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Emerging from COVID: Online work and its implications for the worker performance in Kosovo

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Abstract

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we live and work. Employers in Kosovo shifted their operations to a new and unfamiliar form of work for them and their workers and found new ways for their organizations to survive and strive in unexplored virtual environments. This study investigates the existing practices of remote work, the changing dynamics in remote environments, the opportunities and challenges and the implications for worker performance. To do so, this study analyzes primary quantitative and qualitative data which were collected in the time period of March-December 2020. The quantitative data was collected from a survey distributed online to workers in Kosovo who currently work or have worked remotely (n=513), whereas qualitative data was gathered through semi structured interviews with employers. This study explores the factors that impact worker performance in Kosovo and finds strong correlation with worker demographics, industry, task type, work environment at home and employer's expectations. The findings from the study support the hypothesis that worker performance differs with demographics and industries. Moreover, the findings suggest that worker performance is the same or increases with remote work for the majority of workers in Kosovo. Lastly, the study gives useful insights and recommendations for employers and workers on how to operate post-pandemic and how to maximize their performance as remote work continues to be a prevalent practice and is predicted to be permanent. This study contributes to the emerging literature regarding remote work practices in Kosovo, worker performance and the impact of COVID-19 on workers.

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List of Abbreviations

WHO - World Health Organization

IMF - International Monetary Fund

WFH - Work from Home

HR - Human Resources

CTO - Chief Technology Officer

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

ONS - Office for National Statistics

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

WoW - Women in Online Work

KSA - Kosovo Statistics Agency

Statement of the problem

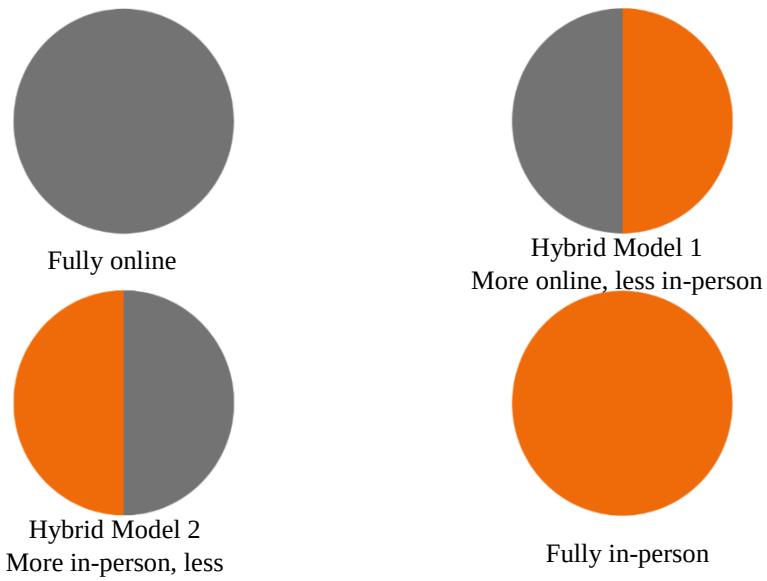
As the world is facing uncertainties and public health problems because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a big shock in the global economy especially in workplace practices. The disruptions in the market have specifically affected employers' outcomes, expectations, and workers' behavior (*COVID-19: Implications for business,* 2020). Over the months, employers have reorganized their operations through online work as an alternative, whereas others have completely closed. The biggest impacts of online work are seen in changing work practices and behaviors and emerging of new trends in labor management. These changes include communication between employers and employees, location away from the office, change in working hours, virtual teamwork, employee autonomy, and a rise in technology use (Elshaiekh et al., 2018). With no prior tradition in online work practices in most of its industries, Kosovo's labor force was highly affected. This study examines the scope of remote work in Kosovo and worker performance from online work, analyzing the changes in productivity based on quality and quantity of work, completion of work in time, hours worked, teamwork, and communication with supervisor. The study looks closely at the performance based on employer demographics (worker gender, age, marital and parental status, household size and commuting time), industry they work in, and other factors such as working conditions at home and employer expectations (See Table 1).

Table 1: Dimensions for evaluating worker performance

	Quantity of Work	Quality of Work	Completion of Work in Time	Hours Worked	Teamwork	Communication with Supervisor
Gender						
Age						
Marital Status						
Parental Status						
Household Size						
Commuting Time						
Industry						
Working Conditions at Home						
Employer Expectations						

Furthermore, the findings from the research unfold the perspective of both employers and employees on the performance from remote work, identify the advantages and disadvantages of online work, and provide an assessment for the future of workplace practices, namely, fully online, hybrid models, or fully in-person (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Workplace practices



Introduction

The first COVID case was registered in November 2019 and by March 2020 there were 87 thousand global cases (*Coronavirus disease 2019 Situation Report – 41*, 2020). WHO recommended the affected countries to use preventive measures since the virus was accelerating rapidly, and this led to the closure of several businesses worldwide or movement to remote work for the industries where this form of work was possible. The IMF called these occurrences as the "Great Lockdown" (*World Economic Outlook*, 2020).

On March 13, 2020, Kosovo's government took rigorous measures ordering private companies to work from home (*Aprovohen masat shtesë nga Qeveria e Kosovës*, 2020). Workers and employers had to move to a form of work that was new to most of them, with no face-to-face interactions and away from other team members.

Since labor is one of the most important factors of an economy's performance, identifying labor performance under different settings such as working from home is crucial to decision-making and adjusting to a more effective economy. Labor performance analysis allows the management to identify how the employees are performing and what can be done to best utilize their capacities (Sauermann, 2016). Managers must find creative ways to approach their employees and create digital strategies to maximize returns. New models of work come with challenges and new work trends; therefore, employers need to set clear expectations to improve worker performance.

According to Bailey and Kurland (2002), assumptions as to why, who and how people telework, the range of impact on the teleworker to the organization as a group or as a whole, the interpersonal processes and outcomes to the organization and the individual are problematic and unclear, both on the motivations and impacts of the employees and the firms.

Research from Zapier Editorial Team shows that 44% of small business owners think that the new work trends emerging from COVID, like online work, will become permanent changes (*How has the pandemic affected small business operations?*, 2020). An earlier nine-month study conducted in 2013 by Nicholas Bloom and James Liang with 16000 workers from a call center in

China, where workers were assigned to work from home, shows that working from home led to a 13% increase in worker performance (2013). They find that 9% came from working more minutes per shift because of less distractions, breaks and sick days, whereas 4% came from being able to make more calls per minute because of a more convenient and quieter environment at home (Bloom et al., 2013). The workers‘ conditions when conducting the experiment were: have no kids, have a working room, and a fast internet (2013). This study gives interesting insights as it considers several variables. The task type is repetitive, and its productivity can be easily measured, it is easy to be done online and the set worker conditions had to be met. This raises the question how performance from online work differs between industries and task types and how we can distinguish between different demographics and criteria set.

It is intriguing to see how findings in Kosovo will differ compared to global findings. The relationship seems to be positive for several variables, and negative for some others. This study is specific on recommendations for employers managing remote workers. As the pandemic is disrupting the workplace practices and behaviors, it is crucial for managers to adapt to these changes and come up with long-term strategic planning agendas (*COVID-19: Implications for business*, 2020).

This study aims to identify the differences in worker performance between industries and demographics, assess the advantages and disadvantages of online working and find long-term solutions for managers on the best scheme for the most efficient mode of work and approach to employees.

Literature Review

This section explains the existing literature on the topic of worker performance during online work. First, the history of remote work and terminology is presented, followed by the changing dynamics in the workplace when working remotely. Then, a review of jobs which can be done from home and how to measure worker performance is provided. Next, research on opportunities and challenges of remote work is explored by analyzing worker performance. Lastly, the current literature on remote work in Kosovo is presented.

History of Remote Work

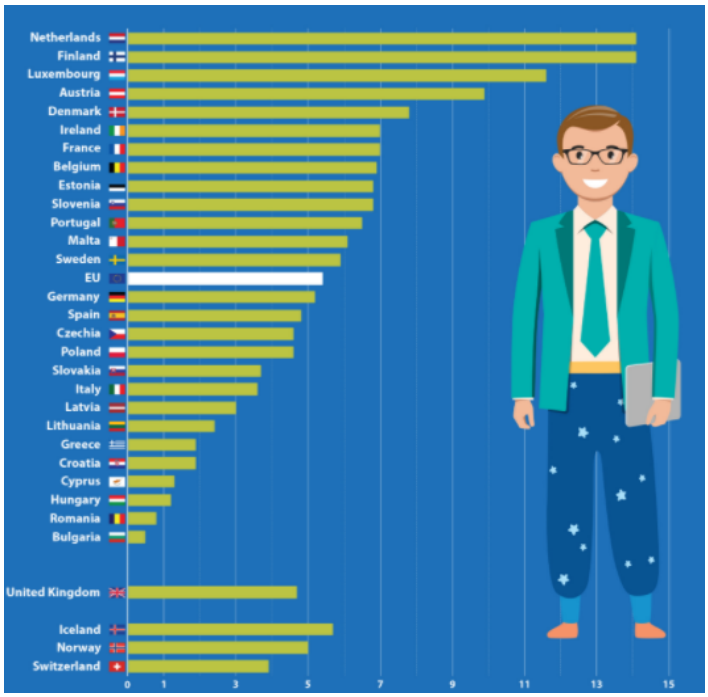
Remote work, telework, telecommuting, homeworking or work from home, all used interchangeably, describe a highly adopted practice by organizations around the world in the current era. Teleworking or telecommuting is “a situation in which someone works for an organization from their home and communicates with the main office and customers, etc by phone or email” (TELECOMMUTING | meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary, n.d.) The first to coin telecommuting was Jack Nilles in 1970s to “enable employees of large organizations to work in offices close to (but generally not in) their homes, rather than commute long distances to a central office.” (Nilles, 1975). Nilles came up with this idea when designing space vehicles and communications systems for the U.S. Air Force and NASA and saw the benefits of telecommunications for the problem of time-consuming commuting on this staff. Therefore, he coined the terms of telecommuting and telework, which would allow workers to work from home. Telework or working outside the organization’s workplace is an early form of virtual work (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). In general, organizations use the terms “working remotely” or “working from home” as they sound more modern and the terms such as remote working, working remotely, working from home, teleworking, and telecommuting are synonymous (Parris, 2017). The difference between teleworking and remote work is that when working remotely the worker lives outside the geographic area of the company’s workplace, whereas telecommuting and telework implies that the worker might do some on-site work (Parris, 2017). Working from a distance might not always be work from home, but from anywhere in the world, therefore it does not represent accurately where people actually are working. However, for the purpose of this study, the terms “remote work” and “working from home or WFH” will be used as the choice in terminology to refer to virtual work or work away from the office. Thanks to globalization and innovations in Information and Communications Technology, remote work has sparked a great amount of interest in the effects on workers and organizations, which stems from the belief that remote work is a win-win situation for both employers and employees (Popovici, V., & Lavinia Popovici, A., 2020; Felstead & Henseke, 2017). As long as one is connected to the internet, technology makes it possible to work from anywhere in the world. While the percentage of people who work from home is smaller than people who go traditionally to the office, it is a well-known practice for some professions, such

as sales, where workers travel long distances for meetings and now can rely on untraditional work practices virtually. This shift in the social landscape and the technological advancements have altered the organization's structure and culture (Ellison, 2004). According to Cyber

Dialogue Inc, by the end of the last century, 11.5 million people in the U.S. were working remotely (2000).

Official European statistics reveal that an average of 5.4% of employed people in the EU worked from home on a regular basis in 2019 (*How usual is it to work from home?*, 2020). While this number has remained constant in the last decade, the number of workers engaged in WFH has increased from 6% to 9% of all employed workers in 2019 (2020). The Netherlands and Finland lead with 14.1%, while Bulgaria (0.5%) and Romania (0.8%) show the lowest rates of workers engaged in WFH (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Share of employed persons usually working from home, 2019



Source: *How usual is it to work from home?*, 2020

Assumptions as to why, who and how people telework, the range of impact on the teleworker to the organization as a group or as a whole, the interpersonal processes and outcomes to the organization and the individual are problematic and unclear, both on the motivations and impacts of the employees and the organizations' (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). The office-centric work from 9:00 to 17:00 and the office culture differs when working virtually. The shift is massive, and workers can make their own choices and create new expectations (Fogarty et al., 2020). The following section seeks to identify the changing dynamics in the workplace and the way virtual workers behave.

