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**New work behaviour on the rise? - A mixed-method study  
concerning stress levels and work related characteristics of  
HR-professionals within Staffing- and recruitment when working  
from home**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of how the perception of stress for HR-professionals within staffing- and recruitment, might differentiate when working more or less from home. An additional ambition was to develop an understanding of how the work characteristics, job-demand, control and support, could have an impact on the above association. To examine this, an exploratory sequential mixed-method design was performed, consisting of interviews assessing an internet-based questionnaire. The final questionnaire consisted of 40 questions, both self-constructed and questions retrieved from two standardized questionnaires (Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire and Perceived Stress Scale). A randomized cluster sampling design was used, resulting in 124 participants (75.8% women and 24.2% men). The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between the amount of working from home and the participants perceived stress. Nonetheless, they did report a slightly higher level of stress when working more from home. Regarding the other work characteristics, a positive correlation was found between job-demands and perceived stress. In addition, negative significant correlations were discovered between the individual's level of control as well as support, and level of perceived stress. However, these associations between support, control, demand, as well as perceived stress, didn't significantly alter depending on the working condition. Based on the limited previous research for HR-professionals within staffing- and recruitment companies, additional research is needed in order to authenticate the results. For now, this study should be seen as a means of advancement for further research.

*Keywords:* Human Resources, Job-demand, control and support model, Mixed method design,

Perceived stress, Remote work, Staffing- and Recruitment, Working from home.

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## **Introduction**

In January 2021, when the Covid-19 pandemic was at a peak, it was estimated that 42.7 % of the employees in Sweden between the ages of 15 and 74 worked from home at least one day per week (Statistikmyndigheten SCB, 2021). Later that same year, in August 2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions had eased a bit, the percentage of employees working from home at least one day per week was estimated to 32.9 % (SCB, 2021). The noteworthy degree of working from home, even after the relevant and dominant reason for this working condition had eased, might indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic had facilitated a new type of work habit, with emphasis on remote work. Even though working from home has been a topic of interest during recent years (Spagnoli et al., 2020), the phenomenon is far from fully researched and explored. The limited field specific research as well as the consequences the work habit could have for its employees, is yet to be advanced.

Some workgroups that adopted the habit of remote work early on were administrative workers, such as administrative service managers, coordinators and Human Resources (furthermore referred to as HR) professionals (Nyberg et al., 2021; Spagnoli et al., 2020). According to Nyberg et al. (2021) HR could be seen as some of the leading characters for remote work during the pandemic and the changes it entailed. This was a fact since the HR role usually implies developing the work environment and having the overall responsibility for the wellbeing of employees. As HR-professionals usually acquire a more administrative role with an overview of the workplace, they were also some of the first to embody the change to working from home on a weekly basis due to the pandemic. The field of HR has many different focus areas, such as hiring new employees, developing, and improving the work environment, as well as making sure that the employees receive the support they need (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2016). The role of HR can also be seen as a support function for the management as well as to the employees. Consequently, the role implies a high level of contact with employees and social interactions, which perhaps could be affected by location the HR-professionals choose to work from.

One area within the HR field is staffing- and recruitment, which is an area that emphasizes social interactions, as well as communication to a great extent in their daily work. The staffing and recruitment field mainly consists of offering simple and effective solutions to the companies recruitment needs, in order for them to find the most suitable employee possible. In some cases, the HR companies also offer staffing solutions where the employees perform their

work tasks at the customers work location but are employed by the staffing- and recruitment company, so called consultants. Mostly this function is created to solve urgent or shorter staffing needs (Kompetensföretagen, 2021). In this field, the HRs function mainly consists of being the link between the employee and the employer, as well as the employee and the potential customer. They have responsibility when it comes to making all parties feel comfortable and happy with the recruitment process, as well as the consultants work. Within this field of HR, focus is not only their ability to recruit new and relevant staff, but also their ability to understand what the customer needs.

In addition, after the recruitment process the HR-professionals have a responsibility when it comes to the wellbeing and work environment of the employed and consultants. Issues or problems involving employees' wellbeing are usually detected through everyday interactions and physical meetings, for example through a conversation when the two are grabbing a cup of coffee. Being able to interact with the workers and their teams also simplifies the HR-professionals work when it comes to understanding what competence and personality that might need to be recruited next. Based on the nature of the HR-professionals work obligations and the importance of communication, it is relevant to think that a change in the HR's work location and environment might have consequences for their work health, such as perceived stress and work satisfaction.

## **Literature review**

### **Remote work**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the phrase remote work has been used extensively in work related contexts. The term implies the possibility for a worker to maintain his/her work obligations elsewhere than at the office (Perry et al., 2018). The recent change to a more flexible work environment with more freedom to work remotely has led to some positive findings regarding employees' work health. Shimura et al. (2021) found an association between remote work and a reduction of physical and psychological stress responses. Mainly this reduction was associated with the fact that working remotely meant less time for commuting, as well as a more flexible work life. Similarly, Allen et al., (2015) found that working remotely could lead to a higher level of flexibility, making it more accessible to facilitate both the demands of work and their family life.

In contrast to the above findings, several unfavorable outcomes connected to remote working have also been discovered. For instance, Spagnoli et al., (2020) found that letting employees remotely could lead to an increased chance of technostress and workaholism, which in turn could escalate the need for management and leadership in the organization. Technostress can be explained as the stress reaction that occurs when there is a discrepancy between the technology used in work related contexts and the demands related to this technology (Suh & Lee, 2017). Since technical devices are one of the main resources when working from home, it is not uncommon to find a relationship between this kind of stress as well as the remote working conditions (Spagnoli et al., 2020). In addition, Bin et al., (2021) found that an increase in remote work could lead to a feeling of isolation combined with higher level of stress, as the employee then is more reliant on her-/himself to manage the technology given to facilitate the work. Others have also found that remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic to some extent lead to an increased reporting of perceived stress and a reduced work-life balance (Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021). Nonetheless, increased stress due to remote work has been a topic of interest for several years. According to Di Martino and Wirth (1990) working remotely was found to create a situation of isolation and marginalization for the workers, which in turn could increase their stress levels as they do not feel satisfied with their job situation.

### ***Working from home***

Although working remotely and its outcomes have been a prominent research area over the past decades (Bin et al., 2021; Shimura et al., 2021; Suh & Lee, 2017), little has been researched about the connection between remote work and the consequences for HR-professionals around the world. Based on this, the research background for this thesis is mostly incorporating the connection between remote work and other work fields. Since remote work is a wide spectrum, the focus will be remote work understood as “working from home” (furthermore referred to as WFH). This phenomenon entails that the worker performs his/her work tasks from home, in his/her home environment, using information and communication technologies as an alternative to working from the office (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

Heiden et al. (2020) have found, in a study concerning employed academics, that the ones performing their work from their home several times per week reported a higher stress level than the ones only working from home a couple of times per month. In addition, several studies that have been conducted during the past two years, have shown a significant relationship between the

shift to WFH due to the pandemic and the level of perceived stress employees report (Hayes et al., 2021; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021). Nevertheless, earlier research has shown that WFH could also lead to some positive outcomes, at least to some extent, such as a higher job satisfaction and productivity (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Also, more recent studies have found connections between the possibility for employees to work from home as well as higher levels of reported work engagement and performance (Shimura et al., 2021).

## **Stress**

The concept of stress has been a topic of interest for several decades and has had a great influence on the development of occupational psychology. Over time, a field of stress research has been developed, and within this a field that is more directed towards the stress that occurs as the work environment changes and its potential stressors, has become a topic of interest. Examples of such stressors are work overload, higher demands as well as time pressure. A common description of stress is that it is a harmful emotional and physical reaction to unreachable demands and requirements (Bentley et al., 2016).

