10-49

50-250 employees

> 250 employees

8. What is the title of your job?

9. Is this a leadership position?

Yes

No

10. Which type of contract do you hold?

Fixed-term contract

Contract of employment of unspecified duration

Contract of employment of indefinite duration

Short duration contract of employment

Part-time contract of employment

Temporary work

Provision of services

11. Did you experience remote work before the pandemic?

Yes

No

12. How often, on average, have you worked remotely in the last 12 months?

1 day per week

2 days per week

3 days per week

4 days per week

5 days per week

13. Nowadays, on average, what proportion of the workweek do you spend working remotely?

- 1 day per week
- 2 days per week
- 3 days per week
- 4 days per week
- 5 days per week

14. When you work remotely where do you do it most of the times?

- Home
- Co-working spaces
- Others. Which?

## Annexe D – Pre-defined Codebook

### 1. Well-Being and Remote-Work

#### 1.1. Benefits of remote work for employees' well-being

1.1.1. Higher commitment levels (Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Golden, 2006; Golden & Eddleston, 2020; Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Martin & MacDonnell, 2012)

1.1.2. Healthier habits (Charalampous et al., 2022)

1.1.3. Higher productivity/focus levels (Charalampous et al., 2022; Bloom et al., 2015; Boell et al., 2016; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Hill et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 2008; Noonan & Glass, 2012; Popovici & Popovici, 2020)

1.1.4. Better work-life balance (Charalampous et al., 2022)

1.1.5. Positive affect at work (Charalampous et al., 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012)

#### 1.2. Challenges of remote work for employees' well-being

1.2.1. Unhealthier habits (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013)

1.2.2. Blur between work and personal life (Charalampous et al., 2022; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; George et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011)

1.2.3. Tendency to work more hours (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Noonan & Glass, 2012)

1.2.4. Less informal learning experiences (BCG, 2020a; Madsen, 2011)

1.2.5. Negative affect at work (Charalampous et al., 2022)

1.2.6. Difficulties reaching out to colleagues/supervisors (Dambrin, 2004; Madsen, 2011; Wang et al., 2021)

1.2.7. Less contact with people (Charalampous et al., 2022; Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Morganson et al., 2010; Tietze & Musson, 2010; Wang et al., 2021)

1.2.8. Limited social networks (Grant et al., 2013; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012)

1.2.9. Difficulties bonding/building relationships (Grant et al., 2013; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021; Madsen, 2011; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012)

### 2. HRM Practices and Remote Work

#### 2.1. Recruitment and Selection

##### 2.1.1. Positive differences identified

2.1.1.1. Easier logistic wise (European Commission, 2021; SHRM, 2021)

- 2.1.2. Negative differences identified
  - 2.1.2.1. Lower sense of initial engagement/motivation (BCG, 2020a)
  - 2.1.2.2. Difficulties perceiving certain aspects (University of Oxford, 2022)
  - 2.1.2.3. Difficulties connecting with the interviewer (University of Oxford, 2022)
- 2.1.3. No differences identified
- 2.1.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
  - 2.1.4.1. Virtual informal on-boarding sessions (BCG, 2020a)
- 2.2. Training and Development
  - 2.2.1. Positive differences identified
    - 2.2.1.1. Higher productivity/focus levels (Boell et al., 2016 and Charalampous et al., 2022)
  - 2.2.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.2.2.1. Less informal training opportunities (BCG, 2020a; Madsen, 2011)
  - 2.2.3. No differences identified
  - 2.2.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
    - 2.2.4.1. Increase regular touchpoints for coaching and development (BCG, 2020a)
- 2.3. Performance Management
  - 2.3.1. Positive differences identified
  - 2.3.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.3.2.1. Difficulties evaluating performance (BCG, 2020a)
  - 2.3.3. No differences identified
  - 2.3.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
    - 2.3.4.1. Rethink/clarify the evaluation criteria (BCG, 2020a)
- 2.4. Compensation and Benefits
  - 2.4.1. Positive differences identified
  - 2.4.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.4.2.1. Difficulties measuring performance (BCG, 2020a)
  - 2.4.3. No differences identified
  - 2.4.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
    - 2.4.4.1. Rethink/clarify the criteria (BCG, 2020a)
- 2.5. Promotion Possibilities
  - 2.5.1. Positive differences identified
  - 2.5.2. Negative differences identified