Remote Work and Dynamics in the Workplace

Anecdotal evidence and formal research suggest many changes in the dynamics in the workplace when working remotely as compared to in-office work. Many organizations believe that being physically present in the office provides more collaboration, collision and collective energy, which brings more innovation (JLL - Office Renew, 2017; Dobson, 2020). Companies are continuously focused on creating innovation (JLL - Office Renew, 2017). The workplaces of the big players such as Google, Microsoft and Apple are designed with huge auditoriums and cafeterias in their buildings, in such a way that people interact randomly with each other and fuel innovation (Dobson, 2020). In-office dynamics include face-to-face interactions, data security, greater access to technology for employees and a greater sense of company culture, followed by a fixed schedule, fixed working hours, long commuting time and inefficient work processes (JLL - Office Renew, 2017; Gabriel, 2020; Decker, 2020; Howell, 2018; Dobson, 2020; Gaul, 2020). When working in-office, workers have easy access to the network, which gives them a greater feeling of belonging and connection to each other on a deeper level (Dobson, 2020). They also have more chances to get promoted, since they can easily bump into executives' offices to share their ideas (2020).

On the other side, working remotely is characterized by greater flexibility, greater work life balance, no commuting to work, uninterrupted work, greater focus on the tasks, and greater autonomy (Gabriel, 2020; Felstead and Henseke, 2017; Howell, 2018; Dobson, 2020). Remote work allows for flexible work, which is "a type of working arrangement which gives a degree of flexibility on how long, where, when and at what times employees work" (Ayling and McCartney, 2020). However, research shows that when working online, workers do not know when to stop and face longer working hours because of no distractions and that they are now in charge of their activities (Gabriel, 2020; Felstead and Henseke, 2017; JLL - Office Renew, 2017). While some studies show that working online allows for less distractions and more space, some others suggests that there are more distractions in the home front (Dobson, 2020). Therefore, the existing research provides mixed results regarding work-life balance. Albert Galarza, Global Vice President of HR at TELUS International is concerned that their workers are overworking and not taking breaks (Dobson, 2020). Another issue when working remotely, different from in-office, is security. IT companies express that security is even more important

now that workers search for information on devices that are outside the protection of the network security they used to have in-office and the secure remote access is very significant. (Gabriel, 2020). Another crucial aspect to remote work is communication. While workers cannot communicate face-to-face as organizations are forming teams that are not co-located, teams use email, telephone, audio conferences and video calls to communicate (Veinott et al, 1999). Organizations are now using platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, Zoom, WhatsApp or Google docs to communicate and work (Gabriel, 2020; Deckert, 2020; Dobson, 2020). Technology is playing a crucial role into making remote work possible. Alvin Rodriguez, senior solutions strategist at İV4, points out that video conferencing helps to engage with co-workers and allows the workers to feel the same way as they do in-person (Gabriel, 2020). As aforementioned, big companies design their workplaces to fuel interactions and innovation, which lacks when working remotely. Smith from Brite Computers points out that even though the current technology advancements enable virtual work, in-person interactions should not be replaced completely (2020).

To sum up, moving away from office-centric work changes the dynamics of the workplace, which can be advantageous and disadvantageous for workers and organizations. There are many consequences when working remotely regarding flexibility, work life balance, work effort in terms of hours worked, security, teamwork and costs. The daily experiences of remote workers differ significantly from in-office worker and this shift is massive (Fogarty et al., 2020). “People are making new choices about where they want to live and creating new expectations about flexibility, working conditions and life balance that can’t be undone,” says Elisabeth Reynolds, Executive Director, Task Force on the Work of the Future, Massachusetts Institute of Technology for BBC (2020).

Which jobs can be done from home?

Social distancing and the spread of COVID raises many questions regarding the way we perform work. Jonathan Dingel and Brent Neiman, economics professors at the University of Chicago conducted a research evaluating the jobs that can be done from home (2020). They classified the feasibility of working at home for all occupations. The feasibility measure was based on

responses to two Occupational Information Network (O*NET) surveys. Their findings show that 37% of jobs in the United States can be performed entirely at home, and that there is variation across occupations (Dingel and Neiman, 2020). Furthermore, they applied their occupational classification to 85 countries, which showed that there is a lower share of jobs that can be done at home for lower-income economies (2020).

Table 2 reports the share of jobs that can be performed at home based on occupational classification to the major group level. The findings show that computer and mathematical occupations, education and legal occupations, business, financial and management occupations, office and admin support, architecture, social sciences and service and sales and related occupations are widely able to be performed from home (Dingel and Neiman, 2020). Construction, food production, farming, production, healthcare and transportation occupations cannot be performed from home (2020). A study by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on how adaptable jobs are to remote working shows that professional occupations are most likely to be adaptable to remote working (2020). Actuaries, economists and statisticians are most likely to work from home together with management, technical and administrative jobs, which require little face-to-face contact, physical activity or use of tools or equipment (Office for National Statistics, 2020). The study shows hundreds of occupations, among which the most likely occupations to be performed remotely can be classified in the following large groups: Finance and Accounting Services, ICT Sector, Marketing and Sales, Education, Business Consulting, and Customer Service, whereas the least likely ones are elementary occupations such as cleaners, waiting staff and security guards, alongside process,

Table 2: Share of jobs that can be done at home, by occupation's major group

	Occupation	O*NET-derived baseline	Manual assignment
15	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1.00	1.00
25	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	0.98	0.85
23	Legal Occupations	0.97	0.84
13	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	0.88	0.92
11	Management Occupations	0.87	0.84
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	0.76	0.57
43	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	0.65	0.51
17	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	0.61	0.88
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	0.54	0.36
21	Community and Social Service Occupations	0.37	0.50
41	Sales and Related Occupations	0.28	0.21
39	Personal Care and Service Occupations	0.26	0.00
33	Protective Service Occupations	0.06	0.00
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	0.05	0.06
53	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	0.03	0.00
31	Healthcare Support Occupations	0.02	0.00
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	0.01	0.00
51	Production Occupations	0.01	0.00
49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	0.01	0.00
47	Construction and Extraction Occupations	0.00	0.00
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	0.00	0.00
37	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	0.00	0.00

Source: Dingel and Neiman, 2020

plant and machine operatives and frontline workers (police officers, paramedics, firefighters) (2020).

According to the data from Kosovo Agency of Statistics about Labor Force Survey, Q3 2020 in Kosovo, 371.6 thousand people were employed.

In the third quarter of 2020, the largest number of employees were working in occupations such as service and sales (22.4 %), professionals (15.5%), elementary occupations (22.6%) and craft workers (10%) (See Table 3). Moreover, the report shows labor force in Kosovo based on activity, which helps identify the key jobs that can be done from home in Kosovo (see Table 4). Based on the findings from the reviewed studies (Dingel and Neiman, 2020; Office for National Statistics, 2020) and classification based on activity and occupations, the following major groups of occupations in Kosovo (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2020) will be the main study groups throughout this analysis: Accounting, Banking and Finance; Business, Consulting and Management; Information and Communication Technology; Marketing and Sales; Customer Service/Call Center; and Teacher Training and Education.

Table 3: Employment in Kosovo by occupation

Kosovo (age 15 and over)	Male	Female	Total
EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION (IN THOUSAND)			
Legislators, senior officials and managers	28,7	5,2	33,9
Professionals	28,9	28,8	57,7
Technicians and related occupations with them	13,6	6,8	20,4
Clerks	12,9	9,9	22,8
Service and sales workers in shops and markets	63,6	19,6	83,2
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	8,7	3,1	11,9
Craft and related trades workers	32,5	4,6	37,1
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	19,7	0,8	20,5
Elementary occupations	73,3	10,8	84,1
Total	**281,9**	**89,7**	**371,6**
EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION (IN %)			
Legislators, senior officials and managers	10,2	5,8	9,1
Professionals	10,3	32,1	15,5
Technicians and related occupations with them	4,8	7,6	5,5
Clerks	4,6	11,1	6,1
Service and sales workers in shops and markets	22,5	21,9	22,4
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	3,1	3,5	3,2
Craft and related trades workers	11,5	5,1	10,0
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	7,0	0,9	5,5
Elementary occupations	26,0	12,1	22,6
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Source: ASK, 2020

Table 4: Employment in Kosovo by activity

Kosovo (age 15 and over)	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5,8	4,3	5,5
Mines and ore	1,3	0,3	1,1
Manufacture	12,5	7,6	11,3
Supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	2,6	0,7	2,1
Water supply, sewerage, waste management	1,4	0,5	1,1
Construction	17,3	0,7	13,3
Wholesale and retail trade, car and motorcycle repairs	16,7	18,6	17,2
Transport and storage	4,3	1,4	3,6
Accommodation and food service activities	7,0	5,0	6,5
Information and communication	3,4	4,5	3,6
Financial and insurance activities	1,2	2,1	1,5
Properties activities	0,2	0,0	0,1
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2,6	4,3	3,0
Administrative and support service activities	4,1	5,7	4,5
Public administration and defense, compulsory social security	6,5	5,1	6,2
Education	6,1	18,4	9,1
Activities of human health and social work	2,9	12,7	5,3
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0,9	1,6	1,1
Other service activities	2,0	4,2	2,5
Household employment activities	0,6	1,8	0,9
Activities of the institutions and extra-territorial organizations	0,7	0,6	0,7
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Source: ASK, 2020

Measuring worker performance during remote work

Throughout this study, worker performance and productivity are the focus of discussion. Certain definitions are suitable to define the meaning of worker performance and they vary based on the organization's goals. The concept of performance management and productivity causes a lot of confusion and leads to questions whether it should be used as a practical tool or measurement (Bjorkman, 1992). The following part of this section provides different definitions that will clarify the use of this term.

To accomplish the strategic objectives in the organization, performance management of employees is necessary. Performance management refers to "an ongoing process of communication between a supervisor and an employee that occurs throughout the year" in order to accomplish the organization's objectives (*Performance Management*, n.d.). According to University of California in Berkley HR Network, this process includes clarifying expectations, setting objectives, identifying goals, providing feedback, and reviewing results (*Performance Management*, n.d.). Another definition for performance management is given as "doing all that is required to continuously improve performance of every employee in relation to his/her role, dyad, team and the entire organization in the context of the short and long term goals of the organization" (Rao, 2015). According to Rao (2015), performance management involves many dimensions such as:

1. Output or result
2. Input
3. Time
4. Focus
5. Quality
6. Cost

To sum up, Rao's definition refers to performance as the expected deliverables of an individual or a team of individuals in a given time frame. Indiana University defines the purpose of performance management to be the communication of expectations to employees and that

performance is expressed in terms of quantity, quality, timeline, cost, safety, or outcomes, which are set by the organization (*Define Performance Standards,* n.d.).

While performance and productivity are used interchangeably, they do not refer to the same thing. According to Tanja Nicholls, executive consulting psychologist at Work Dynamics "productivity is the measure of the efficiency of production whereas performance deals with the way in which someone functions to accomplish something successfully." Organizations seek to increase productivity by improving performance in the right direction, therefore the two are strongly correlated (Work Dynamics, 2011).

Sauermann (2016) points out the importance of measures of worker productivity in the workplace and provides contemporary performance measurements. Productivity is defined as the ratio between a measure of output and a measure of input; therefore, productivity of workers could be measured as sales (output) per hours worked or cost of labor (input) (2016). This is the most standard and recent definition of productivity. The problem is the right measures as to what are the input and output factors, therefore specific definitions are chosen for specific situations from the workplace management and the occupation (Bjorkman, 1992; Sauermann, 2016). Organizations use a more holistic approach and metrics to evaluate worker performance and these measures are known as "key performance indicators" (KPIs). Since the tasks, nature of work and deliverables vary from occupation to occupation, these deliverables can be measured in different dimensions, such as by the quality and quantity of a task (2016). Workers could finish a vast number of tasks, but with low quality, or just a few tasks, but of very high quality. The time dimension is also very important alongside the aforementioned two other dimensions (Sauermann, 2016). The number of working hours affect the performance of workers and varies by occupation. Another dimension introduced by Sauermann is the effect of peers in the workplace, which also varies (2016). Sauermann's study provides great insights on how to measure performance and that there are differences in performance measuring between workers across occupations. The author points out that it is possible to compare estimates based on several studies to draw more representative conclusions and that capturing more dimensions is more representative of the multidimensional nature of productivity (Sauermann, 2016).

