



WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WORKING FROM HOME IN BANGKOK,
THAILAND, DURING THE COVID-19 SITUATION AND BEYOND

BY

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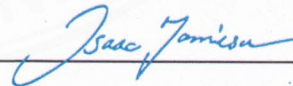
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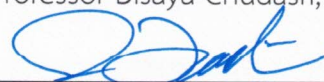
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ABSTRACT

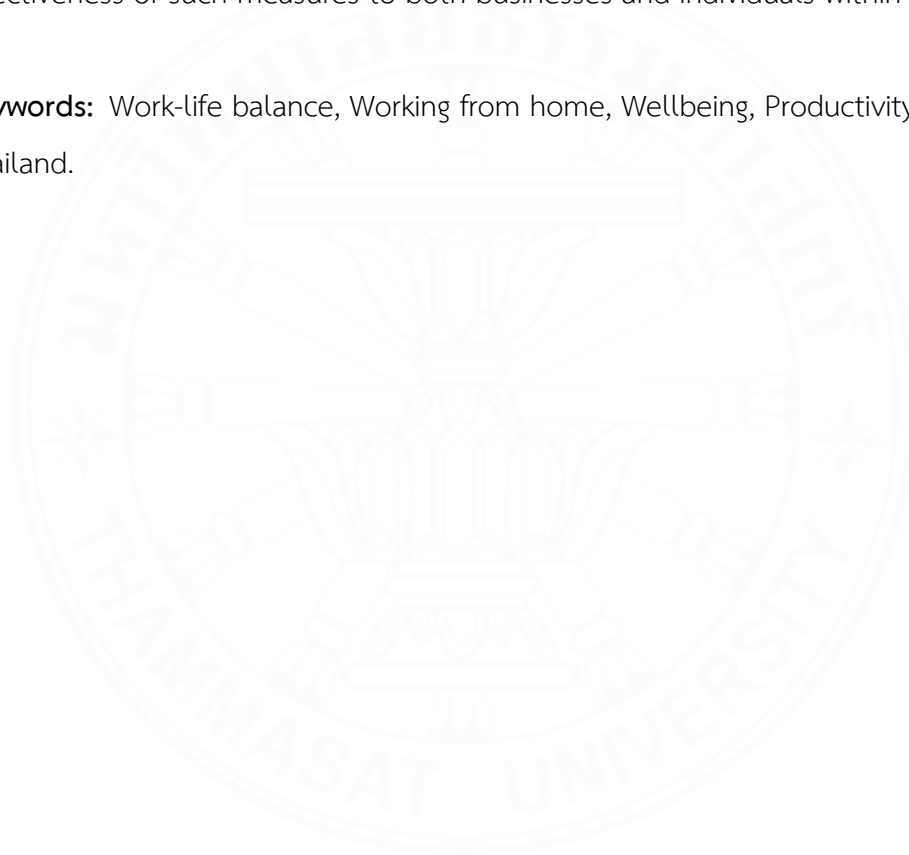
This study investigates the impacts of working from home (WFH) on work-life balance (WLB), especially among residents of Bangkok, Thailand, during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking into account the city's ranking as one of the world's most overworked cities as a starting point, this research explores how remote working, especially as undertaken at home by large numbers of people during the COVID-19 lockdown and the WFH conditions they experienced, further exacerbated poor WLB and work-life boundaries, and negatively affected mental and physical health, job satisfaction, and productivity.

The quantitative research undertaken for this work was conducted through an online survey that received 625 responses from a diverse group comprising private company employees, government workers, freelancers, and students. Amongst other factors, it examined respondents' WFH conditions, daily routines, stress levels, personal wellbeing, and satisfaction with remote work setups. The results obtained revealed that while WFH provided some benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased time with family and reduced commuting, many respondents had poor WFH conditions and experienced worsened mental health, increased overtime, and difficulty separating personal and professional life. Significant contributors to poor WLB

included inadequate employer support, suboptimal home workspaces, and excessive outside of work hours communication. All factors that continue today in the post-pandemic world.

The study concludes by proposing guidelines for individuals and organisations to improve WLB and WFH setups, emphasizing in particular the importance of mental health support, ergonomic home setups, time management initiatives, clear work boundaries, and flexible policies. It also indicates the costs effectiveness of such measures to both businesses and individuals within Bangkok.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Working from home, Wellbeing, Productivity, COVID-19, Thailand.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Terms
CCOHS	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
CFI	Corporate Finance Institute
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
EHT	Environmental Health Trust
EMFs	Electromagnetic fields
Gen X	Generation X
Gen Y	Generation Y
Gen Z	Generation Z
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
MSDs	Musculoskeletal disorders
RSPH	Royal Society for Public Health
TED	Technology, Entertainment, Design
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WFH	Work from home
WHO	World Health Organization
WLB	Work-life balance

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Work-life balance (WLB) is an individual's abilities to meet their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities (Thomas, 2021). Having a good WLB enables you to make more of your life without compromising your own happiness or wellbeing. It also allows you to prioritise what is important in your life, including work-tasks, without feeling guilty. Furthermore, it enables you to create strong boundaries between different aspects of your life. It is often something that many people find difficult to achieve (Moulder, 2021). Many people have experienced diminishing life-quality in the recent past, due in large part to decreased WLB exacerbated by working at home as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown, poor work from home (WFH) conditions, and the blurring of work-life with private life demarcations.

Moreover, having poor WLB and poor working conditions not only affects both physical and mental health (Royal Society for Public Health, 2020), it also reduces productivity and increases the likelihood of having burnout syndrome (Ahmed, 2020). It is proposed that these are factors that businesses, and individuals, should take very seriously.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, poor WLB was further exacerbated by many people having to work almost exclusively from home at that time, individuals often having poor working conditions within the home, plus an erosion of work-life boundaries exacerbated by the increased sending of work-related electronic communications by bosses and co-workers outside of normal work hours. The extended erosion of WLB and changes in work practices that have arisen is having a dramatic impact on most people's health. As an example, an online survey revealed that whilst in May 2020 34% of people were experiencing burnout (already a very high figure) that number had risen to 69% by July 2020 (Monster, 2020). Burnout is

additionally one of the contributive factors to both ‘quiet quitting’ where employees put in “the minimum effort required, and ... are psychologically disconnected from their employer”, and “loud quitting” where “employees take actions that directly harm the organization, undercutting its goals and opposing its leaders” (Gallup, 2023).

It is proposed that even after the passing of the COVID-19 pandemic, measures urgently need to be taken to help address the issues that have been highlighted above.

1.2 Problem statement

The COVID-19 pandemic forced millions of workers in Bangkok, and other parts of Thailand, to rapidly transition from going out to work to working from home (WFH), often without them having adequate preparation, training, resources, or suitable places within the home, to do so effectively. Whilst it was already known that WFH can offer potential benefits such as flexibility and reduced need to commute, many Thai individuals who WFH during that period struggled to maintain a healthy WLB.

It was hypothesised for this present work that many Thais being suddenly forced to WFH, lack of appropriate personal workspace and equipment within many individuals’ homes, increasingly blurred boundaries between work and home life, and mental and physical health issues exacerbated by these sudden changes, may have been major factors contributing to the increased levels of stress, physical strain, and emotional exhaustion being experienced by those WFH at that time.

The above issues have raised serious concerns about the long-term sustainability of WFH and WLB issues if not properly addressed especially in Bangkok, a city that was already known for its poor WLB prior to the pandemic (Kisi, 2022, 2021). This study aims to investigate how such conditions that have been highlighted affect the WLB of individuals who WFH and to identify practical strategies for improving their wellbeing and productivity, learning from the results obtained from the primary and secondary research undertaken for this work and thinking how it can be applied both

during future periods when periods of WFH may be enforced and on a more day-to-day basis for those who regularly WFH, or work remotely, when conditions are normal.

1.3 Research question

What are the benefits of creating a better work-life balance and working conditions, especially during the COVID-19 situation and beyond, and how might they be achieved in particular for those who work from home some or all of the time?

1.4 Research aims

The research aims of this work are as follows: To investigate the impacts of working from home on work-life balance (WLB) in Bangkok during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to identify strategies that individuals and organizations can adopt to improve WLB, enhance employee wellbeing, and sustain productivity in remote work settings in the future as well.

1.5 Research objectives

The research objectives of this present study are as follows:

- 1) To assess the mental, physical, and relational effects of poor WLB and working conditions among individuals working from home in Bangkok, and elsewhere in Thailand, during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) To identify key factors contributing to poor WLB and working conditions when WFH based on survey data and literature review.
- 3) To propose evidence-based recommendations and guidelines for individuals and employers that can be used to help improve WLB and working conditions in both current and future WFH scenarios and standard work condition scenarios.

1.6 Research framework

The research framework created for this present research is divided into three main phases.

Phase 1 covers development of the research question, aim, and objectives; the undertaking of a critical literature review, including an investigation of relevant case studies; sampling selection; and the creation and launching of an online survey.

Phase 2 covers the collection and analysis of data obtained from quantitative research undertaken through the online survey. It also provides a continuation of the critical literature review specifically addressing issues raised during the primary research and measures that might be taken to address these.

Phase 3 covers creation of guidelines on how to achieve better work-life balance and life quality while working from home.

1.7 Scope of the research

This study investigates the state of work-life balance (WLB) in Thailand and how individuals can improve their own WLB without compromising their happiness, wellbeing, or productivity particularly when working from home (WFH). It seeks to determine and reveal ways for them to preserve their health, become more efficient and prioritise what is important in their lives, including personal time. It also intends to help make businesses more aware of what they too can do to better look after the wellbeing of their staff, and improve their productivity, through taking measures to help them achieve greater WLB and life quality. It focuses on Thailand, and Bangkok in particular, as the location for data collection and sampling. The decision to focus on Bangkok in this present work is because it is recognised as one of the world's cities that has very poor work-life balance (Kisi, 2022, 2021).

In particular, it investigates how working from home and work from home set-ups can affect people's physical health, mental health, and general wellbeing, and seeks to determine what measures and initiatives can be taken to help improve WLB

and life quality in ways that will benefit both individuals and those that they work for. Furthermore, it proposes a set of guidelines for people that have to / wish to WFH and those who employ them.

In addition to having undertaken secondary research from both a national and international perspective to provide data and insights for the above, quantitative research has also been carried out to provide detailed background information on the situation in Bangkok in the form of an online survey. The data that was collected was specifically scoped to answer the research question and to support the intended research outcome.

For the sample population, this study focuses in particular on Thai people who work or study from home, especially those within the Bangkok Metropolitan area.

1.8 Intended results

1) Raised awareness within businesses and for members of the general public working from home on the importance of gaining better WLB and having good work conditions, and the risks that they face if they fail to address these issues properly.

2) A set of guidelines on how to create a better WLB and working conditions for individuals who WFH that can be used by the individuals themselves and those that employ them that can also be instrumental in cost-effectively creating happier, healthier and more productive workforces.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

This literature review principally investigates how work-life balance (WLB) and WFH conditions could have been improved in Bangkok, Thailand, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and lessons that can be applied from this to the current time and beyond. As part of this work, it assesses and discusses research from both Thailand and abroad in order to gain better insights and determine the factors that are important to address. These in turn were used to formulate the questions asked in the quantitative work undertaken for this thesis.

The main areas being investigated in this review section are: what is work-life balance?; work-life balance in Thailand; why work-life balance is important; and working from home and the conditions encountered.

2.2 What is work-life balance?

Thomas (2021) provides the following definition of WLB: “... *an individual's ability to meet their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities.*”

A major challenge in helping individuals achieve WLB is that WLB is different for every person. It can be achieved when the individual is able to manage their time, including have their free time, knowing what is really important and what is not, being able to focus on what they are doing, and being able to separate each part so that they do not interrupt another part.

Moulder (2021) suggests that WLB is not something you can find, instead it is created by you. It is proposed in this present work that companies' work policies and initiatives can also greatly impact the degree of WLB people are able to achieve.

Most people expect that individuals who achieve WLB will be able to do following:

- 1) Work better without interrupting personal health and happiness.
- 2) Make a greater positive impact in their children's lives.
- 3) Focus on the present.
- 4) Know what is important and be able to take care of themselves and their family without feeling shame or guilt.
- 5) Have a strong routine that they feel balanced and good about.
- 6) Not try to do or have it all (Moulder, 2021).

2.3 Work-life balance in thailand

WLB can often be very poor in Thailand. In the 'Cities with the Best Work-Life Balance 2021' report by Kisi (2021), the WLB criteria assessed for 50 cities across the world were: Work Intensity; Society and Institutions; and City Liveability. The factors assessed for each of these were as follows:

- 1) **Work Intensity:** Remote Jobs, Overworked Population, Minimum Vacations Offered, Vacations Taken, Unemployment, Multiple Jobholders, and Paid Parental Leave.
- 2) **Society and Institutions:** COVID-19 Support, Healthcare, Access to Mental Healthcare, and Inclusivity and Tolerance.
- 3) **City Liveability:** Affordability, Happiness, Culture and Leisure, City Safety, Outdoor Spaces, Air Quality, Wellness and Fitness, and COVID-19 Impact.

In that assessment, it was revealed that Bangkok had very poor WLB based on those criteria, resulting in it being rated 49th out of those 50 cities. That same report also ranked it as one of the top over-worked cities in the world (Kisi, 2021). For 2022, the WLB survey by survey by Kisi (2022) ranked Bangkok 96th out of 100 cities assessed. Earlier, back in 2016 it had been ranked as having the 5th longest working hours at 42.13 hours per week (Wu, 2016). By 2021, it was reported to have the 3rd longest working hours of the cities assessed (Kisi, 2021a).

2.4 Reasons why good work-life balance is important

Working long-hours can actually be counterproductive, damage health, reduce work-life balance, and make people work less efficiently. Similar harm can also be caused by out of work hours communications. If individuals work without taking breaks they can increase their stress levels. It is vital to factor adequate breaks into our workday to improve our WLB, work efficiency, and productivity (Corporate Finance Institute, 2015–2021; Worklife, 2020). It is also important to have good working conditions so that we can work as effectively as possible. That also means factoring in breaks, and opportunities to step away from work to recharge, at sufficient intervals.

2.4.1 Good work-life balance enhances your ability to be present

Always thinking about work, even when you not working, and not leaving your work at the workplace, or worrying about personal life while working, will destroy your WLB because it means that you cannot fully focus on the things that you are doing. Being at the present in the moment can make you aware of yourself and the things you are doing so you can do them at full capacity (Moulder, 2021). It also enables you relax better when you are not working.

2.4.2 Working long hours does not necessarily mean being more productive

Contrary to what many people think, working long hours does not necessarily equate to higher productivity. Research shows that productivity begins to decline significantly beyond 50 hours per week, with minimal gains and increasing risks of burnout arising. Productivity declines to such a degree beyond working 55 hours that anyone working a 70-hour week achieves nothing in extra in terms of productivity with those extra 15 hours (CIRCADIAN®, 2018; Pencavel, 2014). In fact, the optimal daily working time for sustained productivity and well-being may be around 7.6 hours (Merle, 2022).

By shifting the focus from working harder to working smarter, individuals and organisations can achieve greater work-life balance, enhanced cognitive

performance, and improved long-term resilience. Fostering such an environment not only supports employee health but also strengthens organisational sustainability.

2.4.3 A balanced lifestyle increases engagement at work

Employees that have good mental and physical health are more likely to be motivated to work harder and do their best in the tasks they are assigned. The more motivation they have, the more engagement they have which can create better communication in the workplace and enhance their relationships with customers (Moulder, 2021).

2.4.4 Work-life balance increases creative thinking

The human brain needs space to think and generate idea. It cannot think as clearly or as creatively when stressed or overused. When you give your brain a rest, it can think more creatively which in turn can boost your productivity (Moulder, 2021).

2.4.5 Balance makes you more productive

Employees that have good mental and physical health, can focus better on what they doing, think clearly and creatively, and be more motivated. All of the things that mentioned can greatly enhance productivity and make individuals more likely to perform better on the work they assigned to do. Working longer hours can be severely counterproductive (The Economist, 2021).

2.4.6 Real balance brings happiness and fulfilment

One of the most important purposes of WLB is to make you feel fulfilled and feel better about yourself. It is possible to create better balance between your personal life and work life to improve matters both for yourself and those you work for.

2.4.7 Work-life balance brings higher levels of success

WLB is all about how well you can prioritise what is really important to you, taking care of your wellbeing, and able to control your life. It makes you think more clearly and creatively, more productively and helps drive you towards success on your true-life goals (Wright, 2021).

As indicated by the survey results discussed above, many companies struggle to create good WLB for their workers. This issue rose to prominence during the COVID-19 crisis, where different to normal work patterns had to be followed, and still continues to this day. Research undertaken on this issue by Workfront (2015), pre-COVID-19, found the following were often major factors contributing to poor WLB: bad or overbearing bosses (60%); inflexible work hours or rigid time-off scheduling (39%); regularly having to work beyond standard business hours (39%); incompetent co-workers (31%); and long commuting times (30%).

Poor work from home conditions (RSPH, 2021), lack of adequate breaks (Corporate Finance Institute, 2015–2021; Worklife, 2020), and increased sending of work-related electronic communications out of normal work hours (Zadow, 2021) have also contributed to such problems.

2.5 Working from home and the conditions encountered

It is important to gain an accurate understanding of the work-from home conditions that individuals have to cope with in order to gain insights into how these may affect WLB and quality of life.

2.5.1 Work from home conditions

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, it was considered appropriate to research best practice and factors that can affect WLB abroad too in order to gain insights into areas of potential importance that should be looked into to help create better WLB for those working in Bangkok and elsewhere in Thailand.

With this in mind, mention is made of an online survey conducted by the Royal Society for Public Health (2021) in the United Kingdom which investigated the experiences of individuals working from home and the kinds of conditions and challenges they have to meet. All of the respondents in that work were based in UK. In total, 678 people of ages between 35-65 years old participated, and of these 80% experienced working either full-time or part-time from home.

2.5.1.1 Location where people work from when working from home

The survey asked respondents which areas of their home they worked from and indicated that while some individuals (28%) work from a home office area that fulfils all of the main needs they have, many do not have that opportunity and work in less-than-ideal conditions (Table 2.1). Working location when working from home is an important factor to take into account when accessing WLB, as it can provide indications into how easy or difficult it may be for people to disconnect from work, and also if there are any factors related to the home work area that may reduce work efficiency, necessitating people have to work longer than normal hours and having less opportunities for relaxation.

Table 2.1 Where have you been working from?

Location	Percentage
Home office/ A room with full functions	28
Kitchen/ Dining room table	23
A bedroom	22
Living room desk	15
A sofa	4
Other	8

Source: Royal Society for Public Health (2021).

2.5.1.2 Composition of the households individuals work from

The Royal Society for Public Health (2021) survey also asked about the composition of the households individuals work from, which is again an important factor that can influence work efficiency and WLB (Table 2.2). It additionally suggests to the present author of the possible benefits to individuals' WLB by companies providing flexible working hours to help them better address personal non-work commitments they have in their daily lives.

Table 2.2 Number of people who live in the household you work from?

Statement	Percentage
I live in a household with at least one young child that I care for	18
Live with partner	39
Live alone	14
Live in a shared house with housemates	12
Live in a household with at least one young child but I am not their primary carer	2
I live in household where I am primary carer for other adults	2
Other	12

Source: Royal Society for Public Health (2021).

2.5.1.3 Types of support provided by companies to those working from home

The Royal Society for Public Health (2021) survey into how home working is impacting the public's health in the UK also investigated the different types of support that had been supplied to individuals from the firms that they work with in order for them to find working from home easier. The results from their survey questions on that topic area are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Types of support offered to those working from home

Type of Support	% of people offered
Laptop /desktop computer	51
Flexible working hours	38
Mental health support	34
Computer mouse	33
Support for setting up home workstation	29
Computer keyboard	26

Table 2.3 Types of support offered to those working from home (Cont.)

Type of Support	% of people offered
Support with keeping fit	20
Ergonomic work chair	17
Budget to spend on work equipment	12
Work from home health and safety assessment conducted online	9
Laptop and cradle stand	8
A work desk	7
Keyboard and mouse gel mats	5
Screen protector to help prevent eye strain	1

Source: Royal Society for Public Health (2021).