In 1976, Cooper and Marshall developed a theory concerning occupational stress, proposing that what is causing the stress is the negative environmental factors or so called “stressors” that can be associated with a job. Stressors can be viewed as psychological or physical demands which an individual responds to (Cooper et al., 2001). From Cooper and Marshalls (1976) theory, the occurrence of occupational stress is mainly due to two different factors; The first being the individual's ability and characteristics to cope with the stressors, and secondly, the sources of stress that are present in the work environment. Focus of this stress theory is directed towards the individual's own work-stress as a result of, among other factors, his/her structural work-environment. Such sources of stressors at work could for example be work overload, time pressure, role ambiguity, demands, control, lack of security, poor social relations as well as physical danger. The individual's inefficiency to cope or adapt to these stressors could in turn lead to a short or prolonged feeling of stress and anxiety. The response to potential stressors at work are called strains, which, if they are consistent over a prolonged time period, could lead to both mental and physical health problems and diseases (Cooper & Marshall, 1976). Examples of such illnesses could be coronary heart diseases, mental ill health, anxiety, as well as job dissatisfaction.

### ***Work related Stress***

Karasek and Theorell (1996) proposed through their Demand, control, and support model, that different combinations of the levels of control, demands and support an employee has in his/her work situation can lead to psychological strains and physical illness. Originally the central model was the interaction between the job-characteristics demand as well as control, and the fall out this interaction could have. They developed a transactional model aiming at examining different work environments and potential health outcomes. While other stress theories often have a focus on the individual, this theory emphasizes the importance of work factors that might need to be restructured to improve the work environment (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). The model mainly brings about two hypotheses, the job-strain as well as the active learning. The first predicts that when the individual has high job-demands in combination with low control, this might lead to negative health outcomes such as tiredness, stress and depression. The hypothesis of active learning, however, focuses on how a work environment where the individual has high work demands and a high control, in turn leads to personal development, well-being and learning (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). The theory has been well tested through the years, and several researchers have found a connection between the job-strain condition and high levels of musculoskeletal disorders, as well as stress-related health outcomes (Oeij et al., 2006).

Later, a third aspect was added to the theory, which proposes that social support at the workplace in turn can ease the negative effects of the workload. The hypothesis predicts that low control combined with low support and high demands can lead to the so-called “Iso-strain” (Johnson & Hall, 1988). In turn, the support the employee receives is thought to have a moderating effect on the negative consequences (Karasek & Theorell, 1996).

More recent findings have shown that organizational factors such as demand, control and support can have an extensive impact on the individual's perception of his/her workplace. According to Johnson & Hall (1988) high demands, combined with low levels of support as well as control, has a strong association with cardiovascular diseases and aggravating health issues. Others have also found a connection between WFH and the demands that are put on the individual worker. Jamal et al. (2021) found that work demands in terms of more independence, interference from family members and professional isolation when working more from home, was correlated with higher levels of perceived stress. These demands included less control over the working situation, as well as less support since the shift to working remotely limited these



resources. Barbieri et al. (2021) also found a similar result indicating a relationship between increased perception of stress and higher demands (such as professional isolation and workload) when working more from home. Over a prolonged period, the increase in demands could have a negative impact on the individual's quality of life.

Even though several health outcomes have been connected to the theory of job-strain, the evidence is not astounding. Support for the connection between the effects of work-related control on health outcomes have been found in earlier research, however, many question the connection of the full model (Kristensen, 1995). Most of the reviews that have supported the original model, have also been found to suffer from several fallbacks. According to De Lange et al. (2003), one limitation has been the lack of consideration for the methodological quality of earlier studies. As a result, the reviews show an inconsistent result, which is mostly based on methodologically weak studies. In turn this could limit the range effects for the variables and possibly show a degradation in the associations between the variables that might not actually be present. Another limitation is that earlier reviews of the model usually have been based on cross-sectional studies. It can be argued that this design is not well-suited for testing causal relationships, as it cannot arrange the temporal order of the variables. Similarly, De Lange et al. (2003) also found only modest support of the connection between high demands and low control on job strain, when looking at 19 studies with a highly developed study design. Even though the job-demand-control-support model is an important component in occupational psychology, it is important to bear these limitations in mind.

### ***Perceived stress***

Work related health issues can be measured in many ways, and one of them is the individual's perceived stress level. More specifically, perceived stress (furthermore referred to as PS) is a measure of the experienced stress level the individual is feeling as a result of a stressful environment or stressors present, such as his/her workload and/or burden. The perception of stress can also be an effect of the individual's inability to cope with potential stressors in his/her environment, leading the person to perceive him-/herself as more stressed (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Similarly, according to Cohen et al. (1983) the phenomenon of perceived stress could be viewed as an outcome variable of the stressful event, measuring the experienced stress level of the stressful events or ability to cope. The effects of perceived stress are many, and the intensity of the outcome is usually dependent on the longitudinal level of stress. If an individual perceives

themselves as stressed over a longer period of time, potential health outcomes have been found to be burnout, headaches, concentration problems, as well as depression (Johnson et al., 2005). In addition, Lazarus and Folkman (1984), also found a connection between a higher level of perceived stress as well as a reduced life satisfaction and self-esteem.

Several studies have shown a significant relationship between employees' perceived stress as well as their level of remote work. Hayes et al. (2021) found that the increased COVID-19 restrictions to more working from home was associated with an overall higher level of perceived stress. Similarly, Shimura et al., (2021) found that full-remote work (working 5 days per week from home) could have a negative effect on the employees work performance. Mainly this was a consequence of the fact that it took the employees longer time to finish their tasks when working from home, which in turn led them to report higher levels of perceived stress as they did not complete all their tasks in time. Others have also found that the change to working more from home and in turn a more flexible work arrangement, could lead the individuals to experience stress related to their expanded autonomy. In turn, this increase in the employee's stress level could lead them to have a more extensive need for support and management from the leaders of the organizations (Spagnoli et al., 2020).

### ***Work related health outcomes***

A well-functioning workplace is often influenced by a protection of employees from harm and potential danger. Nonetheless, most workplaces face sick listings and high work strains on their employees, which could cause potential workplace illnesses. One of the most prominent sources of work-related illnesses in the workplace is stress (Johnson et al., 2005). This area has been studied extensively over the past decades, and earlier findings have shown that prolonged stress can have several negative effects for the individual, such as mental and physical health problems (Cooper et al., 2001; Johnson et al., 2005). Some of the psychological factors that have been associated with stress in past research are, among others, depression, burnout, dissatisfaction with one's job situation, as well as anxiety (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). One of the more serious consequences is burnout, which usually is a response to an extreme state of psychological strains from stressors that have been present over a longer period (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, being exposed to a stressful environment or stressors over a prolonged period can also have several physiological consequences, such as cardiovascular diseases, higher blood pressure as well as an increased heart rate (Fox et al., 1993). If a workplace is infested with stress, and in turn

sick listings, this absence of employees could lead to higher demands for the other employees and affect the health of the workplace. Work-related illnesses related to HR-professionals within the staffing- and recruitment field, has not yet been explored in detail, which emphasizes the importance of this study.

### **Purpose and research questions**

Research concerning work stress has consistently identified predictability and lack of control as two of the most prominent circumstances that may trigger stress reactions (Karasek & Theorell, 1996). A connection between working remotely and higher levels of perceived stress has also been found in previous research (see background). However, research about the connection of remote work and increased stress levels for the specific field of HR-professionals is challenging to find. Based on previous research, concerning the effects of remote work, one can envision that the sudden change to mostly working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, can affect HR-professionals overview of the employees and organization. Mainly, when working from home the interactions between employees and information seeking is harder to implement, making it more demanding for the HR employees to detect potential problems, both within their recruitment processes, dialog with the customer, as well as in regards to their consultants. This situational constraint could lead to a feeling of less control over the HR-professionals own work as well as a decreased ability to perform well, which in turn could lead to a perception of increased stress.