General findings about worker performance from online work

Whether remote workers are happy and productive is an on-going debate across the world. COVID-19 has fueled this debate bringing a sudden switch to a massive number of workers, who had not experienced remote work before, and this shift has the potential to make long-term changes (Pandey, 2020). “The virus could act as a game-changer for remote work,” says Prithwiraj Choudhury, a professor at Harvard Business School (2020). In the section with the changing dynamics in the workplace, many differences have been mentioned from on-site work. How are workers affected from this practice? From the management point of view and the overall economy, the worker performance is specifically significant. Findings regarding remote work and the performance of workers show mixed results. In a survey conducted by Mercer, an HR and workplace benefits consulting organization, with 800 employers, 94% of them reported that productivity was the same (67%) or higher (27%) when working remotely, than before the pandemic when working on-site (Sahadi, 2020). According to this survey, 72% of the respondents stated that there is a lot of flexibility regarding the hours employees work, in terms of scheduling and compressed workweeks, for example, employees may decide to work more hours per day, and work only four days (2020). About 60% of these employers are allowing parents of young kids to adjust their schedules to accommodate their caregiving responsibilities (Sahadi, 2020). The main concern of the employers surveyed was the lack of skills of manager to manage a flexible workforce and maintaining the existing workplace culture (2020). An earlier study published by the Harvard Business Review in 2018 with over 2000 employees and managers globally, finds that remote workers are more likely to be disengaged than those on-site (Schawbel, 2018). The study discovered that two-thirds of remote workers are not engaged and more than a third never interact face-to-face with their team (2018). It further shows that remote workers feel lonely and isolated, and teams need to be engaged to retain talent and compete in the global economy (2018).

On the other hand, a study that tests the effects of remote work on productivity for a call center shows that remote work boosted productivity by 13% (Bloom et al, 2013). However, the task type is repetitive and widely independent from team members. Likewise, another study conducted by the OWL Labs in 2019 with 1202 workers that work remotely showed that remote work can improve employee productivity, increase employee retention, and make employees feel

more trusted and better able to balance work and life responsibilities — making for happier employees and more productive teams (OWL Labs, 2019). Among the top reasons for working remotely, the results are as followed: better work-life balance, increased productivity/better focus, less stress, avoiding a commute, and save money. Even though the report shows increased productivity for remote workers, it also shows that managers are still concerned about their workers' reduced productivity, reduced focus, reduced engagement and satisfaction, and whether work is getting done. The OWL Labs conducted another study about remote work after COVID and finds that 75% of people are the same or more productive during COVID-19 while working from home. Among top reasons for working remotely in 2020 were listed: afraid of getting COVID-19, avoid the commute, reduce stress, more time with family/better work-life balance, increased productivity / better focus. These findings support previous studies which found increased productivity during online work, increased happiness and increased job satisfaction.

When it comes to online work, top concerns for managers include reduced team cohesiveness, employee engagement, and a lack of engagement with coworkers, whereas employees report new distractions and challenges staying productive such as interruptions/being talked over (62%), background distractions (59%), staying focused (57%), video conferencing - audio quality (57%), video conferencing - video quality (56%), internet speed or connectivity (52%), and meeting setup (50%) (OWL Labs, 2020). These findings are supported in a study conducted by Buffer in 2020, which adds other challenges such as collaboration and communication, difficulties to unplug from work and difficulties staying to stay motivated (Buffer, 2020). On the other hand, the founder of Remote.co and FlexJobs, which are platforms for remote work, states that the biggest misconception about remote workers is that they are less productive or not working compared to in-office counterparts. She adds that remote workers are more productive, more engaged and happier at their remote jobs (Kuehner-Hebert, 2019). In support of this, other findings show that remote work influences employees to have more autonomy and less work-family conflict, which increases their job satisfaction (Schall, 2019) which then leads to better worker performance. Some other studies show that remote working is associated with higher organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job-related well-being, and the cost of more work and less inability to switch off (Felstead and Henseke, 2017).

Mixed results are also found when analyzing different demographics. While many studies support burnout of employees and inability to unplug from work as mentioned above, some say that workers with kids were better at setting boundaries and switching off from work (Vanderkam, 2020), whereas others say that parents struggled to call it a day. More findings support the claim that parents are not in favor of remote work because they have kids as distractions at home, whereas others say that they are in favor since they now have more work-life balance and spend more time with their kids. A survey found that 42% of working parents are worried about job security and that they are less productive with kids being at home (Jones, 2020). Mothers complain about having kids around and that they have “literally no place to go” (2020). As quoted in the Jones report, a remote working mother says, "The baby would be napping in one room and the older kids are on calls, and my husband would be on an interview, and I'd have a meeting (all) at the same time" (2020). This is supported by a study that results in 39% of workers without children to believe that their counterparts who are parents are more distracted, have higher workload and take no breaks, whereas 29% say their colleagues who are parents are less productive (Jones, 2020). Similar mixed results are found about age groups, where some studies report benefits from remote work to younger generations, whereas others show that remote work put younger people at a disadvantage. Contrary to the popular belief, research shows that older demographics are more likely to work remotely and have maintained their jobs during the lockdown (Darbyshire, 2020). Moreover, the research shows that 44% of workers over the age of 55 were in jobs that could be done from home and for workers over 65 years old the percentage rose to 47% (2020).

Thus, the evidence from studies on remote work is mixed and differs in many dimensions and task types. The studies have been generally conducted analyzing separate elements that affect the remote worker performance. It is of great significance to see how remote work affects different demographics, with different types of tasks, work environments, commute time, and industry type. The studies on performance management and productivity, specifically the one from Sauermann (2016) on performance measures, alongside other studies about industry type serve as a guide to this research paper and the structure of the research. While these studies provide guidelines for separate elements individually and are conducted at the international level, this research paper will take a more holistic approach that combines performance management in different industries and demographics in the context of Kosovo.

COVID-19 and remote work in Kosovo

COVID-19 is changing the way people work. From March 13, when Kosovo's government took rigorous measures mandating all organizations to work from home, the work environments have changed drastically for workers in Kosovo. This change poses challenges as to how to adapt to this transformation of the workplace. A study conducted on e-leadership and teleworking in times of COVID-19 shows that companies with effective e-leadership can view teleworking as an opportunity; however, the study calls for structural changes on leadership of virtual team (Contreras et al, 2020).

The Labor Force Survey from KSA in Q1 2020 showed that 3.9% of the workforce in Kosovo usually work from home, whereas 12.6% work from home sometimes (*Labour Force Survey Q1.*, 2020). This shows little activity of the workforce in Kosovo remotely before the pandemic. A study conducted by the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo on the impact of COVID-19 on Kosovar enterprises shows that only 11.8% of enterprises moved their operations online (2020) (See Table 5).

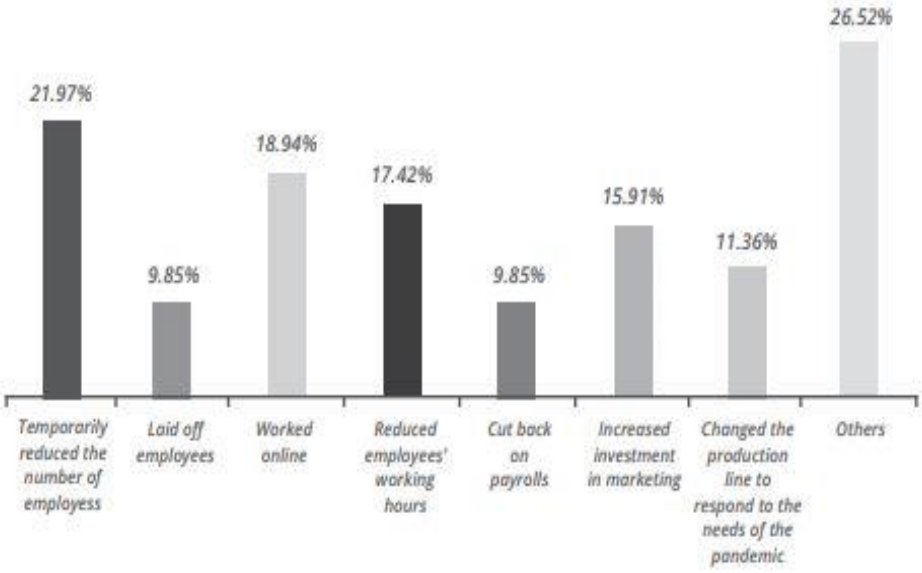
Table 5: Operation of companies in Kosovo after the lockdown

		Size of the business				
		1 – 9 employees	10 – 49 employees	50 – 249 employees	250+ employees	Total
How is your company operating during this period?	Entirely Closed	54.4%	36.6%	19.8%	26.7%	39.0%
	Does not know	3.0%	1.9%	1.0%	3.3%	2.2%
	No change	0.6%	1.9%	6.3%	3.3%	2.4%
	Working with reduced capacities	12.4%	32.3%	57.3%	40.0%	30.7%
	Working with reduced work schedule	13.6%	16.8%	8.3%	16.7%	13.8%
	All or parts of the activity conducted from home	16.0%	10.6%	7.3%	10.0%	11.8%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, 2020

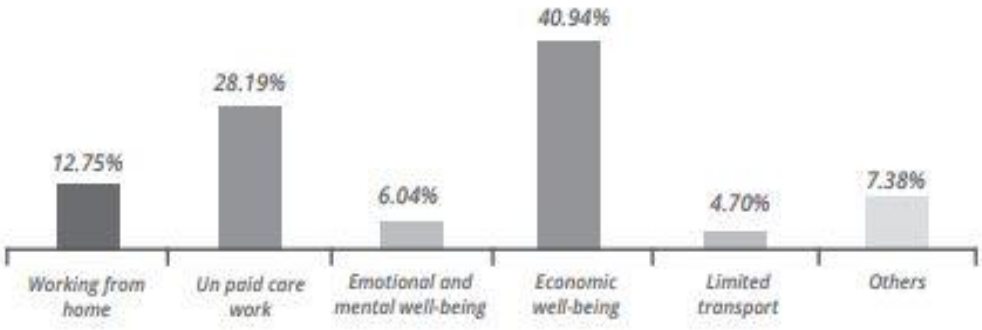
However, the study was conducted in the beginning of April - only three weeks after COVID-19 restrictions were imposed, therefore it may not reflect the true number of Kosovo enterprises who moved online. A more recent study conducted in October 2020 shows significant data on impact of COVID-19 in women-owned businesses. It is conducted with 166 women business owners from different industries across the country (Hajra, 2020). The majority of the respondents (66.44%) say that COVID has negatively impacted their business operations, since their time and energy was tied with unpaid work (28.77%) going towards additional care and attention toward their families. About 19% of the respondents worked online (See Figure 3) and preferred such option, which softened the adverse impact of COVID-19 for their businesses; however, 12.75 % of them ranked working from home as their biggest challenge (See Figure 4). The limitation of this study is that it is representative of the impact of COVID-19 on women business owners only.

Figure 3: Strategies applied to overcome crisis after lockdown



Source: Hajra, 2020

Figure 4: The biggest challenges faced by women in business during the pandemic



Source: Hajra, 2020

To the author's knowledge, there is no comprehensive research about remote workers and their performance in Kosovo. A Kosovar ICT company, Frakton, had just started implementing remote work in their company culture, introducing the option of working at least once or twice a week to their employees, and as government imposed COVID-19 regulations, they had to switch entirely online (Nimani, 2020). They provide some recommendations to remote teams regarding communication, tools and planning that needs to be made in order for remote teams to be successful (2020). In 2016, a program called Women in Online Work (WoW) was implemented by the Government of Kosovo, which encourages women to pursue online employment and improve their online working skills (*S4YE Digital Jobs Case Study—18. WoW Kosovo, 2*018) and it is very successful regarding women participation in the labor force. In addition, another study conducted before the pandemic supports the hypothesis that the flexible working hours that online work provides boost productivity (Baraku, 2019), however the study is limited to women only and is conducted in the field of freelancing rather than working remotely per se. In this paper, flexible working hours is a factor among many others that will be analyzed in different demographics and industries.

The latest study on socio-economic impact of COVID in Kosovo that tackles the issue of remote work is conducted by UNDP in two waves, one in May and the other one in November (*Rapid Socio-Economic Impact | UNDP in Kosovo*, 2020). The survey results show that 27% of respondents were working from home during the quarantine, whereas out of 202 businesses interviewed, only 15% declared that they allowed their workers to work from home. It is important to reference that a larger percentage of women (42%) declared that they worked from home, compared to men (19%). Surprisingly, while 27% of the surveyed individuals declared to be working from home in May 2020, only 3% did the same in November.

In this paper, only the ones who have worked online will be examined and their performance will be analyzed. The UNDP study shows that the percentage of remote work drastically dropped as the economy started reopening, therefore, in this study we will see if remote work is instead a worth remaining practice for organizations. The focus of this present study is on workers who have worked online.

Methodology

The aim of this project is to analyze workers' performance during remote work in Kosovo and to see the differences with respect to demographics and industries in which those workers work. To gain a more in depth understanding on the matter, several previous studies (Buffer, 2020; OWL Labs, 2020; Felstead and Henseke, 2017; McKinsey Global Institute) have served as a base for the methodology. Other crucial studies (Dingel and Neiman, 2020; ONS, 2020; KSA, 2020) provide the ground for industries to be studied. Data from the Kosovo Statistics Agency on Kosovo Labor reinforce the global findings for key employment activities and the labor force characteristics to be considered. The research is conducted mainly from the perspective of employers and workers who are the focus of this study. The survey was conducted with workers to measure their work performance, the factors that impact this performance and their work preferences for future recommendations. Since workers tend to be slightly biased when they rate themselves, semi-structured interviews are conducted with employers to see how they reacted to the shift, how their workers performed in accordance to employer's expectations and goal, what strategies were effective and what did not work.