- 2.5.2.1. Lower visibility toward employees' work (Bloom et al., 2015; Charalampous et al., 2022; Madsen, 2011; McDonald et al., 2008; Redman et al., 2009; Sewell & Taskin, 2015)
  - 2.5.3. No differences identified
  - 2.5.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
    - 2.5.4.1. Rethink/clarify the criteria (BCG, 2020a)
- 2.6. Job Security
  - 2.6.1. Positive differences identified
  - 2.6.2. Negative differences identified
  - 2.6.3. No differences identified
  - 2.6.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
- 2.7. Flexible Job Design
  - 2.7.1. Positive differences identified
    - 2.7.1.1. Higher flexibility/freedom levels (Mercer, 2020; SHRM, 2021)
  - 2.7.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.7.2.1. Tendency to work longer hours (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2013; Madsen, 2011; Noonan & Glass, 2012)
  - 2.7.3. No differences identified
  - 2.7.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
- 2.8. Employee Involvement and Participation
  - 2.8.1. Positive differences identified
    - 2.8.1.1. Creation of specific moments (Deloitte Insights, 2020)
  - 2.8.2. Negative differences identified
  - 2.8.3. No differences identified
  - 2.8.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
- 2.9. Transparency and Information Sharing
  - 2.9.1. Positive differences identified
  - 2.9.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.9.2.1. Less access to information (Madsen, 2011)
  - 2.9.3. No differences identified
  - 2.9.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
- 3. HRM Practices, Well-Being and Remote Work
  - 3.1. Most highlighted HRM practices influencing well-being
    - 3.1.1. Recruitment and Selection
    - 3.1.2. Training and Development

- 3.1.3. Performance Management
- 3.1.4. Compensation and Benefits
- 3.1.5. Promotion Possibilities
- 3.1.6. Job Security
- 3.1.7. Flexible Job Design
- 3.1.8. Employee Involvement and Participation
- 3.1.9. Transparency and Information Sharing
- 3.2. Other practices influencing well-being

## Annexe E – Final Codebook

1. Well-Being and Remote-Work
  - 1.1. Benefits of remote work for employees' well-being
    - 1.1.1. Healthier habits
    - 1.1.2. Higher productivity/focus levels
    - 1.1.3. Better work-life balance
    - 1.1.4. Positive affect at work
    - 1.1.5. *Higher engagement with work*
  - 1.2. Challenges of remote work for employees' well-being
    - 1.2.1. Blur between work and personal life
    - 1.2.2. Tendency to work more hours
    - 1.2.3. Less informal learning experiences
    - 1.2.4. Negative affect at work
    - 1.2.5. Difficulties reaching out to colleagues/supervisors
    - 1.2.6. Less contact with people
    - 1.2.7. Limited social networks
    - 1.2.8. Difficulties bonding/building relationships
    - 1.2.9. *Difficulties establishing a more personal connection*
    - 1.2.10. *Less commitment to work beyond what is asked*
    - 1.2.11. *Lower levels of productivity/focus*
    - 1.2.12. *Lower engagement with work*
    - 1.2.13. *Lower sense of purpose and meaning with the organization*
2. HRM Practices and Remote Work
  - 2.1. Recruitment and Selection
    - 2.1.1. Positive differences identified
      - 2.1.1.1. Easier logistic wise
      - 2.1.1.2. *Lower levels of stress/anxiety*
    - 2.1.2. Negative differences identified
      - 2.1.2.1. Lower sense of initial engagement/motivation
      - 2.1.2.2. Difficulties perceiving certain aspects
      - 2.1.2.3. Difficulties connecting with the interviewer
      - 2.1.2.4. *Tendency to limit the process*
      - 2.1.2.5. *Higher levels of stress/anxiety*
    - 2.1.3. No differences identified

#### 2.1.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM

- 2.1.4.1. *Include in-person moments*
- 2.1.4.2. *Provide more information about the company*
- 2.1.4.3. *Increase the number of interactions with supervisors/team colleagues*
- 2.1.4.4. *Rethink the recruitment process*