Good working conditions and support can help individuals work more efficiently and be more productive, thereby getting things done faster so that, ideally, they can have more time for their personal lives and better WLB.

It is interesting to note that 34% of respondents were offered mental health support. This is mentioned because mental health issues are seldom given the support they deserve in Thailand because of the counterproductive negative stigma often given to them in society and the workplace.

2.6 How to set up a healthy workstation area in the home

The above findings on the amount of support provided to individuals to create better WFH conditions, prompted additional literature review work being undertaken in this chapter on how to set up healthier workspaces for individuals. It is proposed that creating healthier WFH areas will benefit both mental and physical health, plus help reduce fatigue and increase user work efficiency. Increased work efficiency will help individuals get more done in less time, thereby offering the opportunity for them to have more free time and better WLB.

2.6.1 Lighting

2.6.1.1 Daytime light exposure

Ideally individuals should work from an area where they have good exposure to natural daylight. They should also have appropriate task lighting to ensure they have can work in appropriate light exposures for the tasks they are undertaking whatever the time of day. The benefits that can arise from addressing such issues include the following:

(1) Improved performance

Research has shown that office workers who received good exposure to natural light whilst at work had 10-25% better mental function, memory recall and task performance than those who did not (Heschong Mahone Group, 2015; Loftness et al., 2009; Pierson, 1995).

Likelihood of depression and making errors: Incidence of anxiety and depression increased 25% worldwide during the COVID-19 lockdown (World Health Organization, 2022). This may in part have been due to lack of exposure to natural light especially at the start of the day. Many people typically spent considerable parts of their days in low light levels of around 100-300 lux indoors when (Archtoolbox 2020), and some only typically experience light intensities greater than 1,000 lux for less than 1 hour per day (Okudaira et al., 1983). In Thailand, people often work in low light conditions when indoors with curtains and blinds often drawn restricting the passage of natural light.

During the pandemic, opportunities to receive sufficient exposure to natural light were reduced even further as people went outdoors even less than normal. As insufficient exposure to daytime natural light is associated with higher risk of depression (Brown & Jacobs, 2011), this situation is likely to have been a major contributory factor to increased depression risk in Thai workers during that period.

Higher light levels have additionally been shown to reduce error rates for prescription-dispensing of medicines: 2.6% at 1,500 lux versus

3.8% at 450 lux (Buchanan et al., 1991). Similar reductions may also be noted for other tasks.

(2) Daylight and sleep quality

Another benefit of good exposure to daylight whilst working is that it can help individuals have longer and better-quality sleep which will benefit both their productivity and long-term health. As an example of the latter, Boubekri et al. (2014) report that office workers who work next to windows are more physically active than those who do not and typically get achieve 46 minutes more sleep every night.

2.6.1.2 Artificial light exposure

When using electronic devices, it's important to ensure proper ambient lighting. Avoid working in complete darkness, as this creates a sharp contrast between the bright screen and the surrounding environment, leading to eye strain, headaches, and discomfort. A well-lit background helps maintain a balanced visual field and prevents what's often referred to as "computer vision syndrome" (American Optometric Association, 2021).

(1) Key tips for healthy lighting while using electronic screens:

1.1 Use suitable ambient lighting: Background lighting reduces the strain caused by screen glare and improves focus.

1.2 Avoid direct glare: Position desk lamps so they do not shine directly into your eyes or reflect off screens. This helps reduce visual fatigue and supports long-term comfort (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2025).

1.3 Avoid screen use in the dark: Always maintain some ambient lighting when using a screen at night to reduce contrast-related eye fatigue.

Artificial lighting, when used appropriately, can enhance productivity, reduce eye strain, and support overall well-being. In contrast, a lack of

natural or adequate artificial light can lead to tired eyes and reduced concentration (BenQ, 2024).

(2) Nighttime light exposure and its health impacts

Exposure to artificial light at night, whether from streetlights, indoor lighting, or electronic screens, can significantly disrupt individuals' natural circadian rhythm (the body's internal clock that regulates the sleep-wake cycle). This disruption interferes with melatonin production, a hormone essential for sleep and with protective effects against several health conditions.

According to research (Cho et al., 2024; Blask et al., 2014) light exposure at night is associated with:

- 1) Poor sleep quality
- 2) Increased risk of obesity
- 3) Higher incidence of depression
- 4) Greater risk of certain types of cancer, including breast and prostate cancer

Even low levels of light during sleep can suppress melatonin. A 2022 study found that sleeping in a room with moderate ambient light can raise nighttime heart rate and insulin resistance the next day (Mason et al., 2022).

(3) Tips to reduce harmful nighttime light exposures

There are a number of protective measures that can be taken at night to help ensure that individuals get more restorative sleep that will both help protect their sleep and improve their productivity the next day.

As examples: use blackout curtains or eye masks to block out light pollution from external light sources:

- 1) Avoid looking at screens (such as those for mobile phones, computers and/or TVs) 1–2 hours before bedtime. (Additionally, use 'night mode' settings on electronic devices to reduce blue light exposure and/or wear glasses that block blue light).
- 2) Install dim, warm-colored lights for evening use, and avoid bright white or blue-spectrum lighting at night.

3) If night lighting is necessary, use low-intensity red or amber nightlights where possible, as have far lower impact on the body's melatonin levels and its ability to heal itself (West et al., 2011).

2.6.2 The importance of good ergonomics in the home office work area

Poor ergonomic setups, such as is often the case in work-from-home work areas, can lead to musculoskeletal issues, reduced work efficiency, and cause long-term health complications. Many individuals often work from home in ergonomically substandard conditions that can aggravate or cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which encompass a wide variety of health conditions including lower back pain, tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. In addition to creating physical discomfort, MSDs can also contribute to mental issues including depression (Harnett, 2024).

There has been a sharp rise in MSDs injury cases connected to work in recent years, rising from 1.4% in 2019 to 37.7% in 2020 (Webber, 2021). In 2022/2023 it was reported that 21% of all workdays lost to health-related issues in the United Kingdom were due to work-related MSDs (HSE, 2023). Additionally, in the USA it has been reported that MSDs caused 31% of all work-related illnesses in that country, and that for seated employees their prevalence can be even greater (Harnett, 2024).

As noted by Ascenti (2020): *"... it is vitally important that employees are supported to introduce an ergonomically friendly home working set-up as soon as possible."* Having work areas within the home have good ergonomic characteristics makes sound financial sense as good ergonomics can help individuals maintain good physical health, comfort, and help optimise their productivity (CMD, 2025; Environmental Health Trust, 2025; Wickersham 2025; Boubekriet al., 2014; Public Health Degrees, 2021; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2014; Yamavu, 2013; Fjeld et al., 1998; West et al., 2011) (Figure 2.1). The costs of taking proactive measures to ensure good ergonomics in the home office work area would appear to represent a sound investment to boost both health and productivity.

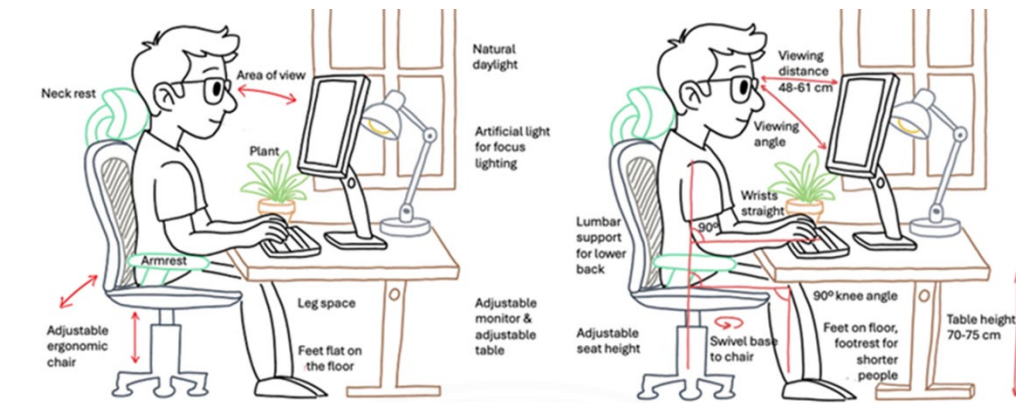


Figure 2.1 Workstation ergonomics

By following ergonomic principles and incorporating evidence-based practices, home office areas can be created that cost-effectively supports reduces strain, physical health, and increases long-term productivity. Computer monitors should be located at a suitable height for viewing and easy usage as bending to see the screen bad is for your posture and physical health, particularly as related to your neck and spine. The top of the screen should be little lower than eye level and the screen should be located at around one arm's length from the user (American Optometric Association, 2021; Yamavu, 2013).

2.6.3 Reduce exposures to electromagnetic pollution

2.6.3.1 Avoid using electronic devices directly in contact with your body

Computers, laptops and tablets should be used on hard surfaces and not in direct contact with your body, as is so often the case with individuals when working from home. This is mentioned because both the magnetic and radiofrequency fields that such devices emit are classified as Group 2B carcinogens by the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2011; IARC Working Group on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans, 2002) and because work areas should be as bio-friendly as possible to help individuals operate as efficiently as they can and in good health.

2.6.3.2 Use low-EMF technology and accessories

To reduce EMF radiation exposure within areas where people work from when working from home, hardwired keyboards and hardwired mice should

be used instead of wireless or Bluetooth versions. The use of wired alternatives can greatly lower exposure to electromagnetic pollution. Ideally equipment should be switched off and unplugged when not in use (Environmental Health Trust, 2025).

(1) Use a corded telephone

Corded landline telephones emit significantly less electromagnetic fields (EMFs) than wireless mobile phones, making them a safer option for call, particularly prolonged conversations. When using a mobile phone, best practices include using speakerphone or a wired (non-Bluetooth) hands-free set and avoiding direct contact with the head. Airtube headsets, which use hollow tubes to carry sound instead of electrical signals, are preferable to standard wired or Bluetooth headsets when mobile phones do have to be used (and when the use of speakers for them is impractical or they are not available) because they reduce electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure near the brain. For additional guidance (Jaron, 2025).

(2) Organise electrical wiring away from the body

Electrical wires, extension cords, and power strips should be placed as far as possible from the body, ideally routed along the wall or behind furniture. The strength of electric and magnetic fields decreases significantly with distance. Even a few centimeters can make a meaningful difference in long-term exposure. Such wiring should also be kept away from conductive metal elements of furniture which can increase local fields next the body (Environmental Health Trust, 2025).

(3) Charge devices safely

While wired chargers emit lower levels of electromagnetic radiation than wireless ones, both types can contribute to EMF exposure. It is best to charge devices away from where you sit or sleep, to avoid prolonged low-level exposure, especially at night. Avoid sleeping with mobile phones being charged near the bed, especially if these are located relatively close to your head or some other part of your body.

2.6.4 Measure levels of EMF exposures in proposed work areas

Measuring your home's and home workspace's EMF levels can be a useful step toward creating a healthier environment. EMF meters can help identify sources of radiation such as Wi-Fi routers, smart meters, and improperly grounded devices and empower individuals and families to take action to reduce unnecessary exposure (TechWellness, 2025).

2.6.5 Contact with nature

Park & Lee (2019) report that enabling people to have a visible connection with nature can help reduce potential stress and boredom, plus increase their concentration levels and level of engagement in work whilst lowering their blood pressure and heart rates. Often this can be achieved by aligning key elements in the work-from-home workspace to allow views to the outside whilst undertaking work activities. Those authors additionally note that views of nature can also increase individuals' performance through helping increase work engagement and concentration.

Research has shown that enriching with plants previously 'lean' office space (which had previously had no plants) can significantly increase worker satisfaction, self-reported levels of concentration, and even perceived air quality. A 15% increase in productivity has also been demonstrated (Nieuwenhuis et al., 2014). Furthermore, Elzeyadi (2011) suggests that creating workspace that enable contact with nature can help reduce worker absenteeism by around 10%. Fjeld et al. (1998), who investigated the effects of indoor plants on health and discomfort symptoms among office workers, found that just by adding indoor plants to an area to help provide such contact could reduce absenteeism by around 14%. The effects of helping people working from home to green their workspace is seldom considered by companies yet could yield large benefits for all parties.

2.6.6 Impact of work from home on health and wellbeing

The results of the survey by the Royal Society for Public Health in the United Kingdom revealed that 45% of respondents think working from home is better for their health and well-being, while 29% think it worse and the rest did not

think it affects their health and wellbeing or didn't know if it had effect or not. Moreover, looking deeper into this area revealed that people who lived with multiple housemates are more likely to have problems while working from home (41%) than those who live with a partner (24%), or those who live alone (29%) (Royal Society for Public Health, 2021).

2.6.7 Impacts of work-related stress

The World Health Organization (2020), notes that: "Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope." It can also arise when individuals have work to do that is within their capabilities, but do not have enough time to do it. To give an indication of the scale of the problem, workplace stress is ranked fifth highest with regards to causes of death in the US. It has additionally been noted by around a quarter of all Americans that their jobs are their main source of stress. Furthermore, the American Institute of Stress suggests that workplace stress costs the US economy around \$300bn annually (Pfeffer, 2018).

Measures that can be taken to help you avoid stress and anxiety caused from overwork load include: Saying no to things that are not priorities; Delegating as much work as appropriate; Choosing to do things that important; Prioritising your wellbeing first. When you can manage your workload and have more time for what is important to you, you can greatly decrease your stress and anxiety levels (Moulder, 2021).

Many modern jobs require long hours of sitting and screen time, which can lead to fatigue, discomfort, and chronic health issues. Taking care of your body and helping it to operate efficiently is an important part of maintaining good WLB and supporting physical health. Simple practices such as getting exposure to natural light (especially in the morning, including whilst working), eating healthy meals, reducing intake of junk food, sugar, and alcohol, and prioritizing quality sleep (and ensuring good environmental conditions to do so) – and not working late at night - can make a marked difference.

2.6.8 A good WLB can improve your mental health

Being under pressure and stressed all the time has a negative impact on the human brain and mental health. Poor work-life balance often results from a combination of workplace and personal pressures. Common causes include long working hours, poor time management, increased professional responsibilities, and additional duties at home, such as caregiving or parenting (Sanfilippo, 2021). Left unaddressed, these issues can lead to burnout, poor health, and reduced job performance.

Achieving better WLB gives individuals more time to think and see problems clearly and be able to make better decisions. When individuals have the time to step back, reflect, and manage their day with greater clarity, they are better able to make thoughtful decisions and approach challenges in a healthier, more self-aware way (Moulder, 2021). Good time and knowledge management can help this be achieved.

2.6.8.1 Time management and WLB

Poor time management can seriously affect quality of life and productivity. It contributes to stress, missed deadlines, and reduced personal time. Conversely, improving time management leads to better life balance and productivity (Dierdorff, 2020). Problems caused by poor time management include inefficient workflows, wasted time due to multitasking or unclear priorities, and a loss of control that can cause stress and anxiety. Rushing to meet deadlines often reduces work quality, while a pattern of poor performance can harm professional reputation and future opportunities.

On the other hand, effective time management offers many benefits. Setting clear goals, prioritising tasks, and allocating appropriate time to each activity can greatly increase focus and efficiency. Taking regular breaks helps maintain energy and concentration throughout the day, reducing the likelihood of mistakes and burnout. Being organized, removing non-essential tasks, and planning your day in advance all help ensure that your time is used meaningfully. Starting the day with a plan allows for more control over your schedule, enabling you to manage your

responsibilities with greater ease and satisfaction (Corporate Finance Institute, 2015–2021).

Factoring in time for breaks in time management can help you work more efficiently, so you can get more done in less time and have more time for your personal life thereby improving WLB. Ideally, the breaks that you factor in should be taken before your energy levels start to drop as working in this way helps you to recharge your energy levels sooner (Schwartz, n.d.). Spending time outdoors (particularly in nature) when possible is also recommended to help individuals work effectively as doing so helps reduce stress and encourages the release of endorphins in the body, which are feelgood chemicals, improving both mood and energy. Incorporating these habits into individuals' daily life can improve their sleep quality, boost their energy, enhance their overall sense of wellbeing and levels of productivity (Maryville University, 2023).

2.6.8.2 How knowledge management can improve WLB

Good knowledge management can play a key role in supporting better WLB. When information is well organized and accessible, people can work more efficiently and avoid unnecessary stress. Good knowledge practices also strengthen organizational resilience, allowing teams to adapt to change and collaborate more effectively (Raman & Gopinathan, 2016). Organizations themselves can take proactive steps to improve employee WLB, including when they work remotely and even more specifically when WFH. These include offering flexible or remote work options, encouraging managers to focus on productivity rather than clocking hours, and ensuring that employees take adequate breaks during the day. Preventing work from spilling into personal time, keeping workloads reasonable, and supporting parents and caregivers through flexibility are all vital steps in achieving such aims. Additionally, providing employee wellness plans and recognizing the diverse needs of staff members can help foster a more supportive and sustainable work culture.

Moreover, good knowledge management can play a key role in supporting better WLB. When information is well organized and accessible, people

can work more efficiently and avoid unnecessary stress. Good knowledge practices also strengthen organizational resilience, allowing teams to adapt to change and collaborate more effectively (Raman & Gopinathan, 2016)

2.6.9 Health impacts of poor WLB

An online survey and assessment of over 2.5 million people by Thailand's Department of mental health published at the beginning of 2022 revealed that 9.86% of those survey respondents were prone to depression, 8.38% were suffering from stress, 5.46% were at risk of suicide, and 4.16% were suffering burnout. The Director-General of that Department, Dr Amporn Benjaponpitak, said that all of them needed mental health care, and also noted that "half of post-COVID infection cases still have physical or mental health problems three months after their recovery and need mental health care, as they tend to be vulnerable to suicide thoughts" (Thai PBS WORLD, 2022).

There is a strong moral case, and financial case, for businesses to look properly after their workers and ensure that they have good WLB to aid their mental and physical health. There are many health conditions linked to poor WLB. A brief overview of some of these is provided below:

2.6.9.1 Anxiety and depression:

Virtanen et al. (2011) found that if healthy individuals regularly worked more than 55 hours a week, compared to 35-40 hours a week, they were at increased risk of anxiety and depression. Their risk of anxiety was found to be 1.74 times greater, and their risk of depression 1.66 times greater than those working 35-40 hours per week.

2.6.9.2 Heart-related problems:

Research by Virtanen et al. (2010) revealed that regularly working long hours is bad for the heart, and that individuals working for an additional more than 3 hours on top of a 7-hour day have a 60% greater risk of a heart related problems, including angina, non-fatal heart attacks, and death from heart disease compared to those not regularly working such hours.

Additionally, Li et al., (2020) report that regularly working 55 hours or more per week increases likelihood of ischaemic heart disease incidence and mortality. (Ischaemic heart disease, which is also known as coronary artery disease and coronary heart disease is caused by narrowed heart arteries and can lead to heart attacks). Regularly working 55 hours or more per week has also been shown to increase the likelihood of strokes (Descatha et al., 2020).

2.6.9.3 Sleep issues

When people have poor WLB, they often do not get enough sleep. Professor Matt Walker, professor of neuroscience and psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, advocates that people should have 8 hours sleep a night (Berkeley Psychology, 2017). The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.) in contrast recommends that individuals of between 18-60 years in age typically require 7 or more hours sleep per night. Fernquest (2016) reported that Thais slept on average 6.3 hours a night. Many Thais do not get enough sleep and suffer from sleep debt.

Even relatively short periods of sleep deprivation can have negative impacts on wellbeing. As an example, Dinges et al. (1977) reported that healthy young adults who had their sleep restricted, so that they slept on average only 4.98 hours per night for a week, reported feeling increased level of anger, sadness, and mental exhaustion. Those authors additionally noted that when those individuals resumed normal sleep patterns there were dramatic improvements in their mood levels.

Moreover, it has been shown that regularly working long hours and having reduced amounts of sleep in mid-life decreases in the health and vitality of individuals in later life. Among the impacts of poor work-life balance and lack of sleep in mid-life on the later health of the individuals revealed in the research of von Bonsdorff et al. (2017) were: reduced general health; lower social functioning; reduced physical activities and physical functioning; and reduced vitality. Generally later health was found to be poorer.

