

Choosing to work from home or at office

The role of physical and psychosocial
workplace experiences in hybrid work

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Telework in post-pandemic organizations

- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, work time spent away from the workplace has increased (Eurofound 2023).
- Telework refers to work that could be performed on an employer's premises but is carried out elsewhere on a regular basis (Eurofound 2023) enabled by digital technologies.
- In Finland, 35 % of all salary earners worked remotely (Statistics Finland 2024).
- This is among the highest amount in the Europe (Eurofound 2023).
- In Finland, 36 % of them working remotely said that could choose almost freely how often they worked at their workplace (Statistics Finland 2024)



Hybrid work: Choosing to work from home or at office

- Hybrid work highlights the debate between working from home or at office.
- Organizations navigate to find a new balance between telework and working at the office, or from any other locations (Eurofound 2023).
- Companies' policies range from "return-to-office" to giving employees autonomy to plan their workdays based on individual or team decisions (Eurofound 2023).
- Organizations aim to support such hybrid working with modern office design, e.g. activity-based offices



Objectives of the study

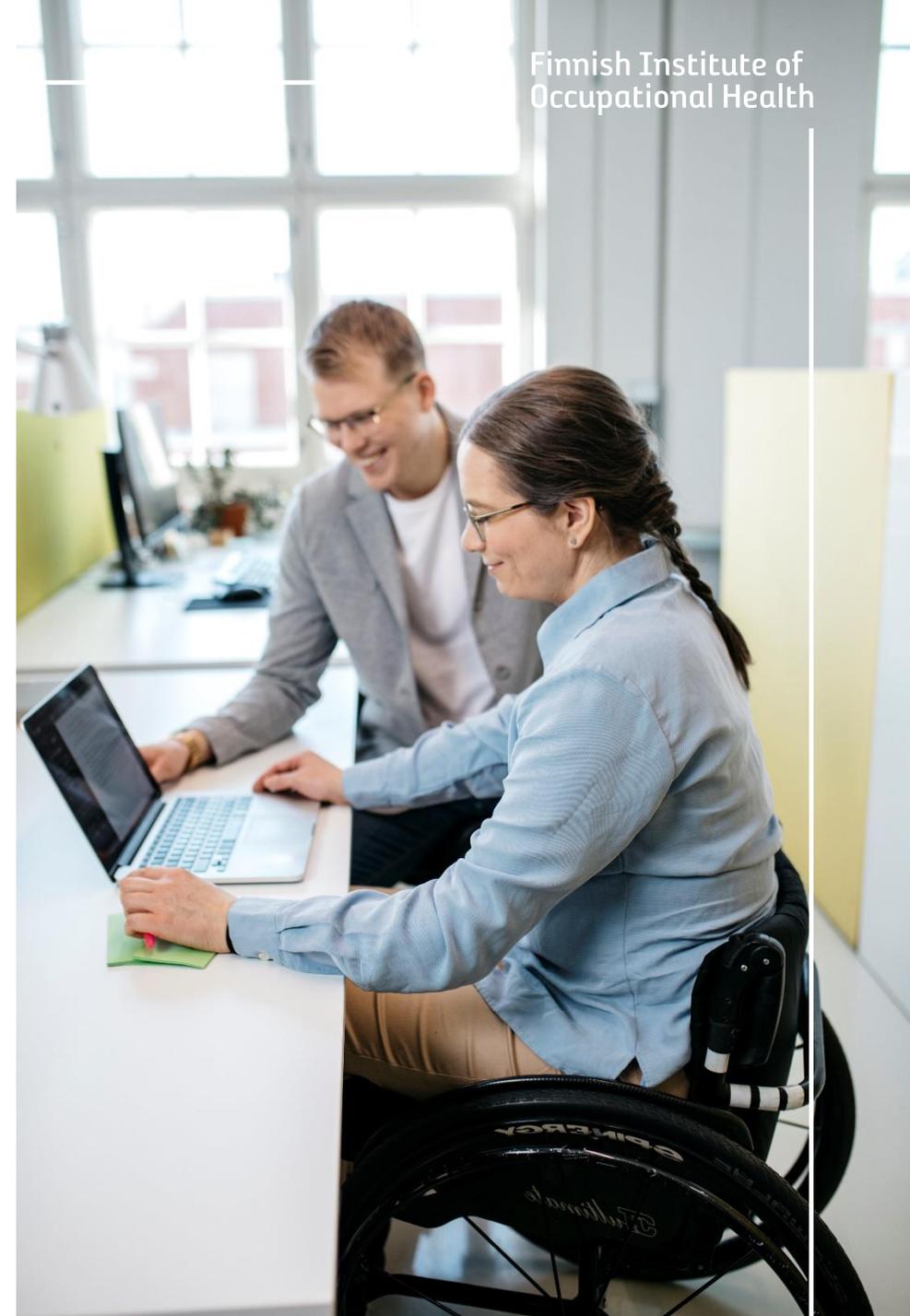
As hybrid work is becoming more common and office spaces are being developed, the objectives of this study are the following

