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THE QUALITY OF INTERNAL COMMUNICA-

TION DURING REMOTE WORK

Case: KWH Logistics, Support Functions

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ABSTRAKT

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Intern kommunikation är en viktig del av ett företag, eftersom den påverkar arbetares och arbetsgivares välmående och motivation. En plötslig växling till en virtuell arbetsplats påverkar den interna kommunikationen. Detta arbete inriktar sig på kvalitén av intern kommunikation inom KWH Logistics Support Functions under pandemin, med fokus på kommunikation både inom och mellan avdelningar och kommunikationsredskapen.

Studien genomfördes genom att granska litteratur, utföra en undersökning, analysera resultat, kombinera resultaten med teori, och presentera förslag för förbättring. Den teoretiska grunden för undersökningen innehåller: kommunikation, intern kommunikation, den virtuella arbetsplatsen och kommunikationsstrategi. Undersökningen gjordes genom att kombinera kvalitativa och kvantitativa frågor, för att få en bättre förståelse om respondententernas ståndpunkt.

Resultaten av studien visar att de anställda generellt är nöjda med kvalitén av intern kommunikation på arbetsplatsen. Respondenterna är överens om att de får professionell hjälp och att möten organiserade på distans fungerar väl, men de anställda kräver mer information om aktuella ärenden och klara instruktioner för användning av kommunikationsredskap. Genom att utföra detta studium hittas utvecklingsobjekt för att ytterligare förbättra kvalitén av intern kommunikation.

Nyckelord	Intern kommunikation, kommunikation, virtuell arbetsplats

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ABSTRACT

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Internal communication is an important part of the running of a business as it affects the well-being and motivation of employees and employers. A sudden shift to a virtual workplace affects the internal communication. This thesis studies the quality of internal communication in KWH Logistics Support Functions during the pandemic, focusing on communication both within and across the departments as well as the communication tools.

The research was performed by studying literature, conducting a questionnaire, analyzing results, combining results with theory, and presenting suggestions for improvement. The theoretical framework of the thesis includes communication, internal communication, the virtual workplace, and internal communication strategy. The research is conducted as mixed-method, combining quantitative and qualitative questions, to get a clear understanding of the attitudes of the respondents.

The results of the study show that employees are generally satisfied with the quality of internal communication in the workplace. The respondents agree that they get professional help and meetings organized remotely function well, while the employees require more information regarding current issues and clear instructions for the use of communication tools. By doing this research development objectives are found to further improve the quality of internal communication.

Keywords	Internal communication, communication, virtual workplace

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1   INTRODUCTION

Internal communication is an important part of the success of a company, and as the world is moving towards a remote working place, the significance of internal communication is increasing, and it has become one of the main concerns of managers (Akkirman and Harris 2005). Internal communication affects the motivation, well-being, and trust of employees and employers, and therefore it is important to have a functioning internal communication (Hola 2012; Robbins and Judge 2013).

This chapter is divided into three sub-chapters, 1st the Background and Objectives of the Thesis, which presents why this research is conducted and what the goal of the paper is, 2nd The Research problem and Questions, to present the problem this paper will find the solution for, and outline the main questions that will be answered when reading this paper, and 3rd the Structure of the thesis, to give the reader a clear view about what the paper includes and the order of the topics (Kniivilä, Lindblom-Ylänne & Mäntynen 2017, 52-54).

1.1   Background and Objectives of the Thesis

The aim of the study conducted was to research the quality of internal communication within and across the departments of KWH Logistics Support Functions, during the remote work recommendations. This research enables presentation of development objectives to further increase the quality of internal communication in the organization.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and this led to sudden changes in the way of working, also at KWH Logistics, therefore it is important to research the employees' interpretation of the quality of internal communication in the organization. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the amount of remote work increased. According to Varma Tutkimustoiminta, the amount of remote work has increased for 72% of the 322 persons performing the survey *Koronan vaikutukset työelämään ja työkykyyn* (Eng: Corona's effect on working life and the ability to work) (Varma Tutkimustoiminta 2021). According to a study conducted in March-May 2021, by Tilastokeskus, 90% of the employees working remotely in the spring

wants to work remotely minimum 25% of their working hours in the future (Sutela 2021). The surveys were conducted for Finnish companies.

This paper will focus on the formal communication across and within the departments of KWH Logistics Support Functions. In the results of the study of internal communication in KWH Logistics Support Functions a few insights on the vertical and informal communication are presented.

1.2   The research Problems and Questions

The research problem is to find the interpreted quality of the current internal communication within departments and across departments in KWH Logistics Support Functions. By researching the quality, the main problems with internal communication during the time of remote work are found and by analyzing the results, improvement suggestions for the communication are presented.

This research will answer three questions:

1. How do the employees of KWH Logistics Support Functions interpret the current quality of internal communication in the company?
2. What are the problems in internal communication during remote work?
3. How can the quality of internal communication be improved?

1.3   The structure of the thesis

First, the introduction of the study is presented to give the reader a clear view of the intentions of this paper. Second, the theoretical framework used in this paper is presented. The chapter includes theories for communication, internal communication, the virtual workplace, and the internal communication strategy. The theoretical framework provides earlier research to describe the topic and justify the research and its analysis. The third chapter presents the company, KWH Logistics, and its Support Functions. Chapter four discusses the research methodology. The chapter explains why the methods for research are chosen, when and how the data is collected, and what kind of analyzing methods are used. In the fifth chapter the questionnaire sent to the employees of KWH Logistics Support Functions is

presented, and it will explain how the questionnaire was structured and the thought process when shaping the questions. Chapter six shows the results of the survey. The chapter is divided into five sub-headings, 1st presentation of the Quantitative results, 2nd presentation of the Qualitative results, 3rd Summary of the results, 4th Analysis of the results and 5th Suggestions for improvement. At last, in chapter seven, this paper is concluded. The last chapter includes discussion about the research, it presents the validity and reliability of the research, and at last the ethical point of view.

In the end the full list of references is found, and the Questionnaire is found in Appendix 1.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will present the theoretical framework implemented in the study. It will present the theories used to conducting the survey, analyzing the results, and suggesting improvement factors. Some theories are presented purely to give the reader a clear view about what communication is and the definition of discussed subjects, therefore they are not implemented in the analysis.

The chapter is divided into four parts, 1st Communication Theory, 2nd Internal communication: Definition and significance, 3rd The virtual workplace, and 4th Internal Communication strategy.

2.1   Communication Theory

According to Robbins and Judge (2013, 337) communication is the "transfer and the understanding of meaning". Thus, to communicate there must be at least two parties, the one sending the message and one receiving and understanding what is said. Perfect communication is achieved when the receiver of a message understands and interprets the information exactly as the sender intended. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal, formal or informal, provided that it transfers a message of some kind (Markovic and Salamzadeh 2018).

There are two types of channels for communication, verbal and nonverbal, and it is important to choose the correct channel when transmitting a message (Stegaroiu and Talal 2014). Robbins and Judge (2013, 340-342), as well as Griffin and Moorhead (2013, 296-298), divide the verbal communication into oral and written communication. These channels are often combined, in for example meetings or presentations.

Verbal communication is words used to share information. Face-to-face communication includes more information than any other type of verbal communication, as it includes emotions and immediate feedback (Robbins and Judge 2013, 340; Stegaroiu and Talal 2014). The downside of oral information is that there rarely is

any proof of what exactly has been said, and as each person interprets the message in their own way, the meaning can change multiple times throughout the communication process (Robbins and Judge 2013, 340-341). To describe things in detail, at least considering technical information, text is the best form. Written communication has been considered slow, but with our modern instruments, written communication can be very effective. (Stegaroiu and Talal 2014). In opposite to oral communication, the information in a written conversation can be stored and re-read for a long period. Written communication is usually more logical and clearer, as one can spend time modifying it (Robbins and Judge 2013, 341).

Body language is usually what comes to mind when speaking about nonverbal communication. However, nonverbal communication also includes facial expressions and, for example, office design. Nonverbal communication includes everything that is not written nor spoken. Body language and facial expressions are very expressive and play an important part in communication. The way an office is designed can communicate different things to employees. As an example, often in a CEO's office there are elegant furniture and beautiful drapes, this can communicate to the employees that they are now in an office of someone with a high ranking. (Griffin and Moorhead 2013; 298.) Nonverbal communication is also intonations in speech. By using different tones and intonations in oral communication, one sentence can get various meanings (Robbins & Judge 2013, 342).

Formal channels and groups are those that organizations establish for communication regarding work related tasks and other professional purposes. Informal groups and channels are often established by employees. These can be related to organizational tasks, but they can also be for day-to-day conversations. When establishing formal channels there is a plan for the channels, whereas informal channels can come up from nowhere. (Robbins & Judge 2013, 339).

In the 1950s, Shannon and Weaver presented the first important communication model, the *Linear model of communication* (Ivanova 2018). The model (Figure 1) describes a linear communication between two parties, the sender, and the receiver.
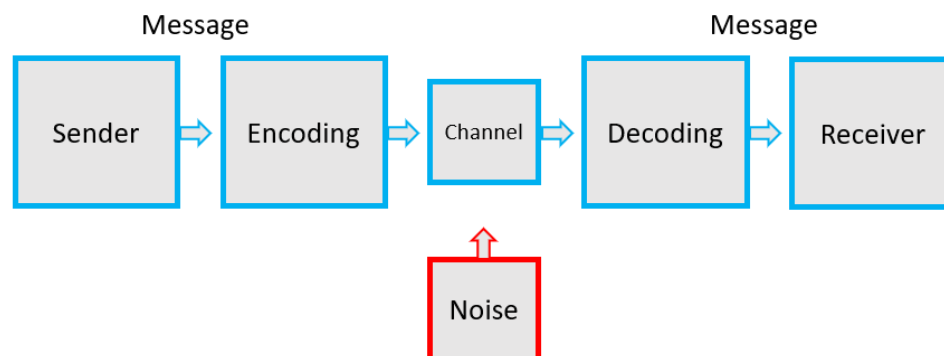
Figure 1. Linear model of communication.

The sender is the creator of a message, the individual who starts the information flow. In the encoding stage the sender creates the message, for example in text or speech. The channel is where and how the message is transmitted, this can be for example an e-mail or a phone call. In the decoding stage the message is interpreted and gets its meaning. After the interpretation of the message, it reaches the receiver. During the information flow there can be noise. In this model noise can mean a bad connection during the call or different backgrounds and knowledge that effects the interpretation of the information. The linear model functions well for electronic media, due to its one-way nature, but for other types of messaging it encounters various problems.

Many researchers have added *Feedback* to the linear model, for example Robbins and Judge (2013, 338), Hartley and Bruckmann (2002, 17-20) and Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018). In Figure 2, the addition is shown.
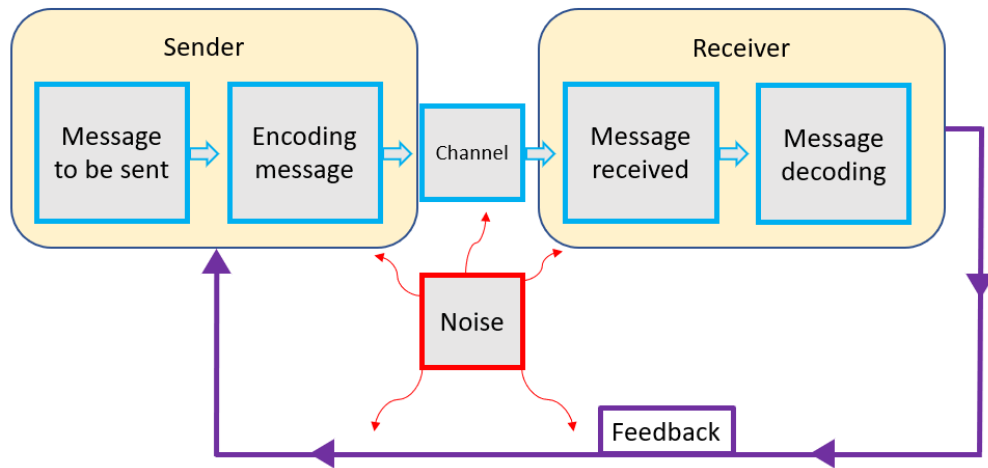
Figure 2 The communication process with feedback.

According to Figure 2, the receiver first receives the message then decodes it. After decoding they send feedback to the sender. The sender then evaluates the feedback to see if the message was interpreted correctly. When a message is unclear, or the environment is noisy the communication process may require several cycles. Clear feedback is important to make the communication more effective. Depending on the common background of the parties in the communication process the amount of information in the message is crucial. (Hartley and Bruckmann 2002, 20).

In 2013 (p. 20), Griffin and Moorhead presents ways to improve the communication process from the *sender*'s and *receiver*'s points of view (Table 1).

FOCUS	SOURCE QUESTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION	RECEIVER QUESTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
Message	What information are you trying to get across?	Say more. Say less. Share complete information.	What does the sender try to explain?	Listen to or read the message carefully, without skipping steps.
Symbols	Does the receiver interpret the symbols similarly?	Use other symbols. Use the receiver's language. Clarify the symbols.	What symbols are being used?	Clarify the symbols. Ask questions.
Medium	Does the receiver use this media? How often?	Change medium. Use multiple media.	What media does the sender use?	Oversee multiple media.
Feedback	How does the receiver react to your message?	Pay attention. Ask questions.	Was the message correctly interpreted?	Repeat feedback. Clarify feedback.

Table 1. Improving the communication process.

As seen from the table, both the receiver and the sender are responsible for the interpretation of the information. The sender must understand when, how and what kind of communication the receiver expects and prefers, and the receiver must recognize the ways the sender communicates. For both ends of the communication process, questions and clarifying the content is important.

2.2 Internal Communication: Definition and Significance

Hola (2012) determines the main objectives of internal communication as following: provide information for employee's needs, internal marketing, establishment of employees' stability and loyalty, and set up of feedback. Internal communication pierces the entire organization. The personal management, internal marketing, communication skills and the company's strategy must all be synchronized to ensure successful internal communication.

Internal communication is an essential area that affects businesses capability to motivate and engage employees in the workplace. Internal communication is constantly taking place within organizations and departments, and it includes both formal and informal communication. (Welch and Jackson 2007, 177-198.)

The communication in a company flows in two directions, vertically and horizontally/laterally (Robbins and Judge 2013, 338). Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018) argues that there is also the diagonal or matrix type communication. The vertical communication can be divided into two sub-categories, upward and downward communication. Downward communication is mainly communication from the managers and leaders to the employees, this communication includes assignment of tasks, pointing out problems, providing feedback about performance, and implementing goals. The upward communication involves employees giving feedback to the leaders/managers, information about the progress to reach goals, and raise awareness about current tasks. (Robbins and Judge 2013, 339-340). Horizontal communication is among members on the same level, generally discussing task-related issues or informal topics (Bartels, Peters, de Jong, Pruyn & van der Molen 2010).

The horizontal communication is important for many reasons. To mention a few: horizontal communication can increase the feeling of belonging in the company and profession, as well as improve the communication climate (Bartels et al. 2010), thus support the identification with the work group, it saves time as employees can inform each other, instead of waiting for managements' orders (Robbins and Judge 2013, 340), and at last, the formal and non-formal discussion improve the skill-sharing and team-building (Rogers, Burnside-Lawry, Dragisic & Mills 2016). Though the horizontal communication within a company is mainly good, there is also some risks. Conflict may raise if decisions are made horizontally, without including the vertical flow in the communication (Robbins and Judge 2013, 340).
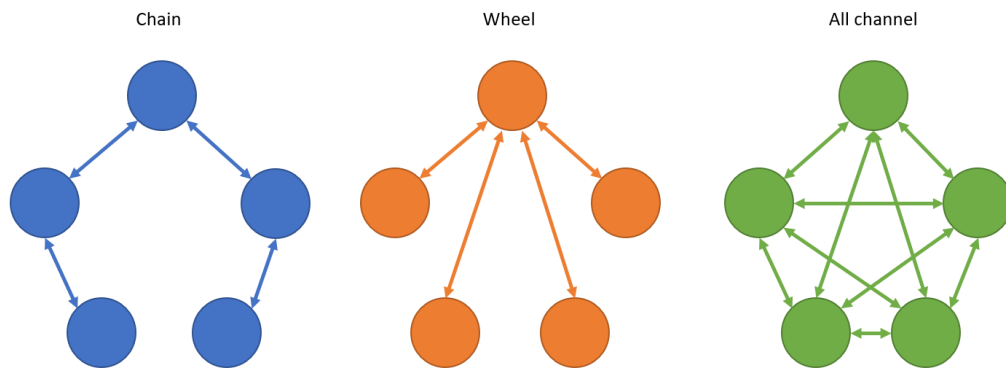
Figure 3. Formal small-group networks.

Robbins and Judge (2013, 343) present three common small-group networks. These networks, Chain, Wheel, and All channel, visually presented in Figure 3, present different kinds of information flow within a company. The models are made to clarify the ways of communication in a multi-level organization, in this case three levels. Griffin and Moorhead (2013, 305) present the same networks, as well as the Circle (Figure 4).
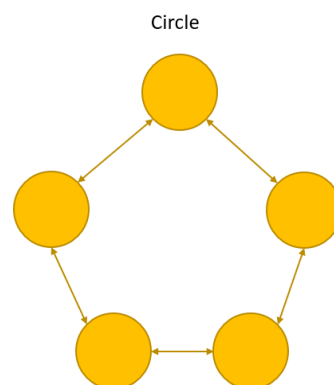
Figure 4. Formal small-group network: Circle.

The chain network represents a model where the individuals only communicate with people above and below them. This is a common flow of information in a company with a vertical hierarchy. In the wheel network each flow of information goes through the manager, and the team members do not communicate directly with each other. This network represents the typical work group with a strong leader. The name of the All channel is descriptive as is. Communication with every

member of the group occurs when there are no designated tasks or leaders, often in non-formal groups and events (Robbins and Judge 2013, 343; Griffin and Moorhead 2013, 305-306). In a circle network everyone communicates with the persons on their sides, but not with anyone else. This type of information flow is generally found in task forces and committees (Griffin and Moorhead 2013, 305).

At last, the Grapevine model will be presented. Many researchers, Robbins and Judge (2013, 343-344), Welch and Jackson (2007) and Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018) to mention a few, discuss the importance of informal communication between employees, the *Grapevine*. According to Robbins and Judge, cited from a survey in Forbes in 1997, 75 percent of the employees hear news first through the Grapevine. The previously mentioned researchers recognize that the information heard through Grapevine channels is not always facts, but at the same time it has a big effect on new job applicants. The informal sources provide for information gathered from formal sources. Thus, the more information that is vaguely presented in formal communication, the more information must be gathered through other sources, this can affect the organizations' intentions poorly. To prevent this, some organizations set up informal channels for formal communication. (Markovic and Salamzadeh 2018).

Markovic and Salamzadeh present four models of grapevine communication, the single strand chain, the gossip chain, the probability chain, and the cluster chain. These chains are visually presented in Figures 5 and 6.

In the single strand chain, the information goes from one person to the next, who then passes the information to the following. The information flows to one person at a time. The longer the chain, the more inaccurate information. The probability chain starts from one person, who passes the information to one or more people. The receivers of the information pass it to whoever, with no exact pattern. This means that some might not get the information.

Single strand chain   The probability chain
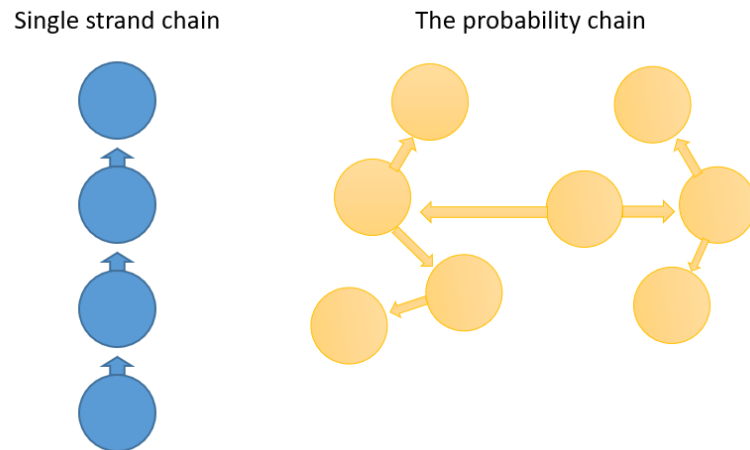
Figure 5. Grapevine: Single strand chain and Probability chain.

In the gossip chain one single person shares the information to everyone. This is a slow way of communicating to everyone, but it keeps the information accurate. The last chain is the cluster chain. In this chain the information starts from one person, this person shares the information with a few people, who then share it with for example their co-workers. This chain often happens in formal situations as well. The director informs the managers, the managers share the information with team leaders, who then share it with their teams, and in the teams, it can be shared with teammates. The cluster chain and the probability chain can look the same, but in the cluster, there is a clear pattern of flow.

Figure 6. Grapevine: Gossip chain and Cluster chain.

Verghese (2017, 103-113) argues that employees are increasingly considered important stakeholders, they act as representatives for the brand as they engage with the public. Effective communication can lead to organizational commitment, employee engagement, good reputation and therefore, great business outcomes. Today, there are not many instruments to develop and evaluate intern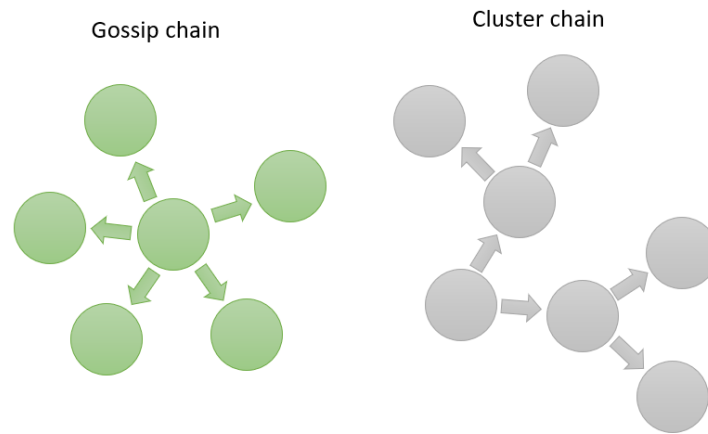al communication, but as organizations are increasingly investing in the development of said instruments, the knowledge in the area is increasing (Vercic, Coric & Vokic 2021).

2.3   The virtual workplace

A virtual workplace, a place where employees work remotely from their colleagues and managers (Cascio 2000). Remote work has increased a great deal the last year, and by this date, almost everyone is somehow familiar with it. It has become more of a norm than an exception in many organizations.

There is both advantages and disadvantages of working in a virtual environment. Some of the advantages are that it is easier to combine the working life with personal life, flexible work hours mean more of a flexible approach to projects, environmental benefits as the employee does not have the need for commuting, and teams are easier to organize when the distance does not matter (Cascio 2000).

One of the biggest consequences regarding remote work is the internal communication in an organization, as colleagues cannot casually discuss matters during their work day, neither work related nor personal. The lack of human connection

can affect an organization and the well-being of the employees poorly. When communication lessens it affects the trust on each other and might reduce the sharing of useful information, naturally this may lead to poor decisions. (Levin and Kurtzberg 2020). Without social interaction, which easily is left out in a virtual environment, employees and employers can feel isolated and a shortage in information-sharing can occur (Cascio 2000).

Implementing new technology is not enough to successfully shift to the virtual workplace. Communication in the remote offices is more crucial than in the traditional on-site environments, as the patterns differ from the traditional contents and contexts of communication. (Akkirman and Harris 2005.)

As stated earlier in this chapter, in face-to-face communication body language plays an important part. In a virtual workplace there is a lack of eye-contact, and it is difficult to see the position of someone's body, thus, body language must be replaced by words and questions. Often in writing feelings are shown by using emojis, but these can be interpreted in various ways, and therefore they should be avoided in formal text. People tend to be harsher over text than in face-to-face situations, which can lead to poor relationships and negative attitudes (Levin and Kurtzberg 2020.)

2.4 Internal Communication Strategy

Earlier in the chapter it was mentioned that employees are representatives of the organization's brand, and the image they share to the public is highly affected by their commitment and trust for the organization, also, it was said that a good internal communication has a great effect on those. For creating a good internal communication, a Communication Strategy is important. Without integrating communication strategy to the organizations strategy there is a massive risk of losing members to competitors, having misinformed employees and dissatisfaction in the teams (Stegaroiu and Talal 2014).

The Internal Communication Strategy includes strategic goals, key messages, and it identifies channels and the proper use of them. Its aim is to improve the effectivity of communication and increase the organizational culture. The strategy should be evaluated continuously and updated regularly to meet the need of the employees. (Stegaroiu and Talal 2014.)

Welch and Jackson (2007) present an Internal communication matrix that can help with the strategic analysis, planning and evaluation of internal communication (Table 2). This matrix suggests that the personnel of a company can be divided into four dimensions, which all have a separate need of communication. When making a communication plan, all the aspects should be taken into consideration.

Dimension	Level	Direction	Participants	Content
Internal director communication	Directors Supervisors Team leaders	Two-way	Directors/ Supervisors/ Team leaders – Employees	Employee's roles, Feedback, Team briefings
Internal team peer communication	Team colleagues	Two-way	Employee –employee	Team task discussions
Internal project team communication	Project group colleagues	Two-way	Employee –employee	Project related information
Internal corporate communication	Strategic managers/ Top management	One-way	Strategic managers – all employees	Organizational issues (goals, objectives, activities)

Table 2. Internal communication matrix.

3   PRESENTATION OF THE CASE COMPANY

KWH Logistics is one of the biggest port operators in Finland (KWH Logistics 2021). KWH Logistics is divided into three business units, International Transports, Port Logistics, and Industrial Services. KWH Logistics includes several independent subsidiaries, these are Oy Backman-Trummer Ab, Oy Moonway Ab, Oy Blomberg Stevedoring Ab, Oy M. Rauanheimo Ab, Stevena Oy, Oy Otto Rodén Ab, Oy Adolf Lahti Yxpila Ab, Oy Blomberg Rent Ab, and A. Jalander Oy. (KWH Group 2021). Through these companies KWH Logistics are present in all the major ports of Finland (KWH Logistics 2021).

KWH Logistics is an independent part of the KWH Group, together with Mirka, KWH Freeze and KWH Invest (KWH Group 2021). KWH Logistics is controlling most of the administrative tasks of their subsidiaries, these responsibilities are mainly handled in Backman-Trummer offices in Vaskiluoto, Vaasa. In 2019, KWH Logistics had a turnover on 187 MEUR, 10% average annual growth, 96 MEUR investments and 587 employees (KWH Logistics 2021).

3.1   Support Functions of KWH Logistics

The Support Functions of KWH Logistics include four departments, (1) Finance, (2) Marketing (and External Communication), (3) HR and Internal Communication and (4) ICT and Digitalisation. These departments control and handle the administrative tasks for all the subsidiaries of KWH Logistics.

The Support Functions of KWH Logistics are presented in Figure 5. Each department has its director, who oversees the work of the department. The departments are divided into teams and areas of responsibility. The teams include more than one employee, the areas or responsibility has one responsible employee. In the Marketing department there is one team, the Marketing Communication Team. In HR & Internal Communication there are two areas of responsibility, Executive Assistant and HR Administration, and Pay roll team. Under the ICT & Digitalisation department there is an area of responsibility called ICT Projects and an ICT Support

Team. Last, in the Finance department, which employs the highest amount of people, there are six teams, Bookkeeping & Purchase Ledger, Financial Reporting, Assets & Cost Centers, Insurances & Risk Management, Project Calculation & Follow-Up, and TEM, and four different areas of responsibility, Credit Control, Contract Management, Worktime, and Admin Software and Data Maintenance.
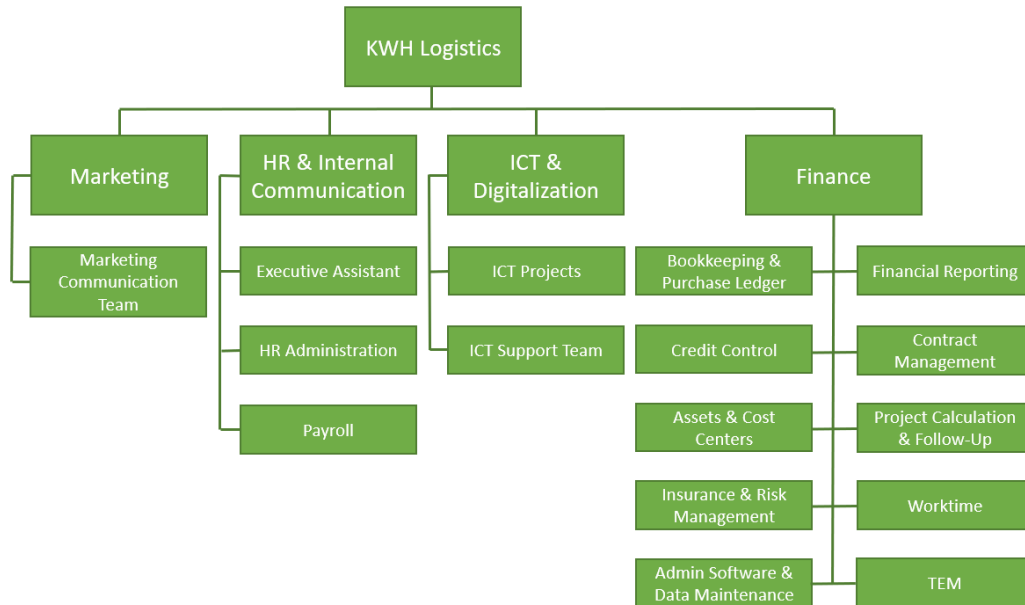

Figure 7. KWH Logistics Support Functions September 2021.

The information about Support Functions is obtained from KWH Logistics intranet.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the research methodology of the empirical research conducted for KWH Logistics Support Functions. The chapter includes three subsections, 1. Research Method, 2. Data Collection Methods and 3. Data Analysis Methods. Chapter five will discuss the structure of the questionnaire more in detail.

4.1 Research Method

The research was conducted as a mixed method, combining both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative method was chosen to simplify the follow up of the quality of internal communication in KWH Logistics Support Functions. As quantitative research collects numerical data, the method makes it easier to do larger scale research, study complex systems, and analyze the data. It is also cost effective, and the results are not affected by the subjectivity of the researcher (Queiros, Faria & Almeida 2017). Thereby, the use of a quantitative method offers an opportunity to regularly research the subject, observe the changes, and make improvements. The qualitative questions were added to get a better view of the respondents' opinions, as it is difficult to obtain the facts from purely quantitative statistics (Thattamparambil 2020). By using mixed method research quantitative results can be validated by qualitative research, and the qualitative research supports the analysis of quantitative research (Imran and Yusoff 2015).

4.2 Data Collection Methods

The questionnaire was created on *e-lomake*, a survey program provided by VAMK. The questionnaire was sent to every employee working in the Support Functions of KWH Logistics. The study was sent to 27 people and the number of respondents was 25, which gives a response rate of 93%. The questionnaire includes multiple choice questions with a scale from 1-5 (1: Disagree, 2: Partially disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Partially agree, and 5: Agree) and an option no. 6: Do not wish to answer (Appendix 1). The questions with options 1-6 are single-choice questions, whereas there are multiple-choice questions about tools that are multi-choice. In addition,

in each section there are fields for open responses. The questionnaire was conducted in Finnish and Swedish, as those are the company's main languages. The collected qualitative data was translated to English to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. The questionnaire is further presented in Chapter 5.

4.3   Data Analyzing Methods

For analysis and presentation of the quantitative data, SPSS and Excel are used. Frequency tables and cross-tabulation are used for ensuring the validity and categorizing data. The data is presented in bar charts, stacked bar charts and pie charts. These presentation methods are used for their visual clarity.

When analyzing the qualitative data, first all the data is read and translated into English, then combined with similar data to have less amount of data to work with. No specific method is used when analyzing qualitative data as it is up front, and the amount of gathered data is not unbearable. Every response is read and gathered. The data that can be traced or addressed to a specific person is not presented.

5 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is divided into six parts, background, communication within the own department, communication across the departments, tools for communication, questions about the time after recommendations of remote work, and at last a part for open comments. Each part includes multiple choice questions, that are generally mandatory, following open questions, that are always optional. Open comments and questions are added to each part for the opportunity to give a qualitative answer. The parts are further discussed under subheadings 5.1 - 5.6. The questionnaire is found in the appendix (Appendix 1). The results of the survey are presented in the following chapter.

In May 2021, when the research was conducted, 27 employees worked in the Support Functions. Since then, there has been some changes in the employee base, but nothing major that would affect the results. As stated in chapter four, the response rate was 93%.

Demographics of the respondents are not studied in the questionnaire as the focus is to research Internal Communication on a general level, where gender, age, educational background, etc., do not play an important role.

5.1 Background

The choice of department is mandatory as it is significant for the second part of the questionnaire. The amount of remote work, before remote work recommendations and now, are asked for comparative reasons.

5.2 Communication within the department

In this part the employees reflect on the communication within their own department. First, there are seven multiple choice questions with single-select options. The questions are reflecting on the formal part of communication, regarding the tasks for work. The seventh question is about the feeling of belonging, as it is important for the motivation of employees (Bartels et al. 2010). The answers for the

multiple-choice questions are on a scale from *Disagree – Agree*, and an option 6: Do not wish to answer. After the multiple-choice questions there are three qualitative questions, and one box for open comments, to support the quantitative responses.

5.3 Communication between the departments

There are four equal parts in the questionnaire, divided according to the four departments. The respondents respond to all of them, excluding the communication with their own department.

The multiple-choice questions in the beginning are the same as for communication within the own department, the feeling of belonging excluded. The open questions are the same as for communication within the own department, again added to support the quantitative responses.

5.4 Tools for communication

First, the tools used for communication are examined, to get an insight on what is mostly utilized. Second, the employee's own interests are studied by asking how they communicate mostly, and what channels for communication they prefer, and if they would want to add new tools for communication, again as open responses to get qualitative feedback. To effectively communicate by digital means, it is significant that the employees are familiar with the tools used, which is why it is examined if they have received enough practice with using the given tools.

5.5 After recommendations of remote work

The first question *After the remote work recommendations, how much do you want to work remotely (percentage, %)?* is added to get the opinions about remote work in general. The second and third question, about the division of remote work and the organizing of meetings, are for the employer to get an insight of employee's attitudes towards the future. At last, the respondents get to comment the organization of meetings.

5.6   Other

As the last part there is a box for open comments regarding internal communica-
tion and remote work, this part is added to cover possibly missing questions.

6   RESULTS

In this chapter the results of the study will be discussed. The chapter is divided into five sub headings, (1) results of the quantitative research, (2) results of the qualitative research, (3) analysis of the results, (4) summary of the results, and (5) suggestions for improvement. The results of quantitative and qualitative research are presented in different sub-chapters due to their distinguished characteristics.

In some departments there are less than five people working, therefore, the results are presented without mentioning the departments to preserve the confidentiality.

6.1   Quantitative research

In this part the results of the quantitative research are presented.
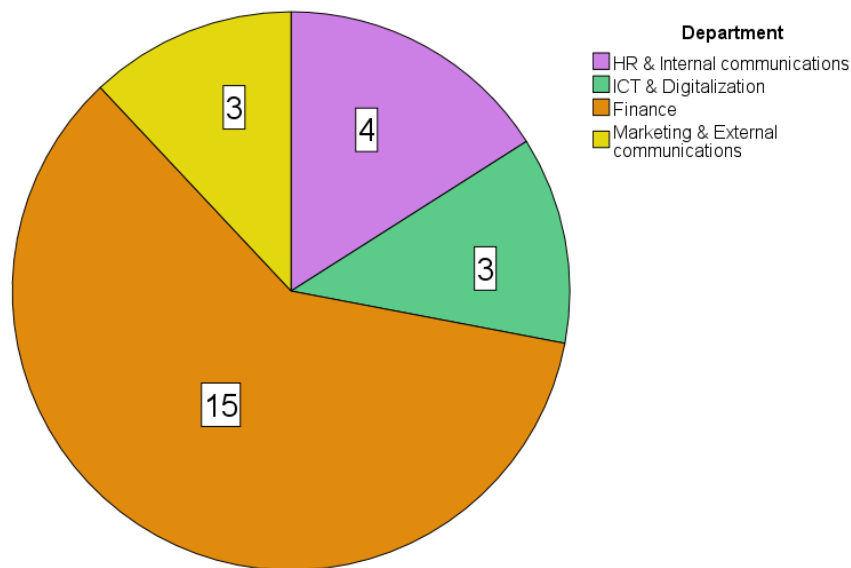
Figure 8. Departments of the respondents.

In Figure 8 the division of the departments of the respondents is presented. Out of 25 respondents, 60% are working in the Finance department, In Marketing & External Communication and ICT & Digitalisation there are 12% each, and 16% are working in HR & Internal Communication. This presents the organization well.

The following figures are presenting the amount of remote work before the recommendations of remote work, during the recommendations of remote work, and

how respondents would want to work after the recommendations of remote work.
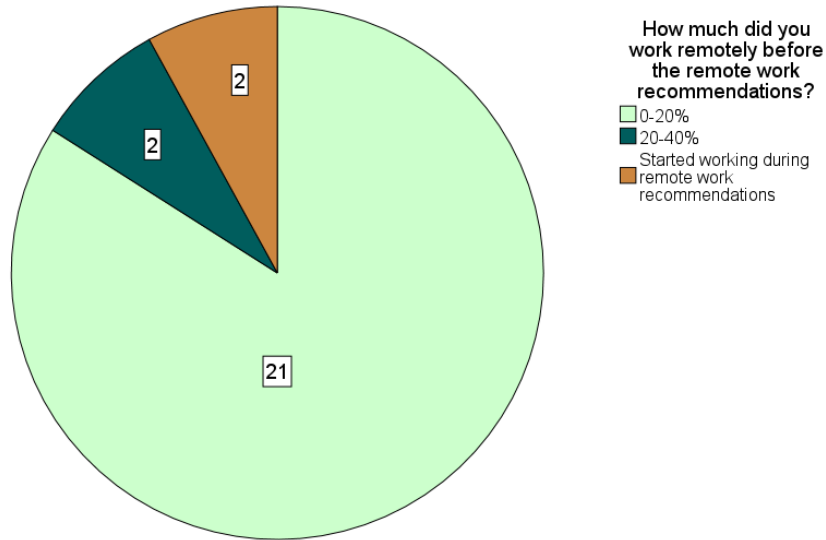
Figure 9. Amount of remote work before remote work recommendations.

Before remote work recommendations only two people were working remotely more than 20% of the time. 21 people were working remotely 0-20% of the time. Two of the respondents started working on KWH Logistics during the remote work recommendations.
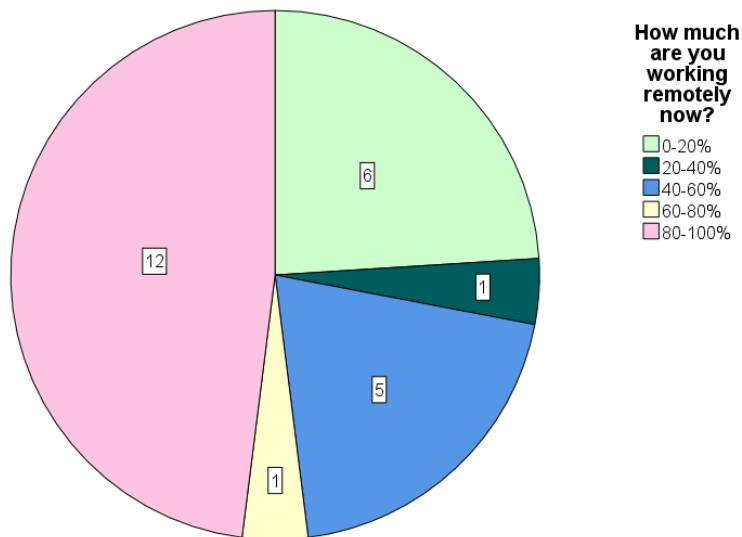
Figure 10. Amount of remote work now.

When the thesis was conducted 12 people were working remotely 80-100% of the time. 20-40% and 60-80% had one respondent each. Five people were working 60-80% remotely and six people work remotely only 0-20% of the time.
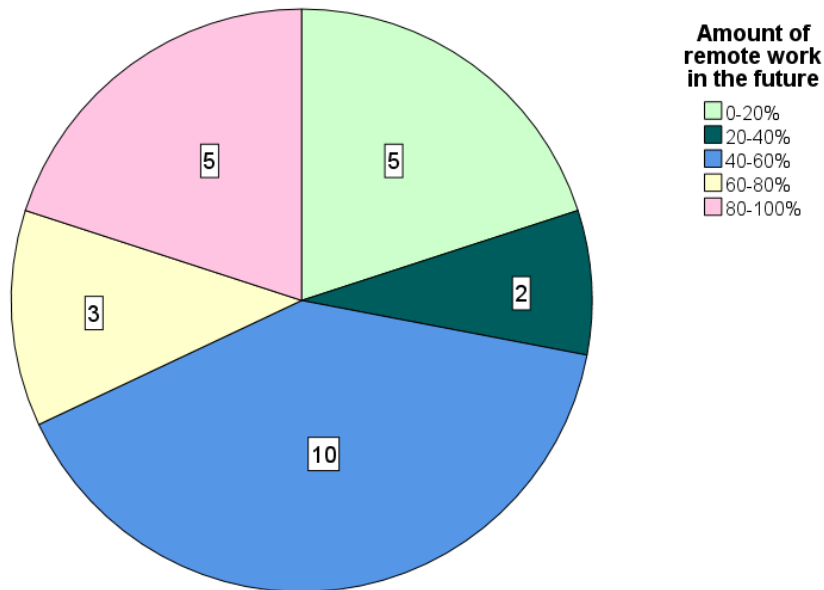
Figure 11. Amount of remote work in the future.

In the future five people want to work 0-20% remotely, two people responded that they want to work 20-40% remotely, ten people wish to work 40-60% of the time remotely, three people wish to work remotely 60-80% of the time, and at last, five respondents want to work remotely 80-100% of the time.
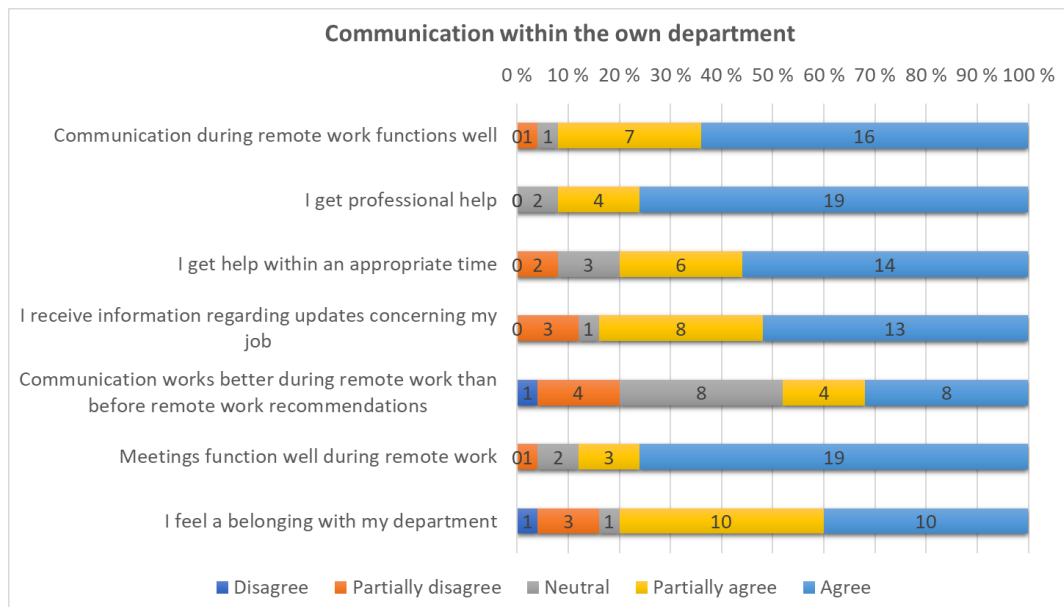
Figure 12. Communication within the own department.

In Figure 12 we can see the result for the part of communication within the own department. 23 respondents agree or partially agree that the communication within the own department works well during remote work, one person is neutral,

and one partially disagrees. 23 people agree or partially agree that they get professional help, two people are neutral. 20 people agree or partially agree that they get help in an appropriate amount of time, three are neutral and two people partially disagree. 21 respondents agree or partially agree that they receive updates regarding their job, three people are neutral, and two people partially disagree. Twelve people agree or partially agree that the communication within the company functions better during remote work than before the recommendations of remote work, eight people are neutral, four people partially disagree and one person disagrees completely. 22 respondents agree or partially agree that meetings function well, two people are neutral and one person partially disagrees. Last, 20 people agree or partially agree that they feel a belonging with their department, three respondents partially disagree, and one disagrees.
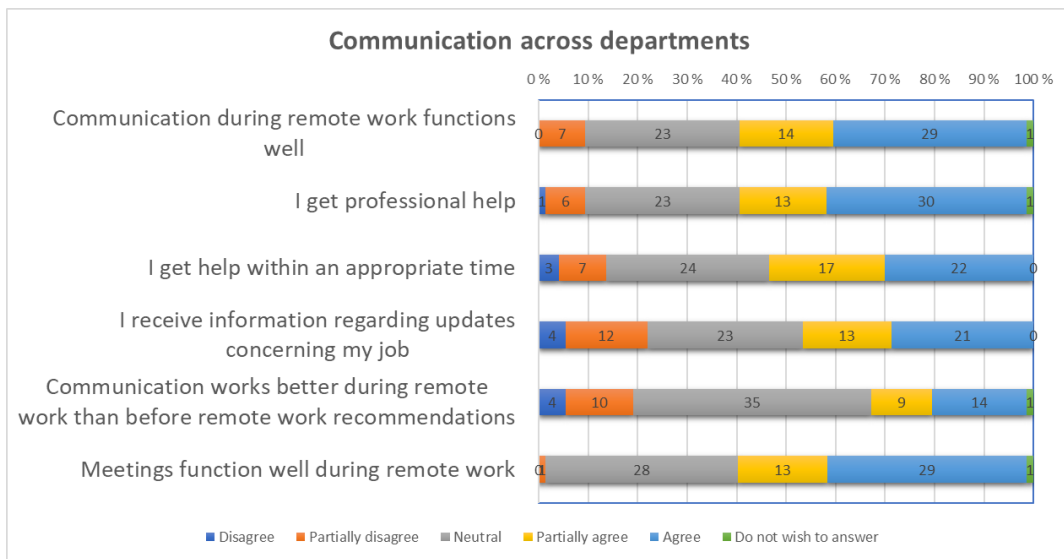
Figure 13. Communication across departments.

In Figure 13 the communication across the departments is presented. In this summary there is 72-74 responses for each question, this differentiation occurs because the questions were not mandatory, and the respondents were not allowed to answer to the questions regarding their own department. 43 people agreed or partially agreed that the communication between the apartments during remote work functions well, seven people partially agreed, one did not wish to answer. 43

people agreed or partially agreed that they get professional help from other departments, six people partially disagreed and one person disagreed, and one person wishes not to answer. 39 people agreed or partially agreed that they get help within an appropriate amount of time, seven people partially disagreed and three disagreed. 44 people agreed or partially agreed that they receive updates regarding their job, twelve people partially disagreed, and four people disagreed. 23 respondents agree or partially agree that the communication works better during remote work than before the recommendations of remote work, ten people partially disagree, and four people completely disagree, one person wishes not to respond. 42 people agree or partially agree that meetings function well during remote work, one person partially disagrees, and one wishes not to respond. In every question there are 23-35 people that are neutral, the assumption made is that they do not have a significant amount of communication across the departments.
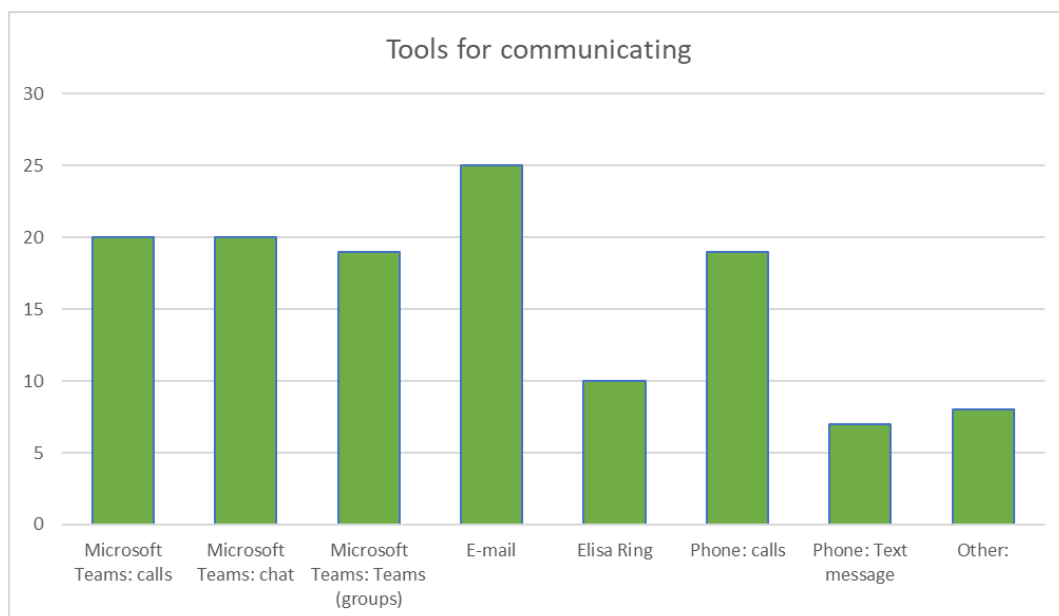
Figure 14. Tools for communicating.

In Figure 14 the tools used for communication are presented. 25 people responded. 20 respondents use Microsoft Teams for calls and for the chat function, 19 people use it to discuss in teams. Every respondent uses e-mail for communication. Ten people use the Elisa Ring application. 19 people use phone calls for

communicating with colleagues, and seven people use different kinds of text messages. Eight people also chose "other". The "other" was stated generally as communicating via WhatsApp.
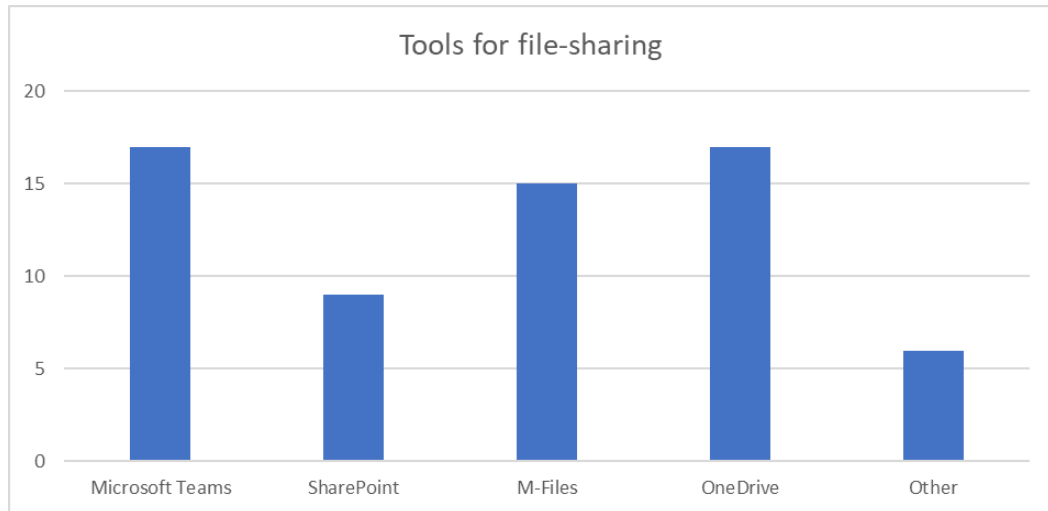
Figure 15. Tools for file-sharing.

In Figure 15 the tools used for file sharing are presented. 24 people responded to this part. 17 people use Microsoft Teams, nine people use SharePoint, 15 people use M-Files, and 17 people use OneDrive. Six people chose "other", which is mainly e-mail.
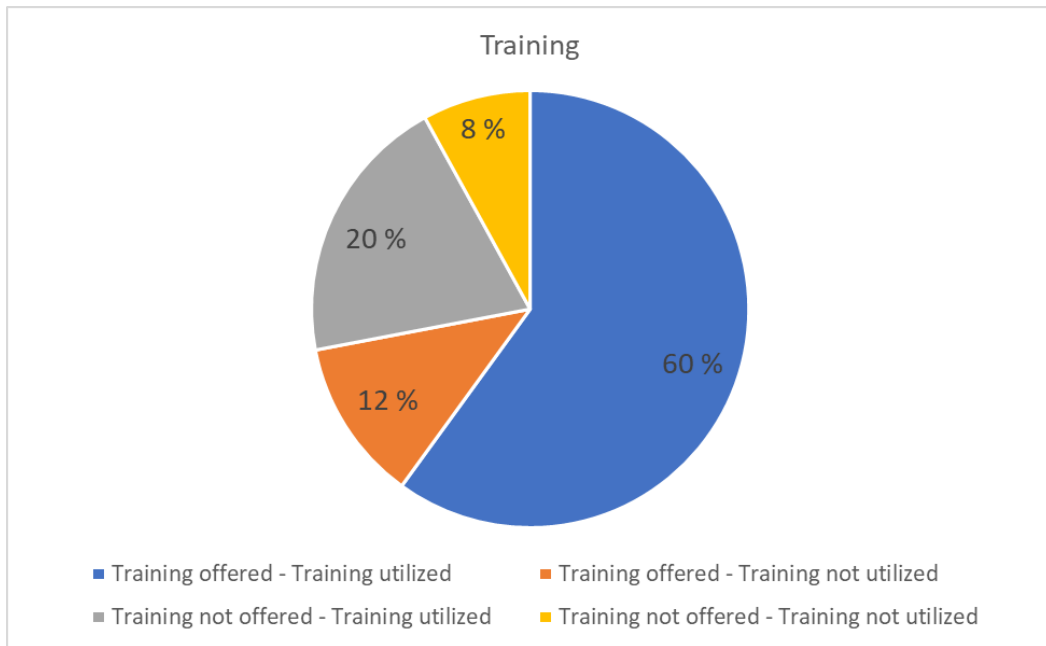
Figure 16. Training.

In Figure 16 the amount of training offered, and the utilization of the offered training is presented. 25 people participated in this part. 60% think that the employer has offered enough opportunities to practice the use of communication tools and they have utilized the offered trainings. 12% think that the employer has offered enough opportunities to practice the use of communication tools, but they have not utilized the offered trainings. 20% think that think that the employer has not offered enough opportunities to practice the use of communication tools, but they have utilized the offered trainings. 8% neither thinks that the employer has offered enough training, nor have they utilized the opportunities.

In other words, 72% of the respondents, 18 people, think that the employee has offered enough opportunities to practice the use of communication tools. 28%, seven people, think that the employee has not offered enough opportunities. 80%, 20 people, have utilized the offered opportunities, while the rest, 20%, 5 people, have not utilized the opportunities to practice the use of tools.
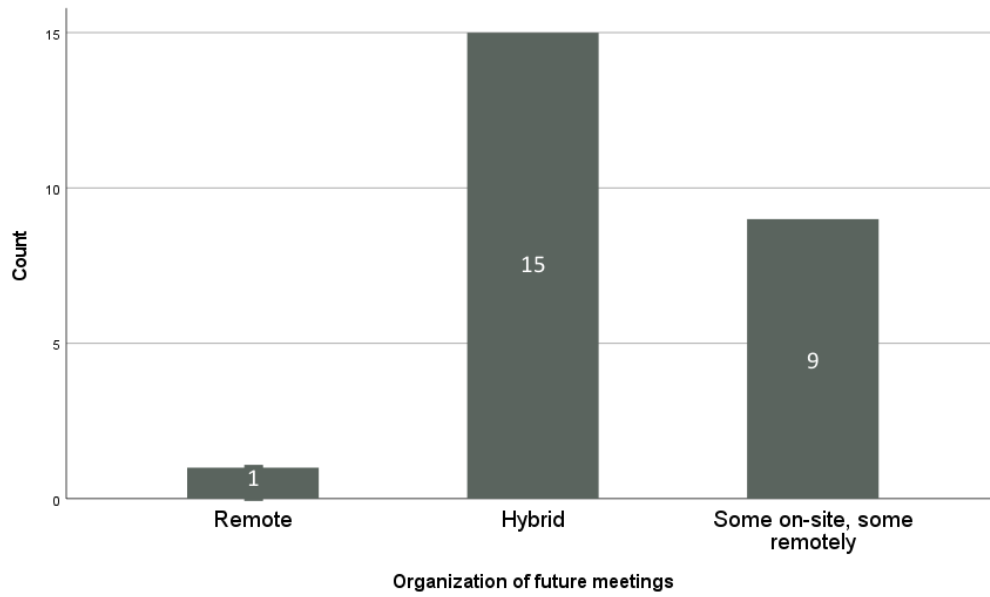
Figure 17. Organization of future meetings.

Figure 17 presents the wishes for future meetings. 25 people responded to this part. One respondent wants all meetings to be held remotely. 15 people wishes to have hybrid meetings, where it is possible to choose the way of participation, and nine respondents wishes that some meetings are held on-site and others remotely.

6.2 Qualitative research

In this part the responses to the qualitative parts of the questionnaire are presented. The sub-chapter is divided according to the different parts of the questionnaire that received open responses.

6.2.1 Communication within the own department

All the departments mentioned the use of Microsoft Teams as a well-functioning part of the communication within their own department. The departments with weekly meetings stated that they are an important and good way of communicating with the colleagues. From the responses, openness and cooperation were found as positive things. Up-to-date calendars were praised as well as an ease of gathering meetings through the various tools. There is willingness to help and cooperate with the colleagues.

During remote work there has been an increase in e-mails and messages, which makes follow-up difficult. An increase in casual conversations amongst the team members would be appreciated to increase the sense of community. There could be more meetings during busy times. Responsibilities and goals should be clearer and shared more often amongst the employees. Everyone should feel heard and participate more in the meetings and information-sharing.

A common wish is to have more meetings during busy periods. The objectives of meetings and the priorities during the meetings should be clearer. Tasks should be better delegated amongst the team members, to improve the quality of certain projects and for better use of energy. Workshops in smaller groups could be held, as discussions usually are more effective and open amongst fewer people. More responsibility should be given, as this shows that there is trust and it motivates employees (Verghese 2017). Clearer tasks and responsibilities within the departments are requested.

In some departments there is a lack of communication between the employees, in others the communication works well.

6.2.2 Communication across the departments

Some departments have managed to increase the communication across departments. Generally, it has been easy to contact and stay in touch with other departments. Meetings have been easily arranged, even ad hoc (ad hoc meetings: meetings held when needed, can be called on a short notice). Mainly it has been easy to get responses to questions regarding work.

For the improvement, more information about common projects and goals should be shared. Better communication regarding tasks and responsibilities, as it is sometimes unclear to which department some tasks belong. Information should be shared within the company before revealing it externally. Furthermore, the following things were requested: increased information about upcoming events and updates regarding work, clearer priorities and cooperative strategic planning, regularity and increase in communication. A frequently mentioned point of improvement is to create and share the common goals between the departments, and thereby increase the feeling of togetherness in the company.

Employees want more information about priorities from the management team. There should be clearer project leaders/managers and distribution of tasks, both within and across the departments. Regular meetings across the departments with reviews of current events are necessary. There is a need for more or better use of resources to get the priorities straight. More courses and information about upcoming projects and updates are required, and there could be a regular information flow and better access to different programs.

6.2.3 Tools for communication

Microsoft Teams with all its functions is the most preferable tool for communication. Calls and e-mails are preferred for longer discussions, and e-mail was also mentioned as the most preferable tool for information and documentation purposes. In addition to the tools, face-to-face discussion were for a few respondents the most enjoyable way of communicating.

The different Office365 modules were mentioned as tools for the future, while some think that there are too many tools already. A shared opinion was that there should be common rules/instructions on how and when to use certain tools, as there are many ways of communicating and it can be difficult to find the information needed in all the channels.

6.2.4   Future of remote work and communication

The most common opinion was that 2-3 days a week would be remote work and 2-3 days on site. Mainly the opinion is that the employee can choose how they want to distribute the remote days, but now and then it is okay to have a mandatory attendance at the office, depending on the tasks.

Meetings held through Microsoft Teams are easy to attend when working remotely. Mandatory on-site meetings are okay, if necessary, mainly when new programs are taken into use or new practices are presented. Face-to-face meetings are important to connect with colleagues. Hybrid meetings can be problematic, as there can be problems with the sound, internet connections and turns to speak.

6.3   Analysis of the results

As seen in Figure 11, A*mount of remote work in the future*, the employees prefer continuing with remote work to a certain extent after the recommendations of remote work. Only five people want to work remotely 0-20% after the remote work recommendations. One example for this amount of remote work is to work remotely once a week. Nevertheless, respondents generally wish to work remotely 2-3 days a week, and the other 2-3 days at the office, an option of remote work every other week is mentioned as well. The result from the quantitative research complies with the qualitative responses. 80% of the respondents wish to work remotely more than 20% of the time, which complies with the result from the study Tilastokeskus conducted in the period March-May 2021 (Sutela 2021)

The communication within the own department works well. The meetings during remote work and the quality of help employees are receiving have gotten high grades of agreement, these are also mentioned in the qualitative results. In addition to these, four of the statements have gotten over 80% partial agreement or

agreement. This makes six out of seven statements strongly agreeable. Weekly meetings and updated calendars are considered important.

Bartels et al. (2010), stated that horizontal communication can improve the feeling of belonging in the company and profession, and Cascio (2000) mentioned the occurrence of feelings of isolation when there is a lack of social interaction. In the survey, it shows that the statement that employees feel belonging had the second to least people who completely agree. This shows that there is a need for horizontal formal and informal communication, which is presented in the qualitative responses as well. From the responses it can be concluded that the small-group network, *Wheel*, presented by Robbins and Judge (2013, 343), is the network used for communication now, as there is a shortage of communication between employees. In the qualitative responses it is seen that more responsibility could be shared in the weekly meetings to hear from other colleagues, as well.

The part showing the most equal division of opinions in the statements of communication within the own department is *Communication functions better during remote work than before remote work recommendations*, only twelve people are agreeing or partially agreeing that communication has improved. This could mean that the general level of satisfaction in internal communication has remained the same as before, so, the quality of communication within the own department has neither increased nor decreased when shifting to a virtual workplace. The two main things mentioned for improvement within the own department are more and clearer meetings during busy periods and clearer delegation of tasks and responsibilities.

For the communication across departments, four out of six statements have an agreement or partial agreement of over 50%. All the statements have at least 31% neutral opinions, which could mean that the departments do not have any significant amount of communication. The statement with the highest amount of disagreement is *I receive information regarding updates concerning my job*. 22% are either disagreeing or partially disagreeing with this statement. On the other hand, 47% are either agreeing or partially agreeing with this statement. This could mean

that some departments are sharing updates more regularly or clearer than others, or that there is a big difference in how much information employees need regarding different programs/events. The statement with the least number of agreements and partial agreements is *Communication functions better during remote work than before remote work recommendations*. As for communication within the own department, this statement has the biggest number of neutral opinions. The assumption can also here be made that the quality of communication has generally remained the same.

In the qualitative responses it is seen that some departments have increased the amount of communication, and it has been easy to arrange meetings across departments. This complies with Cascio's (2000) argument that organizing teams and projects is easier when not having to deal with distance. The respondents are mainly requesting more sharing of important information and common goals. It is mentioned that there should be more regular meetings between the departments, and clearer distributions of tasks and responsibilities.

In 2013 (p. 344), Robbins and Judge stated that Forbes, in 1997, presented research that revealed that 75% of the employees hear news for the first time through Grapevine. Naturally, the Grapevine communication easily vanishes in a virtual workplace as co-workers do not casually run into each other. In the qualitative research it is shown that there is a wish for workshops in smaller groups, these groups could be used for grapevine communication as well.

Regarding the tools we can see that everyone is using e-mail for communication. In 2014, Stegaroiu and Talal argued that text is the best form when describing things in detail, the results of the survey show that yet today e-mail is the most preferred tool for documentation and issues that need detailed information. Approximately 80% of the respondents use Microsoft Teams' different functions and regular phone calls. The high percentage of Microsoft Teams users can be seen as alarming, as it is a common tool for almost everyone, but not for all. The reason might be that there is a lack of knowledge about the usage, and they might therefore miss important information. Regarding the use of channels, as Griffin and Moorhead presented in 2013 (p. 313), and as seen in Table 11, the receiver should

oversee multiple media. As 80% of the employees use Microsoft Teams as a communication channel, and the qualitative results show that it is in many cases the most preferable media, it could be considered to ensure that every employee uses and gets the training needed to use Microsoft Teams as a communication tool.

As for the file-sharing, employees use many different tools. In average one employee uses 2,7 tools. Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, M-Files, and e-mail are the most common channels for sharing documents. Stegaroiu and Talal (2014) argues that an Internal communication Strategy is important, and as the qualitative responses show, there is a common wish to have a shared plan for the usage of tools. This strategy could assist the fact that some think there are too many tools and finds it difficult to locate the proper documents.

For the questions about training, 72% of the respondents, 18 people, think that the employer has offered enough opportunities to practice the use of communication tools. 28%, seven people, think that the employer has not offered enough opportunities. 80%, 20 people, have utilized the offered opportunities, while the rest, 20%, five people, have not utilized the opportunities to practice the use of tools.

60% of the employees want the opportunity for hybrid meetings in the future. 36% of the respondents think that some meetings can be on-site and others remotely. Only one of the respondents wants to have purely remote meetings in the future. A shared agreement is that most of the meetings could be hybrid, but now and then it is accepted to have mandatory attendance, as face-to-face meetings are needed for some issues. In face-to-face communication feedback is easier to send and receive, and it is immediate, therefore it is often the most effective type of communication (Robbins and Judge 2013, 340; Stegaroiu and Talal 2014).

A common wish was to discuss and develop common goals for the company and get more information about current issues, events and/or updates. This is an important part of the vertical communication (Robbins and Judge 2013, 339).

6.4   Summary of the results

In general, employees are pleased with the quality of communication. Mainly they do agree that the communication functions well both within departments and across departments.

In the communication within the department, the two statements with the best results are *I get professional help* and *Meetings function well during remote work*. In the communication across departments, the two same statements have received the highest percentage of agreement. These results show that the functioning elements of communication are equal in the communication across and within departments. The time spent on waiting for help should be reduced and more information about current issues and activities should be shared, both within the departments and across departments. The communication has remained on the same level as before. Only ten of the employees agree completely that they feel a belonging with their department, and they do miss the day-to-day discussions.

E-mail is the most popular tool for communication, every respondent uses it. Microsoft Teams with its functions and phone calls are the second most popular tools. It can be problematic that 80% uses Microsoft Teams, but not everyone, as some might miss important information. The three most utilized tools for sharing documents are Microsoft Teams, M-Files and OneDrive. The wide use of tools for file sharing creates confusion, as employees do not always know where to find files. The usage of tools could be integrated in an Internal Communication Plan (Stegaroiu and Talal 2014). 72% of the respondents agree that the employee offers enough training in the use of communication tools, and 80 % have utilized the offered trainings. 28% think that there should be more training opportunities.

Working remotely functions well and there is hope that it continues to some extent in the future. A popular opinion is that the future meetings could be arranged as a hybrid-model, where participants can choose the way of participation, others think that some meetings can be mandatory on-site, while others are held remotely, as some things are easier to handle face-to-face. Remote work has not affected the communication much, some think that the quality has remained the same when moving to a virtual workplace, some think it has improved, and others

think it was better before. The number of courses and meetings have increased, and they are easier to attend when organized remotely. There has been improvement in remote work and digital tools in the organization, which employees appreciate.

6.5 Suggestions for improvement

After analyzing the result, three improvement suggestions are proposed to increase the quality of internal communication in KWH Logistics Support Functions.

First, in *The Internal Communications Podcast,* episode *The digital Employee Experience*, Simon Field mentioned that the organizational structure in a digital work place should be reconstructed. One way to improve the communication would be to combine the IT department with the communication department, if combining is not possible at least they should be working cooperatively. This cooperation would improve the channels for communication and there could be an increased knowledge-sharing in the organization, even though working remotely. (Field 2021).

The second improvement suggestion is to create an Internal Communication Strategy, or a plan. The plan should include the strategic goals of communication, fundamental purposes, and most importantly, as a request from the employees, it should distinguish the different channels and their purpose. (Stegaroiu and Talal 2014). Welch and Jackson (2007) present a matrix of the four dimensions of internal communication in a company, this could be considered when creating a strategy.

Regular research about the quality of Internal Communication could be conducted, for example annually. The regular research makes it possible to study the relationship between Internal Communication Satisfaction and organizational outcomes. As Verghese (2017) states, the employees act as representatives for the brand, and therefore their well-being and commitment for the brand is important,

and Vercic et al. (2021) argues that effective communication can lead to organizational commitment and a good reputation, and therefore, to great business outcomes.

7   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the paper will be concluded. The chapter is divided into three sub-chapters. First, there is a general discussion about the research and its results, and possible improvements that could have been implemented when conducting the survey. Then the reliability and validity of the research will be discussed, and at last, the ethical point of view when conducting the research.

7.1   Discussion

The goal of the research was to determine the quality of internal communication in KWH Logistics Support Functions during remote work, recognize the problems occurring in internal communication in a virtual workplace and suggest ways to improve the communication. By studying literature concerning the subject and by doing a survey in the organization conclusions can be made.

The quality of internal communication in KWH Logistics Support Functions is satisfactory. Most people agreed or partially agreed with the statements of good communication within the department. The results were similar for the communication across departments, but with more neutral options, which assumingly means that there is not a significant amount of communication between the departments. The quality of internal communication had not improved significantly during remote work, but it did not decrease either. Employees are satisfied with the regular meetings held remotely, and the professional help received from colleagues. More meetings with clearer objectives are called for, and better distributions of tasks, both within and between departments.

The biggest consequence for internal communication in a virtual workplace is, as Levin and Kurtzberg argues in 2020, the lack of day-to-day discussions between colleagues. The feeling of belonging could be stronger with more casual conversation between the employees. Levin and Kurtzberg also states that people tend to be harsher over electronic communication, which can lead to worse attitudes, and

therefore affect the and trust for colleagues poorly. Therefore, the informal communication between colleagues should be of importance when planning the communication, to avoid working in a bad environment.

The results present a clear view of the communication tools. Every employee uses e-mail for communicating, and 80% of the employees use Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams could be implemented as a communication tool for the rest of the employees as well, to ensure that no one misses important information.

An internal communication plan or strategy could be integrated in the company to clearly instruct the use of different communication channels (Stegaroiu and Talal 2014). This would lead to more effective use of time, as the employees do not have to search information in several channels. The communication department and ICT department should be working more co-operatively to improve the communication channels (Field 2021).

In the research, demographic questions could have been included to compare the interpretation of the quality of internal communication between genders and people of different ages. The research could have been narrowed to the different tasks and teams, to study the need for internal communication in smaller groups, as some tasks naturally need more communicating than others do.

7.2   Reliability and validity of the research

The reliability determines how accurate the set of data presented is and how reproducible the collected data is. There will always be some amount of error, but naturally, the goal is to eliminate it. The methods of collecting data affect the reliability. The validity of research determines how well it measures what it is supposed to measure. The validity of research is affected by data collection methods as well. (Litwin 1995, 5-45).

Research of internal communication has not been conducted earlier at KWH Logistics Support Functions, so the results cannot be compared to earlier research within the organization. The research results are compliant with earlier research referred to in the study, for example the future of remote work, according to the study by Tilastokeskus, 72% of the respondents wish to work minimum 25% of the

time remotely, while in KWH Logistics support Functions 80% wants to work at least 20% of the time remotely. Another example is the wish for a plan for the communication tools, which Stegaroiu and Talal argued for in 2014. The response rate on the questionnaire is 93%, so the results should be accurate. The quantitative and qualitative responses support each other, which can be considered a proof of reliability and validity.

The research method and the questionnaire are presented clearly. The questionnaire focuses on the interpreted quality of internal communication in KWH Logistics Support Functions during remote work recommendations. The questionnaire was discussed with the HR & Internal Communication department on KWH Logistics, to get a clearer view on the topic and ensure that the focus is on the correct information.

Many references are used in the thesis, but unfortunately a few of them are over 20 years old, whereas they can include information that is no longer applicable. Nevertheless, a majority of the refences are from 2013 or later. There is not much former research in the topic, which makes it difficult to relate to something. The use of each reference is stated in the text. The amount of remote work increased drastically because of the pandemic, and it is challenging for companies to suddenly move to a virtual workplace, which is important to consider when doing further research. The results can differ after working remotely for a longer time and having the chance to improve the communication channels purposed for remote work.

The reliability of the research can be affected when summarizing and translating the qualitative responses. The author's experience at the company might add insights to the responses, which can affect the results.

7.3   Research ethics

It is important to consider the ethical point of view when conducting research. By doing that, individuals, environments, and organizations can be protected, and harm causing activities can be minimized. The research done should satisfy the

involved parties, promises about confidentiality must be kept, and the purpose of the research must be clear (Israel and Hay 2006).

The topic of the thesis was discussed with the former CEO of the company. Later, discussions were held with the HR and Internal Communication department, about the topic and content of the research.

The respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the thesis. They were promised anonymity, which was kept by translating and rewriting the qualitative responses, clearing them from personal content, and mainly by combining the results to one summary of all the departments, instead of focusing on one department at a time.

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Questionnaire

Internal communication on KWH Logistics Support Functions during remote work

Background

- Department (multiple-choice, single choice)
    - HR & Internal Communication
    - ICT & Digitalisation
    - Finance
    - Marketing & External Communication
- Amount of remote work before remote work recommendations (percentage, %) (multiple-choice, single choice)
    - 0-20
    - 20-40
    - 40-60
    - 60-80
    - 80-100
    - I started working on KWH Logistics during remote work recommendations
- Amount of remote work now (percentage, %) (multiple-choice, single choice)
    - 0-20
    - 20-40
    - 40-60
    - 60-80
    - 80-100
- Open comments regarding the background information

Communication within the own department during remote work recommendations

- Multiple choice questions. 1: Disagree, 2: Partially disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Partially agree, and 5: Agree and option no. 6: Do not wish to answer (Single choice)
    - Communication during remote work functions well
    - I get professional help
    - I receive help within an appropriate period

- - I receive information regarding updates concerning my job
    - The communication works better during remote work than during the time before remote work
    - Meetings function well during remote work
    - I feel a belonging with my department
  - Open questions
    - What do you think works particularly well in your department's communication?
    - What should be improved in your department's communication?
    - How would you improve the aforementioned?
    - Open comments regarding the communication on your own department

Communication with HR & Internal communication department

- Multiple choice questions. 1: Disagree, 2: Partially disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Partially agree, and 5: Agree and option no. 6: Do not wish to answer (Single choice)
  - Communication during remote work functions well
  - I get professional help
  - I receive help within an appropriate period
  - I receive information regarding updates concerning my job
  - The communication works better during remote work than during the time before remote work
  - Meetings function well during remote work
- Open questions
  - What do you think works particularly well in the communication across the departments?
  - What should be improved in the communication across the departments?
  - How would you improve the aforementioned?
  - Open comments regarding the communication across the departments

Communication with ICT & Digitalisation department

- Multiple choice questions. 1: Disagree, 2: Partially disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Partially agree, and 5: Agree and option no. 6: Do not wish to answer (Single choice)
  - Communication during remote work functions well
  - I get professional help
  - I receive help within an appropriate period
  - I receive information regarding updates concerning my job

- o The communication works better during remote work than during the time before remote work
- o Meetings function well during remote work
- Open questions
  - o What do you think works particularly well in the communication across the departments?
  - o What should be improved in the communication across the departments?
  - o How would you improve the aforementioned?
  - o Open comments regarding the communication across the departments

Communication with Finance department

- Multiple choice questions. 1: Disagree, 2: Partially disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Partially agree, and 5: Agree and option no. 6: Do not wish to answer (Single choice)
  - o Communication during remote work functions well
  - o I get professional help
  - o I receive help within an appropriate period
  - o I receive information regarding updates concerning my job
  - o The communication works better during remote work than during the time before remote work
  - o Meetings function well during remote work
- Open questions
  - o What do you think works particularly well in the communication across the departments?
  - o What should be improved in the communication across the departments?
  - o How would you improve the aforementioned?
  - o Open comments regarding the communication across the departments

Communication with Marketing & External Communication department

- Multiple choice questions. 1: Disagree, 2: Partially disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Partially agree, and 5: Agree and option no. 6: Do not wish to answer (Single choice)
  - o Communication during remote work functions well
  - o I get professional help
  - o I receive help within an appropriate period
  - o I receive information regarding updates concerning my job
  - o The communication works better during remote work than during the time before remote work
  - o Meetings function well during remote work
- Open questions

- What do you think works particularly well in the communication across the departments?
- What should be improved in the communication across the departments?
- How would you improve the aforementioned?
- Open comments regarding the communication across the departments

Tools

- How do you communicate with your colleagues (multiple choice, multi-choice)?
  - Microsoft Teams: calls
  - Microsoft Teams: chat
  - Microsoft Teams: Teams (groups)
  - E-mail
  - Elisa Ring
  - Phone: calls
  - Phone: messages
  - Other: (respond below)
    - Open response
- How do you share documents (multiple choice, multi-choice)?
  - Microsoft Teams
  - SharePoint
  - M-Files
  - OneDrive
  - Other: (respond below)
    - Open response
- How do you prefer to communicate?
  - Open response
- Has the employer offered enough opportunities to practice the use of communication tools? (Multiple-choice, single choice)
  - Yes
  - No
- Have you used the opportunities to practice the use of communication tools? (Multiple-choice, single choice)
  - Yes
  - No
- Are there any tools you would like to start using?
  - Open response
- Open comments about the communication tools

After recommendations of remote work

- After the remote work recommendations, how much do you want to work re-motely (percentage, %) (multiple-choice, single choice)?
    - 0-20
    - 20-40
    - 40-60
    - 60-80
    - 80-100
    - Do not wish to answer
- How would you like to divide the remote working time after the remote work recommendations (for example: remote work two days/week, remote work every other week, etc.)?
    - Open response
- After the remote work recommendations, how do you wish that the meetings are organized? (Multiple-choice, single choice)
    - Remote
    - On-site
    - Hybrid (each person can choose the way of participation themselves)
    - Some meeting remotely, some on-site
- Comments regarding the organizing of meetings
- Open comments/wishes regarding the continuity

Other

- Open comments