#### 2.2. Training and Development

##### 2.2.1. Positive differences identified

- 2.2.1.1. *Higher productivity/focus levels*
- 2.2.1.2. *Higher number of opportunities*

##### 2.2.2. Negative differences identified

- 2.2.2.1. *Less informal training opportunities*
- 2.2.2.2. *Lower training quality*
- 2.2.2.3. *Difficulties defining priorities*
- 2.2.2.4. *Difficulties perceiving training needs*
- 2.2.2.5. *Lower productivity/focus levels*
- 2.2.2.6. *Lack of opportunities to interact/exchange ideas*

##### 2.2.3. No differences identified

##### 2.2.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM

- 2.2.4.1. *Define clear training plans*
- 2.2.4.2. *Include in-person moments*
- 2.2.4.3. *Include final evaluation moments*
- 2.2.4.4. *Create training groups*
- 2.2.4.5. *Make trainings interactive/dynamic*
- 2.2.4.6. *Invest more in training*
- 2.2.4.7. *Make people accountable for their development*
- 2.2.4.8. *Reduce duration of trainings*
- 2.2.4.9. *Have everyone remote*
- 2.2.4.10. *Have fewer people per session*
- 2.2.4.11. *Understand employees needs*

#### 2.3. Performance Management

##### 2.3.1. Positive differences identified

- 2.3.1.1. *Easier/quicker to set up the feedback process*

##### 2.3.2. Negative differences identified

- 2.3.2.1. *Difficulties evaluating performance*
- 2.3.2.2. *Higher transactional feedback*

- 2.3.2.3. *Fewer feedback moments*
- 2.3.3. No differences identified
- 2.3.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
  - 2.3.4.1. Rethink/clarify the evaluation criteria
  - 2.3.4.2. *Include more moments for feedback*
  - 2.3.4.3. *Ensure effective/engaging ways for feedback*
  - 2.3.4.4. *Include in-person moments*
  - 2.3.4.5. *Higher communication between managers*
- 2.4. Compensation and Benefits
  - 2.4.1. Positive differences identified
    - 2.4.1.1. *Higher number of incentives*
    - 2.4.1.2. *Higher adaption to employees' working model/needs*
  - 2.4.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.4.2.1. Difficulties measuring performance
  - 2.4.3. No differences identified
  - 2.4.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
    - 2.4.4.1. Rethink/clarify the criteria
    - 2.4.4.2. *Personalize benefits to working models/needs*
    - 2.4.4.3. *Higher number of incentives*
- 2.5. Promotion Possibilities
  - 2.5.1. Positive differences identified
  - 2.5.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.5.2.1. Lower visibility toward employees' work
  - 2.5.3. No differences identified
  - 2.5.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
    - 2.5.4.1. Rethink/clarify the criteria
    - 2.5.4.2. *Include in-person moments*
    - 2.5.4.3. *Include regular touchpoints*
- 2.6. Job Security
  - 2.6.1. Positive differences identified
  - 2.6.2. Negative differences identified
    - 2.6.2.1. *Difficulties perceiving job security*
  - 2.6.3. No differences identified
  - 2.6.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM
    - 2.6.4.1. *Create moments to update employees on such topics*