The body's immune system can also be greatly affected by not having enough sleep, a factor that was particularly important to take into account during the COVID-19 crisis. Professor Matt Walker notes that restricting the amount of sleep an individual has to four hours for a single night can substantially reduce the activity level of the natural killer cells in the human immune system, and that there is also a very strong link between reduced levels of sleep and increased cancer risk (TED, 2019).

Such findings, taken cumulatively, indicate the need to get individuals, and the company that employ them, more aware of the benefits can arise from creating better WLB situations to aid regenerative sleep. Good sleep can help individuals work better and be more productive, and also give them better long-term health. Something that is particularly important to take into consideration for the wealth of the nation as Thailand is one of the fastest ageing countries in the world and it is important to keep its citizens healthy (Lorthanavanich et al., 2021).

2.7 Burnout syndrome

Burnout Syndrome can often arise as a result of poor work-life balance.

2.7.1 Definition

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) recently stated that: *“Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.”* They consider that the term only specifically refers to phenomena in the work context, and that ‘Burnout Syndrome’ should not be used to describe experiences from other areas of life.

‘Burnout’ is a kind of exhaustion, cynicism, and perceived ineffectiveness that can arise as a result of work-related issues. Feeling defeated, emotionally drained, and helpless are things that most people who start to get burnout usually feel. After getting burnout they stop caring, and feel emotionally and physically exhausted. Their work performance drops as a result and they have higher risks of health problems (Genrencer, 2021).

Dr. Christina Maslach, the world's leading authority on burnout, categorises five stages of burnout. These are as follows: 1). Engaged: energetic, involved, effective; 2). Overextended: tired, overworked but productive; 3). Disengaged: cynical, but still productive; 4). Ineffective: less productive, potentially still care. 5). Burnout: exhausted, cynical, less effective.

She additionally notes that: "Categorizing burnout as a disease was an attempt by the WHO to provide definitions for what is wrong with people, instead of what is wrong with companies" (Moss, 2019). Both individuals and the companies they work for can help address the causes of burnout.

2.7.2 Causes of burnout

As noted by Gerencer (2021): Burnout is a result of excessive work demands. This can be due to too much work or the wrong kind of work being given to individuals, and the actual work that employees have to do does not matching what was described that they were required to do in their job description. It can also be due to limited job resources and there not being enough time, supplies, or support to get the job done.

The following are major factors that can contribute to the likelihood of burnout: too much work being assigned to individuals; people not having enough power to do what is needed to reach goals; not enough reward or recognition for doing what is right and good; an isolated workplace culture with little sense of community; unfairness in the workplace such as inequality, cheating, and disrespect; and unethical work practices or bad work goals.

2.7.3 Symptoms of burnout

There are three main sets of symptoms for burnout. These are: exhaustion, feeling of cynicism and detachment, feelings of ineffectiveness. These are discussed in greater detail below:

Symptoms of exhaustion include the following: lack of motivation; irritability; fatigue; insomnia; memory issue; feeling hopeless; nervousness; headaches; change in appetite; trouble concentrating; cynicism; depression; increased illness; and loss of energy.

Symptoms of cynicism and detachment are as follows: feelings of isolation; lack of enjoyment; unconcern; impatience; being critical; feeling persecuted; hopelessness; negative attitude; excessive use of sarcasm; disillusionment with work; loss of job satisfaction; dread of work; and self-medication.

Symptoms of ineffectiveness are as follows: Loss of productivity; Poor performance; Missing deadlines; Habitual complaining; Missing work goal. Main source: Gerencer (2021).

2.7.4 Addressing the causes of burnout

Addressing the causes of burnout can significantly improve WLB. There are a wide variety of causes and contributing factors to burnout. These include workspace, work culture, work environment, management culture, support provision, etc. (Gallup, 2021).

Measures that can be taken to address burnout and improve WLB include: making wellbeing part of the company culture, and also a significant part of the individual's life priorities; educating managers, team members and individuals on measures and work practices that can be taken to prevent burnout; and designing employee experience, work practices and necessary support to reduce risk of burnout (Gallup, 2021; Robinson et al., 2021).

2.8 Measures to improve WLB and mental and physical health

2.8.1 Work more efficiently

When individuals are educated as to how to work more efficiently and have the conditions that allow them to do so, they can get more done in less time. This reduces stress and frees up additional time for rest, personal development, and social connection. Efficient work habits reduce unnecessary stress, prevent burnout, and can cost effectively enhance both mental and physical wellbeing. This section investigates practical, research-backed strategies that can be used to help to improve work efficiency while also supporting a healthier, more balanced lifestyle.

2.8.1.1 The need for good sleep

If individuals work too long, and/or too late, it often means they can have difficulty getting adequate sleep. Reduced levels of sleep can additionally cause higher stress levels, depression, anger, and mental exhaustion (Dinges et al., 1997). It has additionally been shown that mental performance is impaired by typically sleeping for less than 7-8 hours per night (Wild et al., 2018). This typically sleep around 6.3 hours a night (Fernquest 2016). It is important when wanting to achieve better life balance to get good amounts of sleep. Doing so improves life quality, work performance, and helps improve the likelihood of good health in later life (von Bonsdorff et al., 2017).

2.8.1.2 Avoid multi-tasking

Multi-tasking is often undertaken by individuals, particularly if they are stressed. Research shows that multi-tasking greatly increases the time it takes to complete work (Bellur et al., 2015). Multi-tasking less significantly improves individuals' work performance and helps them to use their time more effectively. This in turn can help them improve their WLB

2.8.1.3 The need for good breaks

There is a need to incorporate good quality breaks into the workday to help individuals recharge and work more efficiently. As noted by Schwartz (2014): *“taking more time off is counterintuitive for most of us. The idea is also at odds with the prevailing work ethic in most companies, where downtime is typically viewed as time wasted.”* He suggests that individuals should instead try to acquire an athlete's mindset and pace themselves for optimum performance through taking appropriate intervals. Managers can also put initiatives in place to help make such thinking the norm. He additionally observes that: *“By managing energy more skillfully, it's possible to get more done, in less time, more sustainably.”*

It is also important to note how we interact with technology can also be of huge importance and impact both our work life balance and the amount of energy we have left after a day's work.

2.8.1.4 Zoom exhaustion and fatigue

Predominantly as a result of COVID-19 crisis, many businesses and individuals are having more meetings with fewer breaks in between them. Often people find this extremely tiring, resulting in a phenomena known as ‘Zoom fatigue.’ The four major reasons for ‘zoom fatigue’ are: Excessive close-up eye contact is tiring; Seeing yourself is fatiguing; Video chats reduce individual’s mobility; Video chats increase the brain’s cognitive load (Ramachandran, 2021; Fauville et al., 2021).

Research by Microsoft’s human factors Lab, that measured brain wave activity, has confirmed that it is more stressful for individuals to have back-to-back virtual meetings without breaks. Furthermore, that research demonstrated that: *“breaks between meetings allow the brain to “reset”, reducing a cumulative build-up of stress across meeting.”* It also demonstrated the benefits of having breaks between meetings (Microsoft WorkLab, 2021). Such findings also suggest that meetings should be kept short, and/or should have regular breaks introduced within them.

In addition to having shorter meeting periods and regular breaks, the following measures can also be taken to help address Zoom fatigue: Use alternative communication methods, such as email, Line, and telephone call; Do not force video interaction, use the way to keep in touch (Martins, 2021).

The need for adequate restorative breaks throughout the day, even when not taking part in video calls, is becoming increasingly well recognised and undertaking them can greatly improve work-life balance. This includes having mini-breaks throughout the workday, proper time off to recharge outside work hours, and enough good quality sleep. Such measures can enable individuals to be more productive and more engaged at work whilst also having a better quality of life (Schwartz & Pines, 2019).

2.8.1.5 Reducing out-of-hours work related communication

Sending messages outside of working hours damages work-life balance. If you do this yourself, it can encourage others to do so too. Individuals can set a good example and not send communications outside of work hours and therefore

be part of the change there needs to be. Others may follow your example, especially if you are in position of authority (Sanfilippo, 2021).

As noted by Zadow (2021), making and receiving out-of-hours work related communications reduces the time individuals have available to them for essential recovery activities and can greatly compromise work-life balance and mental and physical wellbeing. It can also seriously interrupt family activities and general quality of life. High levels of stress are associated with high levels of out-of-hours communication.

There are already labour laws in a number of countries which provide workers with ‘the right to disconnect’ during designated rest periods (Matai, 2021). In the early working drafts of this present work, it was proposed that similar best practice measures should be undertaken by businesses in Thailand. Since then, legislation has been enacted within the country in the form of the Work from Home Bill, which includes a right-to-disconnect policy, to help this be achieved (Chipman Koty, 2023). As a result, employees in Thailand now have the right to abstain from having communications with their employer outside normal work hours.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data collection and analysis

This purpose of this chapter is to outline the research methodology employed to investigate the effects of WLB, WFH and the working conditions individuals had during the COVID-19 pandemic and assess measures that were taken to help address the challenges they faced.

The study focuses in particular on how working from home during that time impacted individuals' ability to balance work, family commitments, and personal responsibilities. Quantitative research was the chosen method taken to identify patterns and trends, offering actionable insights for improving WLB and working conditions and the associated benefits that could be achieved by applying the insights gained during similar situations and for those who now practice remote working / working from home, or wish to do so, on a regular basis.

3.2 Research design

This study adopted a quantitative research design to systematically collect and analyze numerical data related to the WLB of Thai-speaking individuals working from home either full-time or part-time during the COVID-19 period. This approach allows for the examination of trends and relationships that exists between variables such as working arrangements, stress levels, and satisfaction with work-life balance.

Key elements of the research design include a survey-based data collection undertaken through use of a specifically crafted online questionnaire to gather data from a large sample of participants working from home in Bangkok and elsewhere in Thailand. Variables such as stress levels, work satisfaction, level of support provided by organisations they worked for, and time spent on work versus

personal activities were assessed as part of this work and then later quantified for analysis.

The design of the questionnaire itself, combined with the findings and insights gained from the critical literature review, provides a structured approach to understanding the effects of working from home on WLB, the kinds of issues that have to be addressed, and measures that can be taken to help address such issues.

3.3 Population and sample

The population sample used for this study is comprised of staff in private companies, government employees, company owners, freelancers, students and others who worked from home in Thailand. The study targeted Thai-speaking individuals residing in Bangkok and elsewhere in Thailand who were working from home either part-or full-time during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey questionnaire was distributed widely to achieve a large and statistically significant sample size.

3.4 Research instrument

The primary research instrument was an online questionnaire, designed to capture quantitative data on issues related to WLB and WFH in Bangkok, and elsewhere in Thailand, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key features of the questionnaire included:

- 1) Structured questions: Multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions enabled the measurement of variables such as: Working arrangements (e.g., full-time or part-time remote work); time spent on work versus personal responsibilities; WFH conditions; stress levels and coping mechanisms; perceived impact of working from home on productivity and wellbeing; and satisfaction with work-life balance.

- 2) Ease of use: The questionnaire was designed for quick completion, enhancing participant engagement and response rates.

3) **Distribution:** The questionnaire was posted on Google Forms and distributed via email and social media to reach a wide audience.

3.5 Data collection

The online survey aimed to evaluate various aspects of WLB and WFH experiences during the period being investigated. The key factors assessed include: demographics and work situation; job satisfaction and workplace benefits; WFH set-ups; WLB perceptions; remote work preferences and challenges; and work-from-home interruptions and improvement suggestions related to home work areas and work practices. These are discussed in greater detail below.

3.5.1 Demographics and work situation

- 1) **Occupation and age:** Identifies the respondent's profession and age group.
- 2) **Living situation:** Determines the household composition of where the respondent lives (e.g., living alone, with family, or roommates).
- 3) **Work location and duration:** Assesses where respondents work and how long they have been working there.
- 4) **Pre- and during COVID-19 work hours:** Compares working hours before and during the pandemic.

3.5.2 Job satisfaction and workplace benefits

- 1) **Happiness factors:** Measures the impact of job, salary, and family on perceived overall happiness.
- 2) **Job enjoyment and fulfilment:** Evaluates job satisfaction, fulfilment, and perceptions of work responsibilities.
- 3) **Work conditions and benefits:** Assesses work conditions, satisfaction with salary, overtime pay, medical benefits, and time-off policies.
- 4) **Work environment:** Measures the contribution of co-workers and supervisors to a positive work atmosphere

3.5.3 Work-life balance perceptions

- 1) **Family and personal time:** Evaluates satisfaction with time spent with family and overall home life.
- 2) **Prioritisation of work vs. family:** Assesses whether respondents prioritize family over work or vice versa.
- 3) **Sacrifices for work:** Determines whether respondents reduce sleep to accommodate work or family time.
- 4) **Workload and time constraints:** Examines whether respondents feel overworked or lack sufficient time for tasks.
- 5) **Work-life separation:** Assesses how frequently respondents think about work at home or work on weekends.

3.5.4 Remote work preferences and challenges

- 1) **Work-from-home experience:** Measures preference for remote work vs. on-site work.
- 2) **Impact on family and personal life:** Evaluates whether working from home allows more time for family, relaxation, and personal well-being.
- 3) **Workload and burnout:** Assesses overtime frequency, work-from-home stress, and mental health impacts.
- 4) **Company support:** Examines satisfaction with employer-provided resources for remote work.
- 5) **Home work environment:** Evaluates the adequacy of workspace at home and additional personal costs incurred (e.g., medical expenses).

3.5.5 Work-from-home interruptions and improvement suggestions

- 1) **Disruptions to WLB:** Identifies common interruptions and reasons for imbalance.
- 2) **Preferred changes:** Collects suggestions for improving work-life balance, including potential policy changes or resource provisions.

Survey distribution: The questionnaire link was shared with the target population through online channels in an effort to ensure broad coverage across different demographics.

Participant recruitment: Efforts were made to engage a diverse sample, including individuals from various sectors and with different levels of experience working from home.

Data recording: Responses were automatically recorded in the survey platform to ensure accuracy and facilitate analysis.

3.6 Survey participants and sample adequacy

There were 625 participants who completed the online structured questionnaire created for the quantitative research undertaken for this work. The respondents represented a wide range of occupational backgrounds, including staff in private companies (n = 473), government employees (n = 107), company owners (n = 26), freelancers (n = 10), and students (n = 6).

While the overall sample size obtained meets the requirements necessary for robust quantitative analysis, the number of participants belonging to individual subgroups, as shown above, varied considerably. For reliable subgroup comparisons, a minimum of 15-30 respondents per subgroup is typically recommended. Three subgroups failed to meet the subgroup size of $n \geq 30$ which is commonly cited as the minimum number of respondents required for parametric statistical tests (Field, 2013; Lumley et al., 2002). Additionally, two of the smaller subgroups failed to meet the subgroup size of $n \geq 15$ and are therefore underpowered for reliable inferential analysis and may yield unstable or non-generalisable findings (Julious, 2005; van Voorhis & Morgan, 2007).

Future studies could benefit from purposive sampling to ensure adequate representation of these critical demographic subgroups.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

Quantitative research was undertaken in this present study to gain greater background knowledge on work-life balance in Bangkok, and elsewhere in Thailand, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how work-life balance can be improved in the new normal and beyond. The findings and insights obtained from this primary research are documented below.

4.2 Research results

There were three main parts to the online survey. Part One concentrated on demographics, and Part Two gathered respondents' responses on a variety of questions and statements directly related to this research topic. Part Three covered work locations, provisions and issues that respondents had encountered

4.2.1 Part one – demographics

The demographics section of the online questionnaire provided information on the age of the respondents; their occupations; who they live with; where respondents work from; how long they have they been working at their present job; and the number of hours they have worked per day both before and during the pandemic. Details of the responses received to these are presented below:

4.2.1.1 Age of respondents

This section provides demographic information on the respondents to the online survey. In total 625 individuals completed they survey. With regard to age, the highest number of respondents, 231 people, belonged to Gen Z representing 37% of all those who replied, followed by 204 from Gen Y (32.6%), followed by 153 from Gen X (24.5%), and then 37 individuals who were Baby boomers (5.9%). There were no respondents from the Silent Generation (refer to Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Number of people who participated and the generation they belong to

Age	Number of people	Percentage
Gen Z (1-24 years old)	231	37%
Gen Y (25-40 years old)	204	32.6%
Gen X (41-56 years old)	153	24.5%
Baby boomers (57-75 years old)	37	5.9%
The silent generation (76-93 years old)	0	0
Total	625	100

4.2.1.2 Occupation of respondents

Next people were asked what they did for a living. Most of the respondents, 473 in total (75.68%), were employed by private companies, followed by 107 (17.12%) who were government employees, 26 (4.16%) who were company owners, 10 (1.6%) who were freelancers, and finally 9 (1.44%) who had a different kind of occupation to those listed above (refer to Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Occupations of those who participated in the survey

Occupation	Number of people	Percentage
Staff in private companies	473	75.68%
Government employees	107	17.12%
Company owner	26	4.16%
Freelance	10	1.6%
Students	6	0.96%
Other	3	0.48%
Total	625	100

4.2.1.3 Who respondents live with

The survey revealed that the greatest number of respondents, 229 in total, live with their partner (36.64%). This was followed by 222 who live alone (35.52%), then 65 who live with their family (10.4%), 63 who live with housemates

(10.08%), and finally 46 (7.36%) who live with children they are looking after (refer to Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Living arrangements of those who participated in the survey

Who they live with	Number of people	Percentage
Live with partner	229	36.64%
Live alone	222	35.52%
Live with family	65	10.4%
Live with housemates	63	10.08%
Live with children you have to take care of	46	7.36%
Total	625	100

4.2.1.4 Where respondents work from

Most of the respondents, 423 people (67.7%) work onsite at an office, next was 130 (20.8%) who undertake hybrid working (working part-time between home and office), followed by 72 (11.5%) who work from home (refer to Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Location respondents work from

Location	Number of people	Percentage
Onsite (office)	423	67.7%
Hybrid (part-time between home and office)	130	20.8%
Work from home	72	11.5%
Total	625	100

4.2.1.5 How long had respondents been working at their current employment at that time?

In response to this question, 193 people (30.9%) had been working at their current employment for 3-4 years, followed by 190 (30.4%) more than

7 years, 183 (29.3%) for 1-2 years, and finally 59 (9.4%) for 5-6 years (refer to Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 How long respondents have been working at their current employment

Number of years	Number of people	Percentage
1-2 years	183	29.3%
3-4 years	193	30.9%
5-6 years	59	9.4%
More than 7 years	190	30.4%
Total	625	100

4.2.1.6 How many hours respondents worked per day before the pandemic

When asked how many hours they been working per day before the pandemic, the majority of respondents, 504 people (80.6%) said that they had been working 8-10 hours per day, next were 61 individuals (9.8%) who had worked more than 10 hours a day, and finally 60 individuals (9.6%) who had worked less than 8 hours per day (refer to Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 How many hours respondents worked per day before the pandemic

Number of hours	Number of people	Percentage
Less than 8 hours	60	9.6%
8-10 hours	504	80.6%
More than 10 hours	61	9.8%
Total	625	100

4.2.1.7 How many hours respondents work per day during the pandemic

When asked how many hours they been working per day during the pandemic, the majority of respondents, 374 people (59.8%) said that they were working 8-10 hours per day, next were 128 individuals (20.5%) who work less than

8 hours per day, and finally 123 individuals (19.7%) who work more than 10 hours a day. (Refer to Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 How many hours respondents work per day during the pandemic

Number of hours	Number of people	Percentage
Less than 8 hours	128	20.5%
8-10 hours	374	59.8%
More than 10 hours	123	19.7%
Total	625	100

It is important to note that the percentage of respondents working >10 hours per day increased from 9.8% pre-pandemic to 19.7% during the pandemic. It is also worthy of mention that research mentioned in Chapter 2 reveals that the optimal number of hours individuals should work every day for best results is 7.6 hours (Merle, 2022). Very few respondents of the survey undertaken for this present study worked less than 8 hours either before or during the pandemic.

4.2.2 Part two - responses on research topic

The respondents (n = 625) were asked to state their level of agreement with each of the following 39 statements on a scale of 1-5, where 1 represented strongly disagreeing with a statement and 5 represented being in strong agreement.