HR-professionals commonly have the overall responsibility for the development of the work-environment and detecting potential stressors or unhealthy work environments in the organization. Their function not only includes recruiting new staff, but also having an overview of the organization in order to continue its progression. Nonetheless, an increased stress levels for HR-professionals and employees in general could have unfavorable consequences for the organization, as it can lead competent employees to leave the company, more mistakes, as well as mental and physical health issues. In relation to these potential outcomes, one could imagine that a sudden change in the HR professionals' work environment, such as working remotely, possibly could lead to an increased perception of stress. Also, such a change could lead to less contact with colleagues and less support from superiors, which is usually something that is of importance in a social role like HR. If such needs are not met it is possible that the HR professional might feel

like he/she has less control over his/her role while the demands remain, which consequently could lead to an increased perception of stress.

The human resource field is a wide and multifunctional profession, including many different types of roles and titles. Therefore, it is a challenge to explore the effects working from home has on the stress levels of the entire field of HR. Consequently, this thesis will focus on one particular group within the HR field, more specifically recruitment- and staffing. As mentioned previously, recruitment- and staffing companies are influenced to a great extent by social interactions with employees, and their ability to understand and detect potential issues their consultants and candidates could be facing. Potentially the HR-professional could face some challenges when it comes to working from home, for example through less support from their colleagues and other ways of communicating with their consultants and candidates, which might challenge the dialog. In turn, such difficulties could lead to a more unhealthy work environment for the HR-professionals, which consequently could have a negative impact on the organization. The reason for this is that the HR function usually are central figures when it comes to the development and withholding of the work environment of the organization.

Based on the above, this thesis will focus on exploring how the degree to which one works from home associates with her/his perceived stress levels, and in turn have an impact on the HR-professionals at staffing- and recruitment companies in Sweden. In addition, this study will investigate if there is an association between other work characteristics, such as perceived job-control, job-demand, and job-support, as well as the perceived stress level of HR-professionals, and whether this association is moderated by the level of working from home. To investigate this, the following research questions have been formulated:

- *To what extent do HR-professionals within the staffing- and recruitment field in Sweden report perceived stress, and to what degree is the level of stress associated with their level of working from home?*
- *To what extent is there an association between the level of job-control, job-demand as well as job-support the HR-professionals experience, and the level of perceived stress they report?*
- *Does the association between the level of job-control, job-demand as well as job-support, and the level of perceived stress reported, alter depending on the HR-professionals level of working from home?*

## **Method**

### **Study design**

As mentioned earlier, the area of working from home as well as perceived stress in relation to HR-professionals has only been explored very limited in the past. Therefore, there was a need to firstly develop an overall understanding of the research area and specific work field. The study design of the present research was an exploratory sequential mixed method design, entailing a mix between qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Specifically, the first part entailed semi-structured interviews, and the second a cross-sectional questionnaire that was informed by the interviews. To specify, the interviews were integrated to guide the direction of the questionnaire as well as inform some of the questions. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), there are two main reasons why such a method is used, either to develop theory from an otherwise non-researched area or to develop the instruments executed in the study. The last option is an approach to redefine the instruments, so they reflect the purpose, which was the aim of this study.

Four semi-structured interviews with HR-professionals within medium to large companies in Sweden were conducted between the 31st of January and the 10th of February 2022. The final data from the questionnaire was collected between the 28th of February and the 15th of March 2022, using the survey platform Sunet Survey. This is a survey tool used to create and distribute online surveys in a safe and high-quality manner. A reminder was sent out to the participants on the 10th of March 2022.

### ***The Interviews***

The interviewees were sampled through a convenience sampling, which entailed choosing participants because of their availability and accessibility to the researcher (Cohen et al., 2018). The sampling was conducted through requests sent to relevant candidates via LinkedIn. Twelve individuals were asked and four agreed to participate in the study.

The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the researcher had an interview guide including both open-ended and closed-ended questions (see Appendix 2). This design allowed the researcher to deviate from some questions and deepen others, advancing on the interviewees answers (Willig, 2013). The interviews were conducted through the online meeting program Zoom, allowing for a smooth and convenient interaction. In addition, the interviews were

recorded through Voice memo, in order for the researcher to return to the interviews during the analysis. Nonetheless, the interviewees were informed of this and gave their consent beforehand.

### ***The questionnaire***

The design of the questionnaire consisted of both standardized questions from scales, as well as questions that were constructed based on the information that was collected from the interviews. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first section entailed a mix of different demographic questions, such as gender, age and level of education. These questions were directed at the participants in order to get a better overview and enable a more in depth analysis. The reason why the questions were placed in the beginning of the study was that earlier studies have shown that placing demographic questions early, increases the response rate for these specific questions (Teclaw et al., 2012). The second part of the first section entailed questions about the individual's role in the company, such as years of experience, level of occupation and current role, as well as how many times per week he/she worked from home.

Following the demographic questions, the remaining three sections of the questionnaire were developed through a mix of the explored themes of the interviews (three questions) and three well-known and standardized questionnaires; Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire III (Berthelsen et al., 2020), as well as the Swedish version of Perceived stress scale 10 item (Nordin & Nordin, 2013). Before the questionnaire was sent out a pilot study was used to ensure that any major uncertainties or errors were detected. Six participants were chosen to participate, and the questionnaire was sent out by email on the 15th of February. After the participants had completed the questionnaire, they gave feedback to the researcher. The only feedback that was given was a sub-headline that was not clear, which then was changed to a more appropriate headline for the specific purpose. Other than that, no errors or uncertainties were detected, and the survey was then distributed to the actual sample.

As a guideline of the minimum sample size required for this study, a power analysis was conducted through the program G\*Power 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2009). The results indicated that a required sample size to achieve 80 % power for detecting a medium effect using Cohen's (1988) criteria, at a significance criterion of  $\alpha = .05$ , was  $N = 144$  for the two-tailed T-test. However, for the Univariate Analysis of Covariance, with a statistical power of .80 and an medium effect, at a significance criterion of  $\alpha = .05$ , the study should have a sample size of at least 269 participants.

### **Intended target population**

The intended target population of this study consisted of HR-professionals working within medium to large sized recruitment- and staffing companies in Sweden. A focus on this company size range was chosen since they include many different HR roles within the staffing- and recruitment field, such as recruiters, consultant- and customer managers (“konsult- och kundansvarig”), superiors, HR-assistants as well as HR-administers. As all these roles to some extent included similar HR tasks such as contact with consultants, candidates and customers, as well as administrative work tasks, they were all included in the intended target population. These companies represent the largest part of the staffing and recruitment industry, and since this was an exploratory research study interested in finding trends and understanding HR-professionals' psychosocial work environment, the larger companies were viewed as a good starting point. There was no limitation to the percent of employment the participants had.

### ***Sample recruitment***

The sample requested to participate in the questionnaire was chosen through a randomized cluster sampling method, where the questionnaire was sent out to several staffing- and recruitment companies in Sweden. This sampling method entailed that all members of the population had the same chance of being selected. In addition, each selection of participants were independent of the next (Cohen et al., 2018). The companies that were included in the random sampling were chosen from a report conducted by the organization Almega, which is one of the largest employer organizations in Sweden (Kompetensföretagen, 2021). The report that was used, was a list of the top 25 staffing- and recruitment companies in Sweden that had the largest revenue during the second quartile of 2021 (see appendix 1). The reason why only the top companies in Sweden were included in this sample was because it could be discovered in the exploratory interviews that there did not seem to be an explicit difference between the smaller and larger companies, when it comes to health and work environment. Nevertheless, there could indubitably be found certain differences when looking at the whole population. Nonetheless, since this study was focused on exploring the field and potential work issues, the researcher argued that such individual differences might not be essential to discover at this stage.