- To examine the role of employees' experiences of physical office environment in the choice of work location.
- To compare them with other potential predictors of location choices, including psychosocial factors and employee well-being.



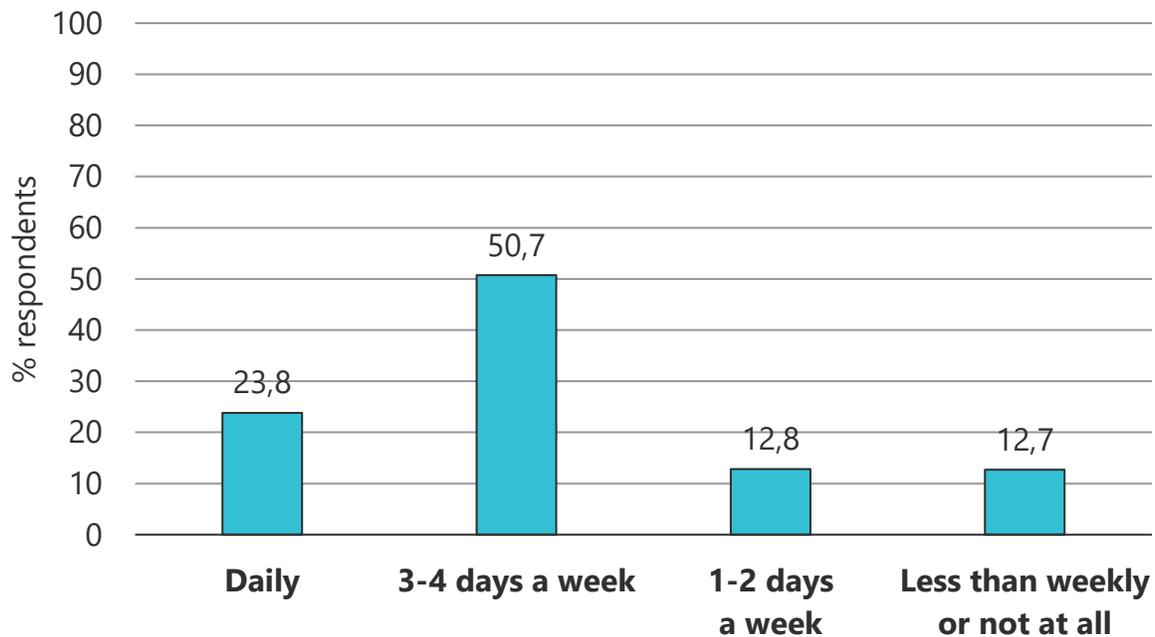
Materials and methods

- A cross-sectional survey was conducted in four large Finnish organizations in Autumn 2022 (n=923 knowledge workers).
- The survey data was analyzed by multinomial regression, comparing preferences to "decrease" or "increase telework" to the reference category "continue the same".
- Analyses were adjusted for age, gender, and education.
- The organizations had flexible telework practices and most employees had no compulsory minimum on-site requirements.
- Most offices represented modern activity-based design.
 - 91 % of employees worked in unassigned workstations and 9 % in assigned workstations