## 2.7. Flexible Job Design

### 2.7.1. Positive differences identified

2.7.1.1. Higher flexibility/freedom levels

### 2.7.2. Negative differences identified

2.7.2.1. Tendency to work longer hours

2.7.2.2. *Lower trust levels*

### 2.7.3. No differences identified

### 2.7.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM

2.7.4.1. *Standardize the process*

2.7.4.2. *Provide a greater sense of trust*

2.7.4.3. *Match people with the same working habits*

2.7.4.4. *Allow a greater degree of flexibility/freedom*

2.7.4.5. *Create mechanisms to avoid working too many hours*

## 2.8. Employee Involvement and Participation

### 2.8.1. Positive differences identified

2.8.1.1. Creation of specific moments

### 2.8.2. Negative differences identified

2.8.2.1. *Lower number of opportunities*

### 2.8.3. No differences identified

### 2.8.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM

2.8.4.1. *Create strategies to promote everyone's involvement and participation*

2.8.4.2. *Give priority to those moments*

2.8.4.3. *Create smaller forums*

2.8.4.4. *Increase the number of opportunities*

## 2.9. Transparency and Information Sharing

### 2.9.1. Positive differences identified

2.9.1.1. *Higher number of information available*

2.9.1.2. *More standardized process*

### 2.9.2. Negative differences identified

2.9.2.1. Less access to information

### 2.9.3. No differences identified

### 2.9.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM

2.9.4.1. *Standardize the process*

2.9.4.2. *Create more channels for information sharing*

## 3. HRM Practices, Well-Being and Remote Work

3.1. Most highlighted HRM practices influencing well-being

3.1.1. Recruitment and Selection

3.1.2. Training and Development

3.1.3. Performance Management

3.1.4. Compensation and Benefits

3.1.5. Promotion Possibilities

3.1.6. Job Security

3.1.7. Flexible Job Design

3.1.8. Employee Involvement and Participation

3.1.9. Transparency and Information Sharing

3.2. Other practices influencing well-being

*3.2.1. Social Interaction/Teambuildings*

*3.2.2. Wellness/Health*

*3.2.3. Work Boundaries*

*3.2.4. Recognition/Appreciation*

## Annexe F – Codebook Dictionary

### 1. Well-Being and Remote-Work

- 1.1. **Benefits of remote work for employees' well-being:** coded when the participant mentions a positive impact of remote work on his/her well-being
  - 1.1.1. **Healthier habits:** healthier habits and/or routines that promote health and wellness
  - 1.1.2. **Higher productivity/focus levels:** higher capacity to be more efficient at work by registering lower levels of distractions and higher concentration levels
  - 1.1.3. **Better work-life balance:** higher balance between professional and personal life
  - 1.1.4. **Positive affect at work:** experience of positive emotions/moods at work
  - 1.1.5. **Higher engagement with work:** higher enthusiasm and dedication towards work
- 1.2. **Challenges of remote work for employees' well-being:** coded when the participant mentions a negative impact of remote work on his/her well-being
  - 1.2.1. **Blur between work and personal life:** blurred line between work and professional life, negatively impacting the balance between both parts
  - 1.2.2. **Tendency to work more hours:** tendency to work a higher number of hours per day
  - 1.2.3. **Less informal learning experiences:** lower number of informal opportunities to learn from colleagues/managers
  - 1.2.4. **Negative affect at work:** experience of negative emotions/moods at work
  - 1.2.5. **Difficulties reaching out to colleagues/supervisors:** higher number of barriers that influence the capacity to reach out to colleagues/supervisors
  - 1.2.6. **Less contact with people:** less communication with colleagues/managers
  - 1.2.7. **Limited social networks:** social networks are restricted to the people that they are working directly with
  - 1.2.8. **Difficulties bonding/building relationships:** more difficulties creating, maintaining, and retaining relationships at work leading to weaker bounds with people
  - 1.2.9. **Difficulties establishing a more personal connection:** more difficulties establishing a personal bond with colleagues/supervisors as relationships are purely work-oriented
  - 1.2.10. **Less commitment to work beyond what is asked:** less will and desire to go beyond the normal tasks/commitment of his/her job
  - 1.2.11. **Lower levels of productivity/focus:** lower capacity to be more efficient at work by registering higher levels of distractions and lower concentration levels
  - 1.2.12. **Lower engagement with work:** lower enthusiasm and dedication towards work
  - 1.2.13. **Lower sense of purpose and meaning with the organization:** lower capacity to live or feel the purpose and meaning of his/her job and role in the organization



## 2. HRM Practices and Remote Work

**2.1. Recruitment and Selection:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work during his/her recruitment and selection process

**2.1.1. Positive differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a positive difference felt between the remote versus office setting

**2.1.1.1. Easier logistic wise:** lower time and geographic constraints associated with the process

**2.1.1.2. Lower levels of stress/anxiety:** lower pressure or tension associated with the process

**2.1.2. Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting

**2.1.2.1. Lower sense of initial engagement/motivation:** lower sense of initial commitment and willingness to work at the company