Data Collection

Part 1: Survey

The first part of the data collection consists of a survey, which was designed in an attempt to gather information regarding worker performance from online work based on their demographics, industries they operate in, and their working environment.

In accordance with COVID measures, the questionnaire (See Appendix 1) was distributed online in several social media platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn and was shared in large and active groups in these platforms with many members. This was a convenience sampling method with 513 respondents (n=513) who have worked online. The questionnaire had the option to select either English or Albanian language, and the respondents had the chance to choose which language they wished to proceed with for the survey to be inclusive and a representative of all workers in Kosovo. Buffer and OWL Labs 2020 surveys helped to address certain questions.

Part 2: Semi-structured interviews

A total of six semi-structured interviews were conducted, which included managers, supervisors, or CEOs of workers in large and representative organizations in Kosovo in the main occupations that are targeted in this study:

- Accounting, Banking and Finance
- Business, Consulting and Management
- Information and Communication Technology
- Marketing and Sales
- Customer Service/Call Center
- Teacher Training and Education

The companies to be interviewed were selected based on convenience sampling. The companies were identified through LinkedIn Premium Search, personal knowledge of the researcher and word of mouth regarding the best representatives of my sample.

Because of the COVID-19 measures, all interviews were conducted online via Zoom videoconferencing. Prior to the interview, a consent form was provided for the interviewee (see Appendix 2). Each interviewee was asked a total of 11 questions (see Appendix 3), with potential additional questions regarding clarifications or further elaboration. The interview questions were designed in the form of gathering information from the organization level as to what managers experienced when moving their operations online, what they did to adjust and how they experienced and measured worker performance from their performance in alignment with their organization's mission, vision and goals. McKinsey Global Institute literature was a good starting point for the preparation of questions and issues to be addressed during interviews. The interview questions provide insights on organizations' preferences on the future of workspaces and work arrangements, which was beneficial when providing recommendations for this research paper.

In order to have the best representatives of the total population, I tracked down companies with regards to the following factors:

-the industry they belong in;

-the size of the organization based on employee count.

The interviewees list resulted as follows:

Interviewee A: Manager at a medium business consulting enterprise in Prishtina, which provides opinion polling, social and economic policy analysis, project evaluation and impact assessment, feasibility studies, new product development, and market size and segmentation studies. The firm has served hundreds of clients including government and public sector organizations, foundations and associations, international and local organizations, and private sector entities

Interviewee B: CEO and co-founder of a large IT enterprise located in Prishtina, which is a provider of services such as product development, software solutions, outsourcing / extended teams, mobile app development, digital products and engineering. The firm offers IT solutions that are used by over 5 million people in over 50 countries around the world.

Interviewee C: Manager at the headquarters of a large bank in Kosovo. The bank is a commercial, domestic bank with tens of units alongside the country and several banking services for businesses and individuals.

Interviewee D: Director of a large high school in Prizren.

Interviewee E: CEO and founder of a medium-sized marketing agency in Prishtina. The agency has tens of clients, which include the biggest and most successful companies in Kosovo and in the region. The agency's services include Social Media Marketing, Creative Content Creation, Campaign Management, and WordPress Management.

Interviewee F: Managing Director of a large German call center with a unit in Prishtina. The enterprise offers customer support services, acquisition of new customers (B2C & B2B), inbound and outbound calls, and marketing research.

Limitations

The main limitation of conducting primary research on this topic was the lack of data regarding enterprises that practiced online work in Kosovo and how big they are in size.

Due to COVID-19 dragging down businesses behind with their tasks and objectives, and end of the year planning and holidays, the sample size of these qualitative interviews is rather small and may not be representative of the population. For the purpose of this study only a number of six industries was selected and therefore interviews belong only to those groups, whereas other important industries might be left out. However, the results and insights gathered from the six conducted interviews are valuable and provide firsthand experience of the managers and supervisors of employees from companies in Kosovo in different sectors in Kosovo with different backgrounds and diverse experiences of their organizations and employees.

The questionnaire was distributed online. For this reason, its distribution is not completely equal in the major sectors and is slightly skewed toward the ICT sector. However, the overall sample size being 513 provides valuable insights regarding worker performance from remote work and the primary purpose of the data analysis is within individual sectors, rather than the whole population.

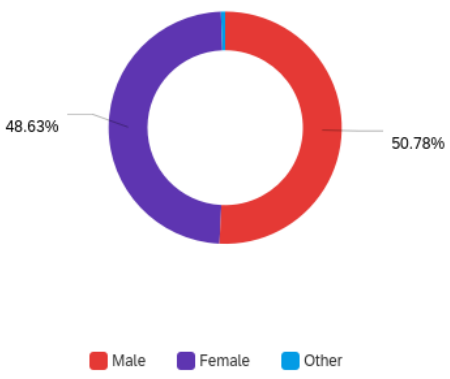
Results and Analysis

Survey Results

Demographics

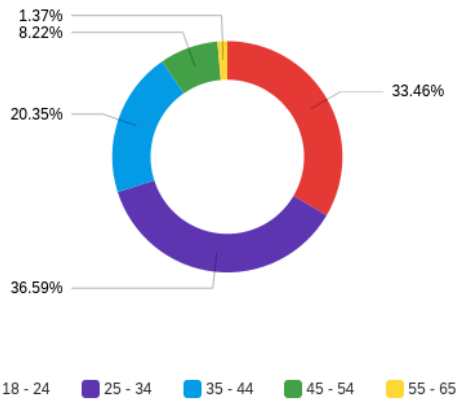
The survey was conducted with 513 workers (n=513) in Kosovo between the ages 18 and 65. This survey data was collected in December 2020; therefore, it covers workers' experience with online work during a 9-month period. The demographics are equally distributed in terms of gender (See Figure 5). As for the age group, the survey is more equally distributed towards younger ages (See Figure 6), with less representation from age groups 45-54 years old (8.22%) and 55-65 years old (1.37%).

Figure 5: Gender



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

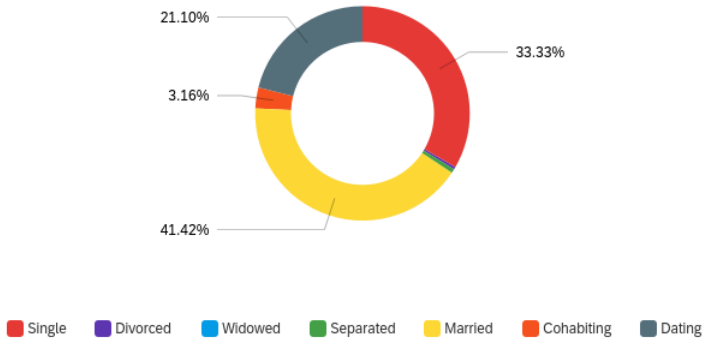
Figure 6: Age Group



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

In terms of the marital status (See Figure 7), most of the respondents are either married (41.42%) or dating (21.10%) whereas 33.33% are single; 62.11% of them do not have kids (see Figure 8). Instead of being single or not single, the question of the marital status was compiled in such a way to extract more data regarding the civil status of respondents, which is supported in the results. Specifically, the data for dating and cohabiting workers has shown significant importance.

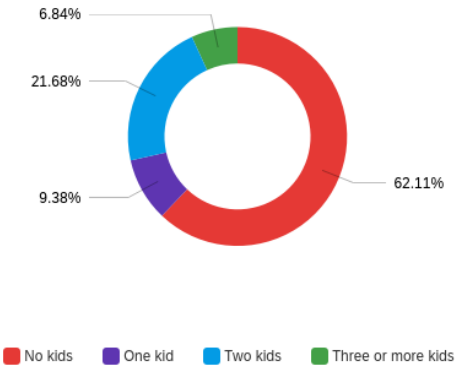
Figure 7: Marital Status



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

When it comes to family size, 86.53% of the respondents reported three or more members in their households, whereas 41.8% reported five or more members (See Figure 9).

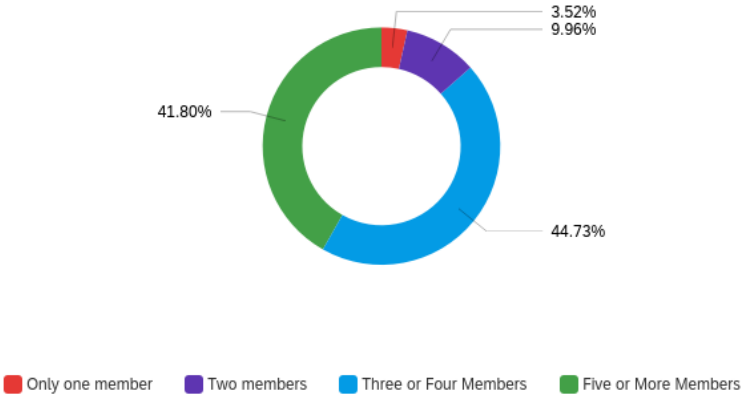
Figure 8: Parental Status



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

These two questions are important regarding the relationship between family size and potential distractions for those working at home.

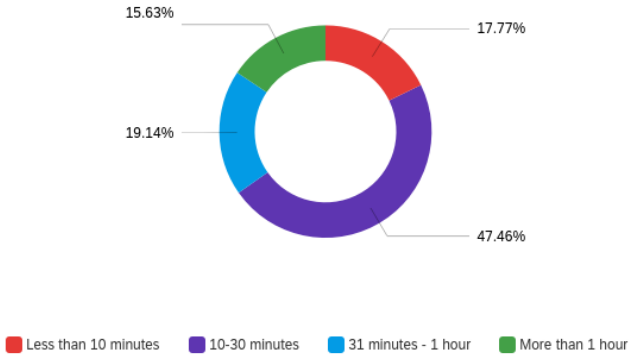
Figure 9: Household size



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Regarding their commuting time, more than 80% commute for more than 10 minutes to work, whereas about 35% commute more than 30 minutes when they have to work on-site (See Figure 10).

Figure 10: Commuting Time

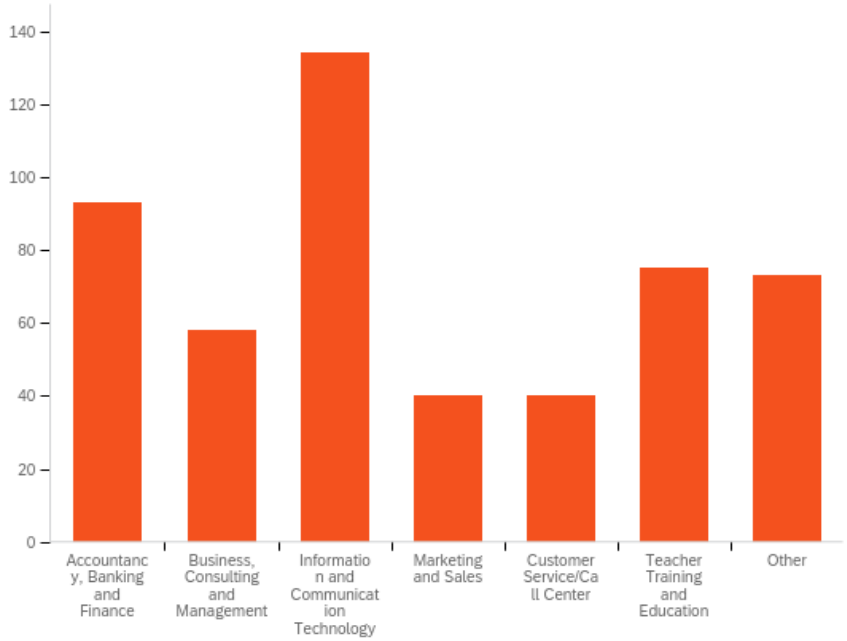


Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Industry Breakdown

Below are shown the top industries where the majority of respondents come from (See Figure 11). The distribution is slightly skewed towards Information and Communication Technology (26.17% of the sample size). Other industries represented include NGOs sector, legal services, architecture, government agencies and others that are less representative of the sample, as represented in Figure 12.

