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Postgraduate Programme of Study *MBA – Master in Business
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Master's Dissertation



**Internal communication disruptions during the pandemic time
of crisis in businesses in Cyprus**

Ioannis Hadjicharalambous

**Supervisor
Dr. Andreas Assiotis**

December 2021

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Summary

COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the work activity of many organizations worldwide. Imposed governmental emergency legislations resulted in compulsory remote work conditions, for some or all employees of many organizations during lockdowns, which required changes, such as utilizing appropriate channels of internal communication, shifting towards digital means for communicating and collaborating in distance, to ensure effective internal communication and information flow within the organization. This dissertation aims to shed some light to the way internal communication of organizations changed, during COVID-19 pandemic in Cyprus, focusing mostly on the channels utilized and on the changes in frequency and direction of internal communication, before and during COVID-19 in Cyprus, during telework. In addition, this study aims to provide and account of the effectiveness of internal communication within organizations, as appreciated by participants and, also, investigate participants' preferences in respect to channels used for internal communication and teleworking option in the future.

In order to address the research questions of this dissertation, quantitative, nonexperimental descriptive research was employed, using survey as data collection method. Participants of this study were 93 employees working in organizations of various sizes and sectors of activities. The results of this dissertation reveal that there were some changes in the way channels of internal communication were utilized in organizations in Cyprus before and during COVID-19. Specifically, findings report that e-mails were used for sharing information regarding the organization, both before and during COVID-19, whereas richer channels of communication, such as face-to-face were utilized for solving issues and coordinating daily matters before the pandemic, but were replaced with online meetings and telephone during COVID-19. In addition, internal communication flow was in various directions with the most frequent communication taking place between coworkers of the same department and the least frequent with the organizations' leader both before and during COVID-19. No changes were reported in preferences of sources used for receiving information regarding organizational matters and even though frequency of communication was decreased during COVID-19, the overall satisfaction of internal communication and its frequency remained in similarly high levels. Lastly, it appears that employees in Cyprus prefer face-to-face as the channel used for future internal communication and they prefer having the option for teleworking, but only for some days of the week.

Περίληψη

Η πανδημία COVID-19 επηρέασε την εργασιακή δραστηριότητα πολλών οργανισμών σε όλο τον κόσμο. Οι επιβληθείσες κυβερνητικές νομοθεσίες οδήγησαν σε τηλεργασία, απαιτώντας αλλαγές, όπως η χρήση κατάλληλων και ψηφιακών καναλιών εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας, ώστε να εξασφαλιστεί αποτελεσματική εσωτερική επικοινωνία και ροή πληροφοριών εντός του οργανισμού. Αυτή η διατριβή στοχεύει να διερευνήσει τις αλλαγές στην εσωτερική επικοινωνία των οργανισμών, κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας στην Κύπρο, εστιάζοντας κυρίως στα κανάλια που χρησιμοποιούνταν, σε αλλαγές στη συχνότητα και την κατεύθυνση της εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας, και στην τηλεργασία, ενώ στοχεύει στην παρουσίαση της αποτελεσματικότητας της εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας εντός των οργανισμών, όπως αξιολογήθηκε από τους συμμετέχοντες και τις προτιμήσεις τους σε σχέση με τα κανάλια εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας και την επιλογή για τηλεργασία στο μέλλον.

Χρησιμοποιήθηκε ποσοτική, μη πειραματική περιγραφική έρευνα με ερωτηματολόγιο ως μέθοδο συλλογής δεδομένων. Στη μελέτη συμμετείχαν 93 εργαζόμενοι οργανισμών διαφόρων μεγεθών και τομέων δραστηριοτήτων. Τα αποτελέσματα αυτής της διατριβής υποστηρίζουν ότι υπήρξαν κάποιες αλλαγές στον τρόπο με τον οποίο χρησιμοποιήθηκαν τα κανάλια εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας σε οργανισμούς στην Κύπρο πριν και κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας. Συγκεκριμένα, το e-mail χρησιμοποιήθηκε για ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών σχετικά με τον οργανισμό, τόσο πριν όσο και κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας, ενώ πλουσιότερα κανάλια επικοινωνίας, όπως πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο, χρησιμοποιήθηκαν για επίλυση προβλημάτων και συντονισμό καθημερινών θεμάτων πριν από την πανδημία, αλλά αντικαταστάθηκαν με διαδικτυακές συναντήσεις και τηλεφωνήματα κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας. Επιπλέον, υπήρξε ροή εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας προς διάφορες κατευθύνσεις με συχνότερη την επικοινωνία μεταξύ συναδέλφων του ίδιου τμήματος και λιγότερο συχνή την επικοινωνία με τον ηγέτη του οργανισμού τόσο πριν όσο και κατά τη διάρκεια του πανδημίας. Δεν αναφέρθηκαν αλλαγές στις προτιμήσεις των πηγών που χρησιμοποιούνται για τη λήψη πληροφοριών σχετικά με οργανωτικά θέματα και παρόλο που η συχνότητα επικοινωνίας μειώθηκε κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας, η συνολική ικανοποίηση από την εσωτερική επικοινωνία και η συχνότητά της παρέμειναν σε παρόμοια υψηλά επίπεδα. Τέλος, φαίνεται ότι οι εργαζόμενοι στην Κύπρο προτιμούν το πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο ως το κανάλι που χρησιμοποιείται για μελλοντική εσωτερική επικοινωνία και προτιμούν να έχουν την επιλογή τηλεργασίας, αλλά μόνο για κάποιες ημέρες της εβδομάδας.

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Chapter

1. Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic and the legislations imposed by governments to protect public health, were a major external threat for almost all organizations, at a global level. During this time many organizations were forced to shift their business activities to remote work and telework, due to lockdowns or restrictions to the number of employees that could be physically present in the workplace. These external factors had a major impact on organizations' internal communication and collaboration practices, as organizations were forced to quickly shift to remote channels of communication, using technology. Depending on organizations' pre-existing level of Information Technology (IT) integration and staff's skills, many of them struggled in adapting fast enough to these new conditions, and, for some, this had an impact on their survival in the market. Considering that remote work and telework appear to be work modes that several organizations plan to continue having, even after COVID-19 pandemic is over, this makes the effective adaptation of internal communication practices and appropriate utilization of technology-enabled communication channels very crucial elements for organizations to focus on, during this transformation.

This thesis seeks to shed some light on the way internal business communication and collaboration practices and channels were disrupted and/or affected during the COVID-19 pandemic, in organizations in Cyprus. Specifically, it aims to survey the communication channels and tools that were utilized for facilitating internal communication and collaboration within organizations before and during COVID-19 teleworking, the extent to which organizations' internal communication and collaboration were affected during COVID-19 pandemic and whether this had an impact on employees' consideration for continuing teleworking even after COVID-19 pandemic is over.

The chapter "Literature Review" that follows will provide a brief review of relevant literature regarding internal business communication methods and tools and the way they were disrupted during COVID-19 pandemic globally. Chapter 3 "Theoretical Background" will

present and clarify key terms used in this research and Chapter 4 “Research Methodology” will illustrate this research’s methodology and methods of data collection and analysis. Next, Chapter 5 “Results” will present the results of data analysis and Chapter 6 “Discussion” will discuss the results of this research. Then, Chapter 7 “Conclusions and Recommendations” will provide final remarks and recommendations for future research. Finally, Chapter 8 “References” will list citations of literature that was included in this thesis and Chapter 9 “Appendix” will enclose supporting information and material that was used in this study.

Chapter

2. Literature Review

COVID-19 pandemic, inevitably, impacted organizations, employers, and employees globally. Several studies were conducted investigating this impact on organizations' functions and work cycles, yet studies imprinting the disruption levels in organizations' internal communication and collaboration are still limited. This section will provide a brief review of relevant literature, focusing on the importance of internal communication for organizations and on studies investigating the internal communication and collaboration changes and adaptations in organizations, during the pandemic. However, it is important to first provide a brief overview of internal communication types and the various channels utilized within an organization.

2.1 Internal communication within organizations

Internal communication refers to the way communication flows within an organization. Communication can be verbal (oral and written) and non-verbal (i.e. gestures) and as with any other type of business communication, it typically involves a *sender*, someone who wants to share information with someone else, a *message* which encloses information to be shared and a *receiver*, who is the person receiving the information and a communication *medium* which is the channel through which the message is sent (Tkalac Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020; Berger, 2008). However, this process is not that simple, as for it to be successful and the receiver to be able to clearly understand the message, the enclosed information must be encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver in a way that allows clear and accurate convey of the message, through an appropriate communication channel (Pardillo, 2019).

In addition, it is important to clarify that communication is a two-way interaction process as it involves both sender and receiver sending and receiving information respectively, whereas information sharing, such as sending newsletters to employees, can be a one-way process as it does not necessarily mean that the receiver responds to this process (Pardillo, 2019). Fostering "*a two-way conversation between an organization and its stakeholders*" (Lee, 2018,

p.3), the notion of symmetrical internal communication strategy, allows employees and not only employers initiate and maintain communication within the organization, with positive associations to employee performance (Men, 2014). Nonetheless, there are various ways in which internal communication is set in an organization, depending on the way communication flows within the organization and the channels of communication chosen to accommodate internal communication, depending on the way the organization.

2.1.1 Internal communication flows within organization

There are various types of communication that take place within an organization, utilizing formal and informal channels of communication. According to Pardillo (2019) formal internal communication can take different directions; upward, downward, horizontal and diagonal. Depending on an organization's size, structure, and nature of operations the preferred directions of information flow are imposed differently. For example, larger and/or more traditional organizations might prefer communication flowing vertically, in an upward and downward direction, whereas organizations utilizing more agile operations, such as start-ups or tech organizations might prefer horizontal and/or diagonal communication flows (LumenLearning, 2021; Dévényi, 2016).

Upward communication, refers to a communication type where lower levels of hierarchy, such as employees and lower management can transfer information to the upper levels of hierarchy such as higher management, CEOs etc. Such information might involve offering their ideas to management, provide feedback regarding their job and issues that management ought to be aware, to respond to instructions and important messages sent by management and so on. The establishment of upward communication in an organization is important as it appears to be the foundation for all other communication types (Pardillo, 2019).

Downward communication happens when upward communication is set and allows higher levels of hierarchy to communicate information towards lower levels of hierarchy. Usually, this kind of communication is used for communicating information regarding organization's mission, vision and policies and also for sharing important information and instructions related to employees' tasks, job and well-being and for boosting morale, increase motivation and obtain feedback, amongst other activities.

Horizontal communication occurs when people of the same level in organizational management hierarchy communicate and collaborate. This type of communication is typically

used to coordinate information and tasks, solve problems, and collaborate across departments in a cross-functional manner, which is important in modern organizational structures (Pardillo, 2019; Lee, 2018).

Diagonal communication allows people of various levels in organizational management hierarchy and of various departments to communicate. This type of communication allows employees who are, for example, work in supporting customers for a tech company to communicate with the head of research and development team and exchange information that can be important for improving the company's product (Pardillo, 2019; LumenLearning, 2021).

Furthermore, internal communication can also take place through informal channels. An example is grapevine communication that can take place in any organization as a result of social interaction between employees (Pardillo, 2019). This type of internal communication is employee-driven, it usually arises when employees perceive information carried out by formal channels of communication to be inadequate (Robinson & Thelen, 2018). Although informal types of internal communication can be sources of important information for employees and also use several channels, such communication is not in the scope of this research and therefore, will not be analyzed further.

2.1.2 Internal communication channels

The choice of appropriate communication channels for an organization's internal communication depends, among other factors, on the organization's size, structure, nature of operations, communication flow preferences, culture, technology readiness and employee qualifications and skills (Tkalac Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020; Dévényi, 2016; Pardillo, 2019). Communication channels are classified differently by authors in literature; verbal (oral and written) and non-verbal channels (Berger, 2008), traditional (i.e. e-mail, face-to-face, memos, reports etc.) and modern (i.e. video conferencing, employee apps, social media etc.), rich (i.e. face-to-face meetings) and less rich (Daft & Lengel, 1984) and so on. The most common channels of internal communication that organizations utilize, as found in literature, are:

- **Face to face communication** is considered as the richest channel of communication because it allows for synchronous communication using both verbal and nonverbal cues, allowing for immediate feedback (Tkalac Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020). It allows communication between two or more people and it is

usually the most preferred channel of communication (Bojadjiev & Vaneva, 2021). Examples are face to face communication include meetings between employees and managers for reporting on project status or for discussing and solving issues, meetings between members of a team, “town halls”, where leaders are open to answer questions employees have and so on.

- **Telephone communication** allows for immediate, synchronous, oral exchange of information using a landline or mobile device. It usually involves communication between two people, although, depending on the device, conference calls between more people can be performed.
- **Videoconference communication** is facilitated by specific software that allows people who are not physically together to communicate and collaborate online, synchronously.
- **E-mail communication** is one of the most popular written channels of communication in an organization, that allows people to share information to one or more recipients, asynchronously, through the company’s e-mail accounts (Yang, et al., 2021).
- **Instant messaging communication** can be exchanged between two or more people, online using specific software. Usually, such software allows people to initiate multiple conversations and typically, this channel is used for team discussions and quick conversations (Yang, et al., 2021). In some occasions, instant messaging is linked to SMS and text messaging via mobile phones.
- **Intranet communication** is the company’s online system where information, such as important documents, announcements, templates, and procedures are stored via a network, through which employees can instantly have access to via the company’s computers and network. Rapid development in technology allows for companies to set up intranets where employees can have remote access to this information at a distance (Pardillo, 2019).
- **Social media communication** is another channel of internal communication as through the company’s social media accounts, employees can be informed regarding company’s news and updates, given that employees also have accounts to such social media (Lynn, 2020).

- **Cloud productivity suites communication** such as Microsoft Teams and Google G Suite, offer several channels of communication and productivity under one solution. For example, they can integrate instant messaging, file sharing, e-mails, notifications, team collaboration via videoconferences and chats, and many more features depending on the software (Palmer, 2021)
- **Print media communication** are typically used to communicate information that is formal, such as legal documents, or information that does not change that often, such as company's regulations and rules, or information that is complex and requires time to study, such as policies and contracts and so on (Burton, 2012).

2.2 Importance of internal communication in organizations

Establishing effective internal communication is vital for any organization since this ensures that vision, goals, news, procedures, messages, and other important information are communicated comprehensively and transparently across all employees, managers, and stakeholders of the organization, facilitating all major business operations (Ruck & Welch, 2012; Sievert & Scholz, 2017). In addition, studies have shown positive relationships between internal communication and employees' behaviour and attitude (Men & Yue, 2019), successful organizational change processes (Neill, Men, & Yue, 2020), building fruitful relationships, avoiding rumors that can cause uncertainty and building culture of trust between employees and employers (Sievert & Scholz, 2017; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2018; Sun, Li, Lee, & Tao, 2021). Furthermore, research conducted by Tkalac Vercic (2021) confirmed a significant and positive relationship between internal communication satisfaction and employee engagement, employer brand as perceived by attractiveness and perceived organizational support in 12 large organizations in Croatia. Therefore, it appears that the way a business organizes and carries out internal communication practices and the kind of internal communication channels utilized, play a major role in succeeding business operations.

In addition, the selected communication media and channels appear to have an impact on the effectiveness of internal and two-way symmetrical communication where both employees and employers carry out messages (Men, 2014; Lee, 2018), on employees' overall internal communication satisfaction (Tkalac Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020), on employee engagement (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014) and on successful team collaboration (Aritz, Walker, & Cardon, 2017).

Specifically, several studies have shown that employees prefer richer communication channels, such as face-to-face meetings and videoconferencing (i.e. Men, 2014; Lee, 2018; Braun, Hernandez Bark, Kirchner, Stegmann, & van Dick, 2019), as they perceive such channels to be of higher quality, when compared to telephone and e-mail communication (Braun, Hernandez Bark, Kirchner, Stegmann, & van Dick, 2019). Indeed, rich communication channels offer immediate feedback and interactivity and allow verbal and nonverbal cues, natural language and personal focus during communication (Daft & Lengel, 1984). Nonetheless, research suggests selecting different communication channels, depending on who is involved in the communication and the task's nature. For example, a study conducted by Lee (2018) in the U.S. argued that richer communication channels, such as face-to-face communication and videoconferencing are important for symmetrical communication between managers and peers whereas other, less rich communication channels such as e-mail and print media are important for symmetrical communication between employees and CEOs.

2.3 Internal communication and collaboration during COVID-19 pandemic

Since Spring 2020, when COVID-19 pandemic entered our lives, many organizations entered a crisis that resulted in radical organizational change, requiring severe modifications in the way day-to-day operations were conducted, the way job was carried out by employees and the overall work environment setting (Carnavelle & Hatak, 2020). However, research has shown that, even if organizational changes are essential for the organization's prosperity, there are not always successfully implemented for various reasons; uncertainty and fear among employees, employee resistance to change, lack of understanding of the rationale behind change, poor internal communication and so on (Oreg, Bartunek, Lee, & Do, 2018; Smet, Vander Elst, Griep, & De Witte, 2016; Sun, Li, Lee, & Tao, 2021). Researchers argue that effective internal communication can positively impact the efforts of implementing successfully organizational changes and COVID-19 outbreak caused one of the most uncertain and challenging crises of the recent years (i.e. Sun, Li, Lee, & Tao, 2021; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2018).

2.3.1 Importance of internal communication for crisis management

In times of crisis, in particular, it appears to be important for employers to have high quality communication by carrying out important information regarding changes, clearly, accurately and timely to all employees (Švec & Mura, 2020; Dwiedienawati, Tjahjana, Faisal, Gandasari, & Bramatoro Abdinagoro, 2021). During COVID-19 pandemic organizations' Human Resources managers had to quickly adjust internal communication practices to select appropriate channels and media to inform employees about changes in their working conditions on one hand and about health and safety regulations on the other hand (Goncalves, et al., 2021). In fact, research conducted by Švec & Mura (2020) argued that, in cases where employers interrupted information sharing related to health and safety and relevant legislations and regulations resulted in disruptions in the work process, as *"such conduct of employers might have endangered the lives and health of employees due to lack of information"* (p. 598). The authors argued that in such crisis times, employers should ensure that formal and adequate information is shared with employees, through the organization's internal communication channels, not only for purely work-related matters but also for other issues that affect their well-being.

The importance of establishing effective internal communication is also supported by the results of a study conducted by Dwiedienawati, Tjahjana, Faisal, Gandasari, & Bramatoro Abdinagoro (2021), the findings of which showed a positive relationship between quality of internal communication and effectiveness of crisis management during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Furthermore, a study carried out by Li, Sun, Tao, & Lee (2021) in the U.S. argues that transparent internal communication contributes to the reduction of uncertainty and can help employees to cope with organizational changes and adapt to the new work conditions more effectively. In addition, research indicated that high quality communication during the pandemic crisis was indirectly, yet, positively associated with reduced possibility of employee resignation, in nursing homes in the U.S. during the outbreak (Cimarolli, Bryant, Falzarano, & Stone, 2021). However, research suggests that communication between employers and employees should not be limited only from employer to employee during the time of crisis as they highlight the importance for employees to participate in the communication process in a two-way symmetrical manner (Neill, Men, & Yue, 2020; Tkalac Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020), so as to provide valuable information timely and adequately and avoid uncertainty and fear that

can result from rumors (Smet, Vander Elst, Griep, & De Witte, 2016; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2018).

2.3.2 Virtual channels for internal communication, collaboration and teleworking during COVID-19

Apart from the quality of internal communication, it appears that the quantity and variety of communication channels that are utilized by organizations are positively associated with likelihood to adapt more effectively to crisis and ensure order to a chaotic situation (Chewning, Lai, & Doerfel, 2012; Fuller, Pyle, Rioli, & Mickel, 2020). For example, one of the major organizational changes that almost all organizations had to make during COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to adapt to the new reality, was shifting to distance and online work conditions using virtual platforms and digital technologies and channels of communication (Bojadjiev & Vaneva, 2021; Itzchakov & Grau, 2021). Therefore, internal communication practices that were previously implemented were reconsidered and were adapted to the new circumstances, as people were now working from home, at a distance. Face-to-face communication, which previously was vastly considered as one of the most effective communication channels, especially between managers and employees (i.e. Men, 2015; Braun, Hernandez Bark, Kirchner, Stegmann, & van Dick, 2019), could no longer be utilized, due to the legislations and prohibitions of governments, to protect people's health. Employees and employers ought to communicate in distance, using appropriate channels of communication, often utilizing digital technologies (Bojadjiev & Vaneva, 2021).

Adapting the internal communication practices and making changes in leadership style as well as in the selected communication channels appears to be important and inevitable when dealing with crisis situations. For instance, a study that investigated the internal communication model and leadership style before and after the pandemic crisis in a private organization was conducted by Bojadjiev & Vaneva (2021). Their findings revealed that, in terms of the internal communication, the communication model and preferred way of communication within the organization, were different before and after COVID-19 pandemic, yet both leaders and employees had the same preferences of communication channels before COVID-19, with face-to-face meetings being the most preferred channel of communication. After COVID-19 outbreak, as expected, both managers and employees shifted to virtual channels of communication instead of face-to-face meetings. However, for leaders,

SMS/Viber/Messenger was indicated as the most preferred channels of communication, followed by phone calls and video conversation (one to many), whereas for employees, after COVID-19, phone calls were the most preferred way of communication, followed by e-mails, SMS/Viber/Messenger and video conversation one-on-one.