**2.1.2.2. Difficulties perceiving certain aspects:** more difficulties perceiving verbal and non-verbal cues during the interview process

**2.1.2.3. Difficulties connecting with the interviewer:** more difficulties building a rapport with the interviewer during the interview process

**2.1.2.4. Tendency to limit the process:** tendency from companies to limit the recruitment process in terms of time and competencies being assessed

**2.1.2.5. Higher levels of stress/anxiety:** higher pressure or tension associated with the process

**2.1.3. No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting

**2.1.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings

**2.1.4.1. Include in-person moments:** inclusion of physical interactions during the process

**2.1.4.2. Provide more information about the company:** increase the number of information shared about the company

**2.1.4.3. Increase the number of interactions with supervisors/team colleagues:** higher number of interactions with the purpose with supervisors/team colleagues

**2.1.4.4. Rethink the recruitment process:** consider rethinking the recruitment and selection process completely instead of adapting the standard process

**2.2. Training and Development:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work on his/her training and development

- 2.2.1. Positive differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a positive difference felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.2.1.1. Higher productivity/focus levels:** higher capacity to be more efficient at training sessions by registering lower levels of distractions and higher concentration levels
  - 2.2.1.2. Higher number of opportunities:** higher number of opportunities to learn available
- 2.2.2. Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.2.2.1. Less informal training opportunities:** lower number of informal opportunities to learn from colleagues/managers
  - 2.2.2.2. Lower training quality:** lower quality of the training sessions attended
  - 2.2.2.3. Difficulties defining priorities:** more difficulties in defining training priorities due to the high number of opportunities available
  - 2.2.2.4. Difficulties perceiving training needs:** more difficulties felt from supervisors/managers in what regards employees' training needs
  - 2.2.2.5. Lower productivity/focus levels:** lower capacity to be more efficient at training sessions by registering higher levels of distractions and lower concentration levels
  - 2.2.2.6. Lack of opportunities to interact/exchange ideas:** smaller number of opportunities available to communicate and interact as well as to exchange training ideas with training colleagues
- 2.2.3. No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
- 2.2.4. Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings
  - 2.2.4.1. Define clear training plans:** definition of training plans, with clear prioritization of the training needs
  - 2.2.4.2. Include in-person moments:** inclusion of physical interactions during the process
  - 2.2.4.3. Include final evaluation moments:** inclusion of evaluation moments after the training sessions as a form to assess knowledge and skills
  - 2.2.4.4. Create training groups:** creation of training groups, especially in e-learning moments, to increase the number of opportunities to interact/exchange ideas

- 2.2.4.5. **Make trainings interactive/dynamic:** make training sessions to be less expositive and less engagement
  - 2.2.4.6. **Invest more in training:** increase the number of training opportunities made available by the company
  - 2.2.4.7. **Make people accountable for their development:** higher accountability from employees to define their own development needs and plans
  - 2.2.4.8. **Reduce duration of trainings:** reduction of the number of hours per training session
  - 2.2.4.9. **Have everyone remote:** guarantee that everyone is attending in the same working model to avoid physical and remote attendees
  - 2.2.4.10. **Have fewer people per session:** reduce the number of people attending per training session
  - 2.2.4.11. **Understand employees' needs:** need for a higher concern from managers to understand training needs
- 2.3. Performance Management:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work on his/her performance management
- 2.3.1. **Positive differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a positive difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.3.1.1. **Easier/quicker to set up the feedback process:** lower time and availability constraints when setting up feedback sessions
  - 2.3.2. **Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.3.2.1. **Difficulties evaluating performance:** more difficulties in evaluating employees' work and performance due to a higher visibility toward work outputs and a lower visibility towards work inputs
    - 2.3.2.2. **Higher transactional feedback:** lower transformational feedback sessions, blocking opportunities to hold a more inspirational, in-depth and rich conversation
    - 2.3.2.3. **Fewer feedback moments:** smaller number of feedback sessions register during a specific time frame
  - 2.3.3. **No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.3.4. **Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings
    - 2.3.4.1. **Rethink/clarify the evaluation criteria:** need from the company side to rethink/clarify evaluation of performance metrics