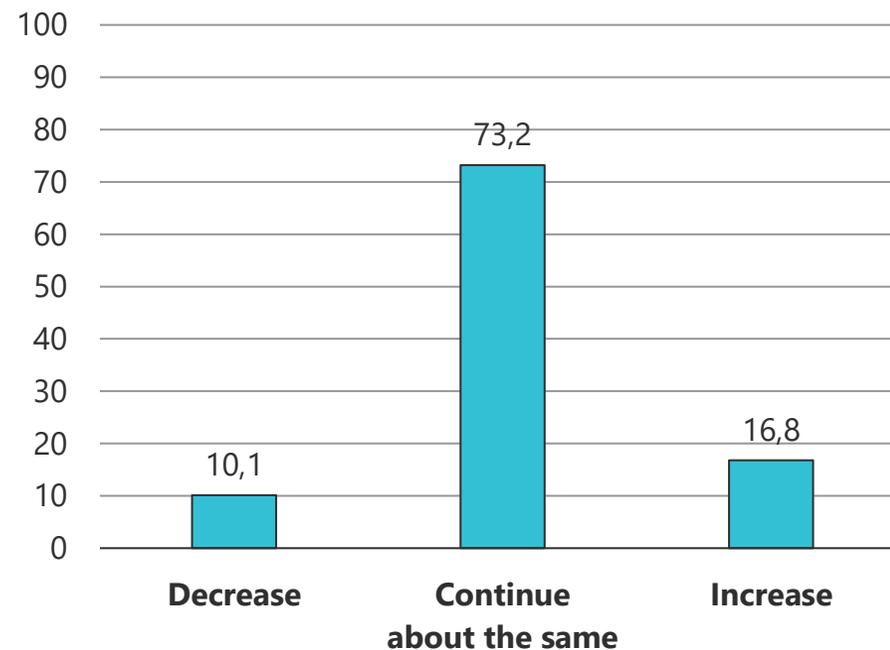


Results: Amount of telework and preferences to decrease or increase telework

Amount of teleworking



Preferences to increase or decrease amount of teleworking



Results: Physical workplace experience was associated with telework preferences

Variable	Decrease telework		Increase telework	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Task privacy	1.36 **	1.15, 1.62	0.69 ***	0.61, 0.79
Access to quiet space	1.18	0.34, 4.13	0.18 ***	0.09, 0.36
Access to spaces for spontaneous discussions	0.58	0.16, 2.18	0.21 **	0.09, 0.53
Ease of workspace-switching	2.29	0.28, 18.89	0.19 **	0.08, 0.47
Person-environment fit	2.24	0.50, 10.09	0.26 **	0.12, 0.59
Being able to detach oneself from work in break room	1.57	0.50, 4.89	0.26 **	0.12, 0.52
Sufficient space to work	1.42	0.60, 3.35	0.21 ***	0.12, 0.37
Sufficient storage space	1.12	0.40, 3.09	0.29 **	0.15, 0.60

Reference category: "Continue about the same"

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The following factors were not associated with telework preferences: Access to bookable meetings rooms, support for interaction, availability of colleagues, satisfaction with cleanliness, and furniture ergonomics and comfort

Interpretation of odds ratios (OR)

- Office perceptions were mostly relevant to wishing to increase telework but not to decreasing it, except for task privacy.
- More positive ratings of the office were associated with lower odds ($OR < 1$) of wanting to increase telework. This means that people with more positive experience of the office more likely wanted to continue teleworking in the same way and not increase telework.
- Conversely, this means that more negative experiences of the office were related to wishing to increase telework
- Only more positive perceptions of task privacy were related to specifically wanting to decrease telework (not just continue the same)

Results: Few psychosocial factors were associated with telework preferences, but employee well-being was not

Variable	Decrease telework		Increase telework	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Relational justice	1.62	1.11, 2.35	0.70*	0.56, 0.88
Effort-Reward Imbalance	0.77	0.40, 1.48	2.10**	1.42, 3.12

Reference category: "Continue about the same" * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The following factors were not associated with telework preferences: participatory safety, support for innovation, vision, task orientation, job demands, work ability, work engagement, and burnout