When conducting the random sample for inclusion in the study, firstly three companies were selected randomly from the report (appendix 1), and then sent the questionnaire. Depending

on the participation rate, additional companies were selected. To select the participants randomly, all the potential companies were plotted into excel and assigned a number which could be selected randomly through the “RAND”-function.

The distribution consisted of sending the questionnaires to the work emails of the employees at the specific companies. However, for the companies that did not provide this information, an email was sent to their official email, with an encouragement to share it with their colleagues. Due to a low response rate for the first randomly selected, more random selections of three companies at a time were conducted. In total, 380 emails were sent out to 25 companies, meaning that all companies included in the random selection were asked to participate at the end.

**Participants.** The final sample of this study ( $n = 124$ ) was approximately balanced when it comes to the participants' age (21-30 years, 31-40 years and 41+). According to a report concerning HR-professionals in Sweden 2021, conducted by the Swedish statistical bureau Novus, approximately 67 % of the employed are 41 and above (Novus, 2021). In terms of gender the sample consisted of 76.8 % Women and 24.2% Men, which also was similar to the findings in the Novus report that showed a gender distribution predominated by women (84 %) in the overall HR-field (Novus, 2021). Unfortunately, statistics for the specific staffing- and recruitment area within the HR field in Sweden, was not to be found due to lack of research for the specific group. Nonetheless, these figures could be seen as benchmarks for the overall HR population in Sweden.

Overall the respondents had a positive trend towards having a degree in Human Resources (Degree in HR = 57.3%, No degree within HR = 42.7%). However, the participants in the sample had a less balanced distribution of how much they worked from home. To clarify, 20.2% of the participants worked from home 0 times per week, while 1.6% worked from home 5 times or more per week. Based on the above the WFH scale was later modified into a dichotomous scale for the analysis concerning the third research question, in order to enable a more balanced analysis. The new division was categorized as following, “0 to 1 times per week” (= 43.5%) as well as “2 or more times per week” (= 56.5 %). In this case, WFH 1 time per week could be seen as almost not WFH, while WFH 2 or more times per week can be viewed as WFH to a greater extent.

### **Quantitative Measurements**

Since this study was directed at HR-professionals within medium-large companies in Sweden, the questionnaire was in Swedish. For the measurements of Perceived stress, Demand, Control as well as Support, Swedish translations were used. A Cronbach's Alpha was conducted



for the scales PS ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), Job-demand ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ), Job-support ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ) and Job-control ( $\alpha = 0.64$ ), to measure the internal consistency. All but one of the scales reached a satisfactory fall out, which in this study was above the cut-off 0.70 (Taber, 2018). The job-control scale did reach a lower score. However, no smaller alterations could be done to increase this value, and it was therefore kept. The participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire that consisted of the scales and anticipated to quantify the following constructs.

### ***Working from home***

As a measure for the participants' remote working pattern the participants were asked to rate the number of times per week they worked from home, through the question “*Hur många gånger i veckan arbetar du hemifrån (i snitt)?*”. The options ranged from 0 times per week to 5 or more times per week, on a 6-point scale (see appendix 6). This was an instrument developed for this specific research purpose. Instead of focusing on remote work in general, which could be influenced by other factors, such as financial burdens as well as time aspects, it was important to center this measure to only one type of remote work, in this case WFH. This concept entails that the individual works from his/her own home, surrounded by his/her home environment whilst conducting work tasks (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

### ***Perceived stress***

Nordin and Nordins (2013), Swedish version of the Perceived stress 10-item scale (PSS-10) was used to measure the respondents own perception of stress. The PSS-10 focuses on the respondents own life, and how unpredictable and overwhelming he/she might find it. Originally the scale consisted of 14 items when it first was developed in 1983 (Cohen et al., 1983). However, it was later shortened to only 10 items as it was discovered that it still scored approximately the same validity and reliability even with the 4 questions removed (Nordin & Nordin, 2013). The scale consisted of 10 items measuring the participants perceived stress levels during the past 4 weeks. The questions were phrased as statements, where the participants were asked to rate how they felt on a 5-point Likert-scale (ranging from 1 = *Aldrig* to 5 = *Väldigt ofta*). In order to create a scale that consistently ranged from low to high, questions 11, 12, 14 and 15 were reversed after the data collection.

### ***Job-demand, Job-control, as well as Job-support***

To measure the constructs of Job-demand, control and support, the Swedish translated Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ), version three (Berthelsen et al., 2020) was

used. COPSOQ is an standardized instrument which is focused on measuring the psychosocial conditions and health promotion in the workplace. However, this study was not interested in including all COPSOQ measurements, and instead focused on demand, support and control. Most questions were collected from the middle and long version of COPSOQ III.

Job-demand was measured through eight questions concerning three different types of demands: Quantitative demands, work tempo and emotional demands. The first concerned the quantity of the participants' work, and was measured through three questions where the participant was asked to rate the quantity of his/her work and if he/she has the time to finish it. The rating ranged on a 5-point likert-scale from 1 = *Alltid* to 5 = *Aldrig/nästan aldrig*.

The aspect of job-demand which concerned work tempo consisted of two questions. These questions concerned the demands that were put on the working pace the participant was required to uphold, where the participant was asked to rate this on the same 5-point likert-scale as the quantitative demands. The third measurement, emotional demands, concerned the emotional exigencies the participant felt in his/her work, such as emotional situations and other individuals he/she had to attain while at work. The emotional demands were measured through three questions, ranging on a 5-point likert scale, with two different ranges (either 1 = *Alltid* to 5 = *Aldrig/nästan aldrig*, or, 1 = *I mycket hög grad* to 5 = *I mycket låg grad*).

As a measure for job-support, four questions were asked, focusing on the participants' feeling of support from his/her superiors and colleagues. The questions were focused on the participants' own feeling of support from the two, and he/she was asked to rate to what extent this support was present on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = *Alltid* to 5 = *Aldrig/nästan aldrig*.

Job-control was measured through four questions concerning the employees' possibility to influence and control his/her work- environment and situation. This included the organizational work environment as well as the social environment. Having a lower control has been associated with stress and burnout which also could be important findings for this study. All questions were rated on the same 5-point likert scale ranging from 1 = *Alltid* to 5 = *Aldrig/nästan aldrig*.

## **Analysis**

The analysis of this study was divided into two different sections, one for the exploratory interviews that helped inform the questionnaire and the other concerned the answers from the questionnaire.

### ***The interviews***

The analysis derived from the interviews focused on detecting and developing well defined themes. With the research questions in mind, the data was analyzed, line-by-line. An inductive approach was adapted as the purpose of the analysis was to get a better understanding of the meaning of the content (Willig, 2013). After the data had been familiarized through hand coding, it was transferred into the coding program Nvivo, version 1.4.1. The interviews were then coded through an in-depth analysis, focusing on repetition and contrasting thoughts. From this, both top codes and secondary codes were developed. The codes were labeled descriptively with specific phrases as well as through conceptual themes capturing the essence of the data the code represents (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). Four top codes were identified and labeled as follows; *Challenges when working from home*, *Advantages when working from home*, *The HR-role*, and *Potential stressors* (see appendix 3).

The outcome of the interviews gave an insight into the field of HR within staffing- and recruitment companies in Sweden, which in turn helped inform the questionnaire as well as direct the purpose of the study. For example, since stress was a clear code in the interviews, more focus was also placed on this in the actual questionnaire.

### ***The questionnaire***

The coding of the participants' answers was conducted in the software program IBM SPSS Statistics, version 28.0, which is a software that enables different kinds of analysis and testing of collected data. Prior to the analysis below, the distribution of the data as well as any potential outliers were analyzed in order to make sure that the data withheld the assumption of linearity. The linear assumption as well as the normal distribution of the variables was checked through simple scatter plots to help identify potential patterns in the data. Overall, the data met the linearity assumption. However, two variables diverged to some extent from this. The WFH index was a little platykurtic, while the support index was left skewed as most participants reported very high levels of support, which was kept in mind during the analysis. Nonetheless, since the sample of this study was rather large and quite robust tests were used, the assumption of normality was accepted. All missing values were treated as variable dropouts, as they did not have a clear effect on the analysis. There were twenty-six missing values in this dataset, however they were all found to be distributed over the dataset, and no participant had more than three

missing values. Therefore, no participant fall out was present in the original data, even though some variable fall out was present.