Figure 11: Represented industries by workers



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

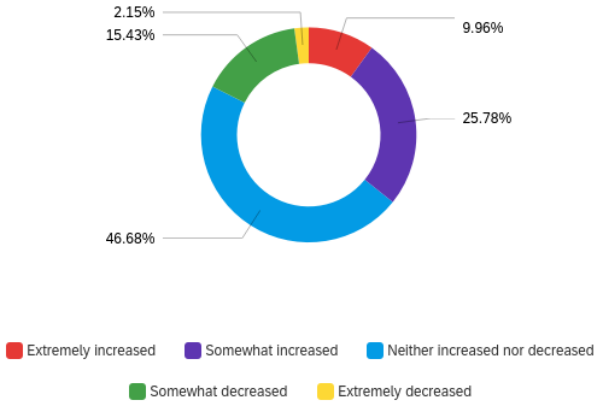
Figure 12: Word Cloud of "Other" Industries

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Overall findings from the survey and interviews

Many findings of the survey support findings from the existing research on remote work. However, the survey brings to life new findings with respect to specific demographics and industries where research was not conducted before or resulted in mixed findings. Most of the existing research was in support of remote work leading to worker burnout or inability to switch off from work. This is supported by the findings from workers in Kosovo (See Figure 13), where the majority declare that their hours have stayed the same (46.7%), however more of them (35.7%) have experienced increased working hours, in comparison to the workers who reported a decrease in hours for the same wage. Similarly, the interviewed managers reported that employees are working longer hours and that work captures a big part of their day. While on-site, workers left the office at 4:00PM or 5:00PM, now that they are at home, they find harder times to unplug from work or their working hours start later during the day from before.

Figure 13: For the same wage, have the hours you work online changed compared to working in-person?

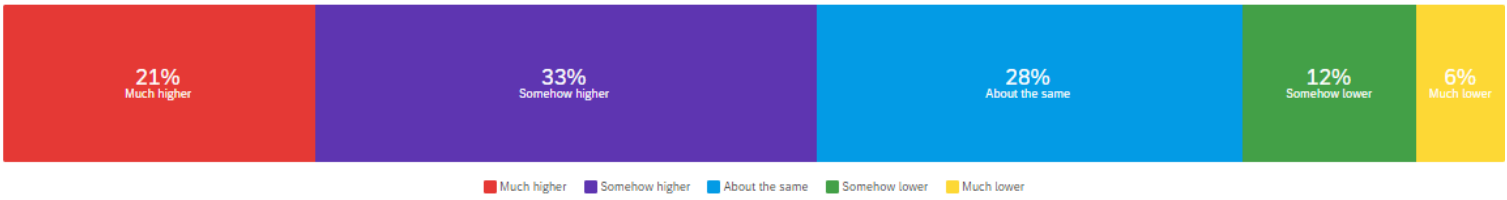


Source: Survey with workers, 2020

In addition, the challenges reported from online work are higher distractions at home (See Figure 14). While 28.1% of remote workers say distractions are about the same, the majority of them (53.5%) experienced higher distractions, which impacts the work performance of remote

workers, where 33% of workers with the most distractions experienced extremely increased hours and 31% of them experienced lower productivity.

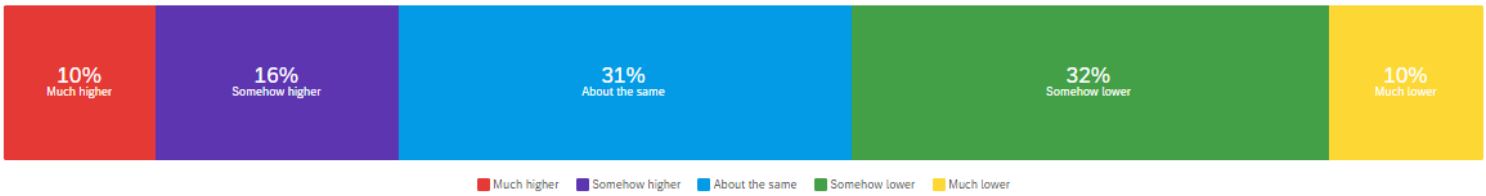
Figure 14: Distraction changes working online compared to working in-person



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

While 30.3% of them say their motivation was the same (See Figure 15), more than 40% say that their motivation was "somewhat lower" or "much lower" when working from home. However, the qualitative data from the interviews does not attribute falling motivation to the remote work only; the interviewees declared that that the pandemics and the isolation played a significant role on this, too; therefore, the impact of remote work on motivation seems rather unclear.

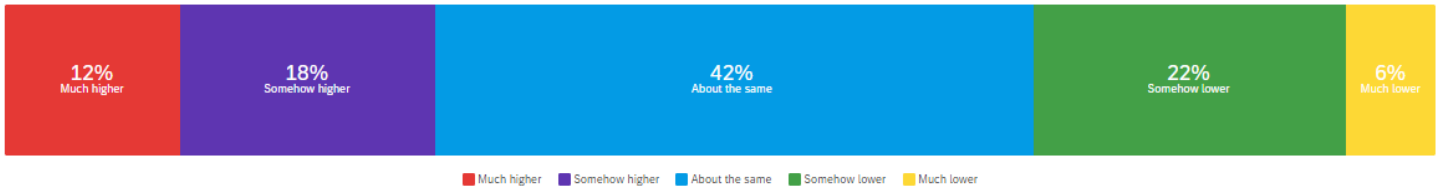
Figure 15: Motivation changes working online compared to working in-person



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Similarly, the impact of remote work on job satisfaction (See figure 16), overall, is ambiguous, since 42% say job satisfaction is about the same, 30% say it is higher, whereas 28% say that job satisfaction is lower.

Figure 16: Job satisfaction changes working online compared to working in-person

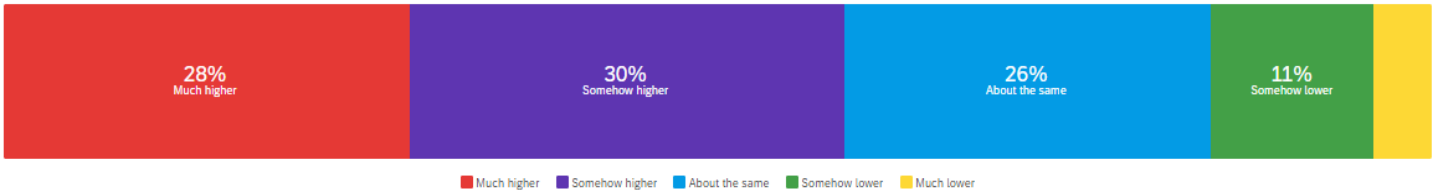


Source: Survey with workers, 2020

On the other hand, remote work has many positive impacts on workers. About 30% of remote workers report “much higher” flexibility (See Figure 17), which is supported by the existing research.

The interviewed managers expressed that they understand their workers’ needs and the changes of the remote workplaces, thus, they allow for more flexibility as to when to start work. Workers can also choose to work less days and more hours per day to finish their tasks.

Figure 17: Flexibility changes working online compared to working in-person



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Work-life balance is also reported to be higher overall. Since workers now have the flexibility to create their own schedules, this contributes to increased work-life balance for about 40% of the respondents (See Figure 18).

Figure 18: Work-life balance changes working online compared to working in-person

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

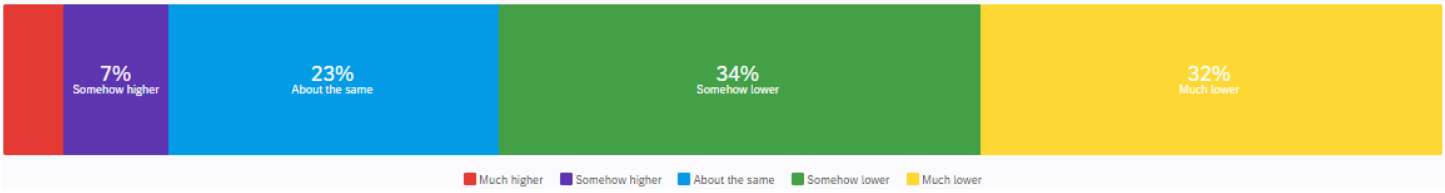
In addition, workers reported similar or higher time-management (44.1%) and self-care (44%), which contradicted the popular belief that remote work leads to less self-care for the workers. This supports the OWL Labs findings that remote workers shower or bathe as they did before when working on-site, and the research in Kosovo shows that a significant percentage of workers (20%) take much more care of themselves when working remotely (See Figure 19).

Figure 19: Self-care changes working online compared to working in-person

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Moreover, the majority of workers (66%) report a significant decrease in costs, where 32% report much lower costs (See figure 20).

Figure 20: Cost changes working online compared to working in-person

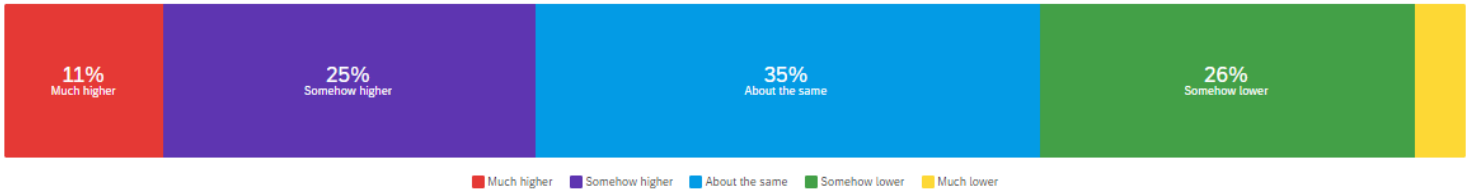


Source: Survey with workers, 2020

However, from the firm level, managers do not report any decrease in costs, since the period of fully online work was short, and they still paid rent and other expenses, therefore, the timing was too short to make adjustments and conclusions regarding costs. However, they say that in the long term, they might see cost reduction at the organization level from remote work.

Additionally, 35% of workers report to have had about the same productivity, whereas 36% of them said they had “much higher” or “somewhat higher” productivity than when working on-site (See Figure 21).

Figure 21: Productivity changes working online compared to working in-person



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

This supports findings from some existing research, however, there are changes within different demographics and industries that will be discussed in a different section below.

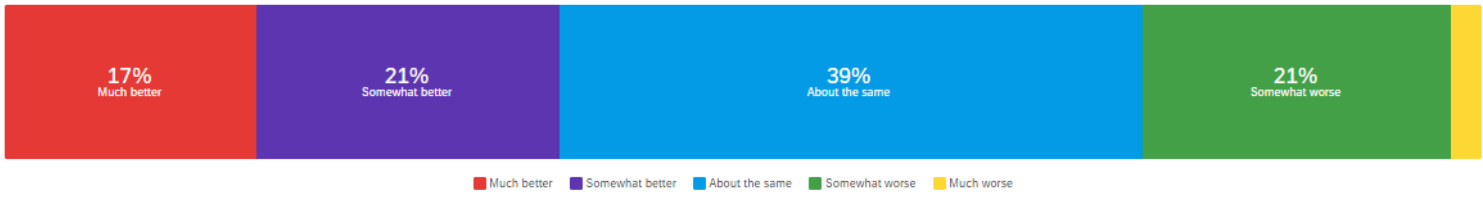
According to *Interviewee F*, in the first three months of online work, after the pandemic started, productivity increased, however, workers became tired and isolated and needed collaboration and teamwork, which led to decreased productivity. Similar to motivation, managers strongly correlate this with the situation created from the pandemic and not from working remotely directly. In support to this, a significant number of workers (29%) said that their productivity decreased (See Figure 21).

Regarding their work performance, the majority of workers rate their quality and quantity of tasks and completion of tasks about the same or better (See Figures 22, 23, 24).