4.2.2.1 Happiness factor

Happiness drivers: The mean values obtained for the responses obtained for these questions revealed that respondents were generally satisfied with the impact of their job (4.152) and salary (4.1456) on happiness, while family was the most effective factor being shown to have the strongest positive influence with a strongly satisfied mean value (4.3312) being shown (Table 4.8).

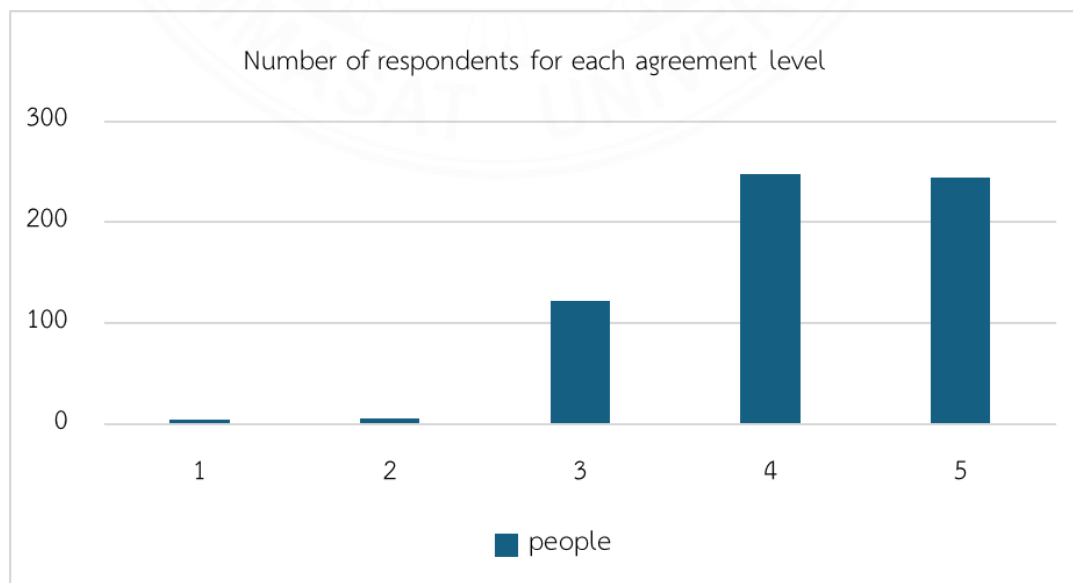
Table 4.8 Statements related to happiness

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
1) My job is the most effective factor to my happiness	4.152	Satisfied
2) My salary is the most effective factor to my happiness	4.1456	Satisfied
3) My family is the most effective factor to my happiness	4.3312	Strongly Satisfied

Detailed information of the actual levels of agreement for each of these statements is shown in the figures below, where the y-axis of these shows the number of respondents for each agreement level.

(1) Statement 1:

For the statement ‘My job is the most effective factor to my happiness’, a significant majority (78.7%) indicated that their job plays a major role in their happiness, whilst only a very small portion disagreed (Figure 4.1). This highlights the strong emotional connection between work and overall life satisfaction for most employees. Something that it is suggested can be strengthened by looking after employees better.

**Figure 4.1** My job is the most effective factor to my happiness

(2) Statement 2:

For the statement ‘My salary is the most effective factor to my happiness’ there was also a strong degree of consensus (Figure 4.2). There were 486 people (77.8%) who gave a score of 4 or 5 indicating that salary is a key driver of their happiness, with only a very small number of respondents disagreeing. This suggests that compensation is a central factor influencing employees' overall sense of wellbeing, highlighting its general importance in job satisfaction and retention strategies.

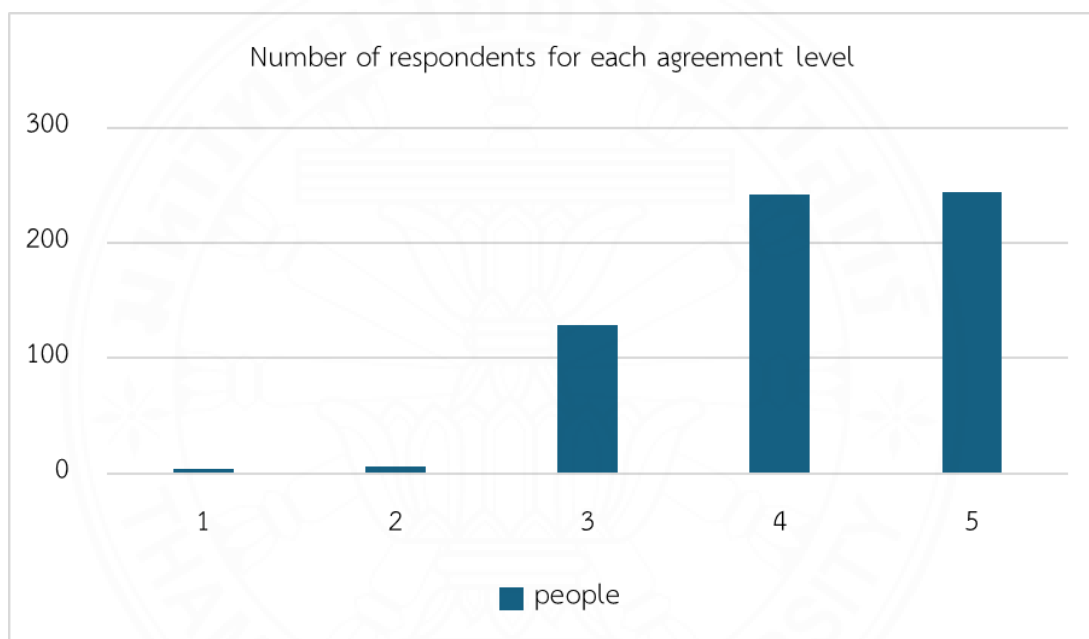


Figure 4.2 My salary is the most effective factor to my happiness

(3) Statement 3:

For the statement ‘My family is the most effective factor to my happiness’ there was an even larger majority in agreement. 528 people (84.5%) who gave a score of 4 or 5 indicating that family is the most effective factor in their happiness, making it the factor acting as strongest happiness factor amongst respondents (Figure 4.3). This result underscores the insights gained through the literature review that work-life balance policies are highly important.

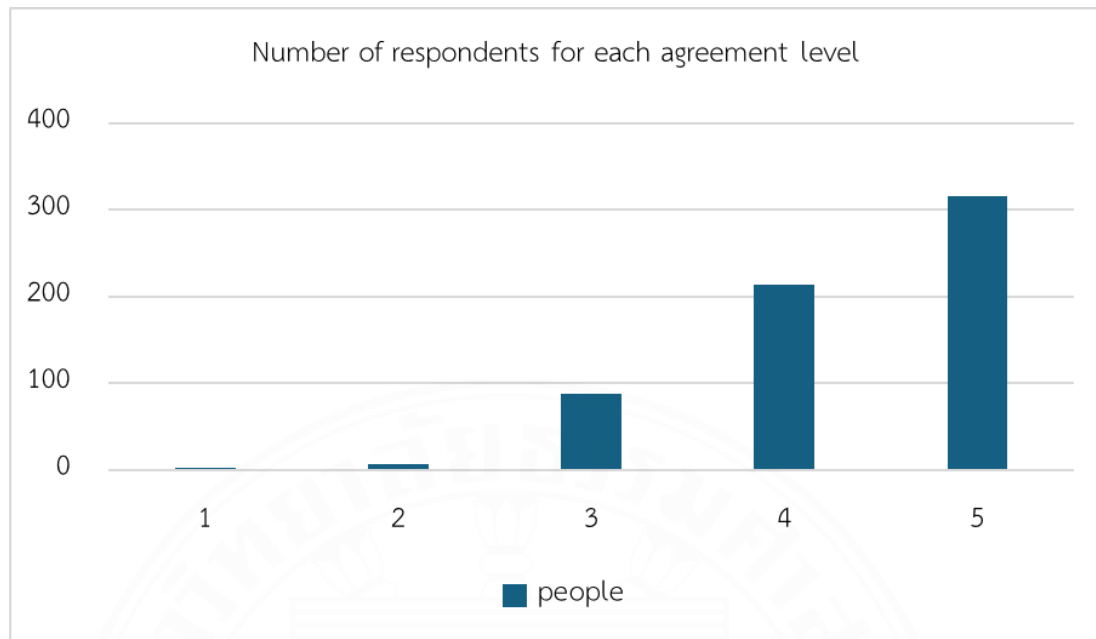


Figure 4.3 My family is the most effective factor to my happiness

4.2.2.2 Work satisfaction

The survey results obtained from the respondents indicate generally positive employee sentiment, particularly about job enjoyment and fulfilment. Lower mean satisfaction levels were observed with regard to compensation and some benefits. While job enjoyment and fulfilment scored the highest, indicating good overall morale, the lower scores for salary, overtime pay, and benefits suggest potential areas for improvement in employee compensation and support packages (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Statements related to work satisfaction

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
4). I enjoy my job	4.0496	Satisfied
5). I feel fulfilled by my job	4.0176	Satisfied
6). I am satisfied with my working hours	3.9344	Satisfied
7). I am satisfied with my job scope	3.944	Satisfied
8). I am satisfied with my salary	3.8416	Satisfied
9). I am satisfied with my overtime pay	3.5824	Satisfied

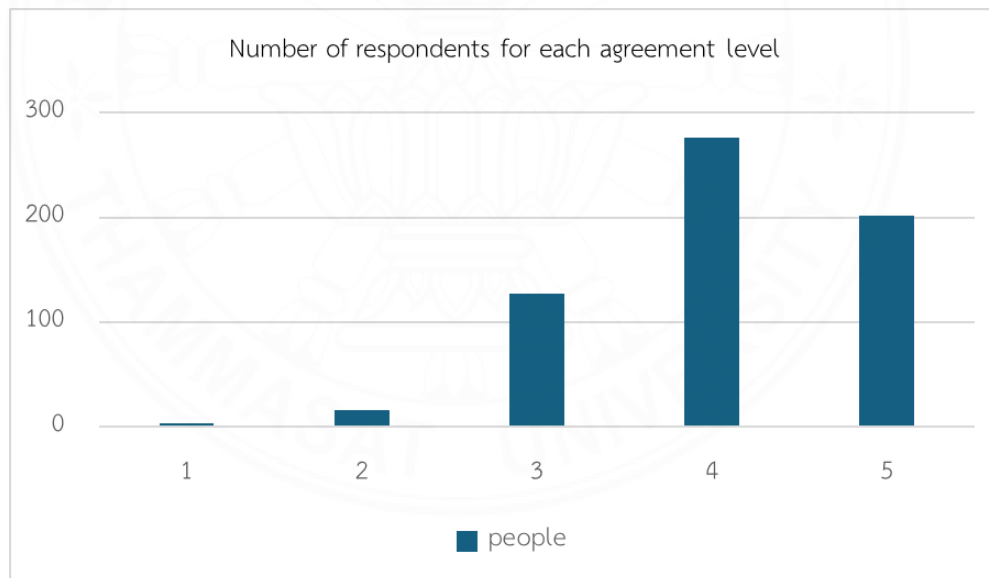
Table 4.9 Statements related to work satisfaction (Cont.)

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
10). I am satisfied with my medical benefit from workplace	3.7856	Satisfied
11). I am satisfied with my time-off benefits	3.76	Satisfied

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 4:

For the statement ‘I enjoy my job’ again a large majority, 478 people (76.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoy their job. Only 20 people (3.2%) expressed disagreement, while 127 people (20.3%) were neutral (Figure 4.4). This indicates a generally high level of job enjoyment was observed across the workforce, which bodes well for employee morale and retention.

**Figure 4.4** I enjoy my job

(2) Statement 5:

For the statement ‘I feel fulfilled by my job’ again a high proportion 471 people (75.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt fulfilled by their job. Only 35 people (5.6%) disagreed, while 119 people (19%) were neutral (Figure 4.5). This suggests that most employees find a sense of meaning or purpose in their work.

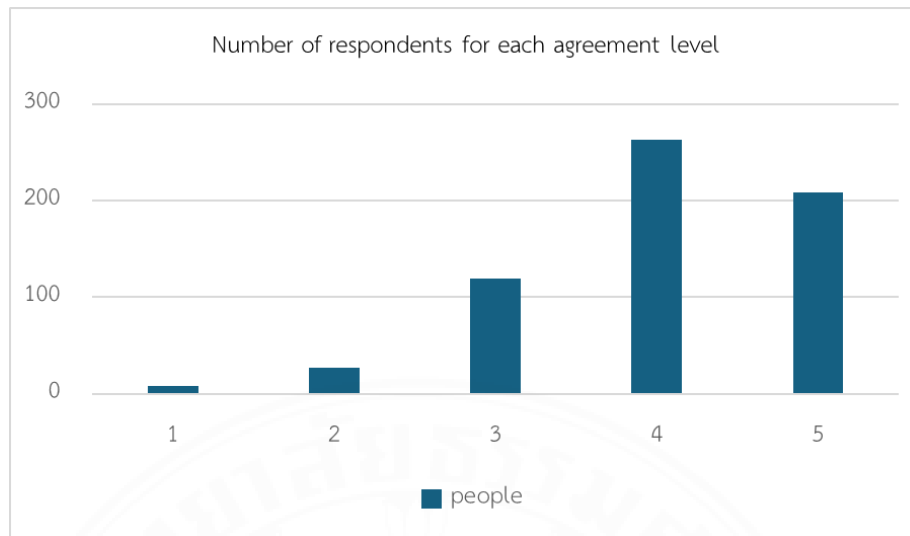


Figure 4.5 I feel fulfilled by my job

(3) Statement 6:

For the statement ‘I am satisfied with my working hours’ 73.1% (those giving a score of 4 or 5) expressed satisfaction with their working hours. Only 6.1% reported dissatisfaction, while 21% remained neutral (Figure 4.6). These results indicate that most respondents were content with the hours they worked, suggesting that work scheduling is largely in alignment with employee expectations. However, the fact that Bangkok is one of the most overworked cities in the world, and that overworked people are actually less productive needs to be addressed to help create the greatest benefit.

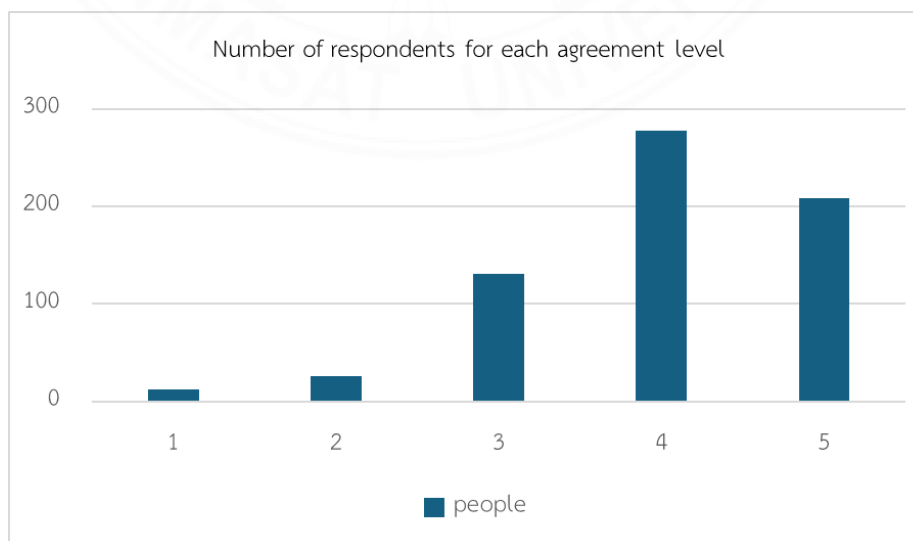


Figure 4.6 I am satisfied with my working hours

(4) Statement 7:

For the statement ‘I am satisfied with my job scope’, 71.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their job scope. Only 5.8% expressed dissatisfaction, whilst 22.4% remained neutral (Figure 4.7). These figures indicate that most of the respondents found their roles and responsibilities clear and acceptable, contributing positively to their overall job satisfaction.

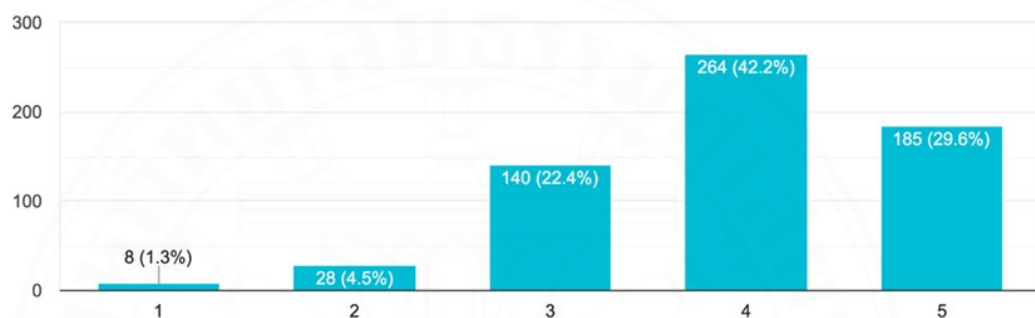


Figure 4.7 I am satisfied with my job scope

(5) Statement 8:

A solid majority of the respondents, 67.4% in total, agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with their salary, whilst 8% expressed dissatisfaction (Figure 4.8).

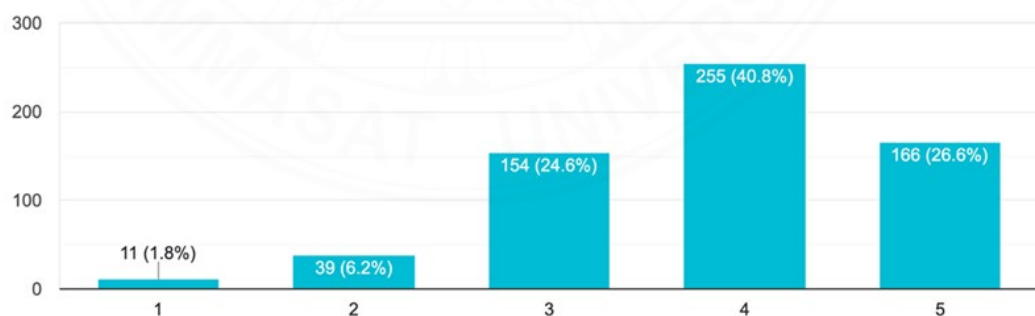


Figure 4.8 I am satisfied with my salary

(6) Statement 9:

A combined 59.7% of respondents were satisfied with their overtime pay, whilst 15.9% expressed dissatisfaction. With nearly a quarter (24.5%) remaining neutral, this suggests moderate satisfaction overall. However, it also

indicates potential room for improvement in perceived fairness or adequacy of overtime compensation (Figure 4.9).

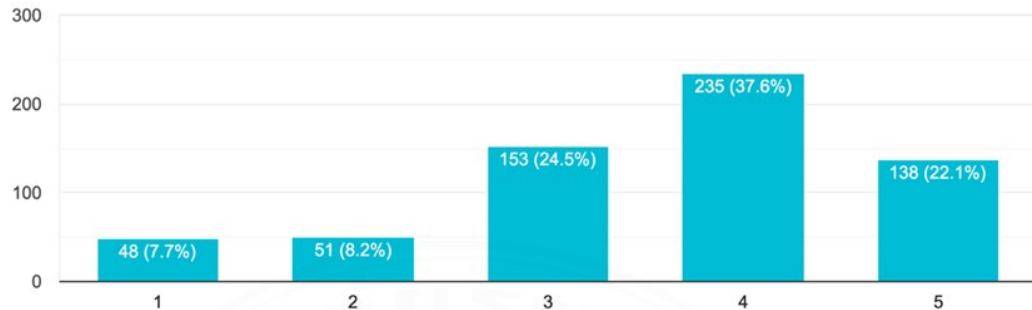


Figure 4.9 I am satisfied with my overtime pay

(7) Statement 10:

A total of 65.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with their workplace medical benefits, while only 9.1% expressed dissatisfaction. With a quarter of respondents (25.4%) remaining neutral, the data suggests that medical benefits are generally well-received, though there is still room to enhance perceived value for some individuals (Figure 4.10).