Similarly, Švec & Mura (2020) reported that the pandemic crisis affected the way internal communication between employees and employers was carried out in Slovakia, stating that the way task assignment, supervision and information sharing was conducted within the organization had changed. The authors stated that, overall, there was a shift to virtual channels of communication, with information sharing becoming more informal rather than formal. In addition, they found that task assignment as well as supervision during teleworking was conducted using specialized software, with employee privacy being on the borderline of being violated, resulting in employees' decrease in satisfaction (Švec & Mura, 2020). This echoes arguments of Datta & Nwankpa (2021), regarding the necessity of establishing security and privacy for successful digital transformation during crisis continuity planning.

The shift to digital means of communication and collaboration was a great challenge for organizations. Even though digital transformation was already underway in many organizations, COVID-19 sudden appearance, forcefully accelerated the process and not all organizations were equipped with the necessary hardware/software nor all employees and employers had developed the necessary skills to handle such a transformation by that time (Trenerry, et al., 2021). Of course, there were organizations that had already employed teleworking before COVID-19 and were more ready to adapt to the new situation in a smoother manner. Indicatively, in the U.S., before COVID-19, a 5% of employees were working from home but after the pandemic this number increased to 37% (Yang, et al., 2021). However, it appears that even though technologically savvy organizations were already implementing teleworking and technology-facilitated communication and collaboration within the organization, before COVID-19, did not necessarily mean that they were able to adapt better than other organizations.

For example, a recent study (Yang, et al., 2021) that analyzed rich data (i.e. e-mails, calendars, instant messages, video/audio calls and workweek hours) of 61,182 US Microsoft employees during the first semester of 2020 revealed that the wide-firm implementation of teleworking due to COVID-19 caused asynchronous communication media use to increase and synchronous communication media to decrease, in comparison to pre-COVID situation and

also, caused workers to use less rich media such as e-mails and messages. The authors argue that this led to disrupted communication and collaboration within the organization, which as they predict *“will impact productivity and, in the long-term, innovation”*, because *“these changes in communication media may have made it more difficult for workers to convey and process complex information”* (p.8). Therefore, having the digital channels and media to facilitate communication and collaboration during remote working conditions is not enough.

The conclusion of Yang et al. (2021) research is in line with arguments of Datta & Nwankpa (2021, p.85) that digital transformation as part of an organization’s crisis continuity planning *“often results in a portfolio of solutions that are independently workable yet need to be integrated, matched, and melded for scalability”*. For Datta & Nwankpa (2021, p.) during a crisis, organizations should focus on *“building a robust and resilient framework based on (1) digital collaboration, (2) security and privacy, (3) transparency, and (4) modularity”*, to implement digital transformation successfully. Specifically, the authors argue that organizations should pay attention to providing employees and managers with digital collaboration mechanisms and means for effective information sharing and access to modular architecture of knowledge at any time, from any place, via appropriate platforms and means of information sharing and communication/collaboration. At the same time, they should protect the organization from cybersecurity threats and establish digital security and privacy on information, especially sensitive information, yet maintaining process by establishing a culture where people in the organization can communicate openly about transparency (Datta & Nwankpa, 2021).

Going further on digital collaboration during COVID-19 pandemic, it appears that trust is a key element in successfully teleworking within virtual teams (Garro-Abarca, Palos-Sanchez, & Aguayo-Camacho, 2021). An investigation of the effect of some determinants on the performance of 317 software engineers that had to work in virtual teams during COVID-19 teleworking was conducted, finding that communication in relation to the tasks and trust within the team were significantly important determinants that affected team performance (Garro-Abarca, Palos-Sanchez, & Aguayo-Camacho, 2021). Similarly to Yang, et al. (2021) investigation of Microsoft’s workers, this research also involved personnel that had worked in teleworking conditions before COVID-19, in technology savvy organizations. However, Yang et al. (2021) research found that *“shifting to firm-wide remote work caused the collaboration network to become more heavily siloed”* both in formal and informal sense, with fewer bridges

and ties between workers being observed as time passed by and, as the authors argue, these changes in collaboration pattern might have hindered information sharing and, in turn, decreased the quality of work.

2.4 Summary and justification of research aim

Establishing internal communication in a way that allows both employees and employers to communicate, collaborate and interact is very important for any organization as, with the utilization of appropriate channels it can help vital information flow in various directions within the organization. However, during COVID-19 pandemic, several organizational changes took place in almost all organizations and the way internal communication had been previously set up, was inevitably changed to deal with the crisis. Research reviewed in this chapter revealed that this affected the way many organizations functioned ever since, mainly, due to teleworking, which subsequently affected employees' productivity, engagement, fear of uncertainty and collaboration, among others, as many of the preferred channels of communication, such as face-to-face meetings could no longer be used. Despite the technology readiness of many organizations, digital transformation was forcefully rushed, to facilitate communication and collaboration within the organization and not all employers and employees were ready for such a rapid change. In addition, even though many organizations appear to consider the continuation of teleworking even after COVID-19 crisis is over, studies claim that such work condition might not be as beneficial as it is considered, in the long-term.

The way COVID-19 outbreak affected internal communication appears to be an ongoing investigation that is currently at the beginning of being addressed. Even though several studies have been conducted in countries such as the U.S., the UK and Slovakia, there is, to my knowledge, no study investigating the way internal communication was and is being disrupted in organizations in Cyprus, because of COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, this study aims to survey the type of internal communication channels that were utilized by employees in Cyprus before and during COVID-19 pandemic teleworking, to report the extent to which internal communication was conducted effectively and whether this had an impact on employee's consideration of continuing teleworking even after COVID-19 pandemic is over.

Chapter

3. Methodology

This chapter presents this study's research questions and then illustrates the methods of data collection and the methods of analysis. Lastly, this study's reliability and credibility, as well, as ethical issues will be discussed.

3.1 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. Which channels were/are being used in organizations in Cyprus for facilitating internal communication before and during COVID-19 pandemic teleworking?
2. To what extent could employees in Cyprus communicate effectively with fellow employees and employers, before and during COVID-19 pandemic teleworking?
3. To what extent do employees in Cyprus want to continue working remotely / teleworking after COVID-19 pandemic is over?

3.2 Cyprus context

This study focuses on organizations that operate in Cyprus and follow Cyprus' governmental legislations and regulations. Therefore, at this point, a brief account of Cyprus labour force and employment, as well as, the legislations imposed by Cyprus government, following the pandemic COVID-19 appearance is important to be provided.

3.2.1 Cyprus labour force and employment information

According to Cyprus Statistical Service's (2021a) results of the 2nd quarter of 2021 labour force survey, the total labour force in Cyprus reached 466,525 people (63.9% of the population, 70.4% males and 57.9% females), of which 427,300 (58.5% of the population, 65.1% males, 52.4% females) were employed up to that time. In respect to the sector of employment, 78.5% were employed in Services, followed by 18.6% in Manufacturing and 2.9% in Agriculture. As

presented in Table 1, in comparison to the 2nd quarter of 2020, the overall number of labour force increased and so did the number of employment and unemployment.

	Number		Percentage (%)	
	2 nd Quarter 2021	2 nd Quarter 2020	2 nd Quarter 2021	2 nd Quarter 2020
Labour Force				
Total	466.525	448.466	63,9	62,2
Males	246.924	238.287	70,4	68,6
Females	219.601	210.179	57,9	56,3
Employment				
Total	427.300	418.015	58,5	58,0
Males	228.505	221.666	65,1	63,8
Females	198.796	196.349	52,4	52,6
Unemployment				
Total	39.224	30.451	8,4	6,8
Males	18.419	16.621	7,5	7,0
Females	20.805	13.830	9,5	6,6

Table 1: Cyprus Statistical Service 2nd quarter of 2021 labour force survey results (CyprusStatisticalService, 2021a, p.2)

Employment in Cyprus can be divided in broad public sector, which includes general government and publicly owned enterprises and companies and private sector which includes privately owned enterprises and companies. For the 2nd quarter of 2021, the total employment in broad public sector was 71,136 people, of which 65,462 are general government staff and 5,674 are people who work in publicly owned enterprises and companies (CyprusStatisticalService, 2021c). Unfortunately, Cyprus Statistical Service did not provide information regarding private sector employment. However, given that for the same quarter, the total employment in Cyprus was 427,300, the calculated number of private sector employment was 356,164. Moreover, another report conducted by Cyprus Statistical Service states that the total number of government employment in September 2021 reached 52,408 people, of which 17,306 are Civil Service staff, 13,813 are Education staff, 12,866 are Security Forces staff and 8,423 are hourly paid workers (CyprusStatisticalService, 2021b).

Furthermore, according to the Companies Section of the Department of Registrar of Companies and Intellectual Property, of the Cyprus Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry, as at 31st of October 2021, there are 201,691 total registered companies in Cyprus (CompaniesSection, 2021).

3.2.2 Cyprus COVID-19 legislations and lockdowns

Following the first case of COVID-19 reported in Cyprus on 9th of March 2020, Cyprus government implemented several measures through the Quarantine Law Act, by issuing several Quarantine (Determination of Measures to Prevent Spread of the COVID-19

Coronavirus 2020) Decrees (CyprusPIO, 2021). Depending on the way COVID-19 deployed in Cyprus, measures that were implemented via those Quarantine Decrees ranged from “lighter” measures such as prohibition of unnecessary movements after some time in the afternoon/night or presentation of SafePass for entering establishments to full lockdowns with very limited exceptions for movement via SMS approval. These measures affected the way many businesses worked from March 2020 and onwards.

Specifically, there were two periods (24/03/2020 – 30/04/2020 and 30/12/2020-31/01/2021) during which full lockdowns were implemented, where many businesses suspended their physical operations and only certain business sectors were allowed to operate physically with limited emergency number of employees), such as health sector, absolutely necessary public services, banks and retailers for basic necessities/services. For many months operations of businesses such as Hotels and Hospitality, Malls, Theme parks, Sports, Libraries, Museums remained suspended and for the businesses that could have physical operation, there were limitations regarding the percentage of employees and customers that could be physically present in the establishment, depending on the size of the establishment (one person per 8 sq.m.) (CyprusPIO, 2021). Due to these limitations, as of March 2020, broad public sector and private sector business were urged to implement teleworking / remote work, where applicable, to continue to operate both during full lockdowns and during prohibition of full physical presence of all personnel.

3.3 Methodology and Methods of data collection

In order to address the above research questions, a quantitative research design is required due to the nature of the research questions. Specifically, the research questions request for data derived by participants’ preferences and perceptions regarding internal communication practices and channels in their organizations, before and during COVID-19, their own appreciation of their own engagement and productivity during teleworking and their willingness to continue working remotely in the future, which can be captured via surveys with numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, this study aims to collect data regarding internal communication and communication channels before and during a phenomenon that had already occurred. Therefore, a nonexperimental research design is required (Drummond & Murphy-Reyes, 2018), of which descriptive quantitative research design was selected as more appropriate, since this study aims in describing a situation before

and during the pandemic, where the researcher had no control of nor would have conducted any interventions/treatments. Rather, the focus is on comparing groups of participants by identifying patterns and documenting differences, not seeking, however, to explain the reasons why such patterns or differences exist (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.3.1 Method of data collection

A questionnaire administered directly to participants was the mean of data collection for this study as through this instrument a large number of participants can provide information regarding their organization's internal communication practices and channels before and after the pandemic, as well as their own perceptions regarding teleworking and communication during the pandemic in a quick, yet direct way, which can allow for descriptive statistical analysis, which can, in turn, provide answers to this study's research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Drummond & Murphy-Reyes, 2018). Interviews, on the other hand, were not a suitable instrument for this study, because this study does not seek to explain phenomena nor provide insight on the why and how of the situation before and during COVID-19 pandemic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The questionnaire (see Appendix I) was prepared in Greek and was administered online via social media, e-mails, and instant messages to participants. The questionnaire had a total of 28 questions, which were divided in five parts:

- Part A, "Demographics", collected data regarding participants' gender, position, years of employment in their organization and the organization's sector, operation cycle and size. In addition, it collected data regarding participants' ICT skills and whether they had worked remotely / teleworked during the pandemic.
- Part B, "Internal Communication before COVID-19 pandemic" collected data regarding their overall perceived satisfaction regarding internal communication in their organization, as well as data regarding the sources and channels that were used by their organization and by themselves, before COVID-19 pandemic, for internal communication in their organization.
- Part C, "Internal Communication during COVID-19 pandemic", collected data regarding their overall perceived satisfaction regarding internal communication in their organization, as well as data regarding the sources and channels that were used by

their organization and by themselves, for internal communication in their organization, during COVID-19 pandemic teleworking/remote work.

- Part D, “Remote work / telework and Communication during COVID-19 pandemic”, collected participants’ level of agreement in a series of statements regarding the extent to which internal communication and remote telework was conducted effectively in their organization during COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, data related to participants perceptions regarding their own engagement and productivity before and during COVID-19 pandemic are collected.
- Part E, “Remote work / Telework and internal communication in the future”, collected participants future preference regarding teleworking and channels of internal communication in their organization.

3.3.2 Sample and participants

The overall population that could participate in this study is the entire Cyprus’ labour force that have been employed before and during COVID-19 pandemic in the same organization, in any hierarchical level of employment. It was not possible to reach the whole population and administer the prepared questionnaire to everyone, as it was not possible to identify, within the time and length limitations of a master’s dissertation, exactly who had been employed and had been working remotely before and during the pandemic in the same organization. Therefore, it was not possible to select a sample in a mathematically random way (Taherdoost, 2016). Thus, a nonprobability sampling procedure, using a convenience sampling technique (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was selected, where the questionnaire was administered to people around the researcher’s social and work network via e-mail, social media and instant messaging, who were then asked to spread out the questionnaire to other people in their network.

Overall, 103 people answered the questionnaire, of which 93 stated they were teleworking during COVID-19 pandemic and 10 were not. For the purposes of this study and to answer the research questions, only those who stated that were teleworking during COVID-19 pandemic were included as participants. 42% (n=39) of participants were male and 58% (n=54) were female (Figure 1) and 18% (n=17) work in the public sector, 23% (n=21) in the broader public sector and 59% (n=55) in the private sector in Cyprus (Figure 2). The majority of participants work in organizations with a size of 101-500 employees (38%, n=35), 19% (n=18) work in

organizations with 501-2000 employees, 16% (n=15) with 51-100 employees, 13% (n=12) with 11-50 employees, 9% (n=8) with more than 2000 employees and 5% (n=5) with 1-10 employees (Figure 3).

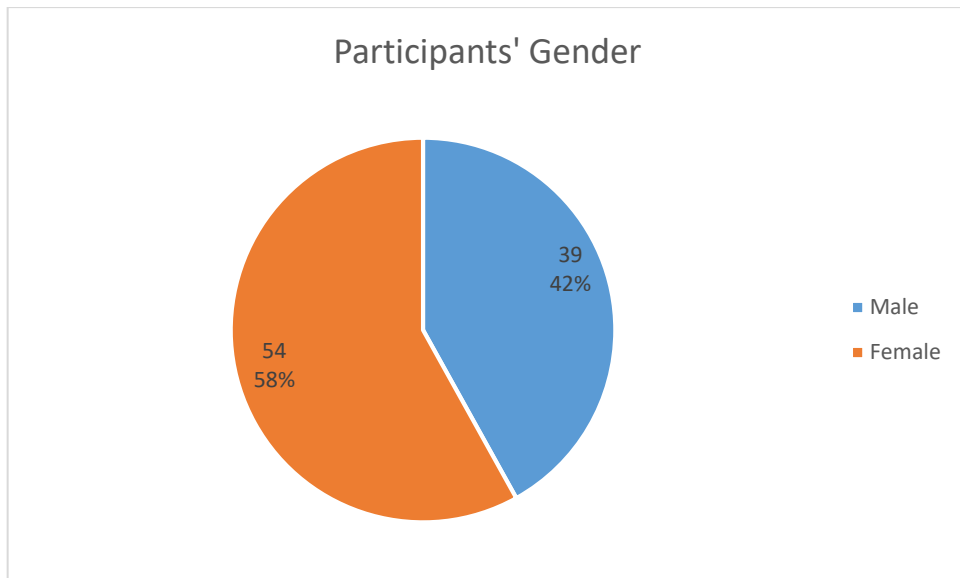


Figure 1: Participants' Gender

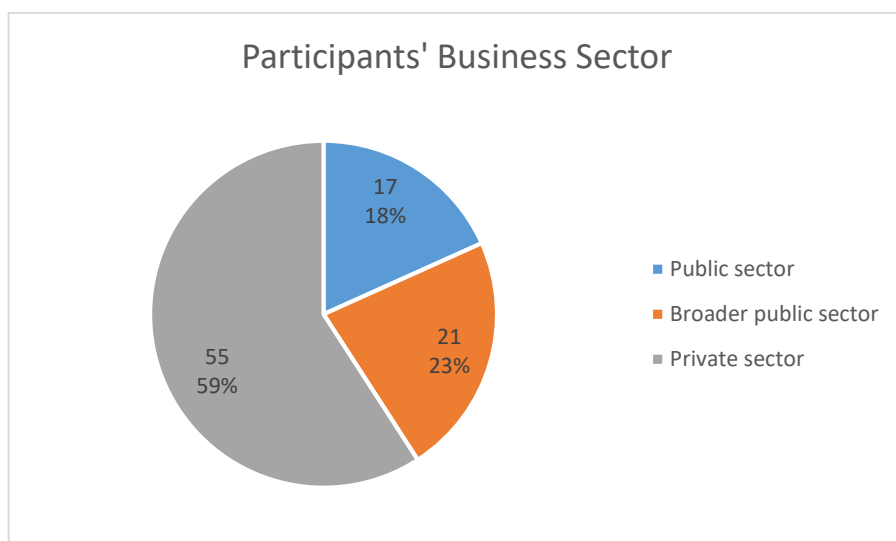


Figure 2: Participants' business sector

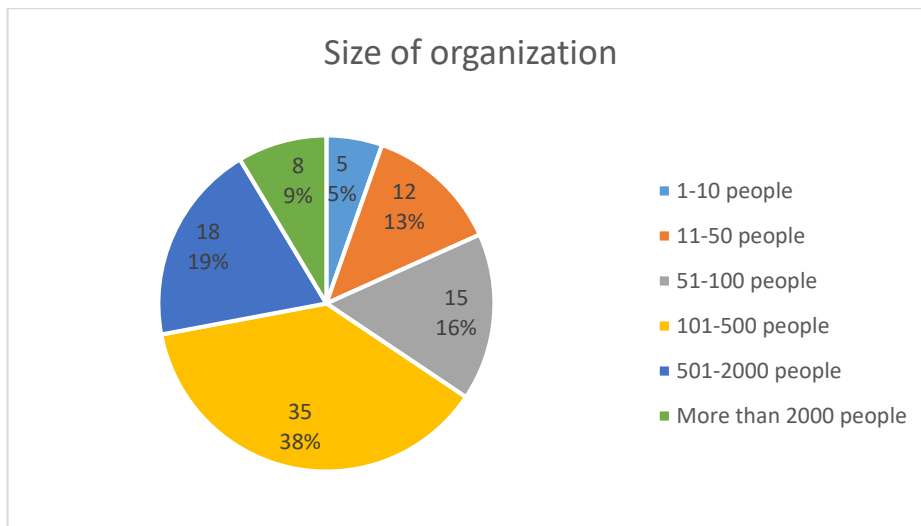


Figure 3: Size of organization

The area of business activity of the organizations that participants of this study work in, varied as shown in Figure 4 below. Most participants work in Services (58%, n=51), followed by Education (28%, n=24). None of the participants of this study selected food services nor primary sector as their area of organization's business activity.

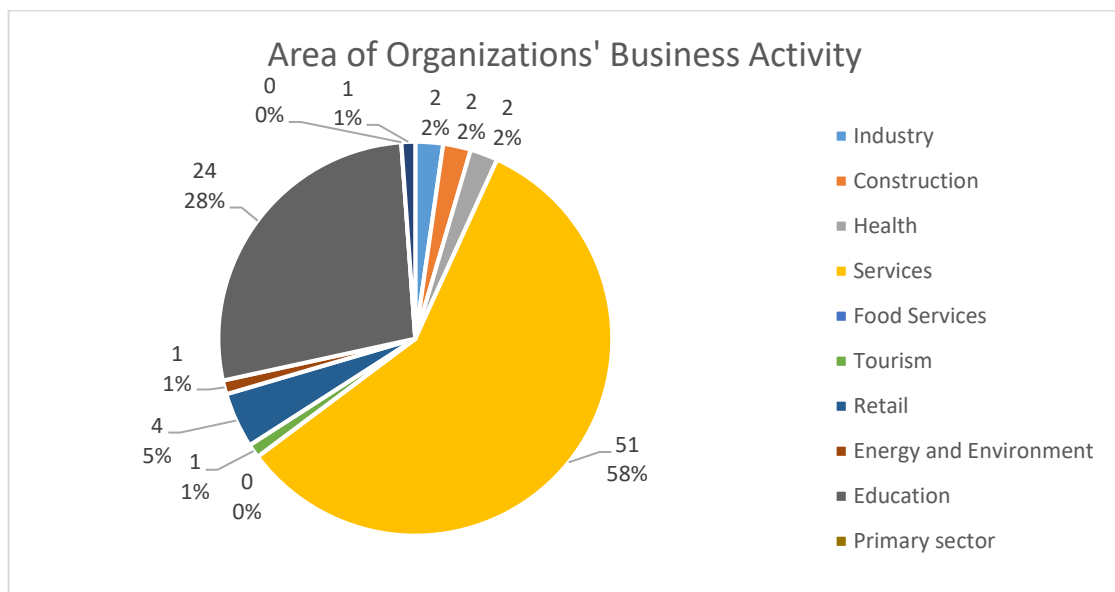


Figure 4: Area of organizations' business activity

In terms of participants' hierarchical level in their organization, as shown in Figure 5 below, the majority of participants were employees (66%, n=61), 30% (n=28) were placed in middle management positions (i.e. team leaders, coordinators) and 4% (n=4) were placed in upper management positions (i.e. head of department). None of the participants were in the top management position (leader) in their organization.