Figure 22: Quantity of completed tasks working online compared to working in-person

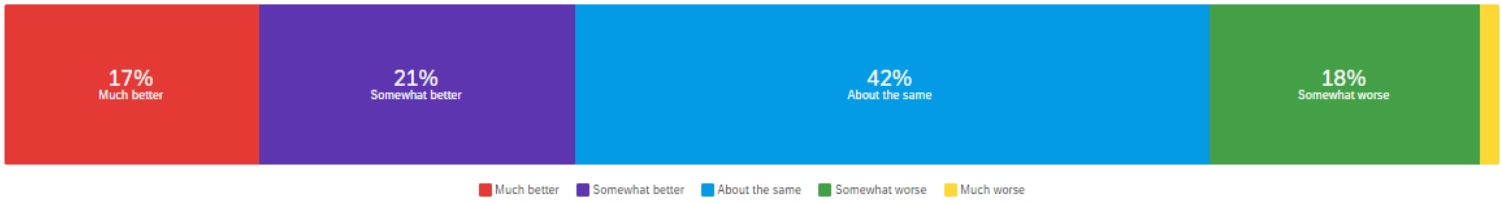
Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Figure 23: Quality of completed tasks working online compared to working in-person



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

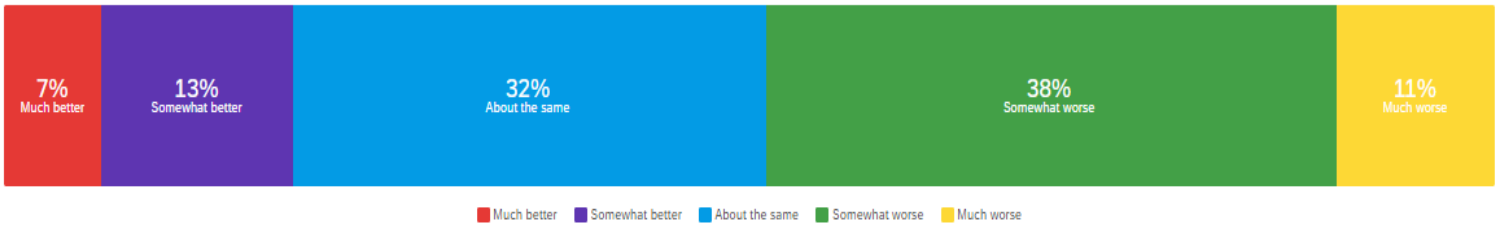
Figure 24: Completion of tasks on time working online compared to working in-person



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

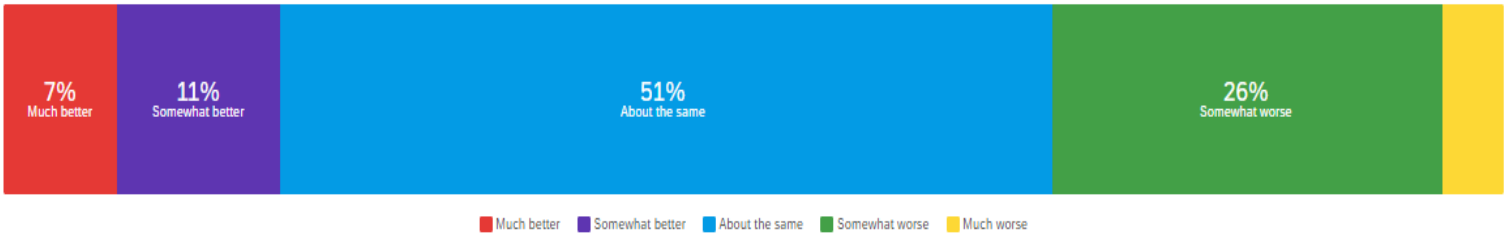
Teamwork is rated among the worst of these dimensions (See Figure 25), in support to literature review, whereas communication with supervisors has remained the same or become somewhat worse (See Figure 26).

Figure 25: Teamwork working online compared to working in-person



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Figure 26: Communication with supervisor working online compared to working in-



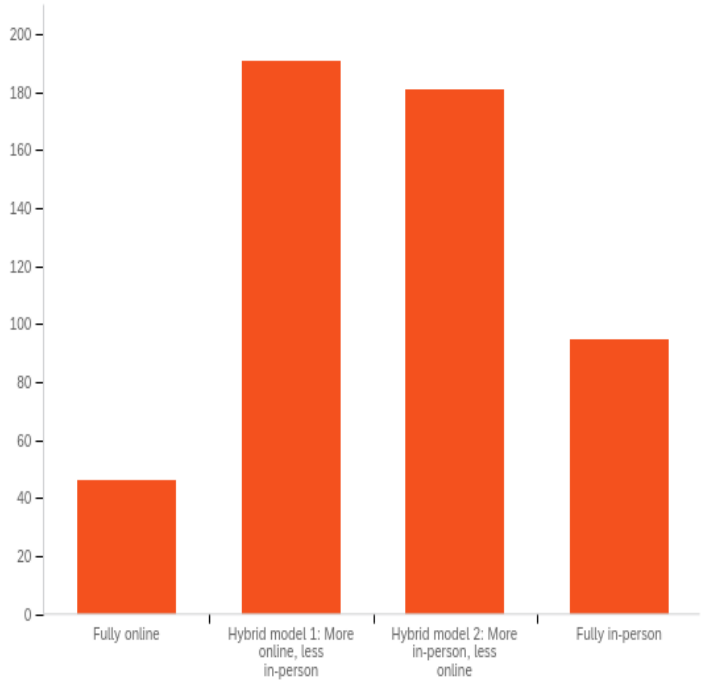
Source: Survey with workers, 2020

While the quality, quantity and completion of tasks on time for a significant number of workers is much better from WFH, a significant share of workers (15%-20%) struggle with these dimensions. This can be explained by workers demographics or industries, having task types independent from computer, or a lack of a dedicated workplace or the required equipment to do their job or even having less clear expectations from their employers, which will be explained later. However, managers interviewed claim that they have been understanding towards their employees of different profiles and that everyone needs to work together to get through these new, unexplored practices for many of the workers and managers too. *Interviewee A* said workers wellbeing is much more important during this time than their deliverables, and that in the long-term they will provide a better infrastructure and guidance to their employees, for better performance. Nonetheless, they see online work as an opportunity for their future operations, specifically for the flexibility that it provides to all workers.

Interviewees also said that the communication with their employees is harder virtually, in comparison to having the whole team in one setting, which is supported by the findings from the survey. Communication is easier when you can view what workers are working on and guide them real-time. Managers are also concerned about company culture and that teamwork is facing difficulties. They said that they are using platforms such as Slack, Asana, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or WhatsApp to communicate with their employees and for employees to collaborate with each other. Moreover, they are doing everything they can to adjust and support workers, such as getting into their employees' computers through TeamViewer, a remote control and desktop sharing platform, when employees are struggling (Interviewee F). The communication and teamwork have been the hardest for newer members and easier for the members who had already built a strong company culture and teamwork within the organization, which is supported by the existing research.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked about their preferred model of work. They were presented with four options: fully online, Hybrid Model 1 (more online, less in-person), Hybrid Model 2 (more in-person, less online) and fully in-person (See Figure 27). The majority of the respondents chose the models with some online work in it. The distribution was fairly similar towards hybrid models with Hybrid Model 1 (more online, less in-person) being slightly more preferable (37.3%) than Hybrid Model 2 (less online, more in-person) which ranked the second (35.2%). Fully in-person model received 18.6% and fully online ranked the 4th with only 9%. Managers were asked the same question during the interviews and all of them chose Hybrid Model 2, preferring more days in person and some of them online, in order to keep the company culture, collaboration and innovation, with the exception of the supervisor in education, who picked the fully in-person mode of operations, which is consistent with the survey results, which will be presented later throughout the paper.

Figure 27: Preferred mode of work



Source: Survey with workers, 2020

After having presented the general results from the research, the following section focuses on the impacts of demographics and industries on remote workers and their performance.

Demographics Impact on Remote Work

Age

Contrary to the popular belief, the existing research with older demographics in the US showed that they perform better when working remotely and have a higher tendency to keep their jobs during the lockdown, whereas it showed mixed results for younger generations.

The results in the survey of this study show that while 18–24 year-olds say their working hours have increased (30.8%), 25–34 and 45-54 year-olds score the highest percentages, both over 40%. Surprisingly, 42.9% of the 55–65 year-olds said their hours had somewhat decreased which can be explained by sympathetic managers giving them less tasks throughout online work, which was revealed during interviews. Similarly, for the 35-44 and 45-54 year-olds around 20% of them experienced a decrease in working hours, which can be explained by the aforementioned

reason or the task types they were dealing with. Flexibility, time-management, work-life balance and self-care scored higher for younger age groups than for older ones. Contrary to the existing research internationally, older workers in Kosovo reported lower productivity than younger ones.

This can be explained by the speed of technological advancements and the later adoption of technology in our country, which dragged older generations behind, as innovations are happening at a very high speed. Increased productivity was reported mainly from younger age groups such as 18-24 years (37.4%) similarly with 24-34 years (45.2%), where 14.9% reported much higher productivity when working online, compared to in-office (See Table 6).

Table 6: Productivity changes from working online compared to working in-person for different age groups

	Total	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 65
Much higher (Productivity)	10.7%	11.1%	14.9%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Somehow higher (Productivity)	25.2%	26.3%	30.3%	18.3%	16.7%	14.3%
About the same (Productivity)	34.2%	28.1%	32.4%	42.3%	45.2%	42.9%
Somehow lower (Productivity)	25.4%	29.2%	19.7%	26.0%	33.3%	28.6%
Much lower (Productivity)	3.5%	5.3%	1.1%	3.8%	4.8%	14.3%

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

While distractions were reported to be relatively the same for all age groups, the majority of 55-65 year-olds (57%) reported more distractions than their younger counterparts did. While older age groups reported a higher decrease in motivation, 18-24 year-olds reported a high decrease as well, whereas the highest increase was scored by 24-35 year-olds (30.9%). However, younger age groups reported a better quality of tasks when working online, whereby around 20% of 18-24 year-olds and 25-34 year-olds reported that their quality of tasks was much better, whereas a significant number of workers older than 35 years old said their quality of tasks was somewhat worse. The survey collected similar results regarding quantity of tasks, completion of tasks on time and teamwork. Communication with the supervisor was about the same for all age groups.

When asked about their preferred working model, the 18-44 year-old age group scored higher for Hybrid Model 1 (more online, less in-person), whereas the 45-54 years scored highest for Hybrid

Model 2 (more in-person, less online) and age group 55-65 years scored highest for fully in person. To sum up, the younger the worker, the more they prefer online work and the better the worker performance is, however, policies need to be implemented to increase the remote worker motivation, especially for the youngest group (18-24 years old) and older groups (35-65 years old) (See Table 7).

Table 7: Preferred mode of work for different age groups

	Total	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 65
Fully online	9.3%	11.6%	10.6%	5.8%	4.8%	0.0%
Hybrid model 1: More online, less in-person	37.1%	38.2%	40.7%	38.5%	16.7%	14.3%
Hybrid model 2: More in-person, less online	35.0%	35.8%	31.7%	34.6%	50.0%	14.3%
Fully in-person	18.6%	14.5%	16.9%	21.2%	28.6%	71.4%

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Gender

Women report increased number of hours worked (41.4%) compared to their male counterparts (31.3%). This is consistent with literature review and the interview results. This can be explained by gender norms, specifically in the country of Kosovo, where women are expected to take care of the family and the household chores, which keeps them behind with the work tasks or extends the working hours (See Table 8).

Table 8: Changes in hours worked online compared to working in-person for the same wage based on gender

	Total	Male	Female	Other
Extremely increased	9.9%	6.5%	13.7%	0.0%
Somewhat increased	25.8%	24.0%	27.7%	33.3%
Neither increased nor decreased	46.6%	51.3%	41.8%	33.3%
Somewhat decreased	15.5%	16.3%	14.9%	0.0%
Extremely decreased	2.1%	1.9%	2.0%	33.3%

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Similarly, much more women report lower work-life balance (27%) compared to men (6%), much higher distractions (respectively 24% of women compared to 17% of men) and somewhat lower time-management than their men counterparts (respectively 25% of women compared to 20% of men). On the other hand, more men (13%) report much worse teamwork when working from home compared to women (8%). Similarly, they struggle slightly more with communication with supervisor as well. Productivity and self-care, on the other hand, are reported to be higher for men. This can be explained as to why more women (23%) prefer working fully in-person compared to men (14%).

Marital Status

Existing literature puts married workers at a disadvantage compared to other groups. This is supported by the survey results. However, interesting results are found about dating and cohabiting workers and the single ones as well. Since the sample size for divorced, widowed, and separated is extremely small, they are left out of this analysis and conclusions cannot be made for those groups.

Married workers report less flexibility than dating and cohabiting workers do. In addition, they report more distractions than other groups, which can be explained by more responsibilities that come with marriage and their parental status, which will be discussed in the next section. Married workers as well as single workers report lower productivity, whereas the highest number of workers cohabiting with their partners report higher productivity. The interesting results about cohabiting couples may be supported by Musick (2012), who shows that couples who cohabit with each other are happier and have more self-esteem than the ones who are married, since when you cohabit, you have more space for independence and personal growth, which may be important to the case of remote work life (2012).

More married workers report decreased time-management (30%) in comparison to single and dating workers who report increased time-management (50%).

However, more single and dating workers report decreased motivation than other groups and increased self-care. In addition, more married couples report decreased quality and quantity of work and productivity compared to other groups. Similarly, teamwork has decreased more for them, followed by the ones who are dating. Most married workers report a decrease of work performance when they work online compared to in-person (See Figure 28).

Figure 28: Changes in work performance when working online compared to working in-person for married workers

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

All these factors lead married workers to be less satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts, thus less likely to prefer online work and call for a fully in person workplace (22.4%) or Hybrid Model 2 (more in person, less online) (39%). The most satisfied group with online work report to be workers cohabiting with their partners (81%), therefore 68.8% of this group prefer Hybrid Model 1 (more online, less in person). Single people, on the other hand, prefer more engaging workplaces and that more work is done in person than online (Hybrid Model 2). The results are very interesting when we compare workers with different marital status and how that affects the worker performance online. The results support the existing research regarding married workers; however, they bring to life more insights regarding other groups as well, which will help managers to design the workplaces to fit with their workers needs and behaviors and to make the necessary adjustments for each group.