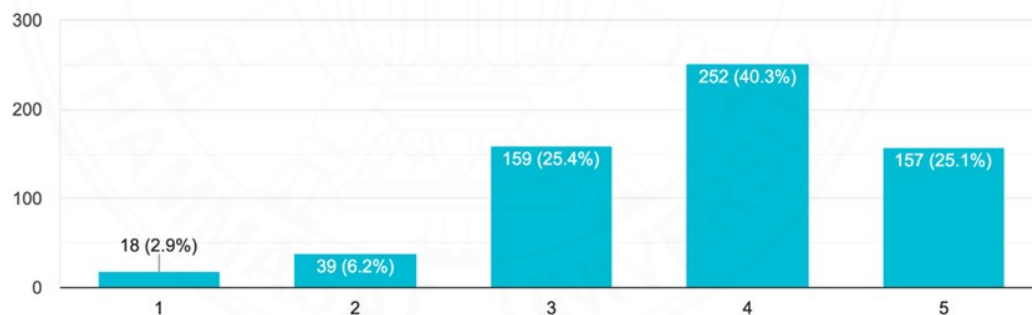


Figure 4.10 I am satisfied with my medical benefits from my workplace

(8) Statement 11:

A combined 62.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with their time-off benefits, while 9.1% were dissatisfied. With over a quarter (27.5%) remaining neutral, the results suggest general satisfaction, though expectations for time-off benefits vary (Figure 4.11).

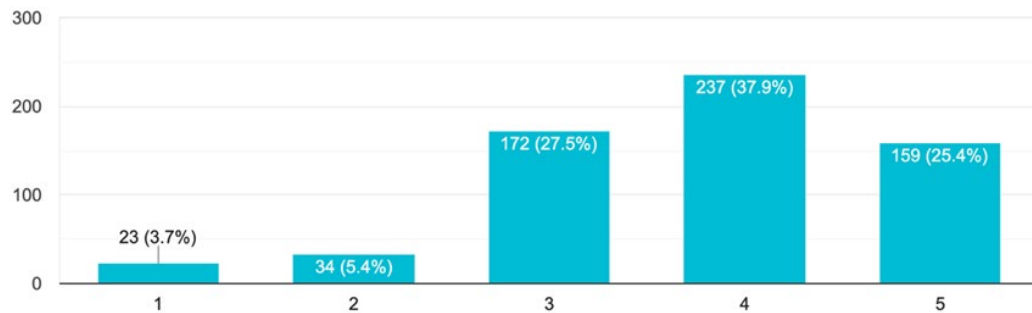


Figure 4.11 I am satisfied with my time-off benefits

4.2.2.3 Work environment satisfaction

The responses obtained, as indicated in the mean scores obtained, revealed generally positive perceptions of the working environment. The respondents were in general agreement that their co-workers contribute positively, resulting in a mean score for that statement of 3.97. Supervisors / managers were additionally seen as contributing to good working environment, though slightly less so, with a mean score of 3.88. This suggests that generally there were healthy team dynamics, with room for improvement in leadership support (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Statements related to work environment satisfaction

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
12). Co-workers contribute to a good working environment	3.968	Satisfied
13). My supervisor/manager contributes good working environment	3.8832	Satisfied

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 12:

72.2% of the survey's respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their co-workers contribute to a positive working environment. Very few (5.1%) expressed disagreement, indicating that peer relationships are a key strength in the workplace culture and should be actively encouraged (Figure 4.12).

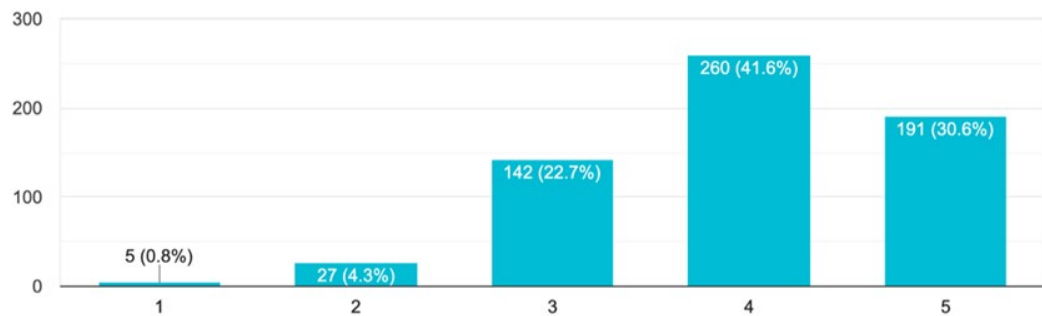


Figure 4.12 Co-workers contribute to a good working environment

(2) Statement 13:

66.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor or manager positively contributes to the working environment. While 7% disagreed, over a quarter (26.1%) remained neutral, suggesting room for leaders to further enhance their influence on workplace atmosphere (Figure 4.13).

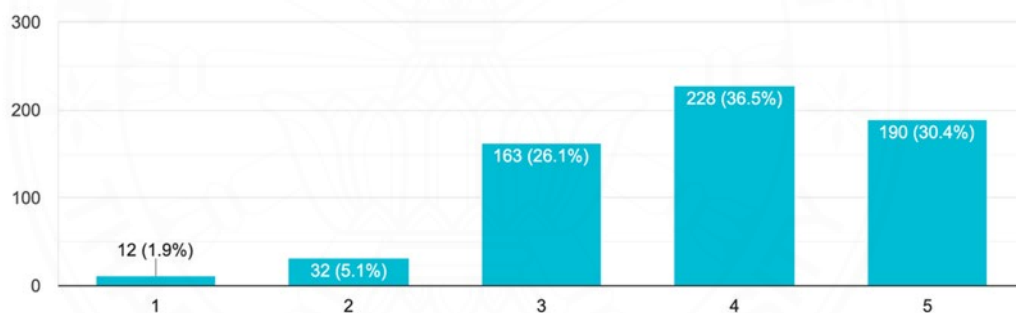


Figure 4.13 My supervisor/manager contributes good working environment

4.2.2.4 Personal life satisfaction

Respondents were moderately satisfied with time spent with family (3.6976) and home life happiness (3.704), though satisfaction with connecting with family and friends was slightly lower (3.64) (Table 4.11). The results shown provide further evidence that work-life balance is an area that requires further support and improvement.

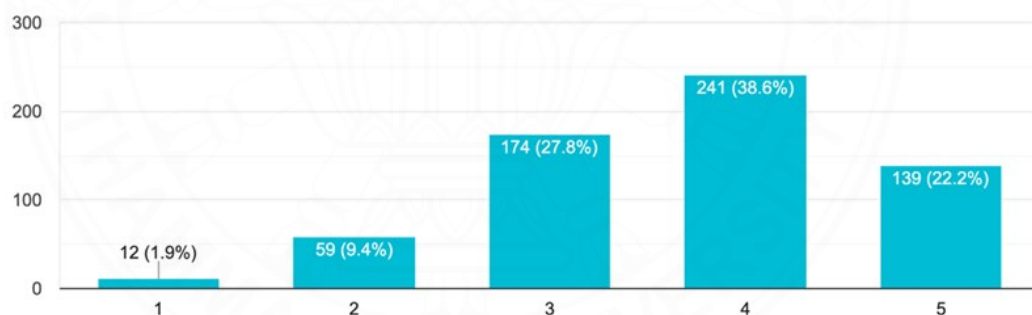
Table 4.11 Statements related to personal life satisfaction

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
14). I am satisfied with the time I spend with my family	3.6976	Satisfied
15). I am happy with my home life	3.704	Satisfied
16). I use my time at home to connect with family and friends	3.64	Satisfied

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 14:

60.8% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the time they spend with their family, while 11.3% were dissatisfied. However, a notable 27.8% remained neutral, suggesting there may be untapped opportunities to better support individuals in achieving satisfactory family time (Figure 4.14).

**Figure 4.14** I am satisfied with the time I spend with my family

(2) Statement 15:

59.6% of respondents reported being happy with their home life, while 12.0% expressed dissatisfaction and 28.6% felt neutral on this issue. This suggests, there is an opportunity for initiatives that enhance overall domestic wellbeing and work-life balance (Figure 4.15)

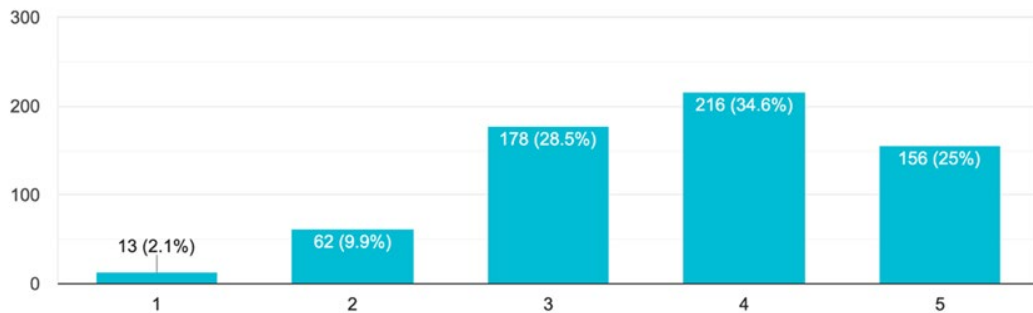


Figure 4.15 I am happy with my home life

(3) Statement 16:

56.2% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they use their time at home to connect with family and friends. However, a significant number of respondents, 32%, remain neutral, indicating potential for improvement in work-life balance and the availability of quality time. Only 12% report dissatisfaction in this area (Figure 4.16).

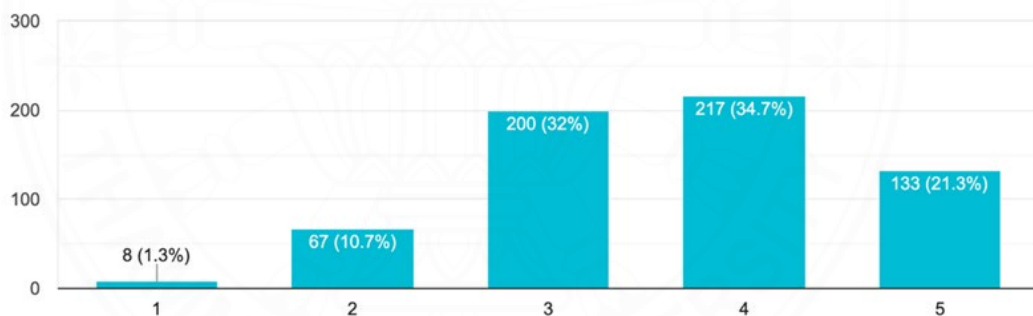


Figure 4.16 I use my time at home to connect with family and friends

4.2.2.5 Balance

The responses obtained here on the topic of balance clearly suggest challenges in maintaining a healthy equilibrium between work, family, and rest. A matter that has already been brought to light in the literature review (Kisi, 2022, 2021). The highest mean score, 3.58, indicates that the respondents often prioritise work over personal and family life. A situation that should, ideally be avoided. Lower scores for prioritising family (3.31) and sacrificing sleep for family (3.25) or work (3.45)

suggest that many of the respondents are struggling to manage competing demands, with sleep and family time often compromised as a result (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12 Statements related to balance

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
17). I spend more time on work than on personal time and time with my family	3.5792	Satisfied
18). I give family time first then my work	3.3136	Neutral
19). I sleep less to make up time with my family	3.2496	Neutral
20). I sacrifice sleep for work	3.4528	Satisfied

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 17:

54.7% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they spend more time on work than on personal or family time, indicating that work-life balance may be a concern for a majority. Only 15.7% disagree with this statement, suggesting a minority feel they are managing this balance well. The high neutral response (29.6%) may indicate varying workloads or shifting perceptions depending on specific work cycles (Figure 4.17).

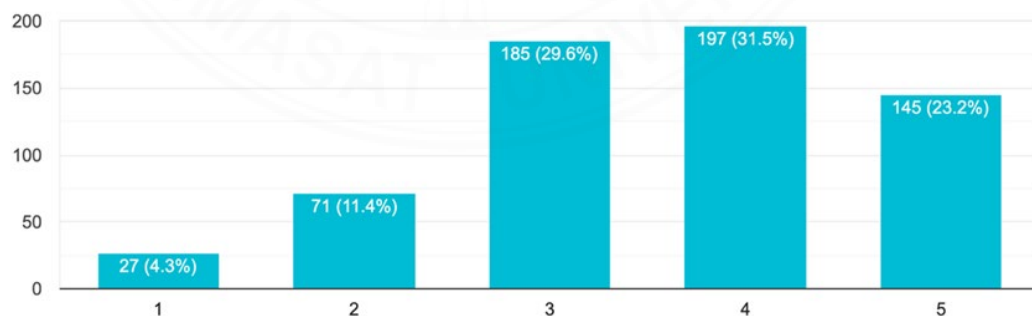


Figure 4.17 I spend more time on work than on personal time and time with my family

(2) Statement 18:

The survey revealed a general leaning toward valuing family time, but with dominant neutral and moderate scores being observed (Figure

4.18). Organisations and policymakers may use this insight on the perceived importance of family time to better support the need for work-life balance in future crisis planning and flexible work design initiatives.

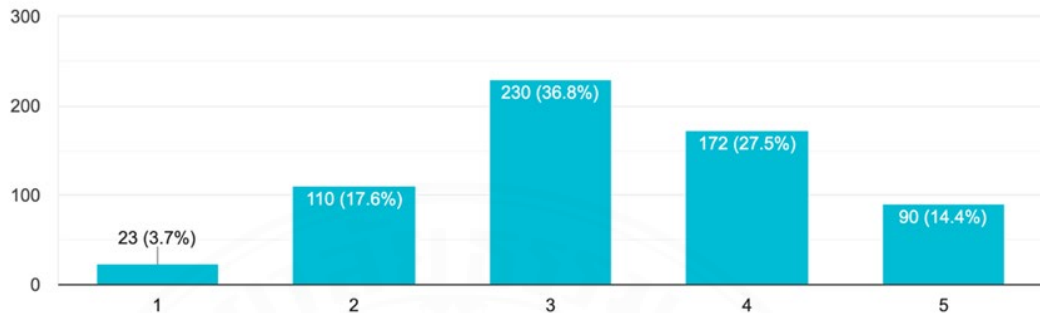


Figure 4.18 I give family time first then my work

(3) Statement 19:

41.7% chose scores 4 or 5, suggesting that a considerable portion of respondents were sacrificing sleep to spend more time with their families (Figure 4.19). This reflects a pattern where individuals try to compensate for work or other obligations by compromising on their sleep. A situation that can lead to long-term health issues.

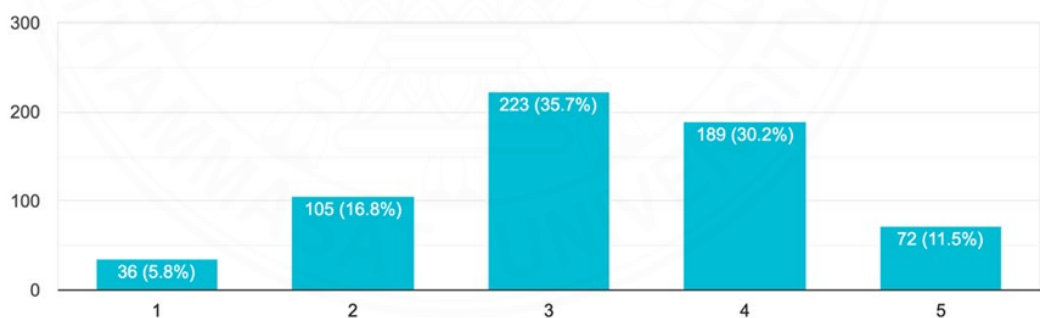


Figure 4.19 I sleep less to make up time with my family

(4) Statement 20:

51.2% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were cutting back on sleep to meet work demands (Figure 4.20). The higher levels of sleep sacrifice for work (compared to sleep sacrifice for family) imply that job responsibilities took precedence over both personal health and family life for many respondents.

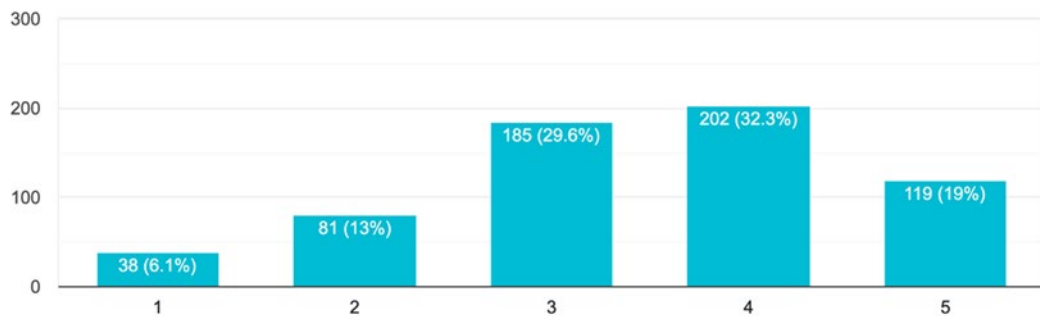


Figure 4.20 I sacrifice sleep for work

This prevalence presents a widespread challenge in managing work intensity during the pandemic and beyond, with long-term implications for burnout, productivity, and well-being.

4.2.2.6 Stress

The responses received on the issue of stress reveal notable concerns. A mean score of 2.88 was shown for the respondents not feeling good about their workload. Additionally, a mean score of 2.91 was obtained for feeling that there are not enough hours in the week. These mean scores suggest that workload and time pressure are significant sources of stress for many individuals, indicating a need for better workload management and ways of support to be developed (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 Statements related to stress

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
21). I don't feel good with the amount of work I receive	2.8752	Neutral
22). There are not enough hours in the week	2.912	Neutral

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 21:

The survey responses to this statement revealed polarized experiences with workload during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4.21). While a portion of workers felt the workload was manageable, a nearly equal share experienced discomfort or dissatisfaction. This finding combined with earlier findings

on sleep loss for work highlight a need for measures to be taken to help ensure better workload balancing, expectations management, and employee support mechanisms.

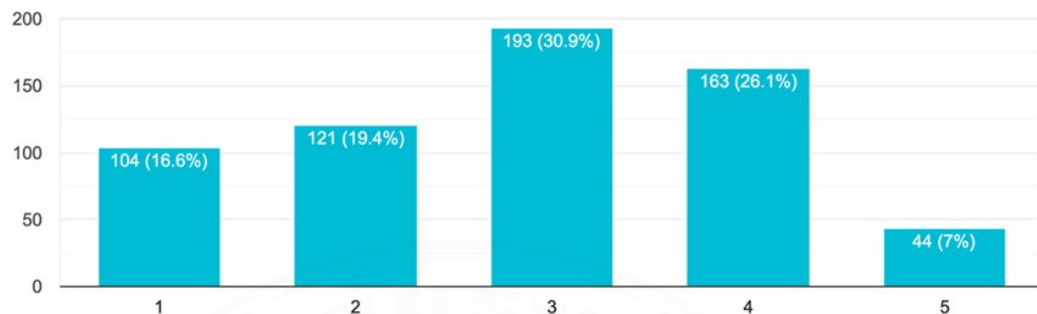


Figure 4.21 I don't feel good with the amount of work I receive

(2) Statement 22:

The answers obtained for this statement revealed that a divided perception of time sufficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic. While a third of respondents managed well, another third struggled to find enough time in the week (Figure 4.22). This is likely due to a combination of increased demands, poor work-life boundaries, and/or challenges in managing competing priorities.

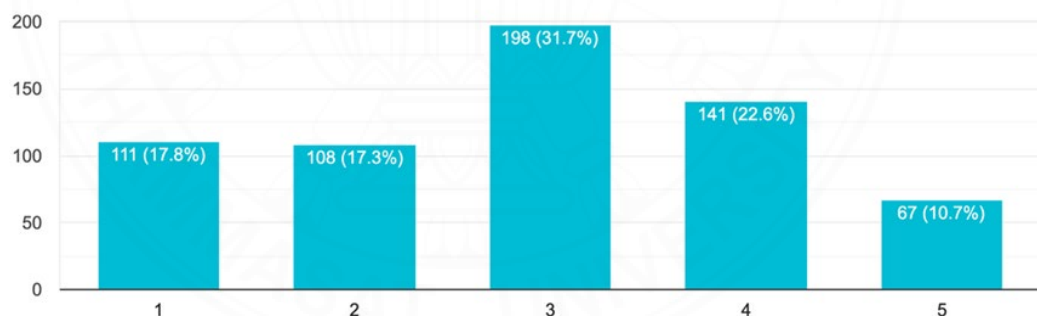


Figure 4.22 There are not enough hours in the week

These findings suggest that organizations should offer flexible scheduling options and time management resources to help address this issue.

4.2.2.7 Time to de-stress

The results suggest that people struggle to fully disconnect from work. The mean score of 3.17 indicates that the respondents often think about work even when at home, and the mean score of 3.10 shows that working on weekends or working irregular hours is relatively common (Table 4.14). This points to

the author that there is a need for clearer boundaries between work and personal time to support better rest and recovery.

Table 4.14 Statements related to time to de-stress

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
23). I think about work even when I'm home	3.1744	Neutral
24). I work on the weekend or irregular working hours	3.0976	Neutral

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 23:

37.6% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, indicating that a substantial proportion were unable to unwind properly and disconnect from work outside of official working hours (Figure 4.23). This relatively high level of agreement highlights a trend of cognitive spillover, where work thoughts persist beyond official hours, potentially affecting relaxation, family interaction, and mental health. Having clear communications boundaries with regards to the out of hours contact issue would help address this.

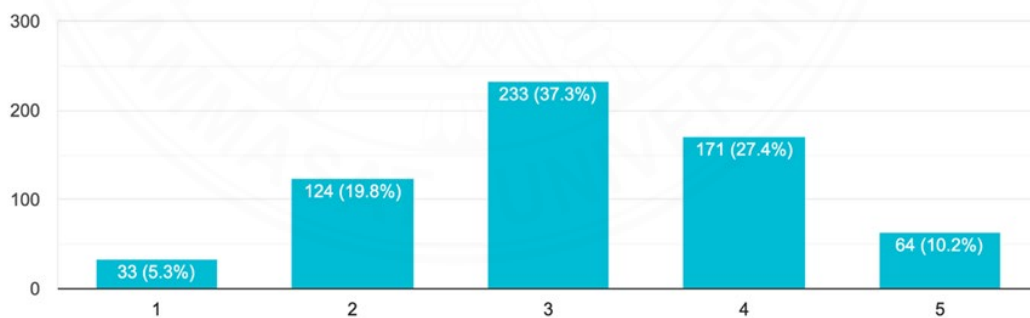


Figure 4.23 I think about work even when I'm home

(2) Statement 24:

A combined 38.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement indicating that a significant portion experienced nonstandard or extended working hours (Figure 4.24). This finding aligns with other trends seen in the survey, such as sacrificing sleep, thinking about work at home, and

not feeling good about workload. All of these reinforce the image of blurred boundaries and time creep in pandemic-era work life and reinforce the picture that was already in existence prior to the pandemic about individuals in Bangkok having poor work-life balance.

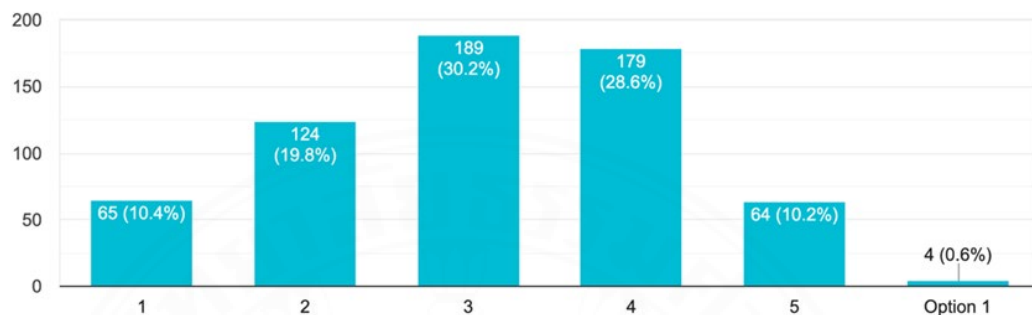


Figure 4.24 I work on the weekend or irregular working hours

4.2.2.8 Work brought home

The responses obtained indicate that work frequently extends beyond office hours for many employees. The statement ‘I leave my work at the office’ received a mean score of just 2.99, whilst ‘I sometimes bring work home’ received a slightly higher mean score of 3.10. Similarly, ‘I often finish my work at home beyond work hours’ received a mean scored of 3.00. These results indicate that bringing work home is a common experience in Thailand, potentially affecting work-life balance and personal time (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15 Statements related to work brought home

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
25). I leave my work at the office	2.9904	Neutral
26). I sometime bring work home, but just a few things to finish up	3.0992	Neutral
27). I often finish my work at home beyond the work hours to keep up with the schedule	2.9968	Neutral

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 25:

Only 32% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that fewer than one-third could effectively disconnect from work at the end of the workday (Figure 4.25). This underlines the need for organizations to support the need for clear boundaries to be drawn between work life and personal life.

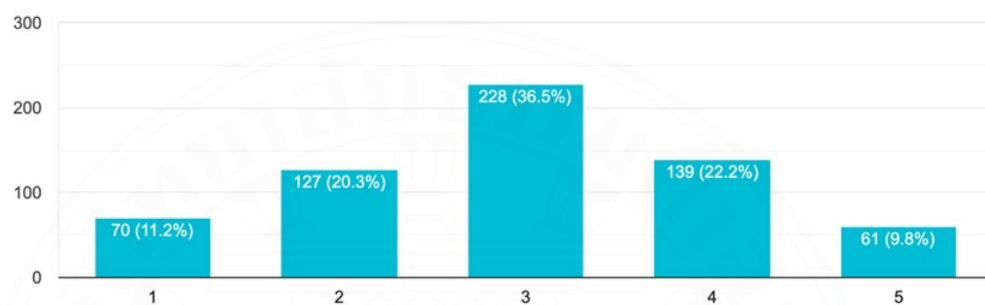


Figure 4.25 I leave my work at the office

(2) Statement 26:

38.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they bring work home occasionally to finish up minor tasks. The data suggests that while not the majority, a considerable proportion of people occasionally extend their workday at home to complete unfinished tasks. The high percentage of neutral responses (33.8%) may reflect that this behaviour isn't routine for some individuals but does happen depending on workload or deadlines (Figure 4.26). This highlights the flexible boundary that presently often persists between work and personal life, which might be thought acceptable for some but can often lead to longer-term work-life balance challenges if not addressed properly.

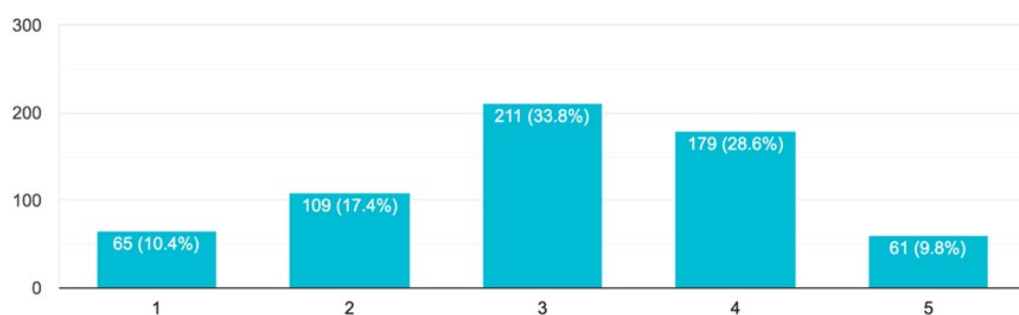


Figure 4.26 I sometimes bring work home, but just a few things to finish up

(3) Statement 27:

34.4% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they often work beyond official hours at home to keep up with their schedule. A sizable portion (29.1%) selected a neutral response, possibly indicating occasional overtime or variability based on workload (Figure 4.27). These findings highlight that working from home may blur boundaries between personal and professional time for a significant number of people.

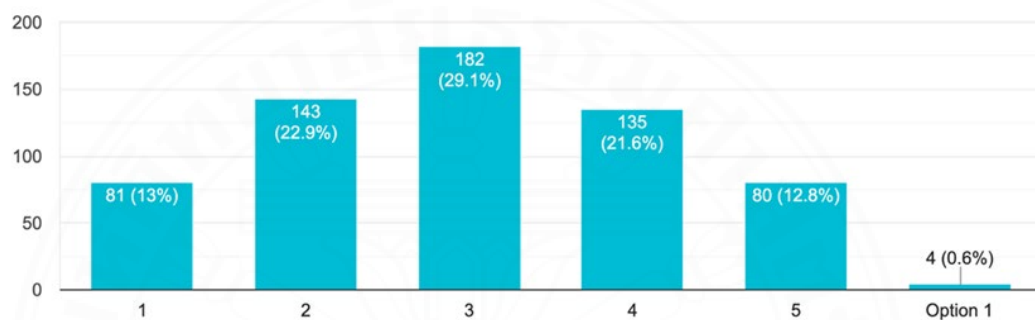


Figure 4.27 I often finish my work at home beyond the work hours to keep up with the schedule

While the overall opinions are divided amongst the respondents, the high proportion of people working overtime highlights the importance of encouraging clear work-life boundaries and offering support in time management and workload planning to address the highlighted issues.

4.2.2.9 Work from home satisfaction

Mixed responses were received for the statements within this category. Whilst respondents reported some personal benefits, the scores suggest moderate overall satisfaction. Overall, the survey's respondents appeared to appreciate the flexibility and personal time gained from working from home, but concerns were indicated around blurred work-life boundaries, overtime, and the adequacy of home workspaces and support (Table 4.16). Issues which this report seeks to help address.

Table 4.16 Statements related to work from home satisfaction

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
28). I prefer to work from home more than working onsite	3.1136	Neutral
29). Working from home gives me more time to spend with family and myself	3.2912	Neutral
30). Work from home give me more time to rest, de-stress	3.064	Neutral
31). Working from home makes it harder for me to balance work and personal time	3.1136	Neutral
32). I often working overtime when working from home	3.0832	Neutral
33). I am satisfied with benefits my company gives me when working from home	3.096	Neutral
34). I am satisfied with my work area when working from home.	3.0656	Neutral

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 28:

37.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they prefer working from home over on-site work. Meanwhile, 30.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating a significant portion prefers on-site work or finds remote work less preferable. The largest group (31.8%) chose neutral, which suggests that many Thai people may see pros and cons in both working modes or have no strong preference (Figure 4.28).

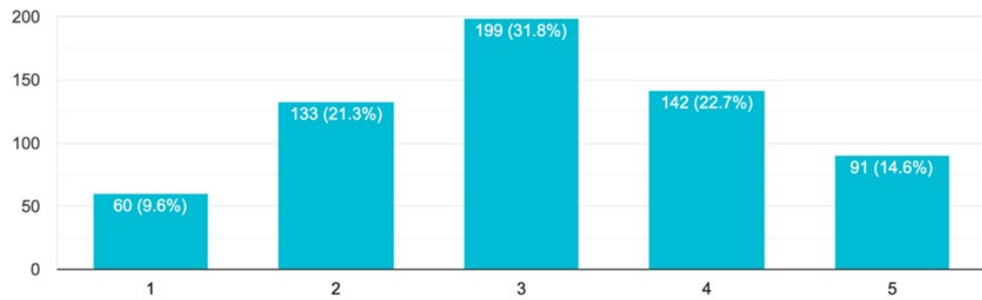


Figure 4.28 I prefer to work from home more than working onsite

While more respondents lean toward preferring remote work / working from home, the split in opinion and high neutrality point indicate the need for flexible or hybrid models. These results underline the importance of offering adaptable work arrangements that can accommodate diverse preferences, work styles, and life circumstances. Such sentiments are also being revealed in the latest work trends with more people preferring a hybrid model.

(2) Statement 29:

41.4% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that working from home gives them more time with family and for themselves (Figure 4.29). The results indicate a generally positive perception of working from home's effect on personal and family time. However, the substantial neutral response (33%) implies that not everyone clearly feels the benefit, highlighting the diversity of home life and work conditions.

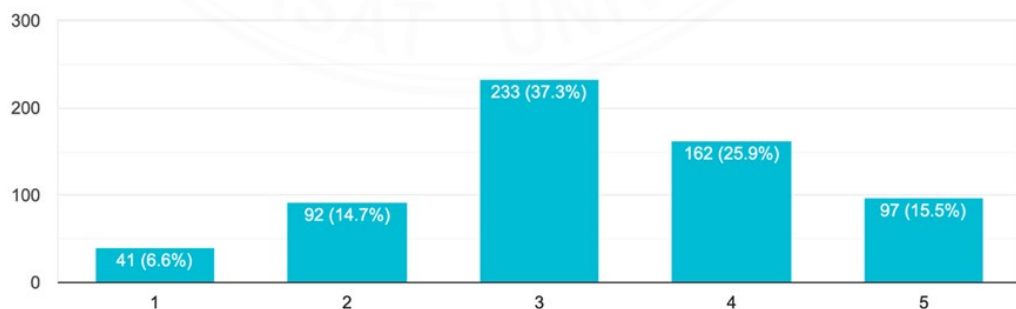


Figure 4.29 Working from home gives me more time to spend with family and myself

(3) Statement 30:

36.2% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that working from home gives them more time to rest and de-stress. Meanwhile, 30.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing a comparable group feeling the opposite. A significant portion (33.1%) chose neutral, indicating that many may not perceive a clear impact on rest and stress levels from remote work (Figure 4.30).

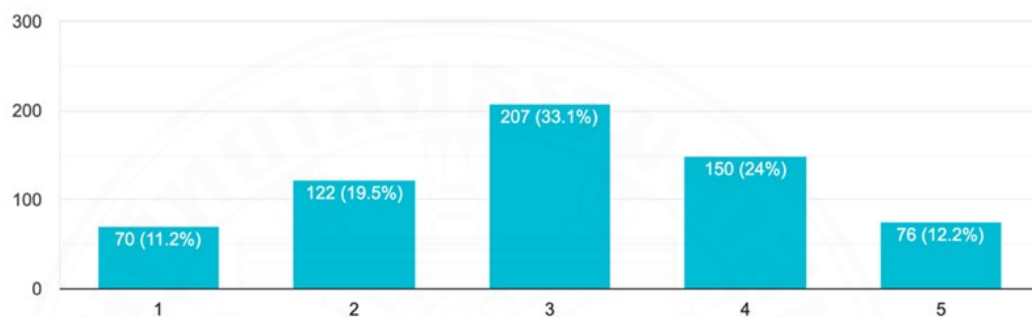


Figure 4.30 Work from home gives me more time to rest, de-stress

While more respondents lean toward their being a positive impact of working from home on rest and stress relief, the relatively high neutrality and near-balanced disagreement suggest that experiences vary significantly across individuals. This mixed sentiment may reflect differences in home environments, workload management, or personal boundaries when working remotely. The answers may also be influenced to a degree by commuting times that individuals may have to face when working on-site under traditional work scenarios.

(4) Statement 31:

40.1% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that working from home makes it harder for them to balance work and personal time. In contrast, 30.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this premise, whilst 29.0% remained neutral (Figure 4.31). The high proportion of respondents who reported having difficulty balancing work and personal time highlights the importance of addressing this issue.

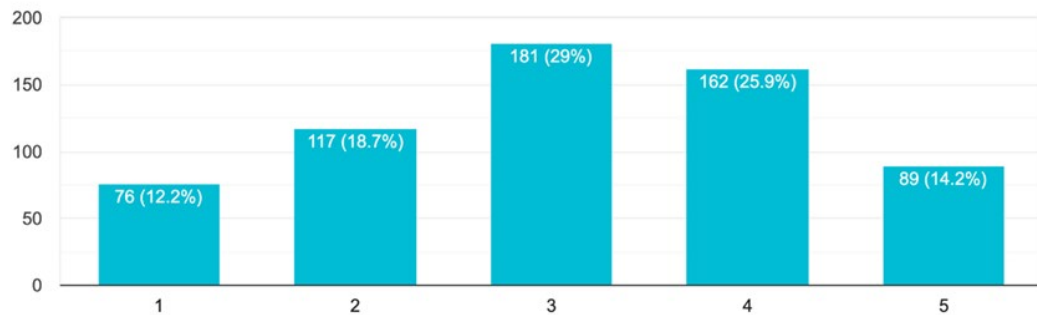


Figure 4.31 Working from home makes it harder for me to balance work and personal time

(5) Statement 32:

Over a one-third of respondents (37.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that they often work overtime when working from home, while 29.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and a significant portion (33.0%) remained neutral (Figure 4.32). These findings highlight the wide range in work practices that exist and that there is a substantial part of the population for whom this issue needs to be properly addressed.

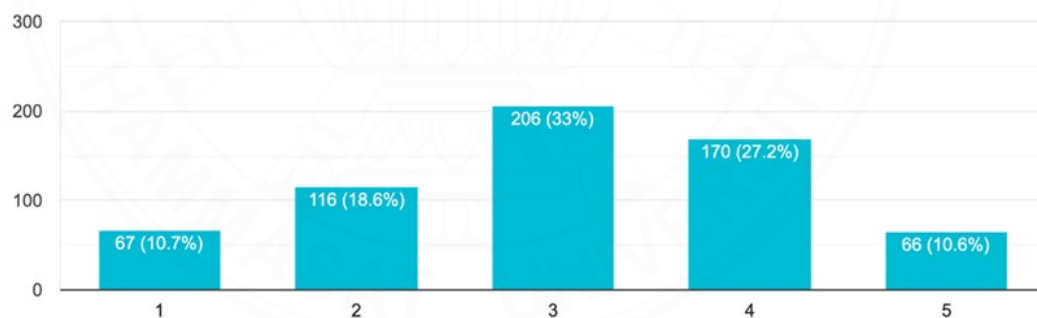


Figure 4.32 I often working overtime when working from home

(6) Statement 33:

36.6% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the benefits provided to them when working from home. 27.7% actively disagree or strongly disagree, while the largest portion (35.7%) remain neutral (Figure 4.33). This finding suggests that there is room for improvement in remote work / work from home support packages, and possibly a lack of clarity or consistency in

what those benefits should include. Enhancing communication and tailoring benefits to employee needs could improve satisfaction on this issue.

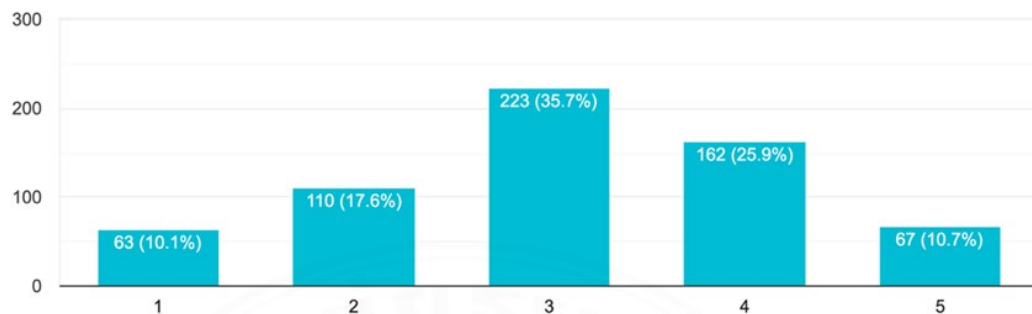


Figure 4.33 I am satisfied with benefits my company gives me when working from home

(7) Statement 34:

For the statement ‘I am satisfied with my work area when working from home’ only 38.7% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their home work areas, while 31.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed indicating their dissatisfaction. The remaining 29.9% were neutral (Figure 4.34). This suggests that while a portion of respondents are comfortable with their work set-ups when working from home, a significant number face challenges. This provides further evidence of the need to seriously address the issue of work set-ups for individuals when working from home.

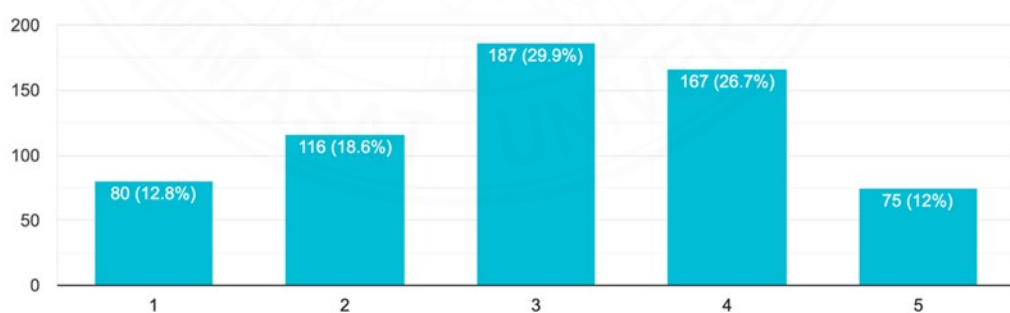


Figure 4.34 I am satisfied with my work area when working from home

4.2.2.10 Health and wellbeing when working from home

The responses indicate considerable concerns about health and wellbeing when working from home. The ratings for all of the statements within this category received a mean score below 3, suggesting that many of the survey’s

respondents experienced negative impacts related to these issues (Table 4.17). Those scores highlight that, while working from home offers some flexibility, it may also lead to increased personal health costs, reduced mental and physical wellbeing, and a higher risk of burnout for some employees.

Table 4.17 Statements related to health and wellbeing when working from home

Independent variable	Mean	Satisfaction level
35). I have to pay more for healthcare than when working in an office	2.3392	Dissatisfied
36). Working from home is worse for my health and wellbeing	2.6256	Neutral
37). Work from home is worse for my mental health	2.6832	Neutral
38). I take more time off than I do at the office	2.5296	Dissatisfied
39). I experienced burnout when working from home	2.6672	Neutral

Looking into the results in greater detail revealed the following:

(1) Statement 35:

The statement ‘I have to pay more for healthcare than when working in an office’ received mostly low levels of agreement, indicating that most responders did not feel their healthcare costs had increased due to working from home: A combined 56.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement, whilst only 14.7% agreed to a degree. The large percentage that was neutral (28.6%) suggests that for many, the impact on healthcare costs is either negligible or unclear.

Overall, the responses obtained suggest that increased personal healthcare expenses were not a widespread concern (Figure 4.35).

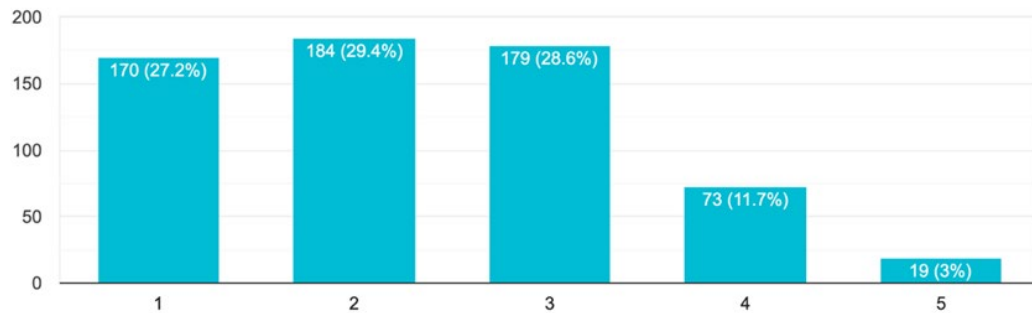


Figure 4.35 I have to pay more for healthcare than when working in an office

(2) Statement 36:

Whilst 42.8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement ‘Working from home is worse for my health and wellbeing’ suggesting that they did not find working from home detrimental to their health and wellbeing, around 22.9% agreed with the statement to some extent. The largest group (34.2%) responded neutrally, indicating uncertainty or mixed experiences (Figure 4.36). Though most did not perceive a negative health impact, a notable portion raised concerns, further backing the findings from the literature review on the need to proactively provide support to those working remotely.

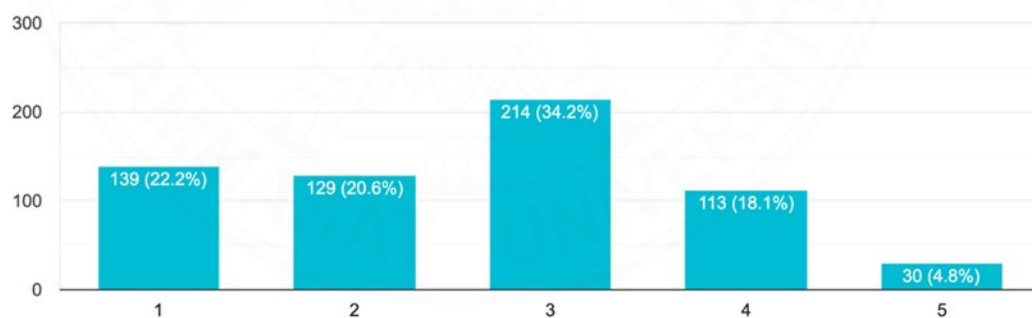


Figure 4.36 Working from home is worse for my health and wellbeing

(3) Statement 37:

Responses to the statement ‘I feel like my mental health is getting worse when I work from home’ revealed a mixed but also marked concern about mental wellbeing. Whilst 41% of respondents disagreed to some extent, suggesting they don’t feel their mental health is worsening, a significant 25.6% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This highlights a potential concern for a sizeable

number of the survey's participants and highlights the importance of ongoing support for mental health, especially for individuals who have to work remotely (Figure 4.37).

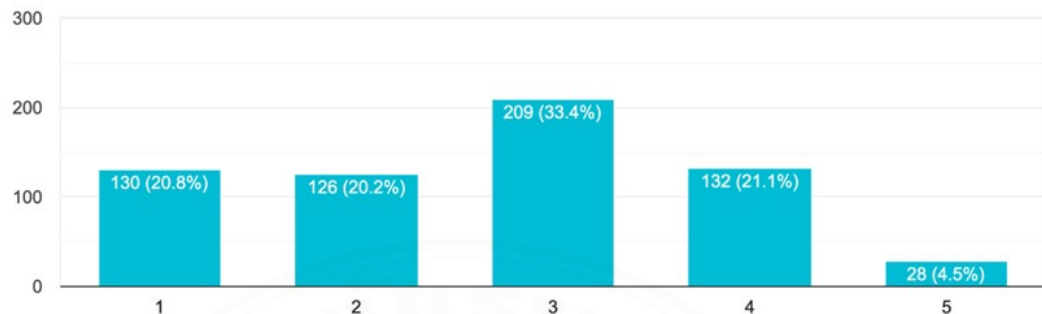


Figure 4.37 I feel like my mental health is getting worse when I work from home

(4) Statement 38:

The responses obtained for the statement 'I take more time off than I do at the office' shows that most respondents did not perceive themselves as taking more leave when working from home. Interestingly, 48% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement suggesting that nearly half feel their time off has not increased while working remotely. However, with over 31% neutral and about 21% in agreement, there is some variability in experiences. Overall, the data suggests that for most, working from home did not lead to taking significantly more time off (Figure 4.38).

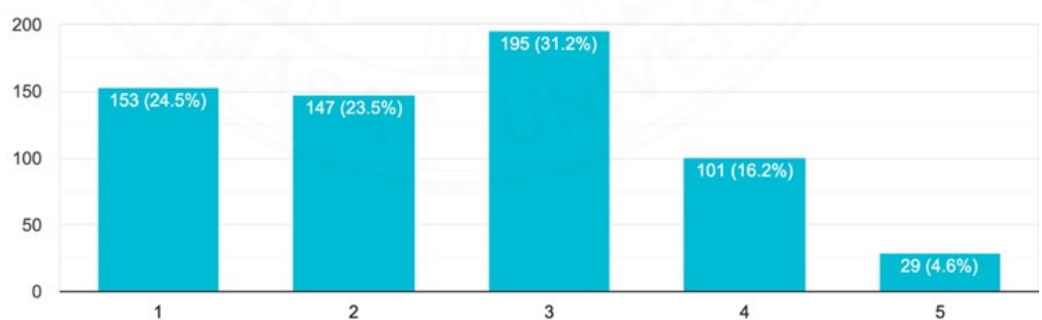


Figure 4.38 I take more time off than I do at the office

(5) Statement 39:

The individual ratings for the level of agreement for the statement 'I experienced burnout when working from home' cover a broad distribution of responses. Whilst almost 44% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed,

suggesting that many did not feel burned out, 28.5% were neutral, and around 28% agreed or strongly agreed (Figure 4.39). These figures, along with the findings of the literature review, suggest that this is an area that should receive substantial targeted support.

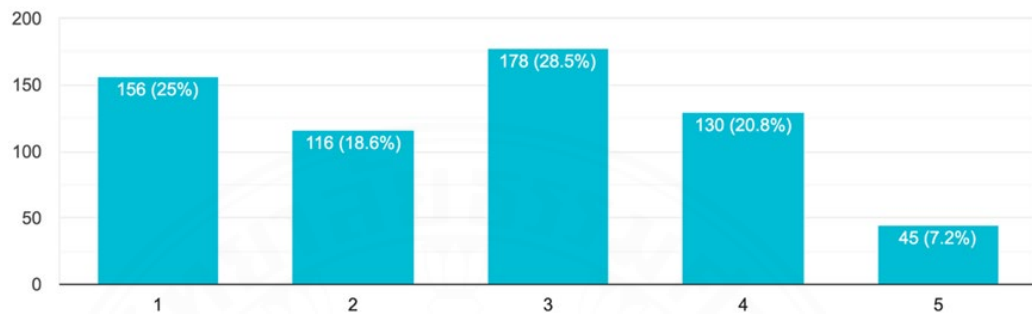


Figure 4.39 I experienced burnout when working from home

4.2.2.11 Key insights and areas for improvement

1) The following key insights and areas for improvement have been gain related to the answers obtained from the above questions:

2) General job and work satisfaction is positive, particularly in terms of happiness, salary, and workplace relationships.

3) Overtime pay and remote work benefits could be improved, as scores indicate only moderate satisfaction.

4) Work-life balance remains a challenge, with respondents feeling they prioritize work over personal time and occasionally sacrificing sleep.

5) As might be expected during conditions of lockdown, remote work does not clearly improve well-being (apart from reducing likelihood of infection), as health impacts, medical costs, and burnout remain concerns.

6) Employers could enhance work-from-home support, particularly in managing workloads, mental health resources, and financial assistance for medical expenses.

4.2.3 Part three - work locations, provisions and issues

4.2.3.1 Location where people worked when working remotely during the pandemic

The data on work locations used while working from home reveals key insights on how individuals adapted and occupied areas of their home environments for professional use. These are discussed below and summarised in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18 Location where people work from when working from home

Location	Number of people	Percentage
Home office/ room with full functionality	278	44.48%
Bedroom	165	26.4%
Table in the living room	128	20.48%
Sofa	33	5.28%
Kitchen-dining table	8	1.28%
Outside (Café)	8	1.28%
Other part of the house	5	0.8%
Total	625	100

(1) A home office / room with full functionality appears the preferred workspace

A home office or a dedicated workspace with full functionality at home was the most common choice, with 44.48% of respondents utilizing such a setup. This suggests that a significant portion of remote workers have invested in creating a structured and efficient workspace, which may contribute to higher productivity and better work-life separation.

(2) Bedrooms were the second most common work area

A notable 26.4% of respondents worked from their bedrooms, highlighting a potential challenge in maintaining work-life boundaries (and possibly greater issues with ergonomics). While this setup may offer privacy, it can also lead to reduced productivity and increased stress, as the lack of physical separation

between work and rest areas can blur the lines between professional and personal life.

(3) Common areas in the home used as workspaces

The living room table is the third most used location (20.48%), suggesting that many individuals worked in shared spaces, possibly due to limited home office setups. While this allows for flexibility, it may introduce distractions, particularly in households with multiple occupants.

(4) Use of less conventional workspaces for work

A small percentage of respondents worked either from sofas (5.28%), kitchen/dining tables (1.28%), cafés (1.28%), or other parts of their homes (0.8%). These locations are typically not ergonomically suited for long-term work, potentially leading to discomfort, lower efficiency, and posture and health issues.

4.2.3.2 Key insights from the above feedback on work from home and remote working locations

1) A dedicated home office is ideal but not possible for everyone.

2) Companies can support employees with ergonomic tools (e.g., chairs, desks, external monitors) and generally offering measures that can help create more bio-friendly conditions to improve home working conditions and work efficiency.

3) Working from bedrooms and common areas is common but may lead to distractions, poor posture, and blurred work-life boundaries. Encouraging structured work routines can help mitigate these challenges.

4) Use of alternative workspaces, like cafés or shared areas during the pandemic was minimal, indicating that most remote workers prefer staying within their homes rather than working from external locations during that period.

4.2.3.3 Things companies provided to those working from home during COVID-19 period

The amount of support provided to respondents from their employers with regard to them working from home during the pandemic varied greatly.

It was found that 407 (65.1%) of the 625 respondents had had a computer provided to them from the company they work for. The next highest provision was vaccine which was provided for 207 (33.1%), followed by flexible working hours for 98 individuals (15.7%), a computer mouse (92 people (14.7%)), a keyboard (76 people (12.2%)).

Support to stay active was provided to 42 people (6.7%), followed by budget to spend on work equipment (36 people (5.8%)), support for mental health (35 people (5.6%)), budget to spend on daily working expenses (air-conditioning, electricity bills) (22 people (3.5%)), and ergonomic work chairs (16 people (2.6%)).

Desks to use for work were provided to 15 people (2.4%), followed by help setting up their workstations (12 people (1.9%)). 35 respondents (5.6% of those who took part in the survey), said that the companies they worked for had not offered them any mental health support (refer to Figure 4.40).

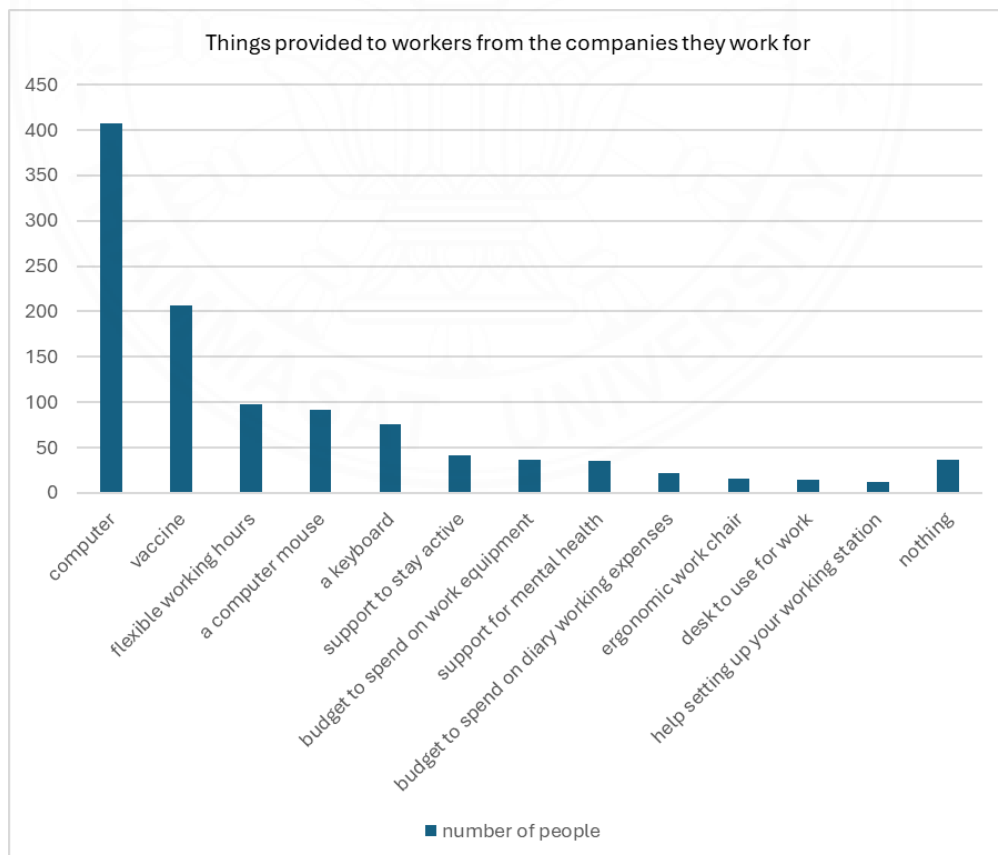


Figure 4.40 Things that companies provide for individuals when working from home

4.2.3.4 Problems faced by respondents when working from home

Written responses given whilst answering the online survey highlighted multiple recurring challenges when working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic:

(1) Increased expenses

1.1 Higher electricity and phone bills due to prolonged home usage.

1.2 Additional costs for equipment and documents (e.g., printers, internet upgrades).

1.3 Increased personal expenses (e.g., food, work-related costs).

(2) Work-life balance and time management issues

2.1 Difficulty in separating work and personal life, leading to overworking.

2.2 Working longer hours without realizing it.

2.3 Challenges in managing time effectively for both work and personal responsibilities.

2.4 Waking up late and struggling with self-discipline.

(3) Lack of proper work environment and equipment

3.1 Uncomfortable workspace, including unsuitable chairs, desks, and lighting.

3.2 Lack of necessary tools and technology for efficient work.

3.3 Inconvenience in handling documents and accessing information.

3.4 Unstable internet connection, slowing down communication and work progress.

(4) Productivity and motivation issues

4.1 Difficulty concentrating due to home distractions.

4.2 Lack of physical activity leading to fatigue and decreased energy.

4.3 Laziness and disorganisation, affecting work efficiency.

4.4 Feeling isolated, missing team interactions and collaboration.

4.5 Difficulty coordinating with colleagues, slowing down decision-making.

4.6 Meetings and communication challenges, making remote work less effective.

(5) Mental and physical health concerns

5.1 Increased stress due to workload and blurred work-life boundaries.

5.2 Back pain and discomfort from unsuitable home office setups.

5.3 Less time for relaxation and self-care, leading to burnout.

5.4 Missing social interactions with co-workers, reducing motivation.

(6) External disturbances and environmental issues

6.1 Noisy surroundings from family members, neighbors, or traffic.

6.2 Unfavorable home environment, making it hard to focus.

6.3 Frequent power outages affecting workflow.

6.4 Disruptions from housemates or family members, causing loss of concentration.

(7) Nature of work and adaptation challenges

7.1 Some tasks are difficult to do remotely, requiring office resources.

7.2 Inefficient collaboration and slower coordination with clients and teams.

7.3 Difficulty in adjusting to remote work, preferring the office environment.

4.2.4 Factors interrupting work-life balance when working from home during the pandemic

Several recurring challenges were highlighted by respondents that disrupted work-life balance when working from home.

4.2.4.1 Distractions from the home environment

- 1) Family members requiring attention, including children, elderly parents, and/or partners.
- 2) Household chores competing for time, making it difficult to separate work from personal responsibilities.
- 3) Pets causing disturbances.
- 4) Friends and neighbours assuming availability, leading to frequent interruptions.
- 5) Visitors or family members playing TV or making noise

4.2.4.2 Noise and environmental factors

- 1) Background noise from family, pets, or neighbors.
- 2) Traffic noise and construction sounds in the surrounding area.
- 3) Lack of a private workspace, making it difficult to concentrate.
- 4) Hot weather, impacting comfort and productivity.

4.2.4.3 Work equipment and technology limitations

- 1) Unstable or slow internet connection, affecting virtual meetings and online work.
- 2) Lack of proper work equipment, such as computers, chairs, or desks.
- 3) Additional costs for equipment purchases, adding financial strain.

4.2.4.4 Work boundaries and work overload

- 1) No clear work hours, leading to work bleeding into personal time.
- 2) Supervisors assigning more work than usual due to remote availability.
- 3) Urgent tasks or excessive work orders affecting time management.
- 4) Expectation to always be available, making it hard to disconnect from work.
- 5) Reporting requirements, such as daily updates in group chats, adding pressure.

4.2.4.5 Psychological and productivity challenges

- 1) Lack of concentration due to home distractions or lack of supervision.
- 2) Lack of motivation and increased laziness when working without direct oversight.
- 3) Feelings of isolation compared to working in an office with colleagues.
- 4) Frequent breaks or leisure activities, such as watching TV or resting too much.

4.2.4.6 Communication and coordination issues

- 1) Coordination with multiple teams being harder online compared to in-person.
- 2) Time zone or work schedule differences among household members disrupting workflow.
- 3) Inefficiencies in online meetings, including time limitations on Zoom.

4.2.4.7 Miscellaneous factors

- 1) Overworking due to the blurred line between home and work life.

- 2) Unexpected errands and travel needs, such as needing to leave for work calls.
- 3) Boredom and distractions, including friends inviting for social activities.
- 4) Lack of energy and power outages, affecting work continuity.

4.2.5 Respondents' thoughts on factors that could improve work-life balance

Survey responses made to the question “What would you like to add or remove to make your work-life balance better?” revealed several key themes regarding work-life balance improvements:

4.2.5.1 Reducing workload and working hours

- 1) Many respondents desire shorter working hours and fewer assigned tasks to reduce stress.
- 2) Some mention the need to reduce excessive work orders and urgent assignments.

4.2.5.2 Work from home environment and equipment

- 1) Requests for better work equipment, including computers, internet speed, and software tools, are common.
- 2) Some suggest separating workspaces from living spaces to improve concentration.
- 3) A few mention the need for an atmosphere conducive to working and better weather conditions.

4.2.5.3 Flexibility and work arrangements

- 1) Several respondents stated that they preferred working at the office rather than at home, citing convenience and reduced stress.
- 2) Others suggest changing work start times or increasing privacy while working from home.
- 3) Some wanted the ability to adjust the workplace to better suit their needs.

4.2.5.4 Financial and welfare support

- 1) Requests for higher salaries, better welfare benefits, and cost reimbursements (e.g., electricity, internet, and phone bills).
- 2) Some mention support for work-related expenses, including massage reimbursements and additional compensation

4.2.5.5 Meetings and communication

- 1) Some respondents request more or better-structured meetings, while others prefer fewer meetings.
- 2) A need for better online communication tools and training is also mentioned.

4.2.5.6 Health and wellbeing

- 1) Some emphasize reminding themselves to move while working.
- 2) A few mention stress reduction strategies and a better balance of personal time.

4.2.5.7 Technology and digital tools

- 1) Participants highlight the need for better internet connections and better digital systems.
- 2) Some prefer switching from paper to digital files with a reliable data retrieval system.

4.2.5.8 No changes required by some individuals

- 1) Several respondents indicate that their situation at that time was sufficient, with no need for adjustments.

4.3 Discussion

The survey results discussed above emphasise the pressing need for improved WLB and improved work practices for those working in Bangkok and elsewhere in Thailand, especially when WFH. The pandemic situation highlighted that

while WFH can offer greater flexibility, it can also create and magnify significant challenges.

The issue of number of hours worked per day also must be addressed when considering WLB. The survey revealed that 90.4% of the respondents worked >8 hours per day, with 9.6% of these working >10 hours per day prior to the pandemic. During the pandemic itself, whilst 79.5% of the respondents worked >8 hours per day, 19.7% of these were working >10 hours per day. A significant increase. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the optimal number of hours individuals should work every day for best results is 7.6 hours – a 38-hour work week (Merle, 2022). When asked about whether they were satisfied with the length of their work hours, 44.5% of respondents agreed and 28.5% strongly agreed that they were satisfied, even though their work hours typically exceed the recommended figure. This finding suggests that much more needs to be done to educate the target audience of the benefits of working more effectively and efficiently and allowing the opportunity for individuals to have greater WLB.

Interestingly, the location people worked from when WFH was also associated with the likelihood of them having burnout when WFH. Though only 26.5% of individuals worked from their bedroom when WFH, a total of 36.5% of that subgroup either agreed (27%) or agreed very strongly (11.5%) that WFH was associated with them having burnout. These were the highest associations for any location. The next highest location associated with burnout in terms of total responses received, and which was used by 44.5% of individuals WFH, was working from a table in the living room for which 2% of respondents agreed very strongly and 13% agreed strongly that WFH was associated with them having burnout. Such findings further highlight the need for work from home conditions to be considered seriously.

Addressing the above issues properly can greatly help improve both productivity and quality of life of workers whilst reducing chances of burnout. Educating individuals and organisations as to the benefits of proactively addressing such issues is key to the proposed solutions becoming more widely undertaken.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This study explored the impact of working from home (WFH) and WFH conditions experienced on work-life balance (WLB) during and after the COVID-19 pandemic with a particular focus being placed on individuals working in Bangkok, Thailand during the pandemic itself. Based on quantitative data gathered from 625 respondents across various employment sectors whilst the pandemic was still running its course, it was discovered that while WFH can offer work flexibility and avoid commute time, it also presents challenges such as increasingly blurred work-life boundaries, the potential lack of proper home workspace, and increased stress arising from inadequate work practices, lack of appropriate equipment, tools and support.

It was discovered in particular that there is a knowledge gap in the awareness of many businesses and the general public about why it is important to all parties that better WLB is achieved, both when WFH, or otherwise working remotely, and when working under normal circumstances. It was also highlighted that there is a need for individuals to have the proper support, tools and equipment to do their jobs effectively. Working smarter and working in the right types of conditions can greatly help improve the quality-of-life of individuals, their performance, and the resilience of businesses in a cost-effective manner that benefits both organisations and private individuals.

5.1.1 Alignment with research question

This present work has sought to provide insights and evidence that answers the question: *“What are the benefits of creating a better work-life balance and working conditions, especially during the COVID-19 situation and beyond, and how might they be achieved in particular for those who work from home some or all of the time?”*

It achieved this through undertaking primary and secondary research and analysis demonstrating the extent of the problems that exist and indicating in particular how improved WLB and working conditions, especially for those who WFH some or all the time, can lead to benefits such as improved physical health, mental health, and productivity.

The COVID-19 pandemic itself accelerated the shift to remote work whilst exposing challenges that had been largely unaddressed for those who had previously worked remotely and also those who worked on-site. These challenges were found to include increased chance of work-related musculoskeletal disorders due to poor ergonomic work layouts (Punnett & Wegman, 2004; Webber, 2021), blurred work-life boundaries (Moulder, 2021), and burnout and emotional exhaustion (Genrener, 2021). It was indicated through addressing this question that there are numerous benefits for both individuals, and the organisations they work for, that can be obtained by proactively addressing these issues including creating better working conditions.

5.1.2 Alignment with aims

The research aims of this work were to investigate the impacts of WFH on WLB especially in Bangkok during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to identify strategies that individuals and organizations can adopt to improve WLB, enhance individuals' wellbeing, and sustain productivity in remote work settings, and elsewhere, especially for those required to WFH. These were achieved through the primary and secondary research undertaken and the findings and insights gained from their analysis

5.1.3 Alignment with research objectives

This study set out to examine how WFH and work conditions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic affected WLB among individuals, with a special focus being given to those living in Bangkok, a city that was already known for its poor WLB even before the pandemic arose (Kisi, 2022, 2021). The three research objectives of this present study and how they were addressed are discussed below:

5.1.3.1 Objective 1

This was to assess the mental, physical, and relational effects of poor WLB and working conditions among individuals, particularly those working from home in Bangkok, and elsewhere in Thailand, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from primary research: The relationships of 12% of respondents were indicated to be suffering because of poor WLB. Many reported stress, burnout, and worsening mental health (e.g., 28% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they had experienced burnout when WFH). Evidence of sleep deprivation, health deterioration, and relationship strain were also reported, as was many respondents stating that they often worked overtime and experienced a blurring of work/personal boundaries. 60.8% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the time they spend with their family, while 11.3% were dissatisfied. However, a notable 27.8% remained neutral, suggesting there may be untapped opportunities to better support individuals in achieving satisfactory family time.

In many areas a poor level of employer support for individuals WFH was indicated. As examples, only 5.6% of the respondents had been offered mental health support, flexible working hours were only offered to 15.7%, ergonomic work chairs were only offered to 2.6%, desks only offered to 2.4%, and help setting up home workstations was only offered to 1.9%. There is much in terms of raising awareness and education that can be done to address this situation.

Recommendations from primary and secondary research: There is an urgent need to address the effects of poor WLB and working conditions among individuals. Clearer work boundaries need to be defined, wellness support is also required, including better access to mental health resources and help in creating better home workspaces and proactive measure to reduce burnout risk and aid both short-term and long-term health. The need for reduced out-of-hours communication and better work and rest practices is also evident.

5.1.3.2 Objective 2

To identify key factors contributing to poor WLB and work conditions when WFH based on survey data and literature review.

Findings: Bangkok is one of the hardest working cities in the world, yet it has been shown that working long hours can actually reduce productivity (Circadian®, 2018) and can have serious impacts on health (Descatha et al., 2020; von Bonsdorff et al., 2017; Virtanen et al., 2011), WLB and energy levels (Schwartz & Pines, 2019). There is a need for it to promote working smarter to help improve the life quality of its workers, and the resilience of both itself and its businesses.

A lack of effective home work area setups was often reported, a greater degree of employer support could have been provided (e.g., only 17% received ergonomic chairs), and issues with extended work hours. Positive impacts seen where family time increased and/or work was structured effectively. Inefficient time management and is a key disruptor of WLB.

Recommendations: Improvements should be sought in the ergonomic setups of home work areas, working conditions, time management training, and employer-provided initiatives to address these issues. In particular, practical and environmental changes should be undertaken to help support wellbeing and work effectiveness.

5.1.3.3 Objective 3

To propose evidence-based recommendations and guidelines for individuals and employers that can be used to help improve WLB and working conditions in both current and future WFH and standard work condition scenarios.

Findings: Evidence shows that staff costs typically account for around 90% of the general operating costs of businesses (World Green Building Council, 2014). For that reason alone, it is important to look after individuals' mental and physical health better. Bangkok has very poor WLB under standard work condition scenarios (Kisi, 2022, 2021), and even prior to COVID-19 it was already known for having some of the longest working hours in the world (Wu, 2016; Kisi, 2021a), factors which can affect WLB and productivity negatively (Pencavel, 2014; Merle, 2022).

Survey data and literature were used to identify the key themes of workspace quality, communication, boundaries, rest, and health-related initiatives that can be used to help improve WLB and working conditions.

Recommendations: The development of best practice guidelines are suggested covering home office ergonomics, right-to-disconnect policies, work-hour limits and structured breaks, mental health and wellness programs, the need for measures that encourage better sleep, and flexible, individualized work plans to help individuals work more effectively.

5.2 Guideline recommendations

As a result of the research that has been undertaken for this report, it is suggested that the following measures can be undertaken to help address the issues covered in this report.

5.2.1 For employers

- 1) Set clear work boundaries. Define staff working hours, encourage regular breaks, and discourage after-hours work and after-hours communication.
- 2) Optimise communication and collaboration. Improve the use of virtual communication tools and foster team engagement.
- 3) Encourage use of non-instantaneous communications where appropriate (so individuals do not feel compelled to immediately reply, particularly after hours).
- 4) Implement a right-to-disconnect policy. Respect employees' rest hours by discouraging work communication outside of core work hours.
- 5) Promote a culture that values outcomes and increased efficiency, not just time spent working, so WLB and productivity are increased.
- 6) Offer flexible work arrangements. Implement hybrid work models and allow adaptable schedules.
- 7) Promote employee well-being. Track working hours and monitor for early signs of stress, overload and burnout risk.

8) Offer mental health programs and/or access to employee wellness programs, and support stress management.

9) Help ensure individuals have good WFH and WLB conditions. Provide equipment, health and financial support to help enable the creation of bio-friendly work environments and conditions, ensure reliable internet access, and cover home-office expenses.

5.2.2 For individuals

1) Create a dedicated ergonomically friendly and bio-friendly home workspace with access to natural light, artificial light, and connection to nature.

2) Establish boundaries to minimise distractions and maintain focus whilst working.

3) Create a physical boundary between work from home work areas and living areas, where possible, so they are less a reminder of work after normal work hours.

4) Set clear work boundaries. Adhere to agreed standard working hours, take regular breaks, and seek to avoid both after-hours work and after-hours communication.

5) Undertake effective time management. Use task lists, calendars, time-boxing and/or other time management tools to manage work and life balance efficiently.

6) Avoid multitasking and instead focus on individual tasks at structured intervals.

7) Schedule time for meals, regular breaks and exercise (e.g., walking, stretching, yoga) as part of the daily routine.

8) Separate work from personal life to help improve WLB.

9) Engage in regular exercise, relaxation activities, and social interactions at appropriate points in the day for rest and recovery and to help boost work efficiency and wellbeing.

5.2.3 Guidelines for creating and ergonomic workspace at home

Creating a good ergonomic work-from-home (WFH) setup can substantially benefit physical comfort, productivity, and long-term health. Well thought out and appropriately provisioned work areas can profit both organisations and individuals. The following suggestions are proposed:

5.2.3.1 Ergonomic chair:

- 1) Neck rest.
- 2) Lumbar support for the lower back.
- 3) Option of adjustable armrests to keep shoulders relaxed.
- 4) Adjustable seat height (allows feet to be flat on the floor or on an elevated surface such as a footrest). Knees should be at the same level as the hips.
- 5) Swivel base and mobility to avoid twisting the spine when seated.

5.2.3.2 Work desk

- 1) This should be around 70–75 cm in height for most users. Often kitchen tables can be used for this purpose.
- 2) Have clear legroom under the desk (and enough clearance for chair armrests if used).
- 3) An adjustable standing desk could alternatively be used to allow either working seated or standing.

5.2.3.3 Workspace surface

- 1) Have enough space on the desk's worktop to rest forearms on its surface.
- 2) Have mouse and external keyboard within easy reach of user to help avoid overreaching.

5.2.3.4 Keyboard and mouse

- 1) Keyboard at elbow height, wrists straight and slightly lower than elbows.

2) Use an external keyboard and mouse if working with a laptop.

3) Have mouse located next to the keyboard and at same level.

5.2.3.5 Monitor screen(s)

1) Ideally the top of computer screen(s) should be at eye level.

2) Have screen at around an arm's length from the user.

3) If necessary, use monitor riser, monitor arm, or stack of books to adjust height to correct level.

5.2.3.6 Lighting

1) Have natural daylight light in work area if possible, preferably positioned to the side of the screen. Ideally work near a window and optimise daylight exposure.

2) Use artificial lighting when necessary. Also have adjustable desk lamp for focused lighting.

3) Avoid glare or reflections on screens.

4) Use warm light and blue-blocking apps for computers, or blue-light blocking safety glasses, if working at night (or relaxing at night using electronic media).

5.2.3.7 Environmental quality

1) Fresh air and good airflow can help maintain alertness and user effectiveness.

2) Consider using air purifiers or plants to improve indoor air quality.

3) Use fans or air conditioning as appropriate.

4) Reduce exposures to electromagnetic pollution. Have devices hardwired instead of operating wirelessly if possible.

5) Connect with nature. Open windows, work near greenery, and/or take outdoor breaks.

5.2.3.8 Location

1) Ideally WFH areas should be in a quiet, well-lit location in the home, with adequate space, minimal distractions and good access to natural light.

2) If possible, choose a space that allows mentally "switching off" from work at the end of the day. The use of a partition can allow this to be done in otherwise open space.

3) Consider using a spare room, corner of a living room or bedroom, or even a converted closet for a workstation that can be closed off when not in use

5.2.3.9 Support and reimbursement

1) If possible, request WFH setup support should be provided by employers (budget or equipment loan).

2) Keep receipts for tax or company reimbursement.

It is suggested that by following these above proposed guidelines, both employers and individuals can enhance productivity, reduce stress, and help achieve a healthier work-life balance in Bangkok and beyond.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

A 2022 survey revealed that 82% of Thai employees want to be able to have, or retain, a hybrid work arrangement (Chipman Koty, 2023). There are also many who wish to work remotely full-time. It is essential that such initiatives be undertaken and supported correctly in order to create the maximum gains for both employee and employer. With this in mind, it is proposed that this present research can be expanded upon in future to look at the situation that exists with regard to work-life balance in Bangkok, Thailand in the Post-COVID-19 era and also that additional research can be conducted to assess the potential effectiveness of the measures that have been proposed in this work and how they can be developed still further to help improve work-life balance and the country's productivity.

It is also proposed that qualitative research be undertaken as part of such work and that it should focus and expand upon all of the groups identified for the qualitative research undertaken for this present work.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

The online survey created for the quantitative data collection undertaken as part of the primary research was written in Thai as Thai nationals and their work-life balance are the main focus of this investigation. A translation of it is provided below:

PART ONE: DEMOGRAPHICS

Personal information

Job title:

How old are you:

- 1) Gen Z or Post-millennials (0-24 years old)
- 2) Gen Y or Millennials (25-40 years old)
- 3) Gen X (41-56 years old)
- 4) Baby boomers (57-75 years old)
- 5) The silent generation (76-93 years old)

Who you living with:

- 6) Live alone
- 7) Live with partner
- 8) Live in a shared house with housemates
- 9) Live in a household with at least one child you have to take care of
- 10) Other please specify:

PART TWO: RESPONSES ON RESEARCH TOPIC

Where do you regularly work from:

- 11) Onsite (office)
- 12) Hybrid (part-time from home& office)

- 13) Full-time working from home

How long have you been working from where you presently undertake most of your work:

- 14) 1-2 years
15) 3-4 years
16) 5-6 years
17) More than 7 years

How many hours had you been working per day before the pandemic:

- 18) Less than 8 hours
19) 8-10 hours
20) More than 10 hours

How many hours you been working per day during the pandemic:

- 21) Less than 8 hours
22) 8-10 hours
23) More than 10 hours

Please state you level of agreement with each of the following statements

On scale of 1-5 (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree), please rate your level of agreement:

Happiness factor

- My job is the most effective factor to my happiness
- My salary is the most effective factor to my happiness
- My family is the most effective factor to my happiness

Work satisfaction

- I enjoy my job
- I feel fulfilled by my job
- I am satisfied with my working hours
- I am satisfied with my job scope
- I am satisfied with my salary
- I am satisfied with my overtime pay
- I am satisfied with my medical benefit from workplace
- I am satisfied with my time-off benefits

Working environment satisfaction

- Co-workers contribute to a good working environment
- My supervisor/manager contributes to a good working environment

Personal life satisfaction

- I am satisfied with the amount of time I can spend with my family
- I am happy with my home life
- I use my time at home to connect with family and friends

Balance

- I prioritise my job over my personal and family life
- I prioritise my family time over my work
- I sleep less to gain time with my family
- I sacrifice sleep for work

Stress

- I don't feel good with the amount of work I receive
- There are not enough hours in the week

Time to de-stress

- I think about work even when I should be relaxing
- I work on the weekend or have irregular working hours

Work brought home

- I leave my work at office
- I sometimes bring work home, but just a few things to finish up
- I often finish my work at home beyond work hours to keep up with schedules

Work from home satisfaction

- I prefer to work from home more than working on site
- Working from home gives me more time to spend with family and myself
- Working from home gives me more time to rest and de-stress
- Working from home makes me not leave my work at the workplace
- I often working overtime when working from home
- I am satisfied with benefits my company gives me when working from home
- I am satisfied with the working space I have in my home

Health and wellbeing when working from home

- I have to pay for my medical wellness more than working onsite
- Working from home is worse for my physical health and wellbeing
- Working from home is worse for my mental health
- I take my time-off more than when working on site
- I have experienced burnout when working from home

PART THREE: WORK LOCATIONS, PROVISIONS AND ISSUES

Please indicate which of the following apply to you

If you work from home, where in your house have you been working from:

- 24) Room with fully function/home office

- 25) Kitchen-dining table
- 26) Bedroom
- 27) Table in living room
- 28) Sofa
- 29) Other

Things that your company provides for you when working from home:

- 30) Laptop, desktop computer
- 31) Flexible working hour
- 32) Support for mental health
- 33) A mouse
- 34) Setting up your work station
- 35) A keyboard
- 36) Support to stay active
- 37) Ergonomic work chair
- 38) Budget to spend on work equipment
- 39) Budget to help with daily working expenses (air-conditioning, electricity bills)
- 40) Desk to use for work
- 41) Vaccine

Please supply answers to the following

Problems you facing when work from home:

.....

What interrupts your work-life balance when working from home? Why?

Answer:

.....

Question: “What would you like to add or remove to make your work-life balance better?”

Answer:

.....