- 2.3.4.2. **Include more moments for feedback:** inclusion of regular touchpoints focused on employees' development
- 2.3.4.3. **Ensure effective/engaging ways for feedback:** need from managers/supervisors to find more effective/engaging ways to provide feedback during feedback sessions
- 2.3.4.4. **Include in-person moments:** inclusion of physical interactions during the process
- 2.3.4.5. **Higher communication between managers:** higher communication touchpoints between managers to increase visibility towards employees' work
- 2.4. **Compensation and Benefits:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work on his/her compensation and benefits
  - 2.4.1. **Positive differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a positive difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.4.1.1. **Higher number of incentives:** increase in the number of incentives made available for remote workers
    - 2.4.1.2. **Higher adaption to employees' working model/needs:** higher adaption of compensation and benefits packages to employees' working model/needs
  - 2.4.2. **Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.4.2.1. **Difficulties measuring performance:** more difficulties in evaluating employees' work and performance due to a higher visibility towards work outputs and a lower visibility towards work inputs
  - 2.4.3. **No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.4.4. **Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings
    - 2.4.4.1. **Rethink/clarify the criteria:** need from the company side to rethink/clarify the raising criteria
    - 2.4.4.2. **Personalize benefits to working models/needs:** higher personalization is needed in what regards to adapting the compensation and benefits packages to employees' working model/needs
    - 2.4.4.3. **Higher number of incentives:** increase in the number of incentives made available for remote workers
- 2.5. **Promotion Possibilities:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work on his/her promotion possibilities

- 2.5.1. **Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.5.1.1. **Lower visibility toward employees' work:** lower visibility towards employees' work employees work leading to less opportunities for career advancement
- 2.5.2. **No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
- 2.5.3. **Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings
  - 2.5.3.1. **Rethink/clarify the criteria:** need from the company side to rethink/clarify the promotion criteria
  - 2.5.3.2. **Include in-person moments:** inclusion of physical interactions during the process
  - 2.5.3.3. **Include regular touchpoints:** inclusion of regular moments for communication between managers and employees as a way to increase visibility towards work
- 2.6. **Job Security:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work on his/her job security
  - 2.6.1. **Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.6.1.1. **Difficulties perceiving job security:** higher isolation from the company reality negatively impact perceptions of job security
  - 2.6.2. **No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.6.3. **Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings
    - 2.6.3.1. **Create moments to update employees on such topics:** creation of regular touchpoints while employees' to talk about company reality and provide a greater sense of security
- 2.7. **Flexible Job Design:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work in his/her flexible job design
  - 2.7.1. **Positive differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a positive difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.7.1.1. **Higher flexibility/freedom levels:** higher flexibility/freedom levels either in the place of work, schedule of work or work autonomy
  - 2.7.2. **Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting

- 2.7.2.1. **Tendency to work longer hours:** tendency to work a higher number of hours per day
- 2.7.2.2. **Lower trust levels:** lower confidence levels in employees' work and efforts from managers/supervisors
- 2.7.3. **No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
- 2.7.4. **Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings
  - 2.7.4.1. **Standardize the process:** higher standardization of the process, ensuring that all company employees follow the same guidelines and rules
  - 2.7.4.2. **Provide a greater sense of trust:** higher need from managers to trust and show confidence in employees' work
  - 2.7.4.3. **Match people with the same working habits:** match employees with the same working schedules as a way of boosting team collaboration
  - 2.7.4.4. **Allow a greater degree of flexibility/freedom:** need for a greater degree of flexibility/freedom in what regards work location, schedule and work autonomy
  - 2.7.4.5. **Create mechanisms to avoid working too many hours**
- 2.8. **Employee Involvement and Participation:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work on opportunities to be involved and participate within the company
  - 2.8.1. **Positive differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a positive difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.8.1.1. **Creation of specific moments:** creation of specific moments for employee involvement and participation
  - 2.8.2. **Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.8.2.1. **Lower number of opportunities:** smaller numbers of opportunities made available from the company
  - 2.8.3. **No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.8.4. **Suggestions for implementation in RHWM:** coded when the participant gives a specific suggestion for better implementation of the practice in virtual work settings
    - 2.8.4.1. **Create strategies to promote everyone's involvement and participation:** creation of strategies to promote all company employees' participation, avoiding involvement and participation only from a very restricted set of people