Parental Status

Parental status brings interesting data for remote workers. Similar to what literature suggests, parent workers in Kosovo are working the same number of hours or experiencing decreased working hours. This can be explained by existing research, which shows that kids make it necessary for workers to unplug from work. On the other hand, a significant number of workers

with kids experienced an increase in working hours; however, this number is still less than the one for workers without kids, who find it more difficult to switch off from work.

Workers without kids report more flexibility, more work-life balance and lower distractions than the ones with kids. In support of that, as the number of kids increases per family, the above-mentioned factors get even worse. In addition, workers without kids report more increased productivity (42%) in comparison to workers with one kid (27%), two kids (25%) or three or more kids (28%) (See Table 9).

Table 9: Changes in productivity when working online compared to working in-person for different parental statuses

	Total	No kids	One kid	Two kids	Three or more kids
Much higher	10.9%	13.4%	12.5%	5.4%	2.9%
Somehow higher	25.2%	28.7%	14.6%	19.8%	25.7%
About the same	34.0%	30.5%	31.3%	43.2%	40.0%
Somehow lower	25.4%	23.7%	33.3%	27.9%	22.9%
Much lower	3.5%	3.7%	4.2%	3.6%	0.0%

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Parent workers also report that they take less care of themselves when working from home compared to their counterparts without kids. Moreover, parent workers report lower quality and quantity of tasks, less tasks completed on time, and lower level of teamwork compared to workers without kids. This leads to the results that the more kids workers have, the more likely they are to choose the model of work fully in person or Hybrid Model 2 (more in person, less online), whereas workers without kids are more likely to choose Hybrid Model 1 (more online, less in-person).

Household Size

Household size variable presents unexpected results as it was expected that the larger the household size, the worse the remote worker performance will be. However, the data from the survey shows otherwise. Workers with five or more members performed much better than their counterparts with less members regarding quality and quantity of tasks, completion of tasks on time and communication with supervisor. They also report much higher productivity, flexibility,

time-management, motivation, job satisfaction and self-care. The reasons might be that they have more support from other family members and feel less lonely and isolated and can now spend more time with their families. The larger households might have grandparents who take care of the kids. In addition, they might have set boundaries with their family members regarding work and have set responsibilities to each member that support the process of remote work for each member.

Commute time

Similar to what existing literature suggests, the results of the survey show that the longer the commuting time, the less is the fully in-person working model preferred and vice versa. In addition to that, the longer the commute time, the higher reported work life balance, time management, motivation, job satisfaction and self-care when working remotely compared to workers with shorter commute time. Similarly, the quantity and quality of work is increased by more percentage points for workers who used to commute longer. This is supported by the information collected from the interviewees, who said that in the past, when working in-office, one of the challenges they encountered was workers checking in to work late because of the travel distance or traffic disturbances, therefore having less hours to work, less deliverables, thus worse performance; whereas now that they are working online, they always check in on time and save the wasted time traveling for work purposed or other purposes which provide them with a better work-life balance and more flexibility. One of the managers said that he himself has to travel long distance to the workplace and waste over one hour or two or be mad for being stuck on traffic. Now, he has improved his well-being by using those hours to stay with his family and spend more time with his kid.

Industry Impact on Remote Work

Existing research, specifically the one conducted on the Chinese call center by Bloom and Liang (2013), which tested workers' productivity, calls for additional research on other industries as well. The results from the survey support the hypothesis that industries play an important role on remote worker performance.

While the survey suggests that the overall working hours for the same wage have increased for workers in Kosovo, it is not the same for all industries. In Teacher Training and Education, the majority of workers (42.7%) who work remotely say that the work effort in terms of hours they work daily has increased even though they get paid the same wage, where 18.7% of workers report "extremely increased" working hours. They find it harder to unplug from work when they work online. Similarly, in the Accounting, Banking & Finance and Marketing & Sales working hours have increased for about 40% of workers, where 13% report an extreme increase. For some workers in education (24% of them) the hours have somewhat decreased, which is explained by a school director during interviews, who said that some workers decided to use the platform Google Classroom instead of holding regular classes on Zoom, giving only assignment to students or written reports for lessons, which might be the reason for the decreased working hours (See Table 10).

Table 10: Changes in hours worked when working online compared to working in-person for different industries

	Total	Accountanc...nd Finance	Business,...Management	Informatio...Technology	Marketing and Sales	Customer S...all Center	Teacher Tr...Education
Extremely increased	10.9%	12.9%	6.8%	8.2%	12.5%	5.0%	18.7%
Somewhat increased	25.9%	29.0%	37.3%	24.6%	27.5%	7.5%	24.0%
Neither increased nor decreased	45.6%	37.6%	40.7%	53.7%	45.0%	67.5%	33.3%
Somewhat decreased	15.9%	17.2%	15.3%	12.7%	12.5%	12.5%	24.0%
Extremely decreased	1.8%	3.2%	0.0%	0.7%	2.5%	7.5%	0.0%

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Teacher Training and Education workers (67%) reported higher distractions than workers in other industries did, which is explained by the nature of their work that requires constant video-conferencing and complete silence from others when lecturing, tutoring or grading students. 30% of Teacher Training and Education workers report worse work-life balance, followed by workers in Business, Consulting & Management. ICT, Marketing & Sales and Call Centers reported lower distractions, with 11.2% of workers in ICT reporting much lower distractions in comparison to workers in other industries who report more distractions.

Marketing & Sales workers (47.5%) lead in productivity increase when working remotely, where 20% report much higher productivity, followed by the ICT workers (13.4%) and Call Centers (12.5%) (See Table 10). Teacher Training and Education workers (41.3%) report lower productivity than others do, followed by Accounting, Banking & Finance. Productivity for workers in Business, Consulting & Management is rather ambiguous; however, the percentage of workers who report productivity increase is by 5 percentage points higher than the ones who report productivity decrease (See Table 11).

Table 11: Changes in productivity when working online compared to working in-person for different industries

	Total	Accountanc...nd Finance	Business,...Management	Informatio...Technology	Marketing and Sales	Customer S...all Center	Teacher Tr...Education
Much higher	11.1%	8.6%	10.2%	13.4%	20.0%	12.5%	5.3%
Somehow higher	24.5%	21.5%	23.7%	28.4%	27.5%	27.5%	18.7%
About the same	33.6%	33.3%	37.3%	33.6%	30.0%	35.0%	32.0%
Somehow lower	26.3%	34.4%	22.0%	22.4%	20.0%	20.0%	33.3%
Much lower	3.4%	2.2%	6.8%	1.5%	0.0%	2.5%	8.0%

Source: Survey with workers, 2020

Motivation, on the other hand, is reported to be low in all industries apart from Marketing & Sales, in which workers have experienced much higher motivation when working remotely than when working in-office (20.5% of workers answered “much higher” for motivation). Similarly, workers in this industry report much higher job satisfaction than others. The lowest motivation was reported in Business, Consulting & Management, Customer Service/Call Center and Teacher Training & Education. Results suggest that remote workers in Teacher Training & Education and Accounting, Banking & Finance have less job satisfaction than others. In addition, workers in education report lower self-care, whereas all other industries report higher self-care.

Moreover, workers in Teacher Training & Education have had worse quality and quantity of tasks, completion of tasks on time and communication with supervisor, whereas Marketing & Sales workers performed much better in quality and quantity of tasks and completion of tasks on time. Teamwork was much worse for workers in Accounting, Banking & Finance, followed by Customer Service/Call Center and Teacher Training & Education.

Overall, the findings suggest that workers in Teacher Training & Education perform worse online than they do in-person, whereas workers in Marketing & Sales strive when they work remotely compared to other industries. Remote workers in Customer Support/Call Center and ICT have a very good performance followed by Business, Consulting & Management and Accounting, Banking & Finance. The aforementioned results are consistent with workers preferences of the mode of work. The majority of workers in Teacher Training & Education prefer the fully in-person mode of work (41.3%), whereas the second preferred option is Hybrid Model 2 (32%). The majority of workers in Accounting, Banking & Finance, on the other hand, prefer Hybrid Model 2 (49.5%), however a significant number of them want to work fully in-person (20.4%). Other industries such as Business, Consulting & Management, ICT and Customer Support/Call Center are strongly in favor of Hybrid Model 1, whereas the results are rather ambiguous for Marketing & Sales. While findings suggest that Marketing & Sales workers perform better than workers in all the other groups, the majority of workers chose Hybrid Model 2, by only 2.5% more than Hybrid Model 1. Yet, the option for fully online was ranked higher from Marketing & Sales workers.

These findings reinforce the hypothesis that industry plays a crucial role on worker performance and on the view of workers towards remote work. Managers from these industries should look closely at the changes that are happening and make the required adjustments. They should try to retain the current beneficial practices and address the ones that are lacking, by finding creative ways to support their workers and the overall performance of the organization, specifically the ones in education and banking. The following section provides other suggested factors that impact the remote worker performance.

Other important factors that impact remote work

Apart from demographics and industry related factors that impact remote work performance, other factors such as having a dedicated place at home to work, having all the needed equipment to do the work, the task type and expectations from managers, have shown to be significant. Workers with a dedicated workplace at home reported higher productivity, where 40% of workers reported increased productivity compared to 27% of workers who did not have a dedicated workplace, which shows a difference of 13 percentage points in favor of the ones with a home office. In addition, 43.4% of workers who did not have a dedicated workplace reported a lower productivity from online work compared to 23% of those who did have a home office. They also experienced significantly less motivation to work (60%) compared to the ones with home office (35.5%) and less job satisfaction (44%) compared to their counterparts (21.4%). In addition to that, they deliver less tasks and of less quality and find more difficulties to complete tasks on time, compared to their counterparts with a home office. The communication with the supervisor is also more difficult for them. In general, workers with a home office prefer online work more, specifically Hybrid Model 1 (40%), whereas workers without a home office tend to prefer in-person work more, with the highest percentage going towards Hybrid Model 2 (40.1%), whereas 23% are in favor of the fully in-person mode of work.

Another important factor is whether workers have the needed equipment to perform their tasks. The results from the survey showed that workers with all the equipment to do their job performed better than their counterparts who had partial or no equipment to do their job, in terms of quality and quantity of tasks delivered, completion of tasks on time, teamwork and communication with supervisor.

Task type matters as well and whether it is dependent from the use of computer. The respondents whose tasks were completely dependent on the computer performed better than their counterparts, in terms of quality and quantity of tasks and completion of tasks on time, teamwork and communication with supervisor. Slightly worse performed the ones whose tasks were “a lot” dependent on the computer, whereas the ones whose tasks were not dependent on the computer performed worse compared to all the other groups. This is consistent with the results about the operation models, where the ones who answered “completely” on this question, preferred Hybrid Model 1 more (42.1%), whereas the ones who answered “a moderate amount” preferred Hybrid

Model 2 (46.1%), the ones who answered “a little” preferred the model fully in-person (46.2%), similarly workers with no dependency on computer who preferred fully in-person (66.7%). The ones whose tasks are dependent “a lot” on computers preferred Hybrid Model 2 for 1% more than the Hybrid Model 1, therefore the results here are ambiguous.

Another important factor is whether workers have clear expectations from their supervisors. Workers who always had clear set expectations reported much higher productivity from working from home in comparison to others who didn’t always have clear expectations. In addition, they report much higher flexibility, motivation, job satisfaction, work-life balance and time-management compared to other groups who didn’t always have clear expectations. More of them report much better quality and quantity of tasks delivered, completion of tasks on time, teamwork and communication with supervisor. This provides with great insights about e-leadership and managers of the future remote workplaces, showing the great importance of setting clear expectations to workers, which benefits workers and organizations by fueling productivity and work performance.

Recommendations

Table 12: Table of Recommendations

Recommendations	For Employers	For Workers	For Institutions
Recommendation 1	Set clear expectations and communicate with your employees	Communicate your needs with the employer	Create a remote work manual
Recommendation 2	Invest in the needed infrastructure	Set boundaries between work and home	Update employment policies
Recommendation 3	Increase accountability and motivation	Invest in your home office and the needed tools	Invest in a digital infrastructure
Recommendation 4	Establish trust	Set boundaries with other household members	

Recommendations for Employers

Recommendation 1: Set clear expectations and communicate with your employees

Communication of expectations showed to be significant when measuring worker performance. Therefore, employers should make sure to set clear objectives among their team members and help ease uncertainty from workers. Daily or weekly check-ins and regular meetings will allow workers to stay in the loop and feel supported. Setting expectations will make it easier for employers to track productivity of workers and to make remote work mutually successful for the organization and the worker. Setting ground rules for communication, such as regular team meetings, scheduled breaks or updates will improve the overall performance of the workers. From time to time, employers need to evaluate the workers' needs and challenges by sending them surveys or organizing Q & A sections. Employers should decide on the strategies that work best for their organization and is in alignment with their company culture.