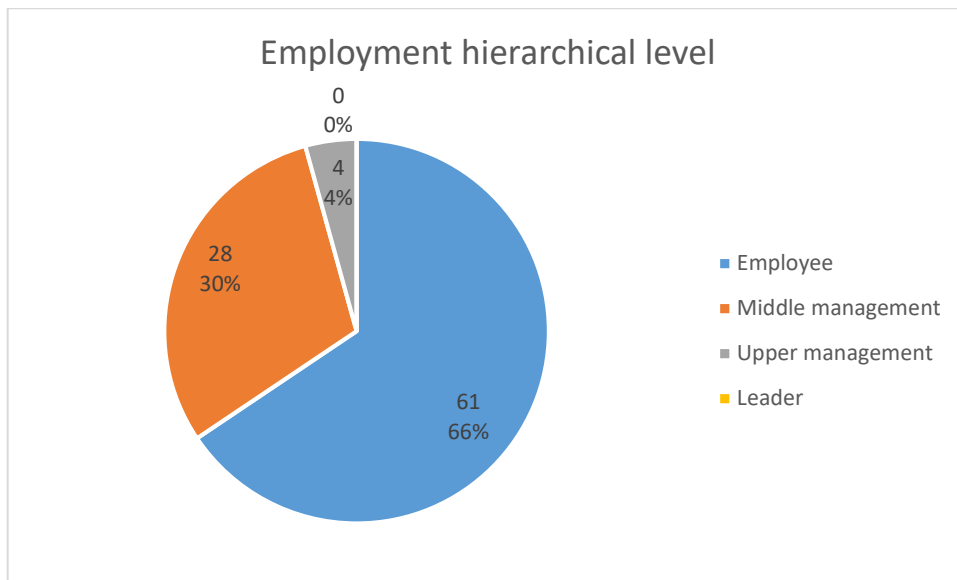


Figure 5: Participants' employment hierarchical level

Most participants were working more than 6 years in their organizations. Specifically, as shown in Figure 6 below, 27% (n=25) worked for 6-10 years, 24% (n=22) for 11-15 years, 24% (n=22) for 3-5 years, 18% (n=17) for 1-2 years and 7% (n=7) worked for more than 16 years at their organization.

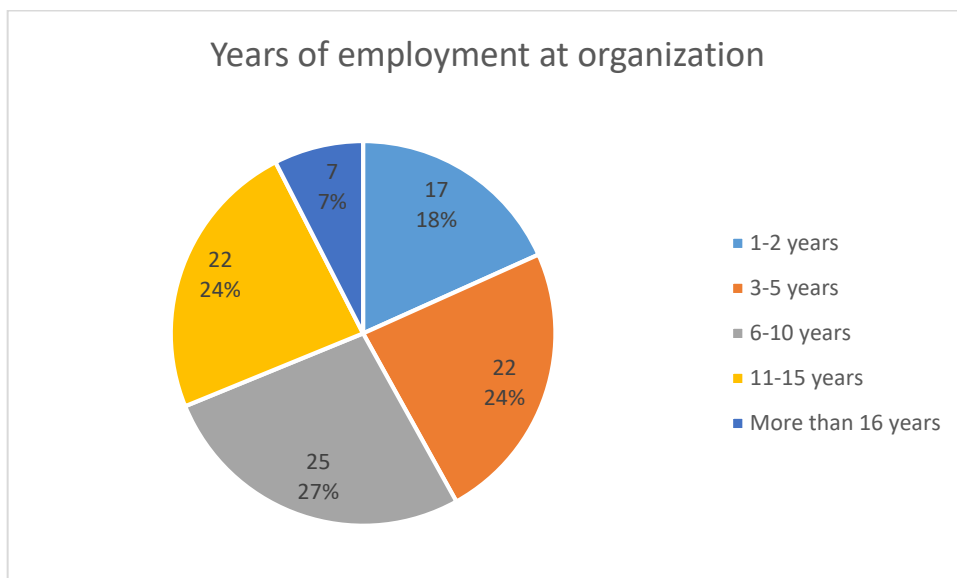


Figure 6: Participants' years of employment at organization

In terms of their perceived level of ICT and Internet skills, as illustrated in Figure 7 below, 57% (n=53) of participants indicated that they had extremely good level of skills, 37% (n=34) very good, 3% (n=3) good, 3% (n=3) somewhat good and none of the participants indicated not at all good ICT and Internet skills.

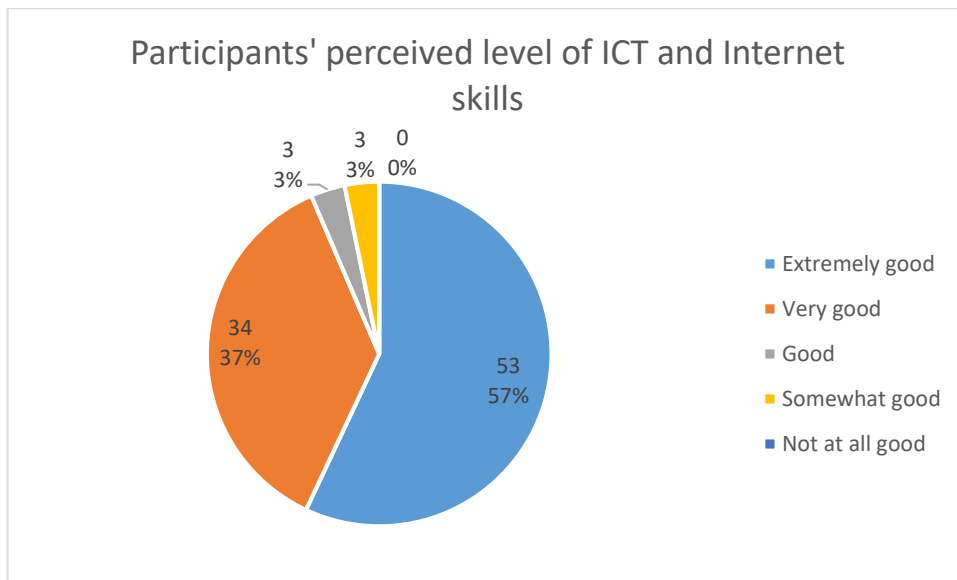


Figure 7: Participants' perceived level of ICT and Internet skills

The majority of participants were not given the option for teleworking in their organization, before COVID-19 pandemic (73%, n=68), whereas 27% (n=25) stated that they could telework before COVID-19 pandemic in their organization, as shown in Figure 8.

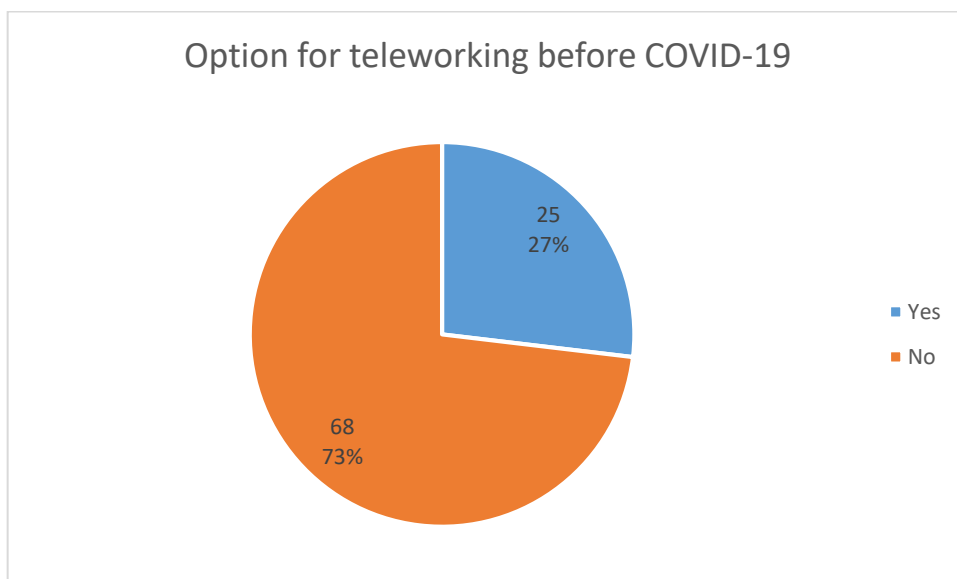


Figure 8: Option for teleworking before COVID-19 pandemic

3.3.3 Methods of analysis

The analysis of the data was done using MS Excel. First, the data were extracted by MS Forms in MS Excel format. In order to address the three research questions of this study, an account

of participants' responses and descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean where appropriated, averages) were produced for all questions of the five parts of the questionnaire. Specifically:

- **Part A data** were manipulated using MS Excel formulas to calculate frequencies and percentages to yield the graphs that were used to present participants demographics and organizations' information, in Section 3.3.2 earlier.
- **Part B and Part C data** were manipulated using MS Excel formulas to calculate frequencies and percentages, to produce the graphs that were used to present the results in respect to sources and channels that were used by organizations and by participants before and during COVID-19, as well as the frequency of communication with others. The results from the analysis of Part B and Part C data were used to address the first two research questions of this study.
- **Part D data** were transformed into numerical data using codes and were then analyzed via MS Excel Data Analysis tool. Specifically, Strongly Disagree was coded as 1, Somewhat disagree was coded as 2, Neither disagree nor agree was coded as 3, Somewhat agree as 4 and Strongly agree as 5. Descriptive statistics of Part D were produced.
- **Part E data** were manipulated using MS Excel formulas to calculate frequencies and percentages, to produce the graphs that were used to present the results in respect to participants' preference for teleworking option as well as their ranking of channels for internal communication to be used in the future in their organization. The results from the analysis of Part E data were used to address the third research questions of this study.

3.3.4 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of this study's questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha test via SPSS software. Not all questionnaire items were tested using this test, as there were preferences and demographics involved. This test was conducted for testing for the internal consistency of the questions in which participants were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction regarding internal communication and its frequency in their organization (2 items in Part B and 2 items in Part C of the questionnaire), as shown in Table 2 below, as well as for the

questions in which participants were asked to state their level of agreement regarding a set of statements (13 items in Part D of the questionnaire), as shown in Table 3 below.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.871	.871	4

Table 2: Reliability Cronbach's Alpha for Overall satisfaction before and during COVID-19

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.878	.876	13

Table 3: Reliability Cronbach's Alpha for Questionnaire Part D items

As shown in tables above, Cronbach's Alpha measurement was over 0.70 in both cases (n=4, 0.871 and n=13, 0.876), which is an acceptable measurement for reliability.

As far as the validity of the questionnaire is concerned, it cannot be measured easily (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, the questions that were included in the questionnaire derived by a thorough literature review regarding sources, channels and ways of internal communication in organizations, as well as, relevant studies that were conducted after COVID-19 outbreak.

3.3.5 Ethical issues

Participants of this study received the questionnaire via the researcher's social and work network via e-mail, social media, and instant messaging, who were then asked to spread out the questionnaire to other people in their network. Participants were informed about the aims of the study and about the fact that the questionnaire was anonymous, and that participants' responses were confidential, in the introduction section of the online questionnaire. However, some participants responded to the researcher indicating that they had just finished the questionnaire. Thus, it was acknowledged beforehand that, for some responses, participants could be identified due to the time stamps of their response in the online form, when compared to the time stamp of their e-mail or message and participants' demographics.

Nonetheless, there was not attempt made by the researcher to identify participants of this study and data were treated anonymously. Lastly, it was ensured that the only people who had access to the raw data of this study was the researcher and his supervisor.

Chapter

4. Results

This section presents the results of participants' responses to the administered questionnaire. The results are next organized in four sections, in order to help addressing the research questions of this study; Overall satisfaction of internal communication in organization; Channels and sources of internal communication before and during COVID-19, Communication frequency with employees and employers before and during COVID-19 and Remote work / Teleworking matters during COVID-19.

4.1 Overall satisfaction of internal communication

Overall, participants indicated that they were satisfied with the formal internal communication in their organization (mean before = 3.76, mean after = 3.73), as well as its frequency (mean before = 3.74, mean after = 3.67), both before and during COVID-19, as shown in Figure 9 below.

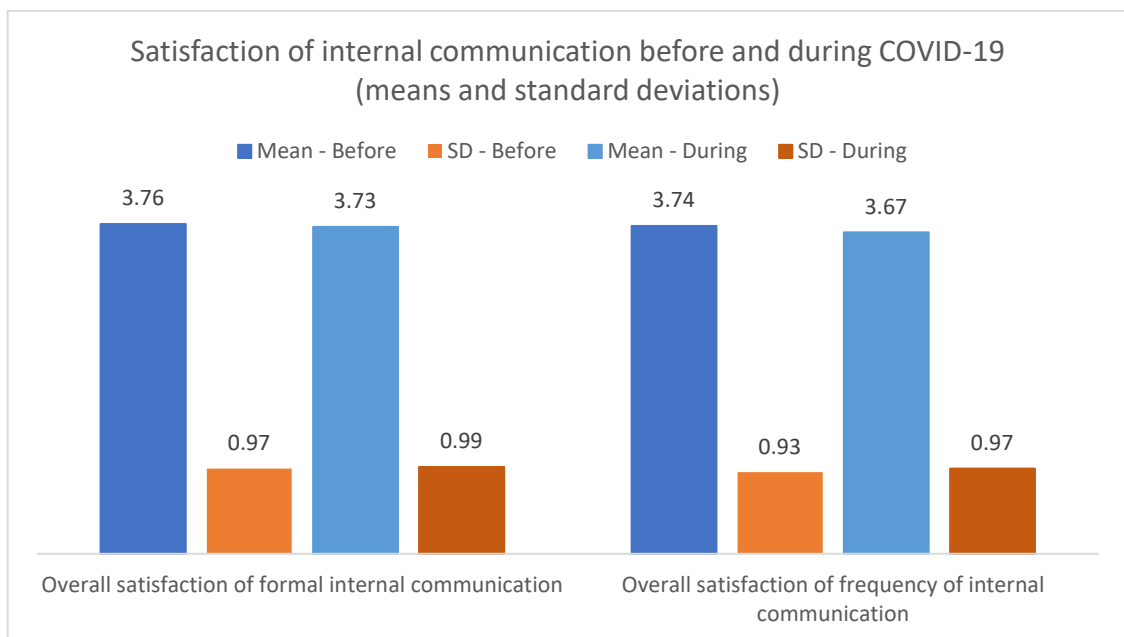


Figure 9: Overall satisfaction of internal communication before and during COVID-19 (mean and standard deviation)

Looking further into data, it appears that indeed before and during COVID-19 there were very slight differences in overall satisfaction of internal communication and its frequency, in respect to participants' gender, employment position and years of employment. However, as shown in Figure 10 below, for employees with more than 16 years of work employment at the organization, the overall satisfaction of formal internal communication during COVID-19 increased by 0.42, in comparison to before COVID-19. Similarly, as shown in Figure 11, there was a decrease of 0.44 to the satisfaction regarding frequency of internal communication during COVID-19, in comparison to before COVID-19.

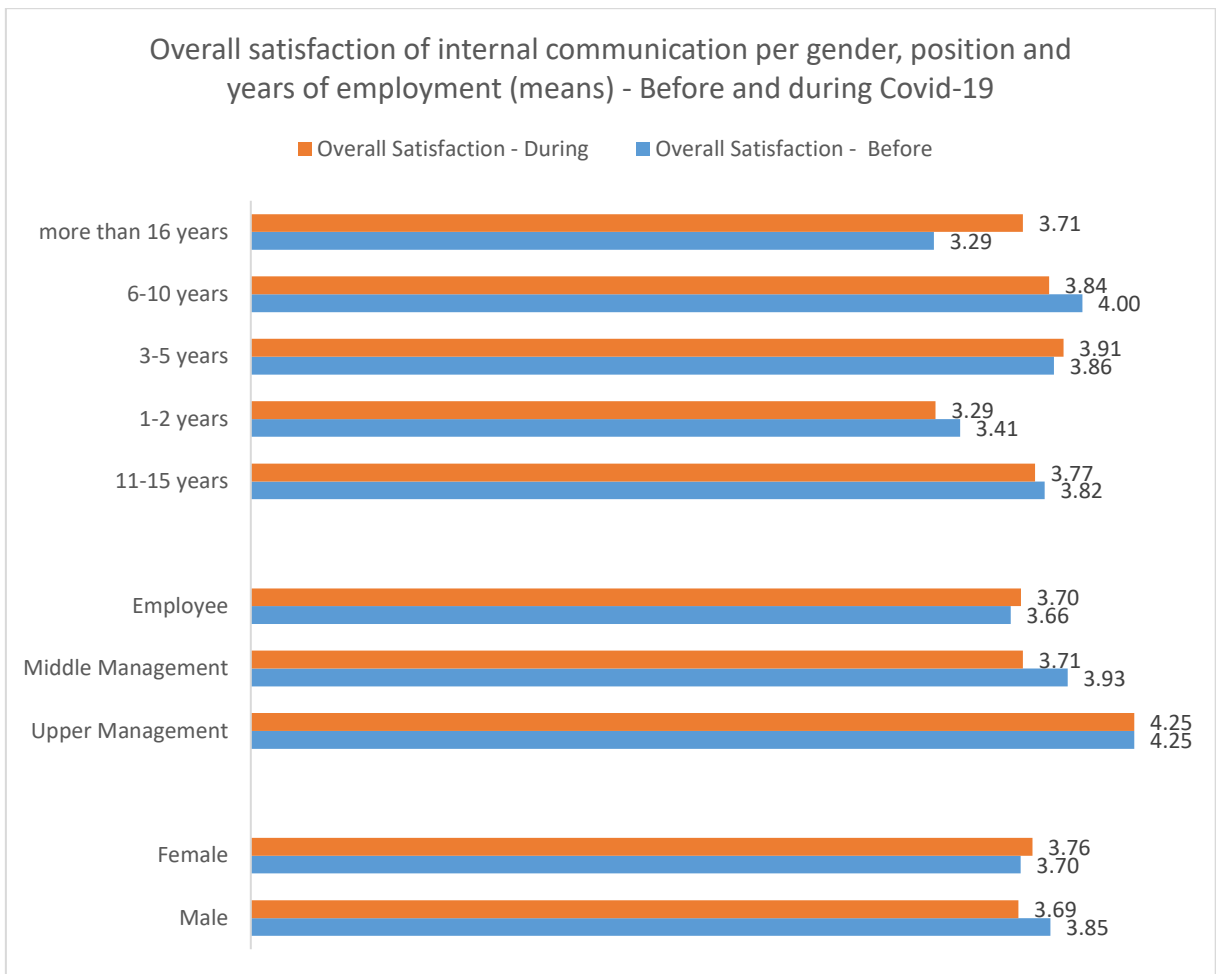


Figure 10: Overall satisfaction of internal communication per gender, position and years of employment (means) - Before and during Covid-19

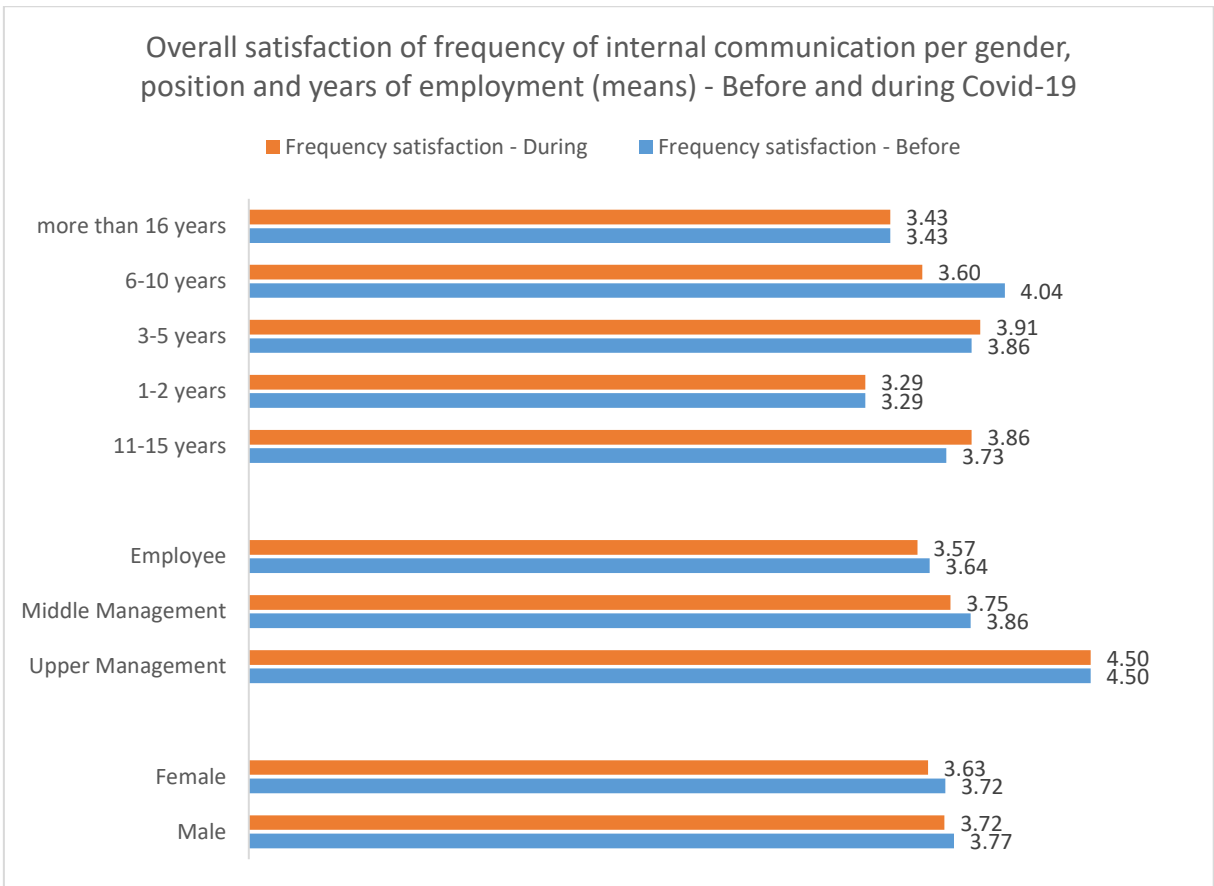


Figure 11: Overall satisfaction of frequency of internal communication per gender, position and years of employment (means) - Before and during Covid-19

Regarding differences between the size of organization and the business sector, as shown in Figure 12 and in Figure 13, it appears that there were not many differences before and during COVID-19, except for the overall satisfaction rating of people working in small size organizations of 1-10 people, where there is a decrease of 0.60 in overall satisfaction of both formal internal communication and its frequency during COVID-19 in comparison to before COVID-19. Similarly, there was a decrease of 0.35 in satisfaction regarding frequency of internal communication in the Public Sector organizations during COVID-19, in comparison to before COVID-19.

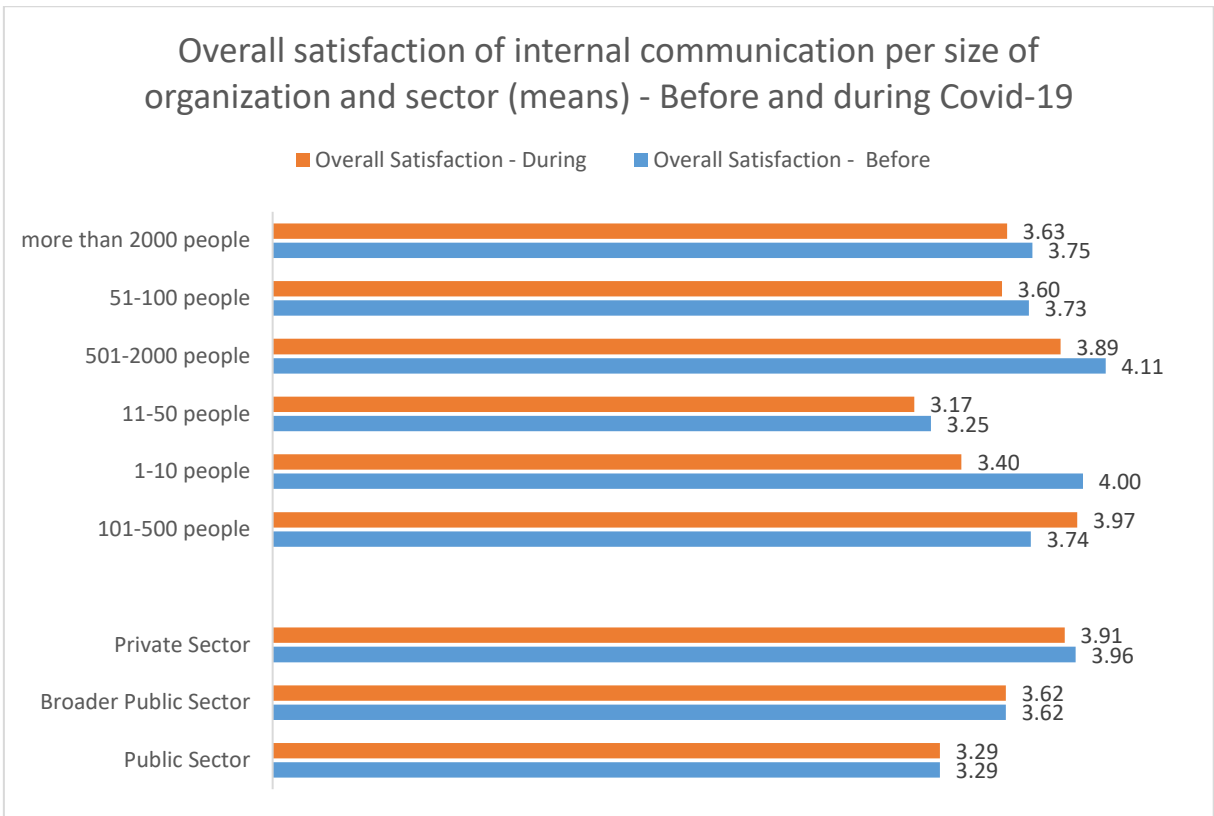


Figure 12: Overall satisfaction of internal communication per size of organization and sector (means) - Before and during Covid-19

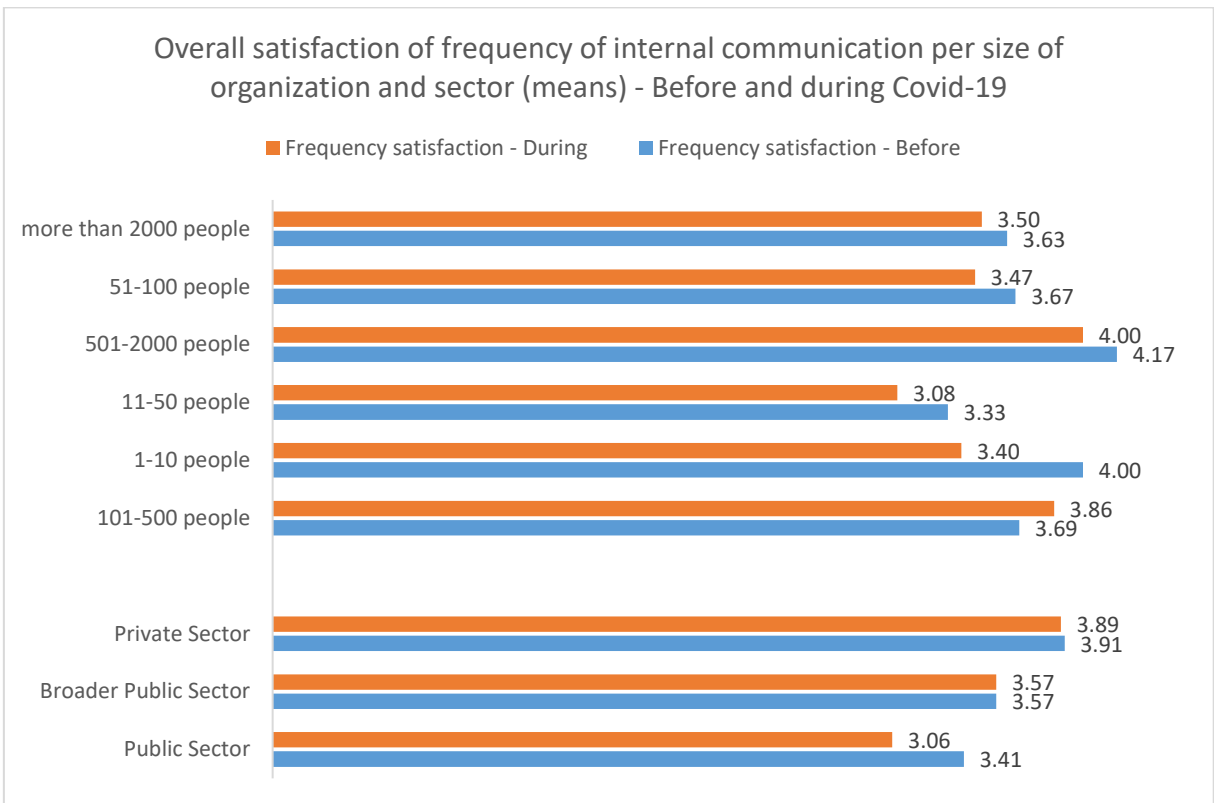


Figure 13: Overall satisfaction of frequency of internal communication per size of organization and sector (means) - Before and during Covid-19

4.2 Channels and sources of internal communication

This subsection illustrates results regarding the sources that participants' use for receiving internal information in their organization as well as the channels used by both organization and participants for formal internal communication for specific tasks.

4.2.1 Sources for receiving internal organizational information

The sources that participants had for receiving information regarding their organization's internal matters did not appear to change in terms of preference ranking. However, as shown in Figure 14 below, the number of selected sources dropped during COVID-19, in comparison to before COVID-19 pandemic. The largest difference between before and after COVID-19 was the use of the organization's intranet as a source, as it dropped from 55.68% (n=49) to 36.36% (n=32) respectively. The second largest difference was coworkers as a source of information before (86.36%, n=76) and during (72.73%, n=64) COVID-19 pandemic.

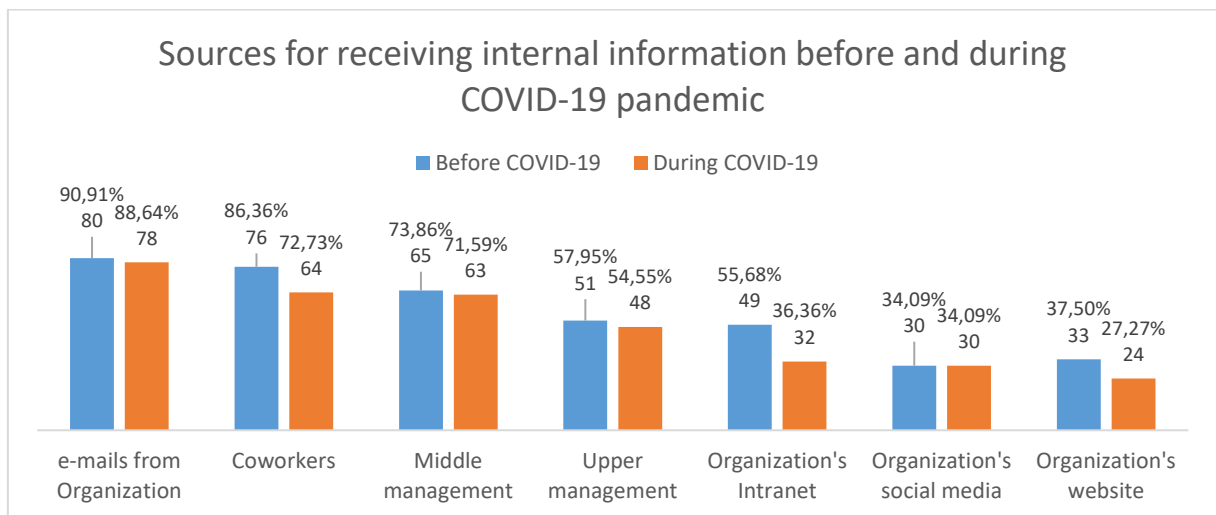


Figure 14: Sources for receiving internal information before and during COVID-19 pandemic

E-mails sent by organization's departments were the source that most of the participants selected before (90.91%, n=80) and during (88.36%, n=76) COVID-19 pandemic and organization's social media (34.09%, n=30 both before and during COVID-19) and organization's website (37.50%, n=33 before and 27.27%, n=24 during COVID-19) were the least selected sources for receiving internal information regarding the organization's matters.

4.2.2 Channels of internal communication in organization

Participants were asked to select from a list of 9 channels of internal communication to indicate the channels that their organization used before (Part B of questionnaire) and after

COVID-19 (Part C of questionnaire) and their responses are presented in Figure 16 in the following pages. It appears that before COVID-19 pandemic, e-mail was the most selected channel (88.64%, n=78), followed by face-to-face meetings (81.82%, n=72), telephone (61.36%, n=54), print media (37.50%, n=33), online meetings (36.36%, n=32), intranet (32.95%, n=29), messages (23.86%, n=21), productivity suites (22.73%, n=20) and social media (14.77%, n=13). During COVID-19 pandemic, e-mail remained the most selected channel (87.50%, n=77). Online meetings were the second most selected channel during COVID-19 (77.27%, n=68), followed by telephone (53.41%, n=47), messages (44.32%, n=39), intranet (n=36.36%, n=32), productivity suites (32.95%, n=29) and social media (20.45%, n=18). Face-to-face meetings (5.68%, n=5) and print media (1.14%, n=1) were two least selected channels, with their use decreasing dramatically during COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of the channels that were mostly used for certain internal communication activities, by organizations and by participants, their responses are illustrated in Figures Figure 17- Figure 20 in the pages that follow. Before COVID-19 pandemic, as shown in Figure 17, e-mail was the channel that was mostly used by organizations in order to share information regarding the organization (i.e. vision, goals etc.) (n=56) and also for sharing information related to working conditions (i.e. working hours, employee rights and obligations, staff movement etc.) (n=63). Furthermore, face-to-face meetings was the channel mostly used by organizations for discussing problems and/or work issues with staff (n=74) and for coordinating daily matters of the department (n=66), before COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, during COVID-19 there are some changes observed. As shown in Figure 18, e-mail remained the mostly used channel for sharing information regarding the organization (i.e. vision, goals etc.) (n=55) and for sharing information related to working conditions (i.e. working hours, employee rights and obligations, staff movement etc.) (n=71). However, online meetings was the channel mostly used by organizations for discussing problems and/or work issues with staff (n=50) and for coordinating daily matters of the department (n=40), instead of face-to-face meetings, during COVID-19 pandemic.

Before COVID-19 pandemic, as shown in Figure 19, e-mail was the channel that was mostly used by participants in order to obtain information regarding the organization (i.e. vision, goals etc.) (n=52) and also for obtaining information related to working conditions (i.e. working hours, employee rights and obligations, staff movement etc.) (n=52). Furthermore, face-to-face meetings was the channel mostly used by participants for communicating with

same department colleagues (n=60) and with supervisors (n=44) for work issues. Face-to-face meetings was also the channel mostly used by participants for collaborating with colleagues to complete a team project (n=57) before COVID-19 pandemic. However, telephone was the mostly used channel for communicating with colleagues from other departments for work issues (n=39).

Similarly to the channels used by organization, it appears that there are changes observed for the channels used by participants, during COVID-19. As shown in Figure 20, e-mail remained the mostly used channel for sharing information regarding the organization (i.e. vision, goals etc.) (n=55) and for sharing information related to working conditions (i.e. working hours, employee rights and obligations, staff movement etc.) (n=71), but during COVID-19 e-mail was also used by participants for communicating with supervisors for work issues (n=40), followed by online meetings (n=30). Furthermore, the channel mostly used by participants for communicating with same department colleagues for work issues was telephone (n=45), followed by online meetings (n=28) whereas e-mail was the channel mostly used for communicating with colleagues from other departments for work issues (n=30), followed by telephone (n=30). Lastly, it appears that, during COVID-19 pandemic, the mostly used channel for collaborating with colleagues in order to complete a team project was online meetings (n=56), instead of face-to-face meetings that were used before COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, regarding the use of productivity suites before and during COVID-19, it appears that, overall, participants' frequency of use of productivity suites increased during COVID-19 pandemic (mean = 3.69, std = 0.14) in comparison to before COVID-19 pandemic (mean = 3.06, std = 0.15). Specifically, as shown in Figure 15 below, 38.71% (n=36) stated that they were using productivity suites very often during COVID-19 and only 11.83% (n=11) stated that they had not used them at all.

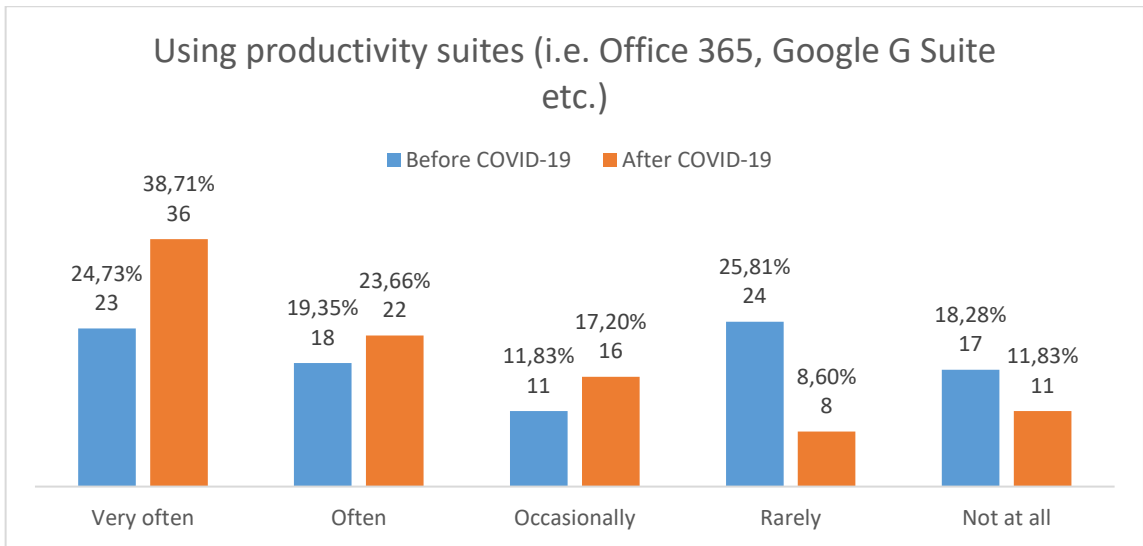


Figure 15: Using productivity suites (i.e. Office 365, Google G Suite etc.) before and during COVID-19

Comparison of internal communication channels used by organization before and after COVID-19

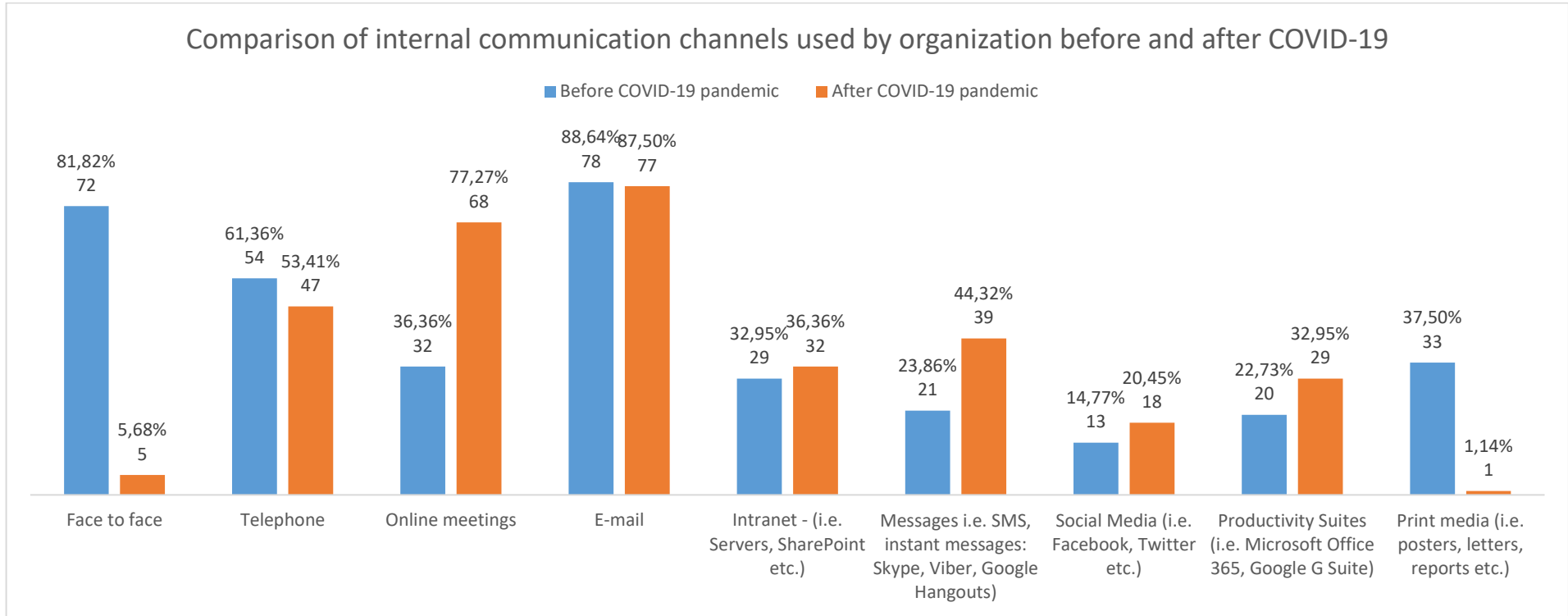
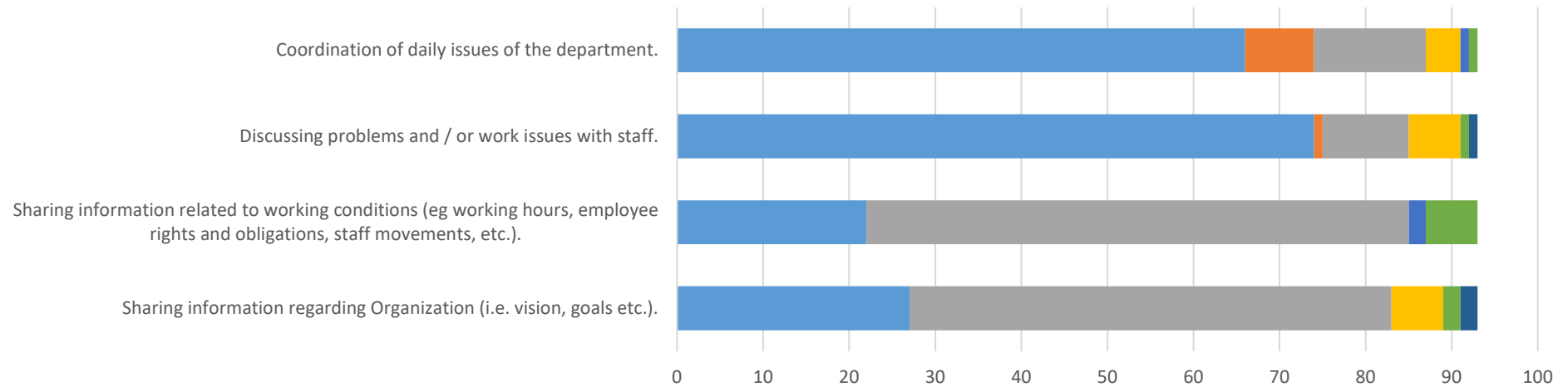


Figure 16: Comparison of internal communication channels used by organizations before and after COVID-19 pandemic

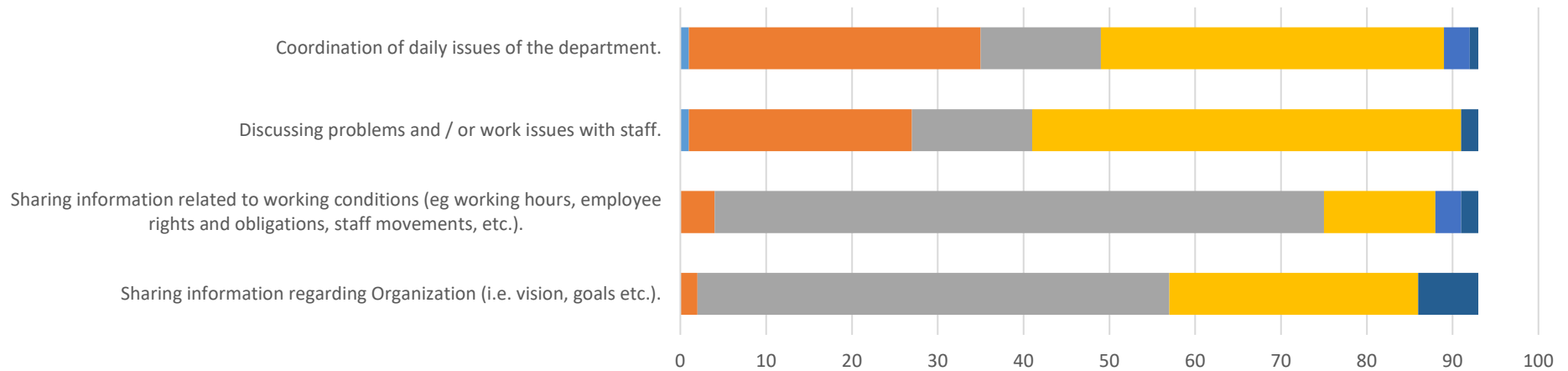
Channels used by organization for internal communication before COVID-19 pandemic



	Sharing information regarding Organization (i.e. vision, goals etc.).	Sharing information related to working conditions (eg working hours, employee rights and obligations, staff movements, etc.).	Discussing problems and / or work issues with staff.	Coordination of daily issues of the department.
■ Face to face meetings	27	22	74	66
■ Telephone	0	0	1	8
■ E-mail	56	63	10	13
■ Online meetings	6	0	6	4
■ Social Media	0	2	0	1
■ Print Media	2	6	1	1
■ None / Not applicable	2	0	1	0

Figure 17: Channels used by organization for internal communication before COVID-19 pandemic

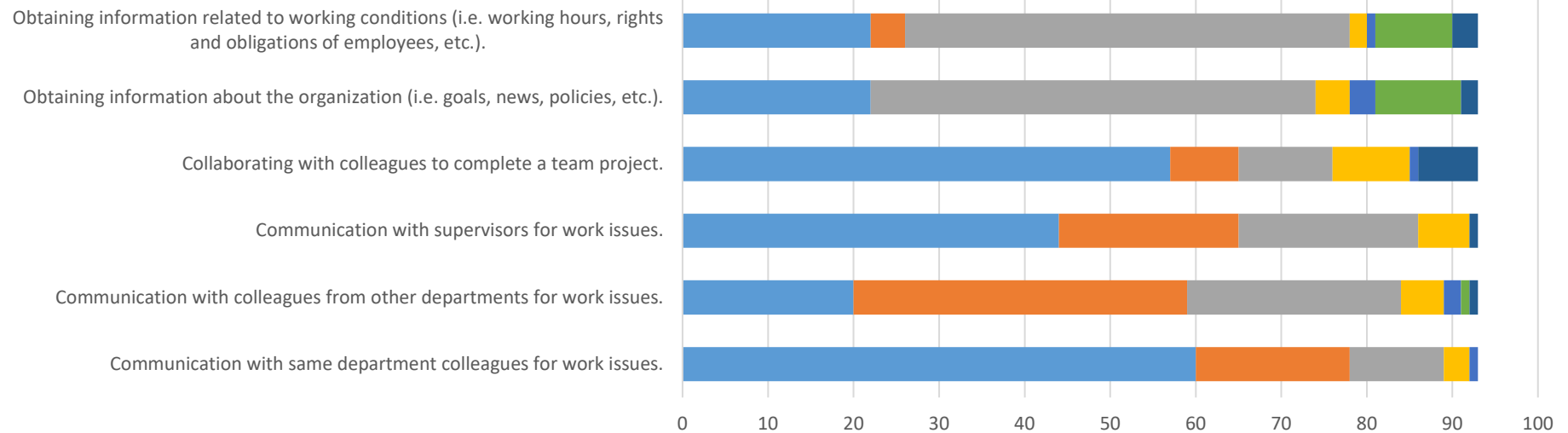
Channels used by organization for internal communication during COVID-19 pandemic



	Sharing information regarding Organization (i.e. vision, goals etc.).	Sharing information related to working conditions (eg working hours, employee rights and obligations, staff movements, etc.).	Discussing problems and / or work issues with staff.	Coordination of daily issues of the department.
■ Face to face meetings	0	0	1	1
■ Telephone	2	4	26	34
■ E-mail	55	71	14	14
■ Online meetings	29	13	50	40
■ Social Media	0	3	0	3
■ Print Media	0	0	0	0
■ None / Not applicable	7	2	2	1

Figure 18: Channels used by organization for internal communication during COVID-19 pandemic

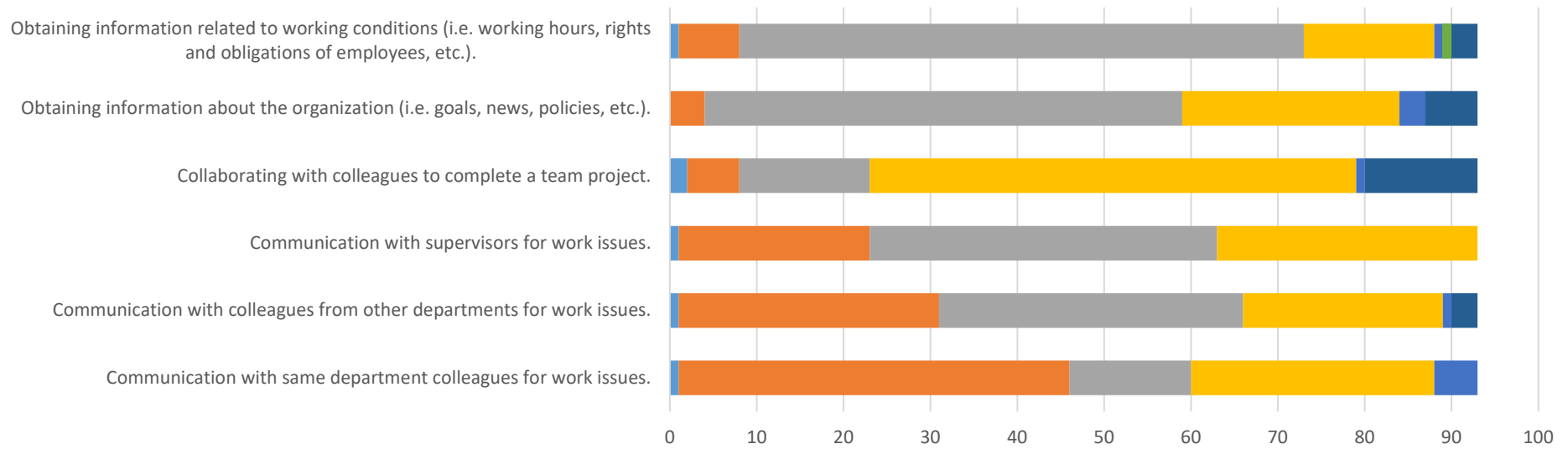
Channels used by participants for internal communication before COVID-19 pandemic



	Communication with same department colleagues for work issues.	Communication with colleagues from other departments for work issues.	Communication with supervisors for work issues.	Collaborating with colleagues to complete a team project.	Obtaining information about the organization (i.e. goals, news, policies, etc.).	Obtaining information related to working conditions (i.e. working hours, rights and obligations of employees, etc.).
■ Face to face meetings	60	20	44	57	22	22
■ Telephone	18	39	21	8	0	4
■ E-mail	11	25	21	11	52	52
■ Online meetings	3	5	6	9	4	2
■ Social Media	1	2	0	1	3	1
■ Print Media	0	1	0	0	10	9
■ None / Not applicable	0	1	1	7	2	3

Figure 19: Channels used by participants for internal communication during COVID-19 pandemic

Channels used by participants for internal communication during COVID-19 pandemic



	Communication with same department colleagues for work issues.	Communication with colleagues from other departments for work issues.	Communication with supervisors for work issues.	Collaborating with colleagues to complete a team project.	Obtaining information about the organization (i.e. goals, news, policies, etc.).	Obtaining information related to working conditions (i.e. working hours, rights and obligations of employees, etc.).
■ Face to face meetings	1	1	1	2	0	1
■ Telephone	45	30	22	6	4	7
■ E-mail	14	35	40	15	55	65
■ Online meetings	28	23	30	56	25	15
■ Social Media	5	1	0	1	3	1
■ Print Media	0	0	0	0	0	1
■ None / Not applicable	0	3	0	13	6	3

Figure 20: Channels used by participants for internal communication during COVID-19 pandemic

When participants were asked to rank their preferred channels for future internal communication in their organization, face-to-face meetings (17.26%¹) was their most preferred channel, followed by e-mail, online meetings, telephone, messages, social media, productivity suites, print media and lastly, intranet (4.77%), as illustrated in Figure 21 below.

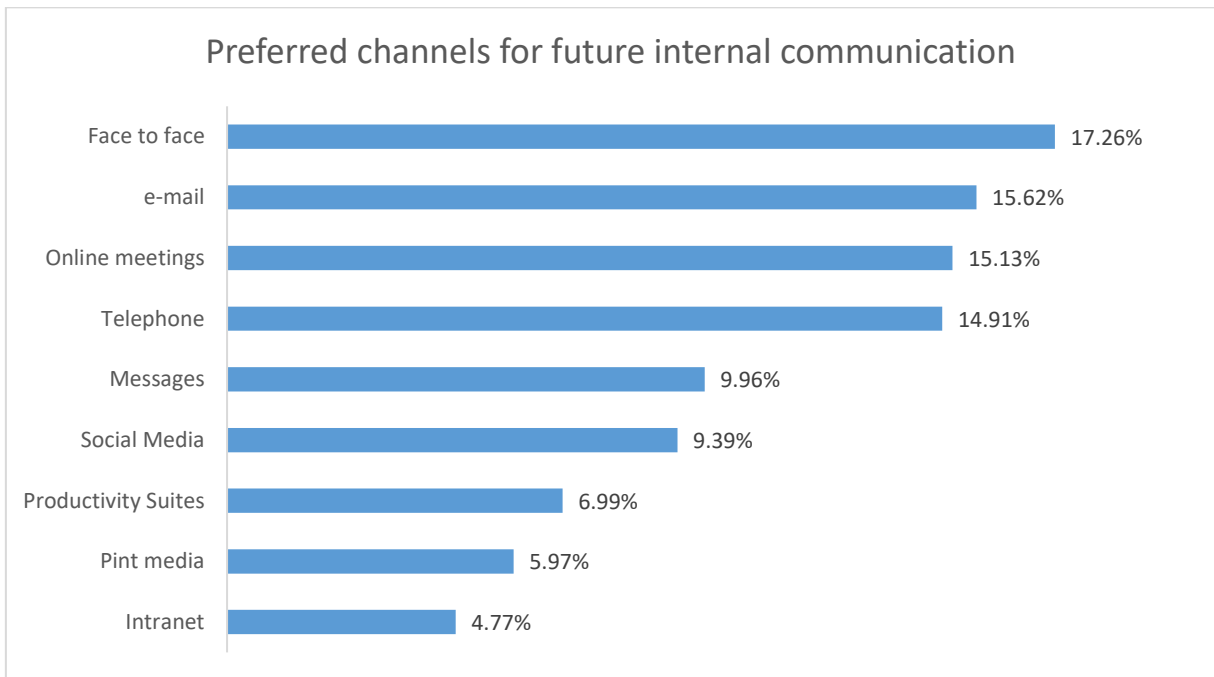


Figure 21: Preferred channels for future internal communication

4.3 Frequency of internal communication with others

Participants were asked to indicate the frequency of upward, downward, diagonal, and horizontal communication with others in their organization, before COVID-19 (Part B of questionnaire) and during COVID-19 (Part C of questionnaire). Overall, participants' communication with colleagues from the same department, with colleagues from other departments, with people in higher hierarchical level, with people in lower hierarchical level and with the organization's leader decreased during COVID-19 in comparison to before COVID-19, as illustrated in Figure 22 below. Nonetheless, it appears that participants communicated most frequently with colleagues in the same department both before (mean =

¹ The percentages were calculated with the following equation: (number of times ranked 1st * 9 points)+(number of times ranked 2nd * 8 points)+ ... + (number of times ranked 8th * 2 points) + (number of times ranked 9th * 1 point)

5.91, on a scale where 1=never and 6=everyday) and during (mean = 5.59) COVID-19. In fact, the vast majority of participants indicated that they communicated with colleagues of the same department everyday, both before (93.55%, n=87) and during (73.12%, n=68) COVID-19, as shown in Figure 23 and Figure 24 respectively. The second most frequent level of communication was with lower hierarchical level employees both before (mean = 5.01) and during (mean = 4.34) COVID-19. Furthermore, the greatest decrease is observed in the communication with people in lower hierarchical level (decrease of 0.67) and with colleagues from other departments (decrease of 0.57). The smallest decrease is observed in the communication with the organization's leader (decrease of 0.22) and with people in higher hierarchical levels (decrease of 0.24).

On the other hand, it appears that the least frequent communication was observed with the organization's leaders both before (2.96) and during (2.74) COVID-19. It appears that there is a standard deviation of responses up to 1.72 before COVID-19, indicating that participants had different levels of frequency in communicating with the organization's leader. As shown in Figure 23 and Figure 24, 24.73% (n=23) of participants stated that they had never communicated with the organization's leader before COVID-19 and 31.18% (n=29) had never communicated with the leader during COVID-19. Going further in the data by analyzing the means per gender, position, years of employment, organization's size and sector, it appears that people working in smaller sized organizations had more opportunities for communicating with the organization's leader both before and during COVID-19. For example, participants who work in a 1-10 people organization indicated high frequency of communication with leader both before (mean = 5.20, where 1=never ... 6= everyday) and during (mean =4.60) COVID-19, as shown in Table 4 below. Similarly, participants who work in a 11-50 people organization indicated frequency of communication with their leader at 3.75 and 3.58 respectively. As the size of the organization increases there appear to be similar frequency of communication with the leader, ranging for the remaining sizes, from 2.44-2.89 before COVID-19 and 2.22-2.63 during COVID-19.

Communication frequency with others in organization before and during COVID-19 (means and standard deviations)

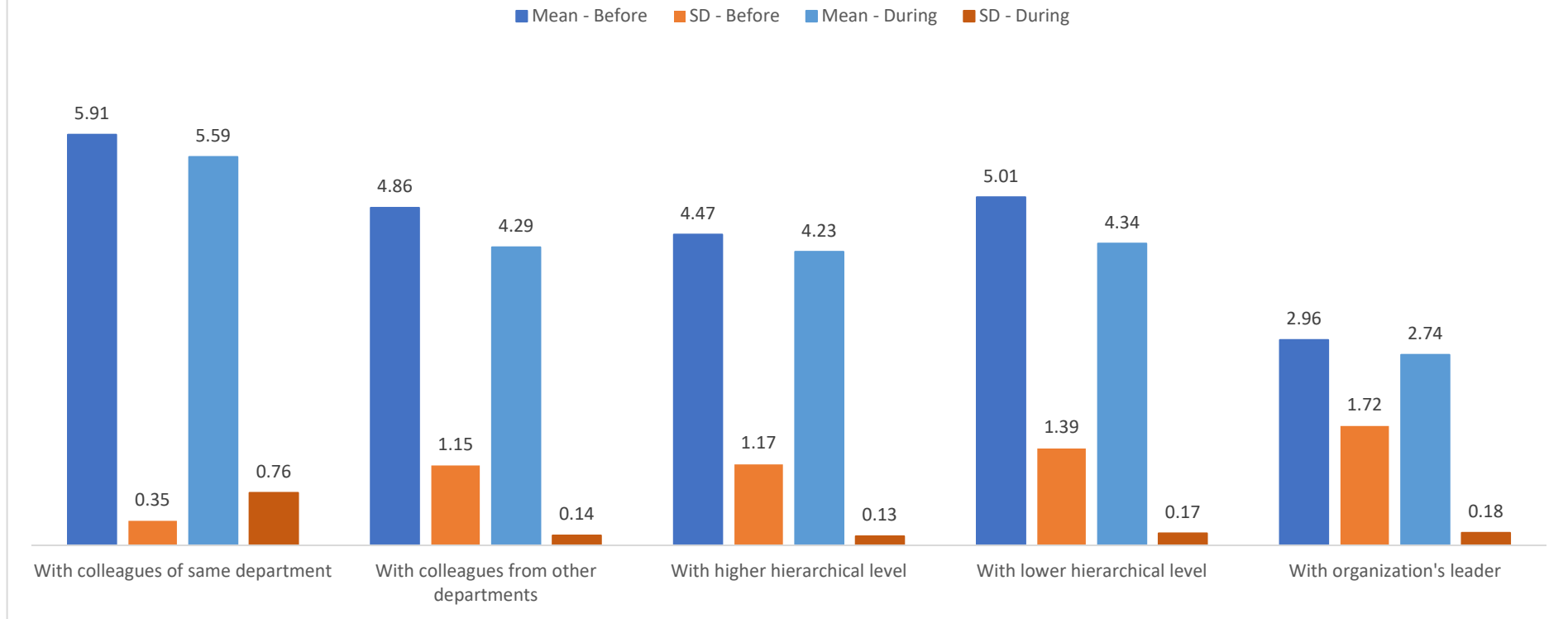


Figure 22: Communication frequency with others in organization before and during COVID-19 (min 1 = never ... max 6 = everyday)

Categories	With colleagues of same department			With colleagues from other departments			With higher hierarchical level			With lower hierarchical level			With organization's leader		
	Before	During	Difference	Before	During	Difference	Before	During	Difference	Before	During	Difference	Before	During	Difference
Male	5.90	5.54	0.36	4.74	4.26	0.49	4.41	4.13	0.28	5.26	4.74	0.51	2.72	2.46	0.26
Female	5.93	5.63	0.30	4.94	4.31	0.63	4.52	4.30	0.22	4.83	4.06	0.78	3.13	2.94	0.19
Upper Management	6.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	6.00	0.00	5.25	5.25	0.00	6.00	5.75	0.25	2.50	2.00	0.50
Middle Management	5.96	5.71	0.25	5.04	4.75	0.29	4.89	4.61	0.29	5.54	5.14	0.39	3.75	3.39	0.36
Employee	5.89	5.51	0.38	4.70	3.97	0.74	4.23	3.98	0.25	4.70	3.89	0.82	2.62	2.49	0.13
11-15 years	5.86	5.68	0.18	4.73	4.36	0.36	4.36	4.41	-0.05	4.82	4.41	0.41	3.36	3.23	0.14
1-2 years	5.82	5.47	0.35	3.94	3.35	0.59	4.71	4.00	0.71	4.76	4.06	0.71	3.29	2.88	0.41
3-5 years	5.91	5.64	0.27	5.09	4.68	0.41	4.64	4.27	0.36	5.14	4.50	0.64	2.91	2.68	0.23
6-10 years	6.00	5.52	0.48	5.24	4.52	0.72	4.20	4.20	0.00	5.00	4.20	0.80	2.40	2.36	0.04
more than 16 years	6.00	5.71	0.29	5.43	4.29	1.14	4.71	4.14	0.57	5.86	4.86	1.00	3.00	2.43	0.57
Public Sector	5.82	5.06	0.76	4.29	3.53	0.76	4.24	4.12	0.12	4.47	3.76	0.71	3.24	3.06	0.18
Broader Public Sector	5.90	5.62	0.29	4.62	4.29	0.33	4.19	4.19	0.00	5.14	4.52	0.62	2.90	3.00	-0.10
Private Sector	5.95	5.75	0.20	5.13	4.53	0.60	4.65	4.27	0.38	5.13	4.45	0.67	2.89	2.55	0.35
101-500 people	5.94	5.80	0.14	4.77	4.49	0.29	4.37	4.46	-0.09	5.17	4.49	0.69	2.89	2.60	0.29
1-10 people	5.60	5.40	0.20	4.80	3.60	1.20	5.20	4.00	1.20	4.40	3.40	1.00	5.20	4.60	0.60
11-50 people	5.92	5.42	0.50	4.92	4.00	0.92	4.58	4.25	0.33	4.83	3.92	0.92	3.75	3.58	0.17
501-2000 people	6.00	5.44	0.56	5.00	4.56	0.44	4.89	4.39	0.50	5.67	4.83	0.83	2.44	2.22	0.22
51-100 people	5.93	5.60	0.33	4.87	3.87	1.00	4.20	3.80	0.40	4.53	4.00	0.53	2.47	2.47	0.00
more than 2000 people	5.75	5.38	0.38	4.88	4.50	0.38	3.88	3.75	0.13	4.38	4.50	-0.13	2.75	2.63	0.13

Table 4: Frequency of communication with others analyzed per gender, position, years of employment, organization's size and sector (means and difference in means)

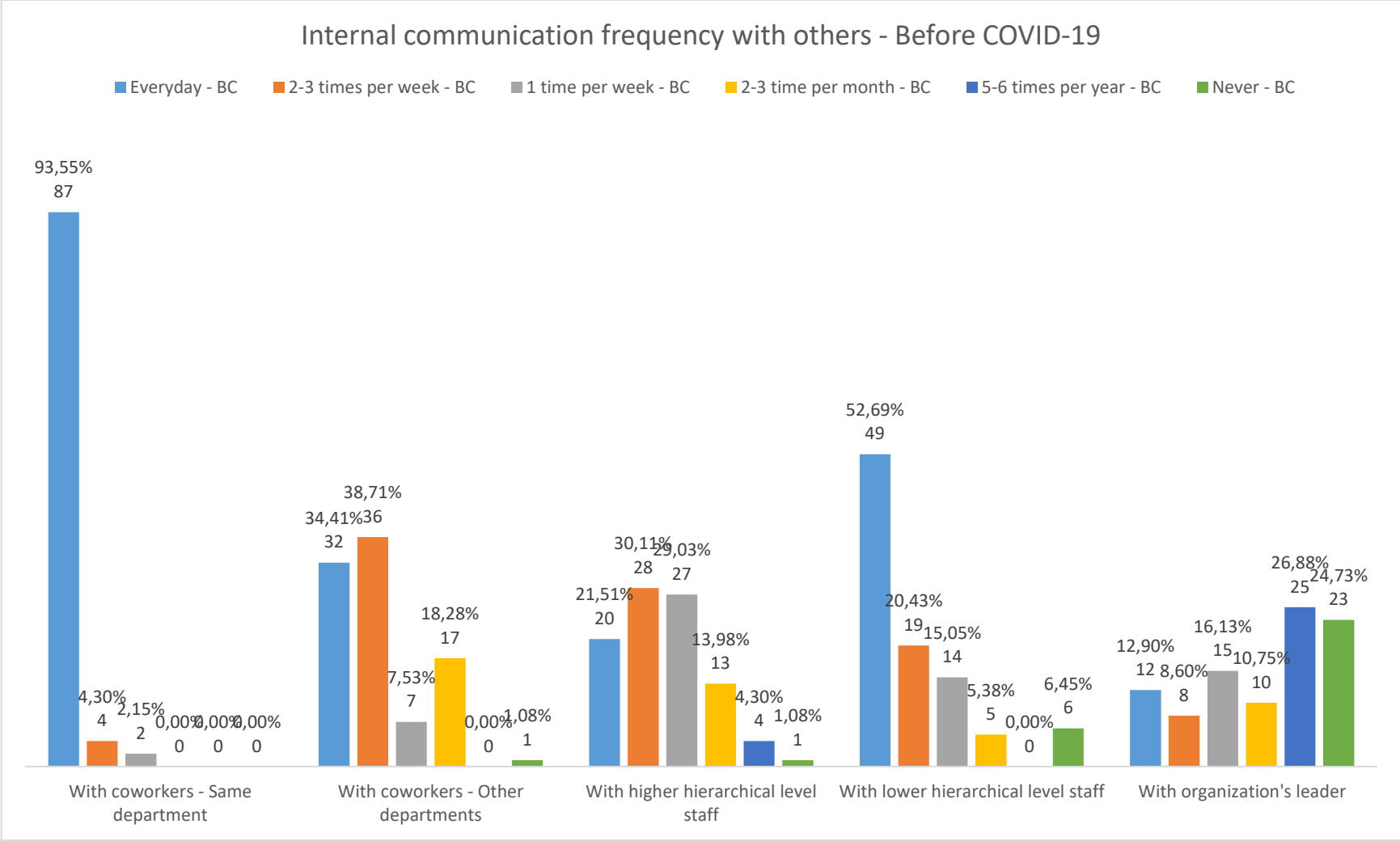


Figure 23: Internal communication frequency with others - Before COVID-19

Internal communication frequency with others - During COVID-19

■ Everyday
 ■ 2-3 times per week
 ■ 1 time per week
 ■ 2-3 time per month
 ■ 5-6 times per year
 ■ Never

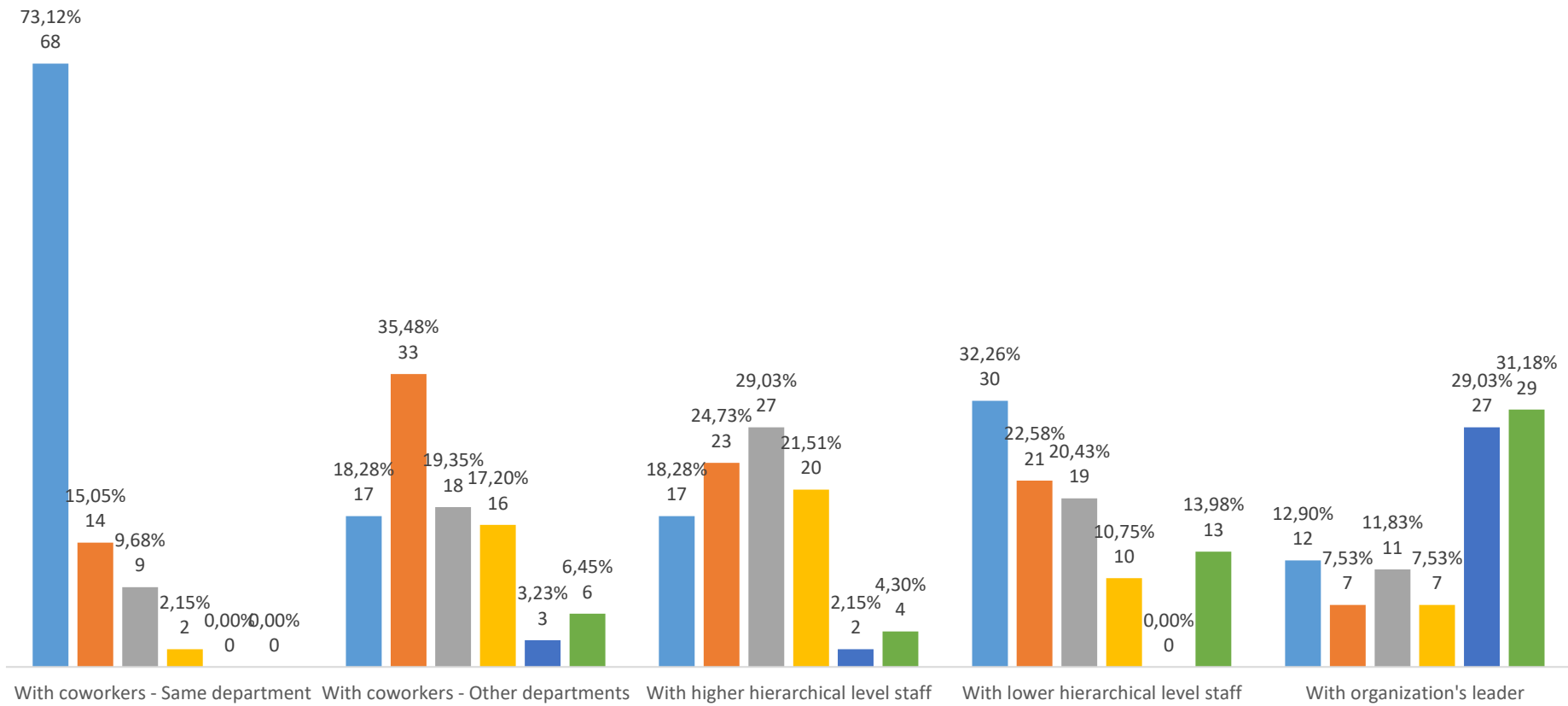


Figure 24: Internal communication frequency with others - During COVID-19

4.4 Remote work / Teleworking during COVID-19

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on a series of statements in Part D of the questionnaire. Figure 25 illustrates the means and standard deviations of their responses, where 1=Completely disagree, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Somewhat agree and 5=Completely agree with the statements. Table 5 and Table 6 that follow, present an account of the means for each statement in respect to participants' gender, job position, years of employment, size and sector of organization and differences of more than 1 unit when means of the category groups are compared are highlighted with "bold".

It appears that participants highly agree that they had received adequate information by their organization regarding Health and Safety (mean=4.37, st.dev.=0.95) and their work conditions (mean=4.25, st.dev.=1.01) during COVID-19. However, as shown in Table 5, there appear to be some differences in respect to the information regarding Health and Safety received by participants working in organizations with 501-2000 people (mean=4.72) in comparison to those working in organizations with 1-10 people (mean=3.60).

Moreover, as presented in Figure 25, they also somewhat agreed that they had received adequate information regarding changes in their duties (mean=4.08, st.dev.=1.06) and that they had adequate communication with their supervisors about work matters (mean=4.15, st.dev.=0.94) during COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it appears that participants somewhat agree that they had received appropriate equipment by their employer for telework (mean=3.84, st.dev.=1.43) and proper training (mean=3.76, st.dev.=1.15) during COVID-19. Nonetheless, as shown in Table 5, there are some differences observed when it comes to receiving appropriate equipment for telework during COVID-19 pandemic, for participants who work in the public sector (mean=2.82), in comparison to those who work in the broader public sector (mean=4.14) and private sector (4.04). In addition, it appears that there are differences between participants who had more than 16 years of employment in the organization (mean=2.57) and any other group of years of employment (range of means: 3.53-4.18). As far as being properly trained, it appears that there are differences in the private sector (mean=4.00) in comparison to the public sector (mean=2.94).

Telework / Remote work statements - Level of agreement (average means and standard deviation)

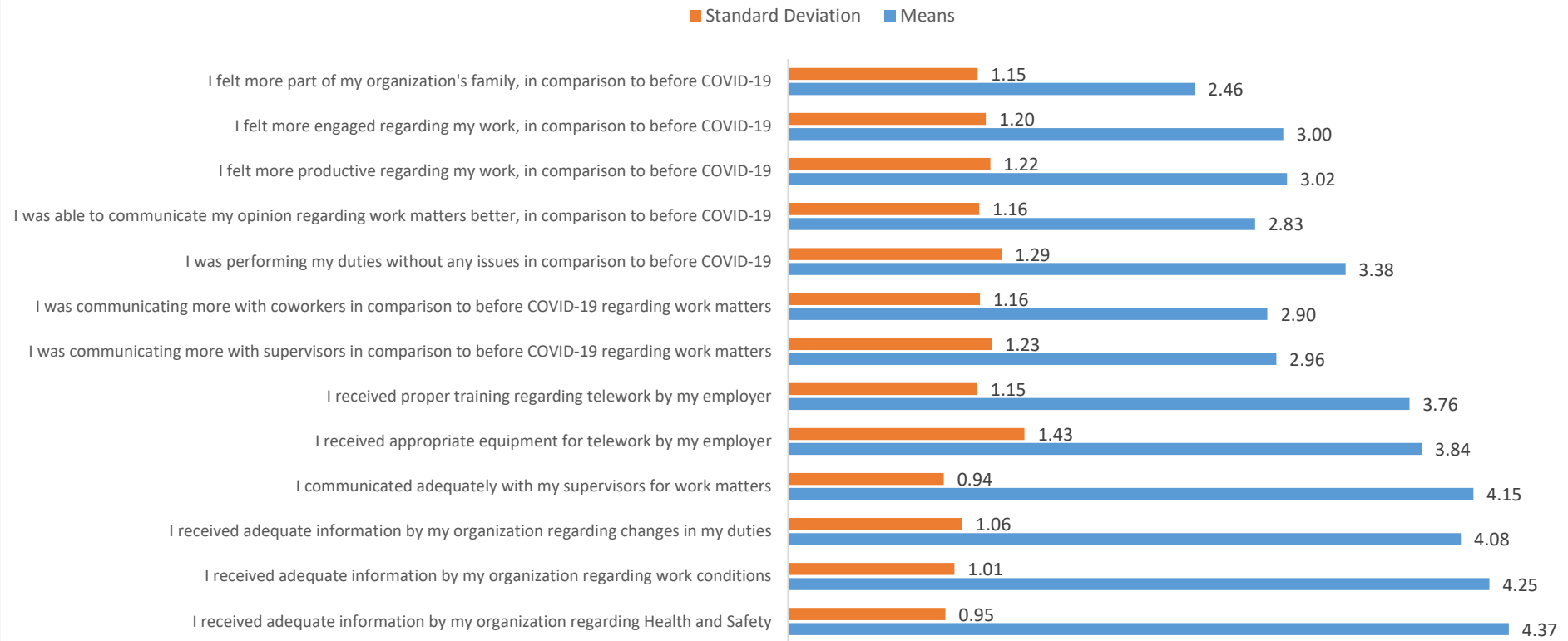


Figure 25: Telework / Remote work statements - Level of agreement (average means and standard deviation)

Category	I received adequate information by my organization regarding Health and Safety	I received adequate information by my organization regarding work conditions	I received adequate information by my organization regarding changes in my duties	I communicated adequately with my supervisors for work matters	I received appropriate equipment for telework by my employer	I received proper training regarding telework by my employer
Male	4.41	4.31	4.26	4.13	4.00	3.85
Female	4.33	4.20	3.94	4.19	3.72	3.70
Upper Management	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.75	4.75	4.75
Middle Management	4.46	4.32	4.36	4.50	4.00	3.93
Employee	4.28	4.16	3.92	3.97	3.70	3.62
1-2 years	3.76	3.76	3.47	3.94	3.53	3.18
3-5 years	4.55	4.50	4.09	4.29	4.18	4.09
6-10 years	4.48	4.48	4.44	4.16	3.96	3.80
11-15 years	4.45	4.23	4.23	4.14	4.00	4.05
more than 16 years	4.57	3.86	3.71	4.43	2.57	3.14
Public Sector	4.06	3.71	3.59	3.88	2.82	2.94
Broader Public Sector	4.67	4.24	3.95	4.29	4.14	3.81
Private Sector	4.35	4.42	4.27	4.20	4.04	4.00
1-10 people	3.60	4.20	3.60	3.60	3.00	3.00
11-50 people	3.83	3.58	3.92	4.00	2.92	3.33
51-100 people	4.27	4.20	4.00	4.07	3.80	3.67
101-500 people	4.51	4.29	4.06	4.17	4.23	4.00
501-2000 people	4.72	4.72	4.50	4.53	3.94	4.11
more than 2000 people	4.38	4.13	3.88	4.13	3.88	3.25
Teleworking before	4.28	4.36	4.36	4.46	4.28	4.24
No teleworking before	4.40	4.21	3.97	4.06	3.68	3.59

Table 5: Participants' level of agreement in statements regarding teleworking and communication (Part D of questionnaire – I)

Category	I was communicating more with supervisors in comparison to before COVID-19	I was communicating more with coworkers in comparison to before COVID-19 s	I was performing my duties without any issues in comparison to before COVID-19	I was able to communicate my opinion better, in comparison to before COVID-19	I felt more productive regarding my work, in comparison to before COVID-19	I felt more engaged regarding my work, in comparison to before COVID-19	I felt more part of my organization's family, in comparison to before COVID-19
Male	3.03	2.97	3.67	3.05	3.16	3.10	2.56
Female	2.91	2.85	3.17	2.67	2.92	2.92	2.39
Upper Management	3.75	4.25	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.33	2.75
Middle Management	2.89	2.86	3.64	2.82	3.30	3.00	2.43
Employee	2.93	2.84	3.22	2.75	2.90	2.93	2.46
1-2 years	2.65	2.65	2.88	2.59	3.19	2.76	1.94
3-5 years	2.91	3.09	4.05	2.82	3.18	3.05	2.32
6-10 years	3.08	2.92	3.60	3.04	2.92	3.16	2.68
11-15 years	3.27	3.09	2.95	3.05	2.86	2.95	2.77
more than 16 years	2.43	2.29	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.43
Public Sector	3.24	3.24	2.75	2.71	2.94	2.88	2.24
Broader Public Sector	2.81	2.71	3.52	2.67	3.24	3.29	2.67
Private Sector	2.93	2.87	3.51	2.93	2.96	2.93	2.45
1-10 people	3.00	3.00	3.80	2.60	2.80	3.00	2.60
11-50 people	3.08	2.92	2.91	2.92	3.09	3.25	2.33
51-100 people	2.53	2.33	3.07	2.40	2.93	2.93	2.47
101-500 people	2.91	2.89	3.49	2.80	2.85	2.83	2.17
501-2000 people	3.06	3.06	3.33	2.94	2.94	2.88	2.78
more than 2000 people	3.50	3.63	4.00	3.50	4.13	3.75	3.13
Teleworking before	3.24	3.16	4.24	3.16	3.63	3.52	2.72
No teleworking before	2.85	2.81	3.06	2.71	2.81	2.81	2.37

Table 6: Participants' level of agreement in statements regarding teleworking and communication (Part D of questionnaire – II)

In respect to whether they could perform their duties without issues, in comparison to before COVID-19 pandemic, as illustrated in Figure 25, participants appear to slightly agree (mean=3.38, st.dev.=1.29). However, as shown in Table 6, there are differences reported when comparing the means of responses of those who worked in organizations where teleworking was an option before COVID-19 (mean=4.24) in comparison to those who did not have that option (mean=3.06). Differences are also reported in respect to the organization's size as participants who work in 501-2000 people (mean=4.00) appeared to agree more that they were able to perform without issues in comparison to those who work in organizations of 11-50 people (mean=2.91). Additionally, there were differences in terms of years of employment, as those who worked 3-5 years appear to agree more that they worked without issues (mean=4.05) than other category groups of years of employment (range of means: 2.88-3.00).

Furthermore, as presented in Figure 25, participants appear to neither agree nor disagree that they were communicating more with supervisors (mean=2.96, st.dev.=1.23) regarding work matters in comparison to before COVID-19 and there was no difference between groups as shown in Table 6. However, even though they also appear to neither agree nor disagree that they were communicating more with coworkers (mean=2.90, st.dev.=1.16, see Figure 25) regarding work matters in comparison to before COVID-19, it appears that upper management indicated that they somewhat agree (mean=4.25), in comparison to middle management (mean=2.86) and employees (mean=2.84) who lay more on neither agree nor disagree, as shown in Table 6.

Moreover, participants appear to somewhat disagree that they felt more part of the organization's family (mean=2.46, st.dev.=1.15, Figure 25) during COVID-19, in comparison to before the pandemic and there appear to be no differences between category groups as shown in Table 6. Participants also neither agree nor disagree that they felt more engaged (mean=3.00, st.dev.=1.20) in comparison to before COVID-19 (Figure 25), but it appears that upper management indicated that they agreed more with this statement (mean=4.33) in comparison to middle management (mean=3.00) and employees (mean=2.93). In respect to feeling more productive in comparison to before the pandemic, participants appear to neither agree nor disagree (mean=3.02, st.dev.=1.22, Figure 25). Nonetheless there are differences between groups of organization's size, where participants working in organizations with more

than 2000 people, appear to agree more (mean=4.14) in comparison to any other group of this category (range of means: 2.80-3.09).

Furthermore, it appears that participants neither agree nor disagree that they could communicate their opinion better regarding work matters (mean=2.83, st.dev.=1.16), in comparison to before the pandemic (Figure 25). However, there are differences between years of employment, organization’s size and job position as shown in Table 6. Specifically, upper management somewhat agree (mean=4.00) that they could communicate their opinion better whereas middle management (mean=2.82) and employees (mean=2.75) neither agreed nor disagreed. Participants with more than 16 years of employment in the organization somewhat disagreed with this statement (mean=2.00) whereas participants with 6-10 years (mean=3.04) and 11-15 years (mean=3.05) appeared to neither agree nor disagree. Lastly, participants employed in organizations with more than 2000 people leaned between neither agree nor disagree and somewhat agree (mean=3.50) whereas those who work in organizations with 51-100 people leaned towards somewhat disagree (mean=2.40) with this statement.

When participants were asked to indicate their preference for teleworking in the future (Part E of the questionnaire), it appears that the majority prefer to have the option for teleworking but they prefer working at workplace rather than teleworking as shown in Figure 26 below. Specifically, 30.85% (n=29) of participants prefer working most days at their workplace or working some days via teleworking and some days at their workplace, 19.15% (n=18) prefer working all days at their workplace, 13.83% (n=13) prefer working most days via teleworking and only 5.32% (n=5) prefer working fully via teleworking in the future.

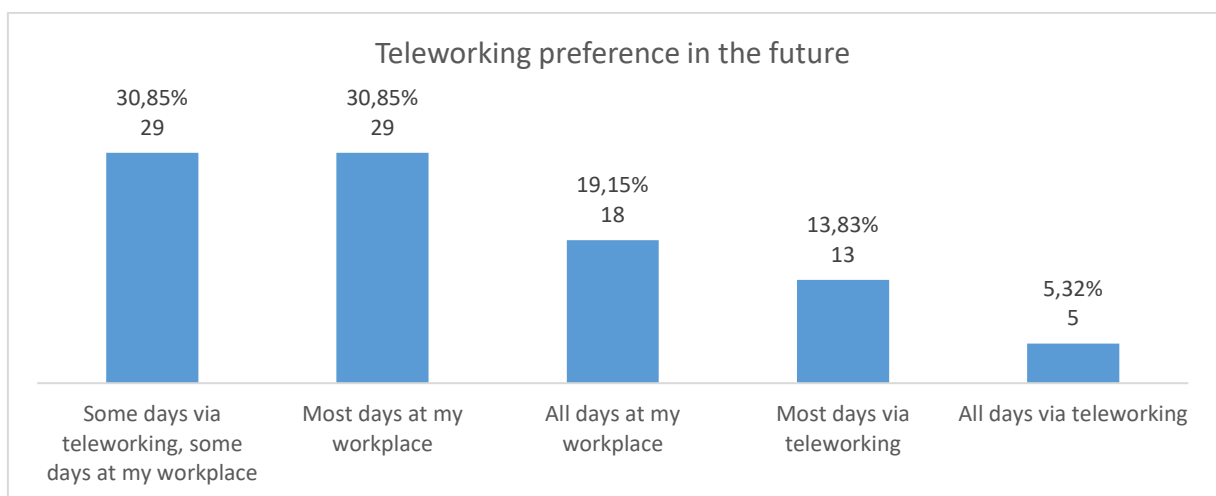


Figure 26: Teleworking preference in the future

Chapter

5. Discussion

This section discusses the results of this study, which were presented in Chapter 4, in respect to the literature which was reviewed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. The discussion that follows is organized around the three research questions of this study; Effective internal communication before and during COVID-19 in Cyprus, Channels of internal communication before and during COVID-19 in Cyprus and Remote work / telework and communication in Cyprus.

5.1 Effective internal communication before and during COVID-19 in Cyprus

The results of this study indicate that employees in Cyprus were overall satisfied with the internal communication and its frequency in their organizations both before and during COVID-19 (see Section 4.1) and prior research argues that high level of satisfaction in respect to internal communication is positively related to employee engagement, overall job satisfaction and retention (Tkalac Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020; Neill, Men, & Yue, 2020; Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). Nonetheless, it appears that employees who work in small-sized organizations (1-10 people) in Cyprus, were more satisfied with the internal communication and its frequency in their organization before COVID-19 in comparison to during COVID-19. Additionally, findings of this study show that participants who work in small-sized organizations in Cyprus stated that they had not adequately received information by their organization regarding Health and Safety during COVID-19 pandemic, in comparison to others' responses. Although this study did not seek to explain why differences amongst groups appeared, perhaps this might have affected their overall satisfaction, because a disruption in sharing information regarding Health and Safety can, according to Švec & Mura's (2020) study, result in work disruptions and internal communication dissatisfaction. Furthermore, perhaps small-sized organizations could not easily digitalize their internal communication practices in

such a rapid manner, since, as findings of Hola (2012) research reveal, small enterprises (of less than 10 people) do not vastly integrate digital channels for internal communication, mainly due to limited financial resources, with, in fact, less than 20% of such small enterprises appear to be using intranet and internet channels of communication for internal communication.

Moreover, it appears that there was an overall decrease in the frequency of information flow (upward, downward, diagonal and horizontal communication) in organizations in Cyprus (see Section 4.3) both before and during COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, it appears that the vast majority of internal communication in Cyprus took place between coworkers of the same department (on a daily basis) and there was frequent communication (2-3 times per week) between departments and between lower and higher hierarchical level coworkers, both before and during COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it appears that, overall, there was frequent internal communication within organizations in Cyprus, both before and during COVID-19 crisis, with information flowing in various directions and in both upper and lower hierarchical levels. These are important elements of effective internal communication as these are indicators of establishing two-way symmetrical communication, where both employees and managers carry out messages, as argued by several other studies such as Men (2014) and Lee (2018). In addition frequent communication found to play a key role when it come to crisis management (Dwiedienawati, Tjahjana, Faisal, Gandasari, & Bramatoro Abdinagoro, 2021) and as the results of this study revealed, in Cyprus there appears to be frequent internal communication during COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

However, even though there appears to be frequent communication between employees at different hierarchical levels, the least frequent communication took place between employees and the organization's leader, both before and during COVID-19 pandemic. This is similar to the findings of Lee (2018), where communication between CEOs and employees was less frequent and, as the author argued, was preferred to be conducted using less rich communication channels such as e-mails and print media. Nonetheless, in time of crisis, prior studies highlighted the importance for employees to participate in the communication process in a two-way symmetrical manner which includes communicating with the highest levels of hierarchy (Neill, Men, & Yue, 2020; Tkalac Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020). In this study, it appears that employees did communicate effectively with managers, yet not with the organization's leaders in a two-way symmetrical communication manner.

5.2 Channels of internal communication before and during COVID-19 in Cyprus.

The results of this study indicate that there were changes in respect to the channels that organizations in Cyprus used for facilitating internal communication, before and during COVID-19. Specifically, it appears that, before COVID-19, organizations in Cyprus overall used mostly e-mails for internal communication, followed by face-to-face meetings and telephone, whereas during COVID-19 pandemic, e-mails remained the organization's top choice channel of internal communication, followed by online meetings and telephone (see Section 4.2.2). Furthermore, it appears that face-to-face channels of communication were transposed to virtual meetings during COVID-19 pandemic, in Cyprus which is a shift that many other studies have reported in organizations' internal communication channels, during COVID-19, in other contexts (i.e. Bojadjiev & Vaneva, 2021; Sun, Li, Lee, & Tao, 2021).

However, it appears that organizations used e-mails and face-to-face / online meetings channels differently depending on the purpose for communicating via those channels. Specifically, it appears that organizations in Cyprus used e-mails (one to many) mostly for sharing information regarding the organization (i.e. vision and goals) and for sharing information related to working conditions to employees, but when it comes to discussing problems and/or work issues with staff and for coordinating daily matters, the organization used face-to-face meetings mostly. This is similar to the findings of Braun, Hernandez Bark, Kirchner, Stegmann, & van Dick (2019) and of Lee (2018) in which the authors imply that richer communication channels are preferred by employees and managers for dealing with issues and coordinating day-to-day matters and for establishing two-way symmetrical communication, whereas organizations (CEOs) prefer less rich communication channels such as e-mail in sharing general information towards all members of staff, in a downward direction (Lee, 2018).

In respect to the channels of internal communication that participants used before and during COVID-19, it appears that they also mostly used e-mail as the channel for obtaining information regarding their organization and their working conditions both before and during COVID-19. Similarly to other studies (Lee, 2018; Men, 2015), employees in Cyprus also used face-to-face channels for communicating with coworkers of the same department and with supervisors for work issues, as well as for collaborating with colleagues for team projects

before the pandemic. Nonetheless, employees in Cyprus used telephone mostly in order to communicate with colleagues from other departments for work matters before COVID-19.

However, similarly to what they reported in respect to the channels used by their organizations, there were changes in the channels they individually used during COVID-19. Specifically, e-mail remained the top choice for obtaining information regarding the organization and working conditions, but it was also chosen as the channel for communicating with supervisors and with colleagues of other departments for work matters. Participants in this study reported that they mostly used telephone (followed by online meetings) so as to communicate with coworkers of the same department. It appears that, during COVID-19, face-to-face channels shifted to e-mails and telephone mostly rather than online meetings which is not in line with what was found in prior research in other contexts (i.e. Bojadjiev & Vaneva, 2021; Sun, Li, Lee, & Tao, 2021). Perhaps this might be due to the limited access to digital means of communication such as productivity suites that allow for online collaboration, as reported in the recent survey of ICT usage and e-Commerce in enterprises in 2019 and 2020 in Cyprus (CyprusStatisticalService, 2019, 2020). Furthermore, this might also happened due to the lack of ICT and Internet skills of some employees and the fact that for employees in the public sector employers did not adequately provide equipment nor training regarding telework as reported in this study (see Section 3.3.2 for participants' demographics).

In terms of the sources that participants had for receiving information regarding the organization's internal matters there were no changes in respect to participants' preferences for using those sources before and during COVID-19 pandemic. However, organization's intranet was the source that had the largest decrease in use during COVID-19, supporting the previous argument regarding the lack of digital resources for communication and the unpreparedness of organizations to implement immediate digital transformation and sufficient training to employees during COVID-19 pandemic, which is something found in other studies in other contexts as well (Datta & Nwankpa, 2021). In addition, it appears that employees in Cyprus least prefer intranet as a channel for future internal communication.

In terms of the other channels of communication that were surveyed via this study, it appears that organizations in Cyprus did not vastly use intranet, instant messages, social media, and productivity suites as channels of internal communication, before COVID-19. However, during COVID-19, there was an inevitable increase in usage since organizations had to forcefully shift to digital means of communication as found in other studies (Li, Sun, Tao, & Lee, 2021). Print

media on the other hand was a channel of communication that was often used by organizations before COVID-19 and the use of which dropped dramatically during COVID-19, as it was expected, due to the measures imposed by governments.

Despite the fact that e-mail was the channel that was most vastly used by both organizations and employees in Cyprus for internal communication, it appears that face-to-face is the most preferred channel for future internal communication as indicated by participants of this study, followed by e-mail, online meetings and telephone. This echoes findings from prior research where employees appear to prefer richer channels of communication first (Braun, Hernandez Bark, Kirchner, Stegmann, & van Dick, 2019). Nonetheless e-mail is also a preferred channel of communication for employees in Cyprus, even though prior research suggests that it is a channel that is preferred mostly by organizations and CEOs (Lee, 2018).

5.3 Remote work / Telework and communication in Cyprus

Effective internal communication is important when dealing with crisis management (Dwiedienawati, Tjahjana, Faisal, Gandasari, & Bramatoro Abdinagoro, 2021) and for the disruptions caused by COVID-19, it appears that digital transformation and readiness for shifting to teleworking was crucial for the survival of many organizations globally (Trenerry, et al., 2021). The results of this study, as discussed earlier, showed that the internal communication was frequent during teleworking and was conducted via several digital/virtual channels, with information flowing in multiple directions within the organization. Nonetheless, it appears that in Cyprus, the majority of participants somewhat agreed that they were able to perform their duties without issues in comparison to before COVID-19, but did not feel more part of the organization's family during the pandemic, indicating that there were in fact disruptions to their daily work cycle during the pandemic. However, the results of this study show a more neutral position of employees in respect to whether they communicate better with coworkers and supervisors for work matters and to whether they felt more engaged and productive during COVID-19, compared to before COVID-19, indicating that, overall, teleworking did not change the frequency and level of communication, engagement, and productivity during COVID-19. The latter might be because, as argued earlier, a frequent two-way symmetrical internal communication appeared to have taken place in organizations in Cyprus both before and during COVID-19.

However, the further analysis of the data of this study revealed that there were some differences between groups of participants. For example, it appears that upper management in organizations in Cyprus felt that they were able to communicate better with coworkers and supervisors during COVID-19 pandemic and they stated that they felt more productive during that time, whereas most employees' responses indicate a more neutral towards negative appreciation of the situation for their work during that time. Given that the most frequent channel of communication was e-mail, which is a preferred channel of communication of upper management and CEOs according to prior research (Braun, Hernandez Bark, Kirchner, Stegmann, & van Dick, 2019), perhaps this is related to the higher level of productivity feeling stated by the upper management participants of this study.

Furthermore, the majority of participants in this study did not have the option for teleworking in their organization before COVID-19. Nonetheless, almost a quarter of participants did have this option and the analysis of the data revealed that there were differences in the way they experienced teleworking during COVID-19 in comparison to those who did not have the option for teleworking before. For instance, people working in organizations with the option of teleworking before COVID-19 stated that they were able to communicate better with their coworkers and supervisors regarding work issues, that they felt more productive and engaged during COVID-19 teleworking and that they overall were able to perform their duties without issues, in comparison to people working in organizations which had to implement teleworking for the first time. The results of this study are in contrast to the results of the study conducted by Yang, et al. (2021) and Garro-Abarca, Palos-Sanchez & Aguayo-Camacho (2021) who found that even though their organization implemented teleworking before COVID-19, the firm-wide implementation that took place during COVID-19 was not fruitful for employees and their collaboration, as the network was more heavily siloed.

In addition, it appears that the size of the organization and the sector might have affected the overall teleworking implementation in organizations in Cyprus as well. For example, it appears that public sector did not provide employees with equipment and training for teleworking as adequately as the private and broader public sector did, especially to employees of more than 16 years of employment. Furthermore, it appears that employees working in larger sized organizations (501-2000 people and more than 2000 people) were better able to provide employees with adequate information regarding Health and Safety and working conditions during COVID-19, with employees indicating that they could perform their duties without

issues during COVID-19, in comparison to medium and small-sized organizations in Cyprus. This echoes findings of prior research (Goncalves, et al., 2021) in which it was argued that smaller-sized organizations had less resources at hand in order to deal with crisis management of COVID-19 pandemic.

Lastly, even though there is a tendency for some organizations to keep remote work / telework as an option for future working condition (Garro-Abarca, Palos-Sanchez, & Aguayo-Camacho, 2021), it appears that employees in Cyprus' organizations would like, on the one hand, to have the option for teleworking in the future but, on the other hand, they prefer to work in situ most days of the week and only be able to work from home for a few days of the week. This is also supported by the fact that the majority of participants prefer face-to-face channels for internal communication in their organization. Nonetheless, given that participants that had the option for teleworking before COVID-19 – and therefore it is assumed that they were already familiar with this type of work condition – appeared to be able to perform without issues and appeared to overall have a more positive experience of teleworking during COVID-19, perhaps a future study that will investigate even further this area for organizations in Cyprus can shed some light on this matter more effectively.

Chapter

6. Conclusions & Recommendations

The aim of this study was to shed some light on the way internal communication in organizations in Cyprus was affected by COVID-19 pandemic, focusing mainly on providing an account of the frequency and type of internal communication that took place within organizations, as well as the channels that both organizations and employees used for internal communication purposes, before and during COVID-19. In addition, this study aimed to provide an account of employees' future preferences regarding channels of internal communication and teleworking. However, as already mentioned in Chapter 3 (Methodology), explaining why changes occurred between groups and/or providing a detailed and explanatory account of the working conditions and communication during teleworking in Cyprus, were not in the scope of this study.

The key findings of this study are mostly in line with the results of other studies that investigated internal communication and channels used in organizations either before or before and during COVID-19:

- Overall, participants reported high levels of satisfaction in respect to the internal communication in their organization and its frequency both before and during COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, findings of this study reveal that there was information flowing in various directions (upward, downward, diagonal and horizontal communication) within the organization and this flow was frequent both before and during COVID-19, indicating that there were elements to support the presence of two-way symmetrical communication between employees and managers (upper and middle management) in organizations in Cyprus.
- Overall, internal communication frequency inevitably decreased during COVID-19 and various channels of communication were utilized depending on the purpose for communicating and the people involved. Nonetheless, there were no changes reported in terms of preference of sources utilized for receiving information regarding

the organization before and during COVID-19, with e-mail being the most preferred source for this purpose and organization's website being the least preferred source.

- In line to prior research, the most frequent communication conducted by employees in organizations in Cyprus was with coworkers of the same department, both before and during COVID-19 pandemic, even though there were different channels of communication employed depending on the circumstances.
- Nonetheless, similarly to findings of other studies, it appears that in organizations in Cyprus, employees had the least frequent communication with the organization's leaders both before and during COVID-19 pandemic, in comparison to communication with coworkers and managers, where there is evidence to support two-way symmetrical communication.
- Similarly to findings of other studies in other contexts, it appears that, the choice of channels for internal communication in organizations in Cyprus also varied depending on the purpose and the people involved. Specifically, before COVID-19, organizations and employees in Cyprus preferred and used richer channels of internal communication, such as face-to-face meetings, to solve problems and coordinate daily matters, especially between employees and managers but used less rich channels of communication, such as e-mails, in order to share and/or obtain information regarding the organization (vision, goals, policies etc.) and the working conditions.
- During COVID-19, when physical presence was not available in many working contexts and teleworking was implemented, it appears that, similarly to other studies, organizations in Cyprus also shifted towards online meetings and to, a less extent, telephone as the channels of communication for resolving issues and coordinating daily matters, whereas e-mail remained the top choice for general information sharing within the organization. Nonetheless, during COVID-19, employees shifted mainly towards telephone as the channel for communicating with coworkers and e-mails when communicating with supervisors. This was not in line with other studies which found that online meetings were mostly utilized instead of face-to-face meetings during COVID-19. Yet, employees in Cyprus did use mostly online meetings for collaborating with others.
- Similarly to other studies, it appears that in Cyprus, teleworking affected the way information was shared within some organizations, which was subsequently linked to

the overall satisfaction up to a degree. For example, employees who worked in smaller-sized organizations indicated that they had not received adequate information regarding Health and Safety during COVID-19 by their organization and they were also not as satisfied with the overall internal communication and its frequency during COVID-19 when compared to before COVID-19 pandemic. This was in line with prior research which highlighted the importance of Health and Safety information during COVID-19 to the overall internal communication satisfaction.

- Employees who work in large-sized (more than 2000 people) organizations in Cyprus indicated that they felt more productive during COVID-19 than before COVID-19, in comparison to smaller-sized (1-10 people) organizations.
- Employees who worked in the public sector appear to have not received as adequate equipment nor training during COVID-19, as employees who worked in the private sector.
- In contrast to other studies, it appears that teleworking did not change the level of communication between coworkers nor their overall engagement and productivity as most of the employees who participated in this study neither felt more nor less productive and engaged during COVID-19 in comparison to before COVID-19 pandemic, although they did feel less part of the organization's family during teleworking. Nonetheless, it appears that upper management felt more productive during COVID-19 which is something found in other studies.
- In contrast to other studies, employees who worked in organizations in Cyprus that offered the option for teleworking before COVID-19, appeared to, overall, communicate better with coworkers and supervisors, feel more engaged and productive and also be able to perform their duties without issues, during COVID-19, in comparison to employees who worked in organizations that did not have the option for teleworking before.
- In terms of future preference of channels for internal communication, it appears that in organizations in Cyprus, face-to-face is the most preferred channel, followed by e-mail, online meetings and telephone. Intranet is the least preferred channel of internal communication, followed by print media, productivity suites, social media and messages.

- In terms of future preference of teleworking implementation in their organizations, it appears that employees in Cyprus prefer having the option of teleworking but only for some days of the week, as they appear to prefer working most days at their workplace. This is in line with other studies who investigated teleworking and employees' preference in other countries.

Even though the results of this study provide an insight of the way internal communication was realized in organizations in Cyprus, before and after COVID-19 crisis happened, it is acknowledged that this study had several limitations. First and foremost, the results of this study cannot be generalized as there were not stratified in a manner to represent the population. In addition, even though the questionnaire was administered to various individuals, due to time and resource limitations, there were not enough representative responses from all groups of employees, i.e. employees of certain job sectors and, also, there were no responses from organization's leaders at all. Furthermore, the fact that this survey took place in a period when employees had experienced two lockdowns – and therefore – two, perhaps different, teleworking conditions, might have affected the way they responded to the questionnaire, since many months have passed by, and it was not clearly indicated in the questionnaire whether they would base their responses on their experience during the first or the second lockdown. Moreover, even though there were some differences detected in respect to the responses of participants from different groups, the way this study was designed and the fact that the scope of this research did not aim for explanations, there were not enough evidence to support whether these responses were significant and why they were detected. For example, there appear to be differences between different sizes of organizations, however, there is not enough data regarding the organizations to distinguish whether these differences are related to other differences between organization's characteristics.

The findings of this study provide an insight of the internal communication disruptions in organizations in Cyprus, during COVID-19 pandemic, but only for those who participated in this research. More investigation is needed, with a larger and more stratified sample of participants, in order to provide a better account of the situation in Cyprus. In addition, further research of a more qualitative nature is needed, such as via interviews and/or focus groups, in order to collect data that allow for explanations of the reasons behind observed differences in different organizations and individuals. Additionally, perhaps a more thorough investigation

of the internal communication practices of specific type of organizations with different characteristics, such as public-private sector, small-large size, sector of business activity etc., as case studies might reveal more valuable findings that can be incorporated in research related to internal communication and, also, teleworking. Moreover, since digital transformation and the utilization of digital tools for internal communication are, currently, high in the agenda of many organizations, further research is needed, especially in providing guidelines and recommendations for organizations to ensure that internal communication is well facilitated in the organization, even in remote work conditions. Further research should also provide an account of important relevant skills that employees are required to acquire to be ready to adapt to the new conditions, given that there appear to be several organizations that are positively appreciating teleworking as a work condition to implement in the future and employees appear to prefer teleworking incorporation at some level in their organization. Lastly, although findings of this study reveal that there is evidence to support a two-way symmetrical communication within organizations in Cyprus, further research is needed to investigate the reasons behind the limited two-way communication with organization's leaders, which is something important for the success of organizations, as found in literature.

Chapter

7. References

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Chapter

8. Appendix

Below is the questionnaire for collecting data for this study was administered online via Microsoft Forms (<https://forms.office.com/r/SQsuuQc1gg>) in screenshot images of the PDF that was produced by Microsoft Forms.

Εσωτερική επικοινωνία στους οργανισμούς της Κύπρου και COVID-19

Το παρόν ερωτηματολόγιο αναπτύχθηκε για τις ανάγκες της διατριβής μου στο μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα MBA του Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου κι έχει σκοπό να συλλέξει δεδομένα για να διερευνηθεί ο τρόπος με τον οποίο επηρεάστηκε η εσωτερική επικοινωνία των οργανισμών της Κύπρου κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας του COVID-19 και συγκεκριμένα κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας. Συνεπώς, εάν δεν έχετε εργαστεί εξ αποστάσεως κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας παρακαλώ μην απαντήσετε αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο.

Το ερωτηματολόγιο είναι ανώνυμο και έχει εκτιμώμενη διάρκεια συμπλήρωσης τα 10-15 λεπτά. Παραμένω στη διάθεσή σας για οποιασδήποτε διευκρινίσεις.

Ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων,
Γιάννης Χατζηχαράλαμπος - ioannis.hadjicharalambous@st.ouc.ac.cy

* Required

Μέρος Α. Δημογραφικά στοιχεία

1. Επιλέξτε το φύλο σας: *

- Άντρας
 - Γυναίκα
 - Προτιμώ να μην αναφέρω
 -
- Other

2. Επιλέξτε τον τύπο απασχόλησης του οργανισμού που εργάζεστε: *

- Δημόσιος τομέας
- Ημιδημόσιος - Ευρύτερος δημόσιος τομέας
- Ιδιωτικός Τομέας

3. Παρακαλώ επιλέξτε τον τομέα δραστηριοτήτων του οργανισμού που εργάζεστε: *

- Βιομηχανία
- Κατασκευές
- Υγεία
- Υπηρεσίες
- Εστίαση
- Τουρισμός
- Εμπόριο
- Ενέργεια και Περιβάλλον
- Παιδεία
- Πρωτογενής τομέας

Other

4. Επιλέξτε το μέγεθος του οργανισμού που εργάζεστε: *

- 1-10 άτομα
- 11-50 άτομα
- 51-100 άτομα
- 101-500 άτομα
- 500-2000 άτομα
- περισσότερα από 2000 άτομα

5. Επιλέξτε τη θέση σας στον οργανισμό: *

- Ανώτατη διοίκηση (π.χ. Γενικός/η διευθυντής/ρια) • Ανώτατη διοίκηση (π.χ. Γενικός/η διευθυντής/ρια)
- Ανώτερη διοίκηση (π.χ. Προϊστάμενος/η, Διευθυντής/ρια)
- Ενδιάμεση διοίκηση (π.χ. Ανώτερος Λειτουργός, Συντονιστής ομάδας)
- Υπάλληλος
- Other

6. Επιλέξτε τα χρόνια υπηρεσίας σας στον οργανισμό: *

- 1-2 χρόνια
- 3-5 χρόνια
- 6-10 χρόνια
- 11-15 χρόνια
- Πάνω από 16 χρόνια

7. Επιλέξτε τις δεξιότητες χρήσης Η/Υ και διαδικτύου που θεωρείτε ότι έχετε: *

- Πάρα πολύ καλές
- Πολύ καλές
- Καλές
- Αρκετά καλές
- Καθόλου καλές

8. Κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας COVID-19 εργαστήκατε εξ αποστάσεως με τηλεργασία; *

- Ναι
- Όχι

9. Στον οργανισμό σας υπήρχε ήδη η δυνατότητα για εξ αποστάσεως τηλεργασία πριν από την πανδημία COVID-19; *

- Ναι
- Όχι

Μέρος Β. Εσωτερική Επικοινωνία πριν από την πανδημία

Η εσωτερική επικοινωνία σε ένα οργανισμό ορίζεται ως η διαδικασία κατά την οποία γίνεται εφικτή η επικοινωνία ανάμεσα στη διοίκηση και τους εργαζομένους ενός οργανισμού αλλά και των εργαζομένων και διαφόρων τμημάτων του οργανισμού μεταξύ τους.

Οι ερωτήσεις που ακολουθούν αφορούν θέματα εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας στον Οργανισμό σας ΠΡΙΝ ξεσπάσει η πανδημία COVID-19 στην Κύπρο, δηλαδή πριν από τον Μάρτιο 2020.

10. Ποια από τα παρακάτω αποτελούσαν πηγές για εσωτερική λήψη πληροφοριών σε θέματα που αφορούσαν τον οργανισμό σας πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19; (Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες από μια επιλογές) *

- Συνάδελφοι
- Ανώτερη διοίκηση (π.χ. Συντονιστές/ριες / Προϊστάμενοι/ες τμημάτων)
- Ανώτατη διοίκηση (π.χ. Γενικός/ή Διευθυντής/διευθύντρια)
- E-mails προερχόμενα από Τμήματα του οργανισμού
- Μέσα Κοινωνικής Δικτύωσης οργανισμού
- Ιστοσελίδα οργανισμού
- Intranet – Εσωτερικό δίκτυο (π.χ. servers)
-

Other

11. Πόσο ικανοποιημένος/η είστε γενικότερα από την επίσημη εσωτερική επικοινωνία στον οργανισμό σας, πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19; *

- Πάρα πολύ
- Πολύ
- Αρκετά
- Λίγο
- Καθόλου

12. Πόσο ικανοποιημένος/η είστε γενικότερα από τη συχνότητα της επίσημης εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας στον οργανισμό σας πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19; *

- Πάρα πολύ
- Πολύ
- Αρκετά
- Λίγο
- Καθόλου

13. Ποια από τα παρακάτω κανάλια χρησιμοποιούνταν γενικά πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19 για σκοπούς **επίσημης** εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας στον οργανισμό σας; (Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες από μια επιλογές) *

- Συναντήσεις δια ζώσης (π.χ. συνεδρίες από κοντά, συνομιλίες πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο)
- Τηλέφωνο
- Διαδικτυακές συναντήσεις (π.χ. μέσω Skype, Teams, Viber κ.τ.λ.)
- E-mail
- Intranet – Εσωτερικό δίκτυο (π.χ. Servers, SharePoint κ.τ.λ.)
- Μηνύματα (π.χ. SMS, instant messages: Skype, Viber, Google Hangouts)
- Μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης (π.χ. Facebook, Twitter κ.τ.λ.)
- Σουίτες εργαλείων παραγωγικότητας (π.χ. Microsoft Office 365, Google G Suite)
- Έντυπα μέσα επικοινωνίας (π.χ. αφίσες, επιστολές, αναφορές κ.τ.λ.)
-

Other

14. Πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19, ποιο από τα παρακάτω κανάλια χρησιμοποιούσε **περισσότερο ο οργανισμός σας για:** *

	Συναντήσεις από κοντά	Τηλέφωνο	e-mail	Μέσα Διαδικτυακής συναντήσεως	Μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης	Έντυπα μέσα	Κανένα κανάλι / Δεν ισχύει
διαμοιρασμό πληροφοριών που αφορούν τον οργανισμό (π.χ. όραμα, στόχοι, πολιτικές κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
διαμοιρασμό πληροφοριών που αφορούν τις εργασιακές συνθήκες (π.χ. ωράριο, δικαιώματα κι υποχρεώσεις εργαζομένων, μετακινήσεις προσωπικού, κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
συζήτηση προβλημάτων ή/και εργασιακών θεμάτων με το προσωπικό;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
συντονισμό των καθημερινών θεμάτων του τμήματός σας;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19, ποιο από τα παρακάτω κανάλια χρησιμοποιούσατε **περισσότερο εξείς προσωπικά για:** *

	Συναντήσ εις από κοντά	Τηλέφων ο	e-mail	Μέσα Διαδικτυακοινωνική κές ς συναντήσ δικτύωση εις ς	Έντυπα μέσα	Κανένα κανάλι / Δεν ισχύει
επικοινωνία με συναδέλφους του τμήματός σας για εργασιακά θέματα;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
επικοινωνία με συναδέλφους άλλων τμημάτων για εργασιακά θέματα;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
επικοινωνία με προϊστάμενους για εργασιακά θέματα;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
συνεργασία με συναδέλφους για διεκπεραίωση κάποιου ομαδικού έργου;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
λήψη πληροφοριών που αφορούν τον οργανισμό (π.χ. στόχοι, νέα, πολιτικές κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
λήψη πληροφοριών που αφορούν τις εργασιακές συνθήκες (π.χ. ωράριο, δικαιώματα κι υποχρεώσεις εργαζομένων κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19, πόσο συχνά χρησιμοποιούσατε σουίτες εργαλείων παραγωγικότητας (π.χ. Microsoft Office 365, Google G Suite) για σκοπούς επικοινωνίας/συνεργασίας στην εργασία σας; *

- Πάρα πολύ συχνά
- Πολύ συχνά
- Αρκετά συχνά
- Λιγότερο συχνά
- Καθόλου

17. Πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19, πόσο συχνά επικοινωνούσατε για σκοπούς εργασίας, με τα πιο κάτω άτομα; *

	Καθημερινά	2-3 φορές την εβδομάδα	1 φορά την εβδομάδα	2-3 φορές τον μήνα	5-6 φορές τον χρόνο	Ποτέ
Με συναδέλφους του τμήματός σας.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με συναδέλφους άλλων τμημάτων.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με άτομα που είναι σε υψηλότερη βαθμίδα από εσάς.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με συναδέλφους που είναι σε χαμηλότερη βαθμίδα από εσάς.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με τον/την γενικό προϊστάμενο/η ή διευθυντή/διευθύντρια του οργανισμού.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Μέρος Γ. Εσωτερική Επικοινωνία κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας COVID-19

Η εσωτερική επικοινωνία σε ένα οργανισμό ορίζεται ως η διαδικασία κατά την οποία γίνεται εφικτή η επικοινωνία ανάμεσα στη διοίκηση και τους εργαζομένους ενός οργανισμού αλλά και των εργαζομένων και διαφόρων τμημάτων του οργανισμού μεταξύ τους.

Οι ερωτήσεις που ακολουθούν αφορούν θέματα εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας στον Οργανισμό σας αφού ξέσπασε η πανδημία COVID-19 στην Κύπρο, δηλαδή μετά τον Μάρτιο 2020. Παρακαλώ όπως απαντήσετε τις ερωτήσεις σκεπτόμενοι/σκεπτόμενες την περίοδο που εργαστήκατε εξ αποστάσεως / με τηλεργασία.

18. Ποια από τα παρακάτω αποτελούσαν πηγές για εσωτερική λήψη πληροφοριών σε θέματα που αφορούσαν τον οργανισμό σας κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19; (Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες από μια επιλογές) *

- Συνάδελφοι
- Ανώτερη διοίκηση (π.χ. Συντονιστές/ριες / Προϊστάμενοι/ες τμημάτων)
- Ανώτατη διοίκηση (π.χ. Γενικός/ή Διευθυντής/διευθύντρια)
- E-mails προερχόμενα από Τμήματα του οργανισμού
- Μέσα Κοινωνικής Δικτύωσης οργανισμού
- Ιστοσελίδα οργανισμού
- Intranet – Εσωτερικό δίκτυο (π.χ. servers)
-

Other

19. Πόσο ικανοποιημένος/η είστε γενικότερα από την επίσημη εσωτερική επικοινωνία στον οργανισμό σας, κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19; *

- Πάρα πολύ
- Πολύ
- Αρκετά
- Λίγο
- Καθόλου

20. Πόσο ικανοποιημένος/η είστε γενικότερα από τη συχνότητα της επίσημης εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας στον οργανισμό σας κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19; *

- Πάρα πολύ
- Πολύ
- Αρκετά
- Λίγο
- Καθόλου

21. Ποια από τα παρακάτω κανάλια χρησιμοποιούνταν γενικά κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19 για σκοπούς **επίσημης** εσωτερικής επικοινωνίας στον οργανισμό σας; (Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες από μια επιλογές) *

Συναντήσεις δια ζώσης (π.χ. συνεδρίες από κοντά, συνομιλίες πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο)

Τηλέφωνο

Διαδικτυακές συναντήσεις (π.χ. μέσω Skype, Teams, Viber κ.τ.λ.)

E-mail

Intranet – Εσωτερικό δίκτυο (π.χ. Servers, SharePoint κ.τ.λ.)

Μηνύματα (π.χ. SMS, instant messages: Skype, Viber, Google Hangouts)

Μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης (π.χ. Facebook, Twitter κ.τ.λ.)

Σουίτες εργαλείων παραγωγικότητας (π.χ. Microsoft Office 365, Google G Suite)

Έντυπα μέσα επικοινωνίας (π.χ. αφίσες, επιστολές, αναφορές κ.τ.λ.)

Other

22. Κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19, ποιο από τα παρακάτω κανάλια χρησιμοποιούσε **περισσότερο ο οργανισμός σας για:** *

	Συναντήσ εις από κοντά	Τηλέφων ο	e-mail	Μέσα			Κανένα κανάλι / Δεν ισχύει
				Διαδικτυακοι κές συναντήσ εις	κοινωνική ς δικτύωση	Έντυπα μέσα	
διαμοιρασμό πληροφοριών που αφορούν τον οργανισμό (π.χ. όραμα, στόχοι, πολιτικές κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
διαμοιρασμό πληροφοριών που αφορούν τις εργασιακές συνθήκες (π.χ. ωράριο, δικαιώματα κι υποχρεώσεις εργαζομένων, μετακινήσεις προσωπικού, κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
συζήτηση προβλημάτων ή/και εργασιακών θεμάτων με το προσωπικό;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
συντονισμό των καθημερινών θεμάτων του τμήματός σας;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19, ποιο από τα παρακάτω κανάλια χρησιμοποιούσατε **περισσότερο εσείς προσωπικά για:** *

	Συναντήσεις από κοντά	Τηλέφωνο	e-mail	Μέσα Διαδικτυακοί συναντήσεις	Μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης	Έντυπα μέσα	Κανένα κανάλι / Δεν ισχύει
επικοινωνία με συναδέλφους του τμήματός σας για εργασιακά θέματα;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
επικοινωνία με συναδέλφους άλλων τμημάτων για εργασιακά θέματα;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
επικοινωνία με προϊστάμενους για εργασιακά θέματα;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
συνεργασία με συναδέλφους για διεκπεραίωση κάποιου ομαδικού έργου;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
λήψη πληροφοριών που αφορούν τον οργανισμό (π.χ. στόχοι, νέα, πολιτικές κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
λήψη πληροφοριών που αφορούν τις εργασιακές συνθήκες (π.χ. ωράριο, δικαιώματα και υποχρεώσεις εργαζομένων κ.τ.λ.);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19, πόσο συχνά χρησιμοποιούσατε σουίτες εργαλείων παραγωγικότητας (π.χ. Microsoft Office 365, Google G Suite) για σκοπούς επικοινωνίας/συνεργασίας στην εργασία σας; *

- Πάρα πολύ συχνά
- Πολύ συχνά
- Αρκετά συχνά
- Όχι και τόσο συχνά
- Καθόλου

25. Κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19, πόσο συχνά επικοινωνούσατε για σκοπούς εργασίας, με τα πιο κάτω άτομα; *

	Καθημερινά	2-3 φορές την εβδομάδα	1 φορά την εβδομάδα	2-3 φορές τον μήνα	5-6 φορές τον χρόνο	Ποτέ
Με συναδέλφους του τμήματός σας.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με συναδέλφους άλλων τμημάτων.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με άτομα που είναι σε υψηλότερη βαθμίδα από εσάς.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με συναδέλφους που είναι σε χαμηλότερη βαθμίδα από εσάς.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Με τον/την γενικό προϊστάμενο/η ή διευθυντή/διευθύντρια του οργανισμού.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Μέρος Δ: Εξ αποστάσεως εργασία/τηλεργασία και Επικοινωνία κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας

Σκεπτόμενοι/ες την κατάσταση στον οργανισμό σας από τον Μάρτιο 2020 και μετά, σημειώστε τον βαθμό συμφωνίας/διαφωνίας σας με τις προτάσεις που ακολουθούν.

26. Σε γενικές γραμμές θεωρώ ότι κατά τη διάρκεια της εξ αποστάσεως εργασίας / τηλεργασίας, λόγω της πανδημίας του COVID-19:

	Διαφωνώ απόλυτα	Διαφωνώ λίγο	Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ λίγο	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
ενημερωνόμουν επαρκώς από τον οργανισμό μου για θέματα Ασφάλειας και Υγείας.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ενημερωνόμουν επαρκώς από τον οργανισμό μου για θέματα που αφορούσαν τις εργασιακές συνθήκες.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ενημερωνόμουν επαρκώς από τον οργανισμό μου για τυχόν αλλαγές που έπρεπε να κάνω στα καθήκοντά μου.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
επικοινωνούσα επαρκώς με τους προϊσταμένους/ες μου για εργασιακά θέματα.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
έλαβα από τον εργοδότη μου όλο τον απαιτούμενο εξοπλισμό για εξ αποστάσεως εργασία / τηλεργασία.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
έλαβα από τον εργοδότη μου την κατάλληλη ενημέρωση/ επιμόρφωση σχετικά με την εξ αποστάσεως εργασία / τηλεργασία.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Διαφωνώ απόλυτα	Διαφωνώ λίγο	Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ λίγο	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
επικοινωνούσα περισσότερο με τους προϊσταμένους/ες μου για εργασιακά θέματα, σε σύγκριση με πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
επικοινωνούσα περισσότερο με τους/τις συναδέλφους μου για εργασιακά θέματα, σε σύγκριση με πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
εκτελούσα τα καθήκοντά μου χωρίς ιδιαίτερα προβλήματα, σε σύγκριση με πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
μπορούσα να επικοινωνήσω την άποψή μου για εργασιακά θέματα καλύτερα σε σύγκριση με πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ένιωθα περισσότερο παραγωγικός/η σε σχέση με την εργασία μου, σε σύγκριση με πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ένιωθα περισσότερο ενεργός/η σε σχέση με την εργασία μου, σε σύγκριση με πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ένιωθα περισσότερο μέλος της οικογένειας του οργανισμού, σε σύγκριση με πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Μέρος Ε: Τηλεργασία και εσωτερική επικοινωνία στο μέλλον

27. Τι από τα παρακάτω ισχύει για εσάς, στην περίπτωση που ο οργανισμός σας αποφασίσει να προσφέρει δυνατότητα για τηλεργασία και μετά το τέλος της πανδημίας του COVID-19; *

- Θα ήθελα να εργάζομαι πλήρως με τηλεργασία.
- Θα ήθελα να εργάζομαι τις περισσότερες μέρες με τηλεργασία.
- Θα ήθελα να εργάζομαι κάποιες μέρες με τηλεργασία και κάποιες στον χώρο εργασίας μου.
- Θα ήθελα να εργάζομαι τις περισσότερες μέρες στον χώρο εργασίας μου.
- Θα ήθελα να εργάζομαι πλήρως στον χώρο εργασίας μου.

28. Με ποια από τα παρακάτω κανάλια θα θέλατε να πραγματοποιείται μελλοντικά η εσωτερική επικοινωνία στον οργανισμό σας; (Μετακινήστε τα κανάλια με βάση την προτίμησή σας ώστε το πρώτο στη σειρά να είναι το πιο επιθυμητό κανάλι επικοινωνίας) *

Συναντήσεις δια ζώσης (π.χ. συνεδρίες από κοντά, συνομιλίες πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο)

Τηλέφωνο

Διαδικτυακές συναντήσεις (π.χ. μέσω Skype, Teams, Viber κ.τ.λ.)

E-mail

Intranet (π.χ. Servers, SharePoint κ.τ.λ.)

Μηνύματα (π.χ. SMS, instant messages Skype, Viber, Google Hangouts)

Μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης (π.χ. Facebook, Twitter κ.τ.λ.)

Σουίτες εργαλείων παραγωγικότητας (π.χ. Microsoft Office 365, Google G Suite)

Έντυπα μέσα επικοινωνίας (π.χ. αφίσες, επιστολές, αναφορές κ.τ.λ.)