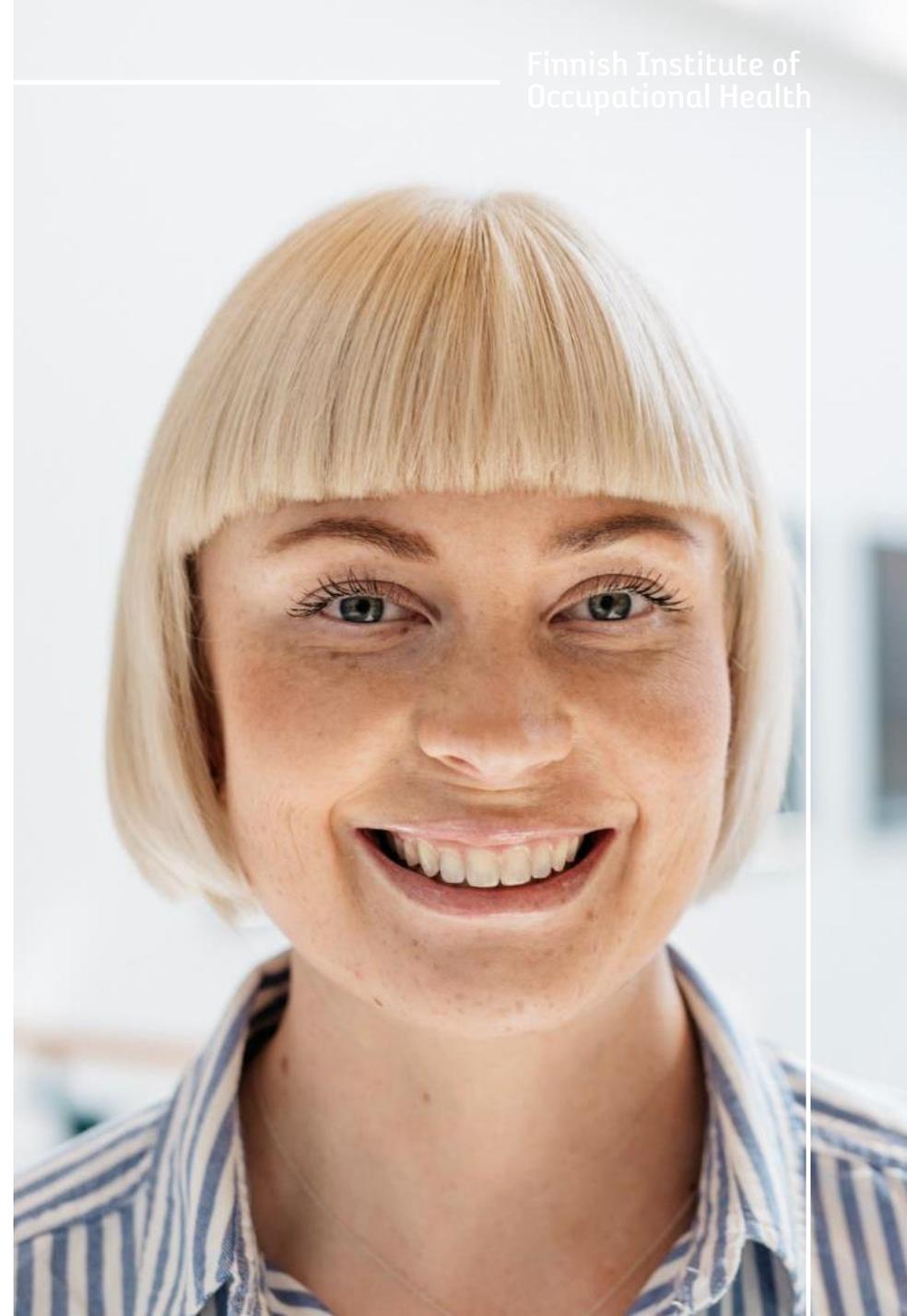
Conclusions

- Employees' experiences of office spaces are a key factor in choosing between telework and office work.
- People who assess work premises more negatively work more from home and are more likely to want to further increase the amount of telework.
- Lower relational justice and effort-reward balance were also reasons for wishing to work from home more.
- Peaceful working conditions with few distractions and interruptions attracted hybrid employees to the office.
- Further research is needed to better understand the dynamics between office conditions and teleworking preferences.



Practical implications

- For post-pandemic organizations, office design should be considered an integral component of hybrid work models.
- In designing the office more attractive for hybrid employees, it is relevant to ensure sufficient privacy and adequate workspaces both for concentration and interaction.
- Hybrid work can be seen as a significant workplace innovation which needs new leadership practices, forms of interaction as well as technological and workspace solutions.



References and more info

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Thank you!

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