Recommendation 2: Invest in the right infrastructure

Remote work requires that all workers have the tools to do their job from anywhere at any time. Employers need to provide for those tools to the workers, such as the software or platforms their organization uses. They should invest in project management tools, collaboration platforms or video conferencing platforms to overcome the challenge of the lack of teamwork in workplaces. This will help employers check the workflow of the organization and the maintenance of the company culture. In the meantime, it will help all the team members stay on the same page as to what is getting done. Project management tools such as Trello or Asana help organizations monitor work progress. Microsoft Office collaboration tools make collaboration easy within an organization and improve overall connectivity of team members. Moreover, tools such as Workplace Analytics help employers identify collaboration patterns that affect productivity of workers, effectiveness and engagement.

Recommendation 3: Increase accountability and motivation

The findings of this research paper show that the majority of workers experienced a decreased in motivation from remote work. This was merely caused by the stress and isolation from the lockdown. In order to keep the workers motivated, employers need to engage with them

constantly, listen to their struggles and empathize with them. The findings show that different demographics have more struggles than others do, therefore, employers need to be understanding towards them and allow for more flexibility for those groups. They need to provide meaningful feedback and acknowledge their efforts. Employers also need to reward workers more than they did before when working in-office and check-in on them more often.

Recommendation 4: Establish trust

Contrary to the popular belief, literature review and the findings from the primary data showed that the majority of workers encountered longer working hours, however, many employers still list trust as their main struggle when working remotely. Trusting the workers is the basis for a successful workplace; it increases efficiency and performance in the organization. Employers need to assure the workers that they trust them and care about their wellbeing and their best interests. Employers need to stay transparent and assign tasks as they see fit for the different demographics. Holding regular video calls to build stronger relationships with workers helps the overall success of the organization. Many employers track hours and activities of their workers, which allows employers to assess productivity of workers. Some of them write down their tasks or use workflow management tools. One of the interviewed employers said that they do not use any tracking tools since they have built strong relationships and have created strong company culture prior to moving online. However, for new teams, employers should focus on establishing company culture and trust with their team members for on-going success when working remotely.

Recommendations for Workers:

Recommendation 1: Communicate needs with the employer

If some tasks take more time than others do, workers need to prioritize the most important ones and communicate them to their employer. If workers have other struggles, such as missing tools to do the job, communicating that to the employer will make things easier for them as the employer will provide the tool or will assign the worker other tasks indecent of that. Moreover, if the worker is struggling with slow internet or power outage, they should let the employer know. This will allow the employer better planning and clearer expectations for the task completion. If

the worker is struggling with other issues, they should let the employer know and they will find the solution together.

Recommendation 2: Set boundaries between work and home

The findings show that the majority of workers have harder times to unplug from work and experience longer working hours. To avoid this, they need to create a schedule for their working hours and stick to it. They should not mix work at their household when they are within that schedule dedicated for work. They need to schedule regular time blocks for breaks in their calendars. In addition, they should set expectations regarding their availability to their boss and other team members. It is crucial for the worker to understand that their life and other responsibilities apart from work are important too.

Recommendation 3: Invest in home office and the needed tools

The findings show that workers with a home office are more likely to have better performance at work. If the workers expect that working from home will be permanent, they need to buy a desk and a comfortable chair at a corner of the room, where they can work comfortably by themselves or crease a home office if possible. They need to use the available tools to stay connected and collaborate with their team members. Video calling is proven to improve the experience of collaboration and will make them feel less lonely and isolated.

Recommendation 4: Set boundaries with other household members

This research paper showed that family members could be a distraction when working online, especially when workers have kids around. For the best outcome, workers should let their households know their working hours to not become a distraction. However, the situation becomes more troublesome with kids. In that case, workers should compromise with their partners to accommodate their work schedules to help with parenting duties.

Recommendations for Institutions:

Recommendation 1: Create a remote work manual

Primary and secondary research for remote work showed that remote work can be very successful and productive, and workers and businesses want to incorporate it in their strategies in

the future, security becomes a challenge. For this purpose, government should create policies to enhance security when working remotely for organizations and workers. One way to do this is through a remote work manual created by the government, which requires organizations to implement it. The manual would include policies to evaluate security capabilities of organizations, require that organizations keep a backup of their data since random attacks can happen, require that they have a specific set of digital tools, and overall educational content to improve the security infrastructure in our country.

Recommendation 2: Update employment policies

Throughout the entire research, several stakeholders showed an increase in flexibility from remote work. When working in-person, the majority of females distance themselves from the workforce after they have kids, in order to take care of them. However, with remote work they have the flexibility to work from wherever they want. In order to have more inclusion of labor, the government should set employment policies to allow for more flexibility to specific groups with different needs. They should require organizations to implement these policies and update their work culture to make it more flexible. Thus, the government can enable a more diverse and equal labor force participation.

Recommendation 3: Invest in digital infrastructure

Government should improve the digital infrastructure in Kosovo, such as enabling national connectivity in rural areas, parks or buses. While employers can provide tools such as software or other essential equipment to workers, the government can help them by ensuring connectivity in every area, thus engage the economy and include workers of all locations. As remote work is anticipated to remain in practice in the long-term, government must ensure that every worker in Kosovo has the right infrastructure to work and learn from home.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the scope of remote work in Kosovo and to see how that has affected the workplaces and the work performance of workers. It specifically analyzed the factors that impact worker performance such as worker's demographics, the industry they perform their activities in or other important factors such as the infrastructure at home, the task type or expectations from employers. In addition, this current study sought to provide an assessment for future business operations based on the preferences of workers and employers and the analysis from qualitative and quantitative research on their performance. COVID-19 pandemic showed everyone what the future of work looks like, and it has already arrived, even in Kosovo. COVID-19 implications on the workplaces taught us the lesson that societies need to embrace remote work and hybrid teams. The findings from literature review and the primary research show that remote work can be as productive, or in many cases more productive than in-office work. The needs of workers and their behavior is changing, and employers need to embrace and shift their practices to adjust to these changes. However, different demographics have different needs, and some industries perform better than others do remotely. Having these differences identified, employers can now take the next round to make the necessary adjustments. Though not traditional in Kosovo, remote work shift happened very quickly and found employers unprepared and unable to manage remote teams in the beginning. However, employers worldwide, including the ones in Kosovo, think that remote work will always be part of workplaces as we move past COVID-19 and that they are constantly looking for new ways to support their workers and their activities.

During the analyzed period (March-December 2020) productivity, flexibility, work-life balance, time-management, self-care and decreased costs have been identified as advantages for the majority of remote workers in Kosovo. On the other hand, motivation, distractions, long working hours, teamwork and communication with supervisors seem to be challenges for many of them, and they differ as per different demographic groups and industries. The absence of a home office, partial or not adequate work equipment and lack of clear expectations are reported to be a challenge for remote workers as well.

Overall, the results show that the majority of workers want to work from home some of the days, whereas only a few want to be completely back on-site. While most of the workers prefer Hybrid Model 1 with more online work and less in-person, qualitative data with employers shows that it is too fast to move to such form of work and that they are not prepared for such movement to happen. The fully online movement was pushed from the lockdown; however, they see opportunity and will consider such a move in the future based of the current lessons and practices. Moreover, they add that the infrastructure in Kosovo still lacks behind other countries where workers have to deal with slow internet or power outage, which impacts their ability to work remotely. Therefore, Hybrid Model 2 was suggested by the majority of employers for the current period, until they have the capacities to move to Hybrid Model 1. The biggest challenge for employers will be maintaining the company culture, collaboration and innovation.

In conclusion, there is great potential for workers in Kosovo to strive remotely as we adapt to this form of work. As remote work is continuing as a practice and is predicted to be a practice in the future, the recommendations will serve to maximize the remote work performance of employers and employees. As the country begins to reopen, employers and institutions must address these changes and act upon the findings that impact the overall success of organizations and the well-being of workers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey

This survey is conducted as part of my Senior Capstone Project, which aims to examine employees' performance in Kosovo from online work in different occupations and demographics and help provide an assessment for future operations post-COVID.

This survey has 18 questions in total and will take approximately 3 minutes to be completed.

You must have worked or be currently working online to participate in this survey.

All responses are anonymous and will only be used for the purposes of this project.

Your inputs are very much appreciated!

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at uxf5456@rit.edu.

Q1 In which occupation are you employed?

- Accounting, Banking and Finance
- Business, Consulting and Management
- Information and Communication Technology
- Marketing and Sales
- Customer Service/Call Center
- Teacher Training and Education
- Other _____

Q2 Age:

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 65

Q3 Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q4 What is your marital status?

- Single
- Dating
- Cohabiting
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Separated

Q5 What is your parental status?

- No kids
- One kid
- Two kids
- Three or more kids

Q6 How many members does your household have?

- Only one member
- Two members
- Three or Four Members
- Five or More Members

Q7 How long is your commute time to work when you work in-person?

- Less than 10 minutes
- 10-30 minutes
- 31 minutes - 1 hour
- More than 1 hour

Q8 Do you have a dedicated workplace where you can work at home?

- Yes
- No

Q9 Do you have all the equipment you need in order to do your work at home?

- Yes
- Partially
- No

Q10 How much is your work/role dependent on computer when you work in-person?

- Completely
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all

Q11 Did you have clear expectations set from your supervisor/manager when you moved online?

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Q12 For the same wage, have the hours you work online changed compared to working in-person?

- Extremely increased
- Somewhat increased
- Neither increased nor decreased
- Somewhat decreased
- Extremely decreased

Q13 How have the following changed from working online compared to working in-person?

	Much higher	Somehow higher	About the same	Somehow lower	Much lower
Flexibility	○	○	○	○	○
Work-life balance	○	○	○	○	○
Costs	○	○	○	○	○
Distractions	○	○	○	○	○
Productivity	○	○	○	○	○
Time management	○	○	○	○	○
Motivation	○	○	○	○	○
Job Satisfaction	○	○	○	○	○
Self-care	○	○	○	○	○

Q14 How would you rate your work performance online compared to in-person?

	Much better	Somewhat better	About the same	Somewhat worse	Much worse
Quality of your completed tasks	○	○	○	○	○
Quantity of completed tasks	○	○	○	○	○
Completing tasks on time	○	○	○	○	○
Teamwork	○	○	○	○	○
Communication with supervisor/manager	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 On a scale from 1-5, 1 being extremely bad, and 5 being extremely good, how much do you rate your work performance from working in-person?

- Extremely bad (1)
- Somewhat bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Somewhat good (4)
- Extremely good (5)

Q16 On a scale from 1-5, 1 being extremely bad, and 5 being extremely good, how much do you rate your work performance from working online?

- Extremely bad (1)
- Somewhat bad (2)
- Neither good nor bad (3)
- Somewhat good (4)
- Extremely good (5)

Q17 Overall, how satisfied are you with your job from working online?

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Q18 If you could choose, which working model would you prefer?

- Fully online
- Hybrid model 1: More online, less in-person
- Hybrid model 2: More in-person, less online
- Fully in-person

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
RIT Kosovo

Title of Project: *Emerging from COVID: Online work and its implications for the worker performance in Kosovo*

Principal Investigator: Ujvara Fetoshi, RIT Kosovo Student

Shpetim Robaj Street

Prishtine 10 000, Kosovo

044-543-218; ujvaraf@auk.org

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to explore the worker performance in Kosovo during online work, analyzing changes in productivity based on workers' demographics and the occupation they work in, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of online work, and providing an assessment for the mode of future business operations.

1. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to answer 11 questions during this interview.

2. **Duration:** It will take about 30 minutes to complete the interview.

Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be used only for the analysis of the subject matter of this RIT Honors Project, which will be consequently published online.

3. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

_____	_____
Participant Signature	Date
_____	_____
Person Obtaining Consent	Date

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

1. Is this the first time your workers have operated online for your firm? If no, when did your workers work online before?
2. What was your experience moving your operations online during COVID?
3. What did you do to adjust your operations?
4. How did you communicate with your employees? What about teamwork?
5. What have been the struggles in this form of operation?
6. What have been the benefits of online work for your firm?
7. Have you noticed any changes in workers' performance? Was it better or was it worse? What worked and what didn't?
8. Have there been any complaints about online work from employees? If so, about what?
9. Was managing and having control over your employees harder online? Did it save you or cost you more time? What did you do to manage your employees?
10. Where did you spend most of resources regarding online operations?
11. Which model of work would you choose? Would you go online again? How do you see the future of workspaces? How do we modernize traditional work arrangements?