- 2.8.4.2. **Give priority to those moments:** need from managers to place employee participation and involvement on top of their agendas, avoiding cancelling or rescheduling such moments
  - 2.8.4.3. **Create smaller forums:** creation of moments with fewer people as a way of improving intimacy and promoting a greater level of employee involvement and participation
  - 2.8.4.4. **Increase the number of opportunities:** increase the number of moments for employee involvement and participation
- 2.9. Transparency and Information Sharing:** coded when the participant talks about the impact of remote work on the ability to have access to information from the company
- 2.9.1. **Positive differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a positive difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.9.1.1. **Higher number of information available:** higher number of information provided and made available by the company
    - 2.9.1.2. **More standardized process:** higher standardization of the process, with regular and frequent transparency and information sharing moment
  - 2.9.2. **Negative differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions a negative difference felt between the remote versus office setting
    - 2.9.2.1. **Less access to information:** fewer number of opportunities available to access information, formally and informally
  - 2.9.3. **No differences identified:** coded when the participant mentions no differences felt between the remote versus office setting
  - 2.9.4. **Suggestions for implementation in RHWM**
    - 2.9.4.1. **Standardize the process:** higher standardization of the process, with regular and frequent transparency and information sharing moments
    - 2.9.4.2. **Create more channels for information sharing:** creation of more channels to promote transparency and information sharing between the company and employees
- 3. HRM Practices, Well-Being and Remote Work:** coded when the participant mentions which and how HRM practices influence his/her well-being while working remotely
- 3.1. **Most highlighted HRM practices influencing well-being:** coded when the participants highlight a specific practice from the practices being studied as an important role in his/her well-being while working remotely
    - 3.1.1. **Training and Development:** training and development highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely

- 3.1.2. Performance Management:** performance management highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely
- 3.1.3. Compensation and Benefits:** compensation and benefits highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely
- 3.1.4. Promotion Possibilities:** promotion possibilities highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely
- 3.1.5. Job Security:** job security highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely
- 3.1.6. Flexible Job Design:** flexible job design highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely
- 3.1.7. Employee Involvement and Participation:** employee involvement and participation highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely
- 3.1.8. Transparency and Information Sharing:** transparency and information sharing highlighted as an important practice for employees' well-being when working remotely
- 3.2. Other practices influencing well-being:** coded when the participants highlight other practices outside the practices being studied that plays an important role in his/her well-being while working remotely
  - 3.2.1. Social Interaction/Teambuildings:** interactions/events organized by the company to promote relationship building
  - 3.2.2. Wellness/Health:** wellness/health programs made available by the company as a way of promoting both physical and mental well-being
  - 3.2.3. Work Boundaries:** rules or guidelines defined by the company as a way to set a well-defined line between professional and personal life
  - 3.2.4. Recognition/Appreciation:** short moments/events organized by the company to recognize and appreciate employees' work as well as to celebrate small victories



## Annexe G – Informed Consent

This study is part of a master's dissertation being carried out at ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa by Natacha Lopes (nblsa@iscte-iul.pt) and under the supervision of Professor Sílvia Agostinho da Silva. You may contact the research team for any question or comment.

The main objective of the study is to understand, through employees' perception, the role between HRM practices and well-being while working remotely. Therefore, your valuable participation, should consist of your experience and perspective sharing during an interview.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and you are free to choose to participate or not. If you choose to participate, you may decide otherwise at any time without having to provide any justification. In addition to this, participation is also anonymous and confidential. This means that the records of the interview (transcript or notes) will not include any data that identifies you and/or the organization in which you work. Access to this information is reserved to the research team. Note that at no time during the study you need to identify yourself.

In view of the above information, please state whether you agree to participate in the study or not.

Agree     Not Agree

Furthermore, in order to make a more detailed and reliable analysis of your comments, we would like to record the interview. Please state whether you agree or not, in audio recording your interview. If you do not agree with that, only notes will be taken during that time.

Agree     Not Agree

Name:

Signature:

Date: