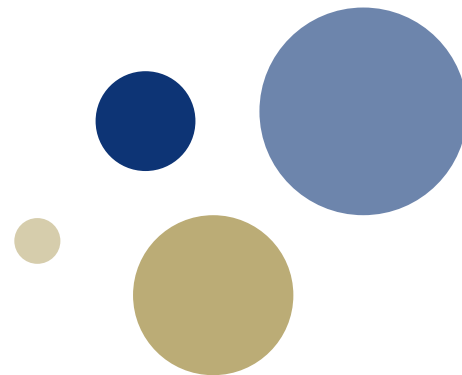




Norwegian University of
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To Change or Not to Change: A Study of the Association between Workplace Change and Burnout and Work Engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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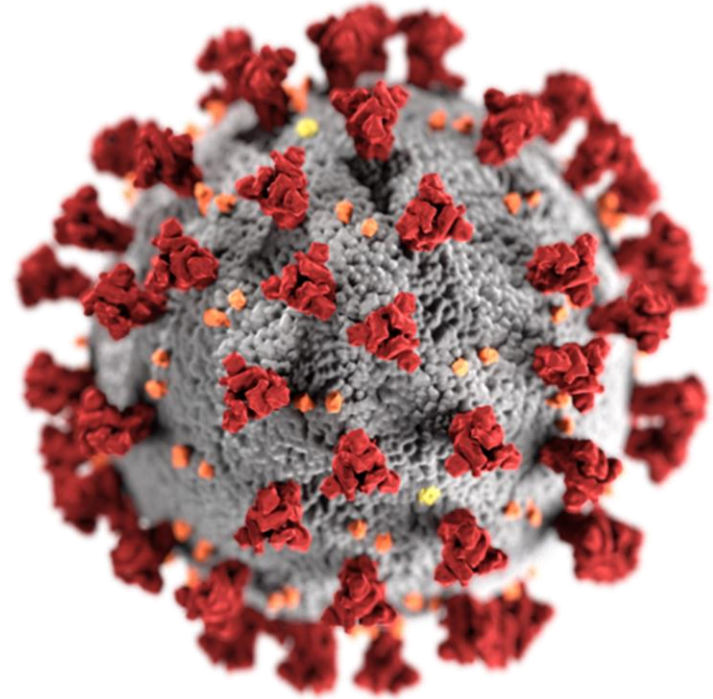
Background



- COVID-19 pandemic - employees were required to work more from home (WFH).
- Benefits WFH - increased job satisfaction, reduced travel time and expenses, increased productivity, reduced turnover and absenteeism
- Drawbacks WFH - isolation from the work culture, potential conflicts between work and home, lack of control over employees, difficulties in teamwork
- Unclear whether WFH affects employee wellbeing positively or negatively, as the evidence from the existing literature is indeterminate and often contradictory.

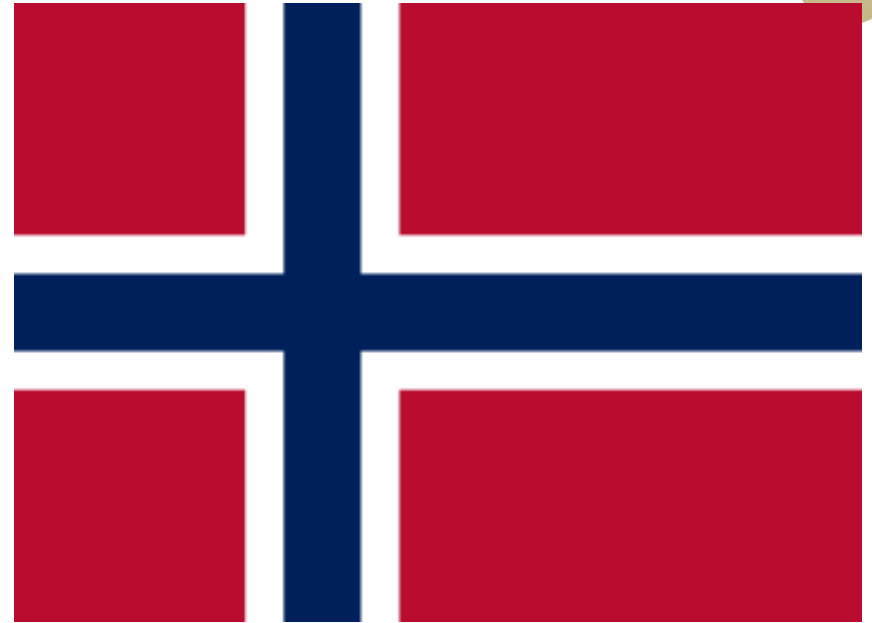
Background

- Research on WFH during the pandemic has revealed mixed results.
- Employees who worked from home had a high sense of insecurity, increased work–home conflict, and high levels of stress
- This was further supported by Hayes et al. who indicated a higher level of burnout and stress among US employees WFH compared to before the pandemic when they went to the workplace.



COVID-19 in Norway

- In Norway, a national lockdown was announced on 12 March 2020, and since then, working from home has been the main policy of many organizations.
- Norway, have dealt with the COVID-19 crisis more efficiently than many other countries due to being a high-trust society and the ease with which citizens maintain social distance and thus prevent spreading the virus.
- Norway also has a public welfare system that is well adapted to reduce the negative influence of redundancies, unemployment insurance, and sick leave.



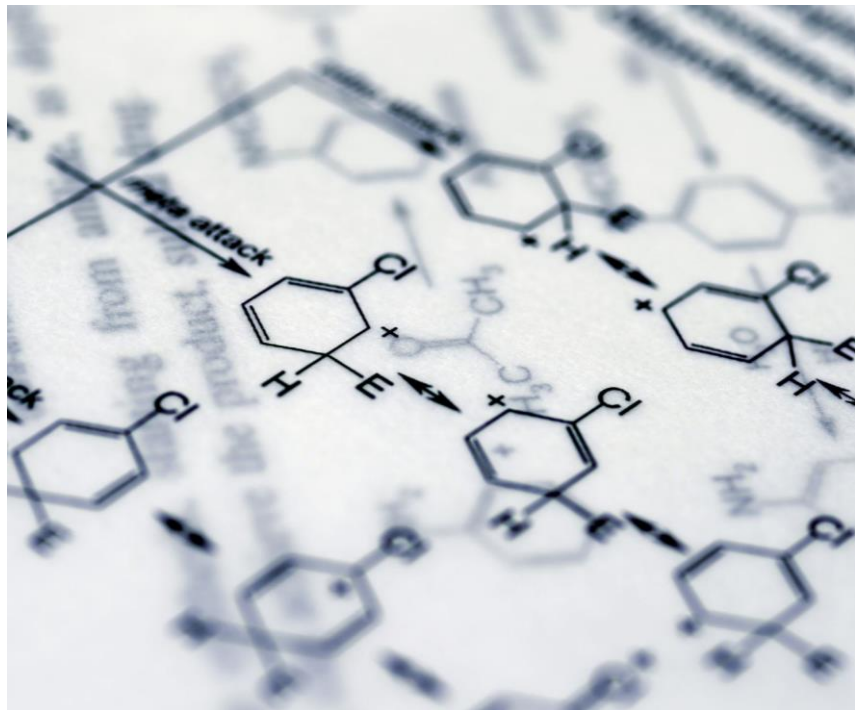
Aim



- The aim of this study was two-fold:
 1. To explore differences in the experience of job demands and resources between employees who still went to their workplaces (no-change group) and employees who transitioned to WFH (change group) during the pandemic;
 2. To explore the relationships among job demands, job resources, and wellbeing outcomes (burnout and work engagement) for employees in these two groups.



Methods



- Cross sectional data (N=575) from January/February 2021 were analyzed with multivariate structural equation modeling.
- The sample - health and social services (43.5%), professional, scientific, and technical services (48.0%), and other (8.6%).
- 78.8 % - having completed a higher education of 3 years or more.
- 310 were living with children (53.9%), and 404 lived with a partner (70.3%).
- The no-change group - 269 participants who went to work every day both pre-COVID-19 and during the COVID-19 pandemic; hence, their work situation did not change due to the pandemic.
- The change group - 306 participants who changed their work situation to working more from home during the pandemic.

BAT



BURNOUT ASSESSMENT TOOL

- Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) - 12 items ($\alpha = 0.88$). BAT is composed of 4 subdimensions, including exhaustion, mental distance, and emotional and cognitive impairment, each measured with 3 items.
- The model fit indices for the CFA of the study model indicated an acceptable model fit when the four subdimensions of BAT were included ($N = 575$, $\chi^2 (439) = 1005.22$, $p < 0.05$; CFI = 0.920, TLI = 0.910, SRMR = 0.053, RMSEA = 0.047, 90% CI [0.044, 0.051]).

BAT



BURNOUT ASSESSMENT TOOL

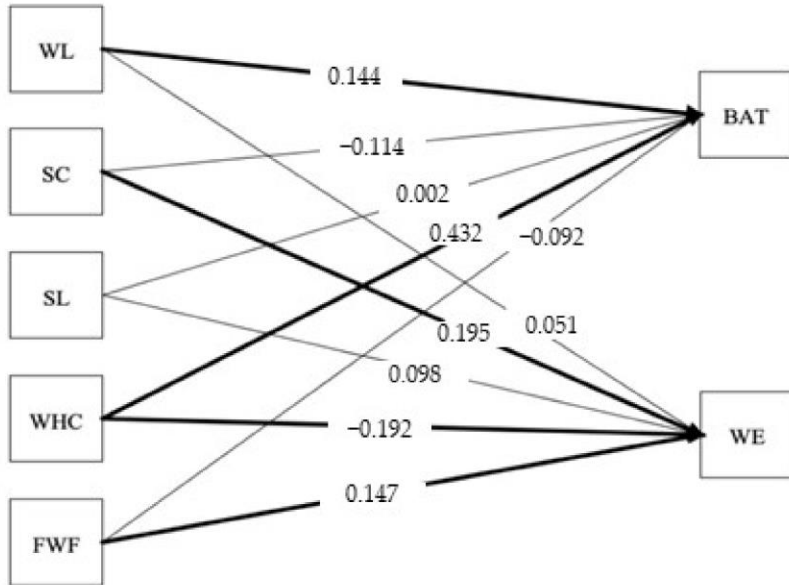
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exhaustion	575	1.00	5.00	2.0922	.79500
MentalDistance	575	1.00	4.00	1.6504	.65504
CogImpair	575	1.00	4.00	1.7554	.56349
Emolmpair	575	1.00	3.67	1.2962	.45016
BAT	575	1.00	3.83	1.6986	.48928
Valid N (listwise)	575				

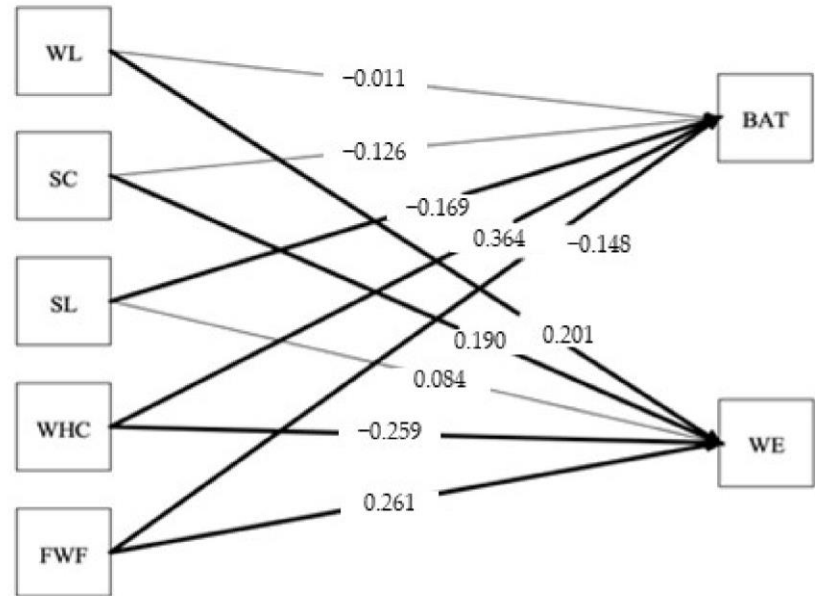
- Alfa subscales:
 - Exhaustion: .868
 - Mental distance .718
 - Cognitive impairment .784
 - Emotional Impairment .780
 - BAT .880

SEM-models

No change group



Change group



Results



Our results indicate that WHC could be the most influential factor related to burnout and work engagement, with relatively high coefficients in both the change and no-change group.



The workload seems to contribute to work engagement for employees who worked from home.



Our study proved that social support had different relationships with burnout and engagement for the change and no-change group:

For employees in the change group, leader support seemed to be more important for reducing burnout, as it was negatively related to burnout. Coworker support seemed to be more beneficial for promoting work engagement, as it was positively related to engagement.



Family work facilitation (FWF) was significantly related to both burnout and work engagement in the change group. For employees who transitioned to more WFH, family support seemed to be a vital element to prevent burnout and promote work engagement. For employees in the no-change group, coworker support and FWF were both positively related to work engagement but showed no significant relationship with burnout.

Implications and conclusions



- This contributes to research on the JD-R model by demonstrating that the same job demand can be experienced as hindering or challenging for employees depending on their work situation.
- It seems that for the different groups, different job resources are of importance for different outcomes.
- Researchers and practitioners should be aware of these mechanisms, especially when generalizing findings across work situations.
- Employers may have a lot to gain from facilitating family-friendly policies and social support from different sources in order to both reduce burnout and increase their engagement.