The first research question was firstly explored through an overall analysis of the mean, standard deviation, median as well as range of the scales, to examine to what extent stress was reported. The second part of the first research question was explored through an independent sample T-test looking at mean value differences between the ones mainly WFH (2 times or more/week) and those slightly WFH (0 to 1 times/week). Here, the main interest was to see if there was a difference in the levels of perceived stress for the ones working mainly from home, compared to those working mainly from the office. In this step, the mean values of the variables were also analyzed.

Research question two was explored through a correlation matrix, clarifying the associations between the variables perceived stress, job-support, job-control as well as job-demand. The third research question was explored through three separate Univariate analysis of Covariances. One analysis was conducted for each of the following variables: Control, Support and Demand, in relation to perceived stress and working conditions. The models are explained more below. For all the statistical tests used in this thesis, a significance level of .05 was used. The reason why this specific level was chosen, was that it is widely accepted within the psychological community and is a feasible level to do research work on, compared to a statistical significance level of  $p < .01$ , which could result in a false negative result where an actual effect might not be observed. Also, since this was an exploratory study a statistical significance of .05 was seen as satisfactory.

**Association and T-test.** In order to understand the data better, the relationship between five continuous scales (WFH, PS, job-control, job-demand as well as job-support) were compared through a correlation matrix. Even though some skewness and kurtosis were found, the scales did not differ significantly from normality, and therefore a two-tailed Pearson correlation was performed. In addition, the Pearson correlation was quite robust, and when comparing the results to a Spearman Rho correlation, the outcome did not show any differences of significance. For the correlation matrix, the whole 6-point scale of WFH was used (see appendix 6), to get a deeper understanding of how the variables correlate with each other.

In order to investigate the degree to which the level of perceived stress and WFH might be associated with each other, an independent sample T-test was conducted. For this analytical test

the dichotomic WFH-scale was used, measuring two points. Either the participants worked less (0-1 times per week) or more (2 or more times per week) from home. The T-test looked at the mean differences between the two groups, working more or less from home.

**ANCOVA.** The third part of the analysis aimed at exploring if the above association between job-demand, support, and control as well as PS, altered depending on the participants' level of working from home. This was examined through three different Factorial Univariate Analysis of Covariance models, one for each work characteristic. Three models were created, where the combination of the covariates (job-control, support and demand) differed for each of them. Each model had one dependent variable (i.e. perceived stress), and two factor variables (WFH, and either job-demand, support, or control). The job-factors that were not included in the model as an interaction, were instead adjusted for as covariates. The main focus of the variables was the interaction effect, which helped explore if the effect that WFH had on the perceived stress level was significantly dependent on the level of either job-control, demand or support the individual had, after controlling for the covariates.

Before exploring the models, the correlation of the covariates were checked to make sure that none of them were highly correlated. This assumption was met as they all showed a value where  $r = < 0.8$ . As mentioned above the Job-support was somehow skewed and the WFH index was somewhat kurtotic, which could make the following ANCOVA models to some extent less reliable. However, besides the two mentioned, the assumptions for normality were met. As a way to explore if the homogeneity assumption of variance was met, the three models were examined through a Levene's test. All three models showed a statistically non-significant result for the Levene's test (M1 [ $p = .580$ ], M2 [ $p = .689$ ], M3 [ $p = .093$ ]), meaning that there was no difference in the variance of the groups.

### **Ethical concerns**

For this study the guidelines given by the Swedish ethics committee were contained (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Since this exploratory study focused more on general knowledge of how the amount of WFH might correlate with the levels of perceived stress the participants felt, it was not focused on each individual which limited the possibility of revealing sensitive information. For the first part of the study, the interviews, the most vital ethical issue was to make sure that the participants were well informed as well as kept anonymous in further analysis. As a way to uphold this, the participants were given verbal information in the beginning of the study, detailing

the purpose, what their answers would be used for, their right to withdraw at any time, as well as who to contact if they had any questions or wished to withdraw their participation. Secondly, as a way to uphold anonymity, the interviews were kept disclosed, as all names were pseudonymized and sensitive information was removed, so that the participants could not be identified afterwards (Bryman, 2018). All collected data was kept in a folder on only one device and not shared with anyone except the researcher as well as supervisor. After finalizing the report, all data was extracted from the device.

As a way to make sure that the participants who participated in the questionnaire remained anonymous as well as prevent them from harm and invasion of their privacy, the survey platform “Sunet survey” was used to collect the answers. This platform stored all the data without any sources to directly connect each participant to their answers. Also, no personal questions such as names, address or identification number were collected. To uphold the principle of integrity and consent the participants were given information about the purpose of the study, what it entailed as well as the way the information was collected, before they agreed to participate (see appendix 4). To protect the participants from harm and potential distress, the participants were also informed about their right to discontinue their participation from the study at any given time, as it was completely voluntary. The first page of the questionnaire repeated the participants rights, and they had to give their consent as well as agree to the terms in order to continue the study (Appendix 5). Contact information to the researcher was given at the end of the questionnaire, with the encouragement to contact her if any questions arose, the participant wanted to withdraw from the study or had been suffering from harm during the study.

## **Results**

### **Overview of the data**

The table below (Table 1) represents the mean, standard deviation, median as well as range for all scales. Mostly the participants' answers were moderately distributed over the different scales, PS, WFH, Job-demand, Job-control and Job-support. Some deviation was found in the support index which had overall high scores.

**Table 1.***Means, Std, median and range for the tested variables (n = 124)*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Percentiles 25-75</b>
PS <sup>a</sup>	2.26	0.55	2.20	1.90 - 2.60
WFH <sup>b</sup>	2.72	1.25	3.00	2.00 - 4.00
Demand index <sup>a</sup>	3.00	0.60	3.00	2.63 - 3.25
Control index <sup>a</sup>	3.27	0.64	3.25	2.75 - 3.75
Support index <sup>a</sup>	4.39	0.67	4.50	4.00 - 5.00

*Note.* PS = Perceived Stress; WFH = Working From Home.

Scales: <sup>a</sup>. Ranging from 1 to 5; <sup>b</sup>. Ranging from 1 to 6.

### **The association between WFH and PS**

In order to explore if there was a difference in the means for the level of PS the participants reported and if they worked less (0-1 time/week) or more (2 or more times/week) from home, an independent sample T-test was conducted. A Levene's test showed that the variances of the groups were not significantly different, as  $p = .963$ . Therefore, the equal variances were assumed for the results of  $t$ . The results of the T-test indicated that there was no significant difference in the reported stress levels for the groups working less from home ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD = .55$ ), compared to the ones working more from home ( $M = 2.30$ ,  $SD = .55$ ), [ $t(122) = .925$ ,  $p = .357$ ]. The 95% confidence interval of the difference between the means ranged from  $[-.288$  to  $.105]$  and did not indicate a significant difference between the means. Therefore, no significant difference was found between the reported levels of PS for the two groups.

### **The association between perceived stress, job-control, job-demand as well as job-support**

As a way to explore the associations further, a correlation matrix was explored. Table two represents a Pearson correlation matrix, showing the correlations between the five continuous variables. No significant correlation was found between the level of perceived stress the participants feel as well as how many times per week he/she works from home. Nonetheless the participants did report a moderate level of Perceived stress on average;  $M = 2.26$ ,  $Std = 0.55$ , on a five-point scale.

**Table 2.***A Pearson correlation matrix between the study variables (n = 124)*

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. WFH	2.72	1.25		.087	-.078	.135	-.104
2. PS	2.26	.59	.087		-.287**	.454**	-.219*
3. Control	3.27	.64	-.078	-.287**		-.103	.309**
4. Demand	3.00	.60	.135	.454**	-.103		-.246**
5. Support	4.39	.67	-.104	-.219*	-.309**	-.246**	

Note. \* =  $p < .05$  (two-tailed); \*\* =  $p < .01$  (two-tailed); WFH = Working From Home; PS = Perceived Stress.

The association between the levels of job-control, job-demand, and job-support the participant reported, as well as his/her perceived stress level, was mainly explored through the correlation matrix (see table 2), as well as several simple scatter plots. A significant moderate correlation was found between Job-demands as well as reported perceived stress ( $r_s = .41$ ,  $n = 124$ ,  $p = < 0.001$ ). This correlation indicated that when the job demands increased, so did the reported perceived stress level of the participants. For the two other variables, control, and support, both were found to correlate negatively with reported PS. A significant negative correlation was found between the level of perceived stress as well as job-control ( $r_s = -.29$ ,  $n = 124$ ,  $p = < 0.001$ ). Similarly, a negative correlation was also found between reported job-support and perceived stress ( $r_s = -.25$ ,  $n = 124$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ).

#### **The association between work conditions, Perceived stress, as well as work characteristics**

To explore the associations between the variables further, three models were created. The first ANCOVA model (M1) explored the interaction effect between the level of WFH and PS, depending on what level of job-demands the individual has, while controlling for job-support as well as job-control. A statistically significant interaction was not found between WFH and job-demand on the PS level, whilst adjusting for job-control and job-support,  $F(3, 114) = 2.52$ ,  $p = .062$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$ . Model 1 did show that the covariate job-control ( $p = .002$ ) significantly



adjusted the association between the job-demand as well as the level of WFH, on the level of PS. Nonetheless the other covariate, job-support, did not significantly adjust this association.

Secondly, model 2 (M2) was much like M1, however, the factor level job-demand was replaced with job-control, whilst the model adjusted for the covariates job-demand and job-support. This model did not show a significant interaction between WFH and job-support on the level of perceived stress the individual reported,  $F(3, 114) = .31, p = .815, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$ . Model 2 showed that the covariate job-demand ( $p = < .001$ ) significantly adjusted the association between WFH and job-support, on the level of perceived stress.

The third model (M3) was similar to the above models (M1 and M2), however, it enclosed WFH and job-support as the factors in order to see if they had a significant interaction with the PS level, whilst regulating for job-control as well as job-demand as covariates. Like the M2 above, this model did not indicate a significant result either, as there was no statistically significant interaction found between WFH and job-support on the level of PS,  $F(2, 116) = 2.20, p = .115, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$ . Nonetheless, Model 3 showed that the covariates of job-control ( $p = .002$ ) as well as job-demand ( $p = < .001$ ) significantly adjusted the association between job-support and WFH, on the level of PS. Since there were no statistically significant interactions found through the models, PostHoc tests were not conducted.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of how HR-professionals within the fast growing and expanding staffing- and recruitment field in Sweden, are affected by the extent of work they perform from home. Since this field is much dependent on the social contact with not only colleagues but also customers and external connections, the prediction was that the HR-professionals working from home to a larger extent would also perceive themselves as more stressed, as they did not have the same feeling of close contact and support from their colleagues. Meanwhile, since the work environment and health of the employees is an extensive area of the HR-professionals' everyday tasks, this study also looked at how the work characteristics, job-demand, job-control and job-support, might have an association with as well as moderate their level of perceived stress.

#### **Working from home and perceived stressed**

The first research question addressed the level of PS the individuals reported, and to what extent this level of stress was associated with their level of WFH. Overall, the participants

reported a moderate level of perceived stress ( $M = 2.26$ , on a 5-point scale), indicating that the HR-professionals do perceive themselves as stressed to some extent. Nonetheless, the reported stress level was not alarmingly high. As a comparison, Hayes et al. (2021) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, participants reported a perceived stress level of 3.90, which was substantially higher than what was found in this study. However, this difference in reported stress levels might be due to other factors, such as a fear of being laid off or being infected by the COVID-19 virus. Since this study was conducted approximately two years after the pandemic broke out, these factors might not be as dominant causes for the stress levels.

No significant relationship was found between the amount of WFH as well as PS, indicating that the relationship between the two variables might not be as strong as predicted. Nevertheless, the group that worked more from home (2-5 times/week) did to some extent report higher levels of stress even though it was not significant, indicating that there might be some association between the two after all. However, not finding a significant association between PS and the level of WFH, can be seen as a positive outcome since many earlier studies have shown the serious consequences prolonged stress can have for employees. For example, earlier studies have shown a connection between a high level of perceived stress and a decrease in productivity, less work satisfaction as well as work-life balance (Hayes et al., 2021; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021). In addition, an increased stress level can also lead to other organizational needs. For instance, Spagnoli et al. (2020) found that more remote work can lead to higher levels of stress and in turn an extended need for management and structure. An increase in organizational resources, such as more support, restructuring and reorganizing, is not only costly for the organization, but also uses resources that might be needed elsewhere.

The non-significant result between PS and WFH can also be related to earlier research, which has shown that more remote work actually can lead to a lower stress level, as the workers now need less time for commuting and have more flexibility in their work life (Shimura et al., 2021). From that point of view, a more flexible work life with more working hours from home, might lead the employees to have a higher sense of freedom while still performing the same amount of work. According to Allen et al. (2015) such a flexibility could also lead to a better balance between work- and private life. Interestingly, the higher level of flexibility as well as less need for commuting to work was also something that the participants in the preparatory interviews raised as advantages of working more from home (see appendix 2).

From the second analysis, the independent samples T-test, a mean difference was found between WFH and their perceived stress levels. The results indicated that the employees working more from home also reported higher levels of stress, which is in accordance with the predicted outcome. Nevertheless, this difference in the stress levels could be due to many different factors. Firstly, earlier studies have shown that working from home can leave the employee with a feeling of isolation, because of the limited physical interactions with colleagues and customers, which in turn can leave them with a higher perception of stress (Bin et al., 2021; Di Martino & Wirth, 1990). In the interviews that informed the questionnaire, the HR-role was depicted as a role with consistent social contact enabling their work, mostly in relation to support as well as a forum for discussing strategies and ideas (See appendix 3). It is therefore not surprising that a loss of the daily contact with employees and customers could lead the employees to feel more isolated, and in turn more stressed. One of the interviewees also mentioned how the contact with colleagues was challenging when working from home, as the daily contact and simple questions required a phone call or email, instead of just asking when meeting in the hallway or similar situations. Furthermore, Shimura et al. (2021), found that the connection between working more from home and a higher reported perceived stress level could be due to the extra effort and time it can take the employees to communicate with their colleagues when they are working remotely. Adding an additional time aspect because of increased remote work, to one of the most crucial work-tasks that the HR-professionals have (communication), could therefore likely be a stressor.

Secondly, the difference of mean perceived stress positively correlating with working more from home, could be due to the increased demand of technical knowledge that WFH could imply. WFH not only puts higher demands on the employees current technical knowledge, but also on his/her ability to solve such problems independently. Particularly, this is often due to the fact that the relief and support from colleagues usually is more challenging to receive when working from home (Bin et al., 2021; Suh & Lee, 2017). Consequently, higher demands together with less support could have a cumulative effect on the individual's stress level and lead to psychological strains. However, as Karasek and Theorell (1996) discovered, the support level an employee receives can be a moderating factor, easing the strains the high demands might cause the individual. Advancing on this theory, introducing a higher level of support might help the employee handle the demands that working from home might cause, such as solving technical problems as well as less contact with employees.

An unforeseen finding from this study was the staggering level of support that was reported by almost all participants. Overall, the participants all reported a very high level of support with a mean of 4.388 out of 5.00 (Table 1). However, one can wonder what the support of colleagues and superiors the participants reported was so much higher than the other factors. One explanation could be that the participants do not want to disrespect their co-workers and therefore tend to report positively on this factor. Another justification could be that the HR field requires a lot of support from both colleagues and superiors, which makes it natural for the participants to perceive their workplace as more supportive. Nonetheless, no strong difference in the means of reported support for either the ones working more or less from home was found.

### **The association between the factors**

The second research question intended to explore how the level of job-demand, job-support as well as job-control might be associated with the level of PS the participants reported. According to Karasek and Theorell's (1996) Demand-control-support model, high levels of demands combined with a low level of control, could cause a strain situation which in turn can lead to negative health outcomes, such as stress and tiredness. Contradicting this, a high level of demands as well as high levels of control, could in turn lead to a feeling of personal development and engaging learning. Later, the level of support was added to the model as a moderating factor. As can be viewed in the result section (Table 2), a positive correlation between the job-demands the individuals are feeling and their PS levels was found in this study. This entails that when the employee's job-demands increases, so does his/her perceived stress level, indicating that higher levels of demand could also cause an increased perception of stress. This result is quite similar to the original discovery by Karasek and Theorell (1996). In addition to this, a negative significant correlation was also found between perceived stress and the level of job-control the individual is feeling. This relationship indicates that when the level of control advances, supposedly the level of perceived stress declines. A similar negative significant correlation was found between the level of support and perceived stress, indicating that when the feeling of support rises the feeling of stress lowers.

According to more recent findings the change in work environment to increasingly working from home can be seen as an increase in demands for the employee, as he/she now has to act more independently, solve technical problems him-/herself, as well as face professional isolation (Barbieri et al., 2021; Jamal et al., 2021). Consequently, these factors could lead to

higher levels of stress, and over a prolonged period potentially cause alarming health consequences, such as cardiovascular diseases and burnout. Based on the outcomes, it is important to apprehend the seriousness in understanding what factors might be causing the employees stress, and what factors might relieve the consequences. Increasing the knowledge of what could cause higher stress levels of HR-professionals, could enable improvements.

The third research question aimed at exploring if there was an association between job-control, job-demand, job-support, as well as the level of perceived stress, and if this association altered depending on the level of WFH. None of the three models (M1, M2, M3) showed a significant interaction between the groups working more or less from home and the work-factors, on the level of perceived stress, which was quite unexpected. This result contradicts the findings of some of the previous studies, which propose that working from home to a greater extent is associated with higher levels of stress, and even more so in combination with higher demands (Barbieri et al., 2021; Jamal et al., 2021). Nevertheless, M1, which included the factor variable job-demand, did show an almost significant interaction ( $p = .062$ ) for WFH and job-demand on the level of perceived stress. Even though no significant interaction was found, the result of M1 indicates that there might be an association between the variables, and that job-demands could possibly have a moderating effect on the association between WFH as well as PS, when adjusting for the covariates job-support and job-control. Nevertheless, the two other models (M2 as well as M3) did not find a significant result. Earlier research have also found that a higher level of remote work in turn can lead to a lower level of physical and psychological stress (Allen et al., 2015; Shimura et al., 2021). Mainly this is due to the fact that the possibility of working remotely also eases potential burdens or obstacles such as commuting and preparing, where the energy instead can be focused on the actual work tasks. Instead, the results of this study indicate that higher demands and lower levels of control can have an effect on the perceived stress levels. Nonetheless, these effects have not shown to be directly associated with the working conditions the individuals have (working more or less from home).

The lack of significant differences of reported perceived stress could give an indication that the HR-professionals within staffing and recruitment might feel approximately the same level of stress, independently of where they work from. On the other hand, according to Bin et al. (2021) as well as Di Martino and Wirth (1990), working more from home can lead to a feeling of isolation, which in turn could cause a reaction of stress for the employee. As mentioned before,

the role of HR within staffing- and recruitment companies does entail a great level of social interactions, both in the recruitment processes, but also when developing and implementing new projects. Based on this, it is possible that the HR-professionals feel a kindred amount of stress, both when working more or less from home, since there might be obstacles or disadvantages for both working conditions. As a potential solution for this issue, Spagnilo et al. (2020) suggests that more flexibility in the working environment (such as more flexibility when it comes to working remotely) also entails a greater implementation of support and management from the leaders of the organization. Mainly this is due to the fact that they have the possibility to oversee the employees that might be in the risk zone for isolation and workaholism when the supervision is lower due to more working from home. In relation to this, a full remote working environment might not be the best solution for HR-professionals. Instead, it might not be the actual working conditions that are connected to the levels of perceived stress, but rather the flexibility for the individual to choose their preferred working conditions to some extent.

### **The ethical principles**

For this study the psychological ethical standards were withheld (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Nonetheless, there are some modifications and improvements that could have been made. Through the consent form (see appendix 5) it can be seen that the research will concern the measure of stress in some way, however, it was not clarified exactly what constructs were being measured. To avoid potential confusion and uncertainty for the participants, it would have been favorable to clarify in the consent form the exact psychological factors being measured. On the other hand, simplifying and clarifying the exact constructs could perhaps lead the participants to respond in an unnatural way, where the participants' responses are based on what they think the researcher is striving for, and not how they really feel. Therefore, a choice was made to constrain this information, even though it might lead to some confusion.

### **Construct Validity**

This thesis entailed constructs that enabled the analysis and development of the questionnaire: WFH, PS, Job-demand, job-control as well as job-support. All constructs, except WFH, were well developed and researched areas, which entailed that there were already several different instruments that had been used to measure these in past research. Since this thesis aimed at understanding and exploring the field of staffing- and recruitment, and not a specific role within the HR-field, the constructs' original instruments were used without case specific

questions. Using original instruments that have been developed over several years and previously tested by many, such as COPSOQ (Berthelsen et al., 2020) and PSS-10 (Nordin & Nordin, 2013), allowed for more reliable measures, as opposed to if the constructs were developed by the researcher. At least with the time and resource restrictions present for this thesis. Cronbach's Alphas were conducted for all the scales, which all showed a high internal consistency. However, the control scale did reach a less satisfactory score than the others, reaching  $\alpha = 0.644$ , indicating that the internal consistency of the questions might not be so high. The reason for this could be that this instrument entailed quite few items which were used to measure several aspects of control. The diversity in what the questions, for example control over what ones tasks, who he/she works with or what he/she works with, could allow for quite a spread of ratings on each question, which perhaps could be the cause for the lower  $\alpha$ -score. An improvement could be to include more relevant items, making the set of items more consistent and the scale more reliable.

The fifth construct entailed the employees working condition. In order to measure this the employees were asked a question of how many times per week they worked from home, ranging from 0-5 times/week. A limitation of this measurement was that it might not have been clear enough (question 7 in appendix 6), as it uses the phrase “working from home”, without any further explanation of what this entails. In turn, this can be seen as a limitation of the validity for the specific construct. Alternatively, it would have been beneficial to have an explanation of what working from home meant in this context, in order to limit potential contradictions and misunderstandings from the participants. One likely misunderstanding is that the participants thought that the question aimed at measuring remote work and not specifically working from home, which could compromise the validity of the results.

## **Strengths, improvements, as well as recommendations for future research**

### ***Improvements***

A limitation of this study was the number of participants which unfortunately did not reach the aspired amount, resulting in a study that was somehow underpowered. The power analysis conducted for the T-tests (Question 1) aimed at a sample size of approximately 144 participants at a power of 0.8. Nonetheless, concerning the ANCOVA models, a sample size of at least 269 participants was considered satisfactory. However, the sample of this study reached 124 participants, which meant that it was somehow underpowered. However, the final sample size was still quite high, meaning that it only limited the analysis to some extent. The

underpowerment could lead to potential type-2 error, and a potential false negative result. Since the sample was quite small, it is possible that certain effects might not have been detected and could have been more prominent and significant if more participants had participated in the study. Nonetheless, since a moderate sample size actually was reached, the underpowerment was still limited, meaning that there were quite good chances of finding valid results and still rejecting potential false negative results. This is a reflection that could be brought to future research where this study could be used as a stepping stone into a deeper analysis of the potential patterns.

Another limitation of this study is that due to the cross-sectional nature of it, causal inferences could not be detected. However, since the study was seen as a leap into the psychological research area of the Staffing- and Recruitment field, and little prior research has been conducted, it was challenging to draw well informed conclusions from the results. However, to be able to generalize and make indefinite conclusions, was neither the intention or purpose of this study. Instead, it was hoped that the study would allow insight into a non-researched area, allowing for more depend analysis in order to minimize the knowledge-gap.

A third limitation for this study is the methodological design, as it is a mixed method sequential design. Since the area that is of importance for this study had been studied very limited in the past, and this study was meant as a stepping stone for further research, the method was also chosen for that purpose. Nonetheless, a mixed method between qualitative and quantitative research can have potential disadvantages. It is a possibility that collecting and analyzing the qualitative data first through interviews, can have an impact on the following interpretation of the quantitative data. However, since the function of the qualitative data in this study was to inform the instruments used and help determine the direction of the questions, the researcher was aware of this potential issue. The design of this study also required more time for completing each section, as well as more participants. Nevertheless, since this area of research was so limited, it was seen as a necessity to include such an element in the study.

### ***Strengths***

A strength of this study is that it puts focus on a field that has been explored very limited in the past. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought much attention to the well-being of employees and potential demands to their work life (Barbara et al., 2021). Nonetheless, very little studies have been focused on the work group that helps the development and implementation of a better work environment, the function of Human resources. Therefore, this study aimed at exploring the



HR function and their work health, as they are the ones that are supposed to help develop and improve the rest of the workforce. Since this is a starting point into this research field, the focus is specified to a limited and concentrated group, which allows for a more in depth analysis of recruitment- and staffing HR-professionals. Studying this specific group makes the study more comprehensive and detailed, allowing one to identify potential patterns and non-patterns. If the study had a broader identified population, the same depth would not be reachable.

Another strength of the present study is the strategic selection of the population. As mentioned above, this study is very focused on only one workgroup within the Human Resource field, staffing- and recruitment, which allows a more in depth study of this specific group. The sample was selected through a cluster randomization of the top middle and large recruitment- and staffing companies in Sweden, where each company that was asked to participate had approximately the same chance of being selected. The population validity of the sample selection was quite high, as it allowed for generalization to the larger target population. Even though the sample size of this study was quite low ( $n = 124$ ), it was limited to only the specific population, HR-professionals within middle to large recruitment- and staffing companies in Sweden. Having a broader population would enable more people to actually participate, however this might forfeit the purpose of the study. The current study has the intention of exploring potential indications between the constructs, rather than being able to draw a definitive conclusion and being able to generalize the results to other groups than the targeted population. Nevertheless, now that some indications have been explored, the next step could be to test the association between perceived stress and working conditions on a wider population, such as the entire HR-field in Sweden.

A third strength of this study was the quite high reliability of the questionnaire. Several factors laid the basis for its reliability, including clearly operationalized variables, as well as conducting a pilot study. Before the questionnaire was sent out to the actual participants, a pilot study was conducted in order to detect potential misunderstandings or errors. The results of the pilot questionnaire were also similar to the ones gained from the actual questionnaire. In addition, the procedure of the study was documented and straightforward, allowing others to repeat it and hopefully gain similar results in the future.

### ***Future research***

Even though perceived stress as well as working conditions have been a relevant topic over a few decades, the staffing- and recruitment field and more specifically HR-professionals

within it have undergone little research. Therefore, it is troublesome to draw conclusions about the field solely based on this study. Instead, this should be seen as a stepping stone into a field which longs for more research. Since some trends were found in this study, such as the participants WFH also reported to some extent a higher level of perceived stress, this should be studied further in order to actually discover if there is a significant connection between the two. When looking at earlier studies (Allen et al., 2015; Shimura et al., 2021) it is clear that working remotely and mostly from home is becoming a more dominant part of modern work life. With this realization, one also has to look at what consequences this could have for the particular field of HR. It would be interesting to explore the potential causal effect between working from home and different health outcomes for HR-professionals, in order to understand the field further.

Another area that would be interesting to investigate further in future research is the level of support that HR-professionals feel in their role. As proposed by Karasek and Theorell (1996) a high level of support could have a moderating effect on the negative consequences high demands and a low control could have on employees. Based on this theory, a more extensive understanding of the level of support HR-professionals feel in comparison with their perceived stress levels, might enable research that could help develop HR-professionals' working environment and lower their stress levels.

### **Conclusion**

To summarize this thesis, the overall levels of perceived stress for HR-professionals within the staffing- and recruitment field in Sweden, were reported as moderately low. In addition, a significant relationship between the perception of stress as well as working from home was not found. Possible explanations could be that working more from home might increase the flexibility of the employees work life, as well as be more time efficient, as the employees need less time for commuting to work. Nonetheless, an association between the participants working more from home and a higher level of perceived stress was present, even though it was not statistically significant. These indicators cannot be used as an insurance for the association between the two, however, it can be seen as a guidance for further research within this area and potential work environmental issues.

The reported perception of stress was found to have some association to the job characteristics job-demand, support, and control. A significant positive correlation was found between the level of demands the HR-professionals were facing, and a higher level of PS. In

addition, significant negative correlations were found between the amount of support as well as control the individual was experiencing, and a lower level of PS. The job characteristics association with the perceived stress levels of the HR-professionals was somewhat expected, and resembles the findings that Karasek and Theorell (1996) found through their job-demand, control and support model. Nevertheless, the level of WFH was not found to alter the association between the HR-professionals' PS as well as the job characteristics demand, support and control. However, a significant interaction was almost found between WFH as well as job-demand, on the HR-professionals perceived stress level. This indicated that the level of WFH as well as the demands the individual experienced might affect the HR-professionals level of perceived stress.

Since the field of staffing- and recruitment in Sweden is still developing and evolving, little research has been performed to this day. As a consequence of this, the results of this study cannot be used as confirmation that HR-professionals within the field do not experience a high level of perceived stress. Similarly, one cannot say with certainty that working from home does not affect the perception of stress for HR-professionals. Therefore, further research is needed to understand how perceived stress, as well as the job characteristics, job-demand, job-control, and job-support, might be associated with the level of working from home over time. One study cannot solely lay the ground for how these psychological factors might unfold, however, it can be a stepping stone into a field that longs for further research.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. *Almega Kompetens Företagen Topp 25.*

#### ✦ | Kompetensföretagen



**Topp 25** största kompetensföretagen första kvartalet 2021 sett till total omsättning för de 35 största medlemmarna. Placering och marknadsandel fjärde kvartalet 2020 inom parentes.

#### Topplista totalt

#### Första kvartalet 2021

		<b>Total %</b>	<b>2020 Q4</b>	<b>2020 Q4</b>
1	Manpower	12,97%	(1)	(13,65%)
2	Randstad	12,92%	(2)	(13,41%)
3	Lernia Bemanning AB	8,25%	(3)	(8,44%)
4	Adecco	7,60%	(4)	(7,19%)
5	Academic Work	6,40%	(5)	(6,92%)
6	Poolia	5,77%	(6)	(5,55%)
7	Logent	3,72%	(7)	(3,99%)
8	OnePartnerGroup AB	3,32%	(8)	(3,19%)
9	Skill	2,74%	(11)	(2,43%)
10	Arena Personal	2,74%	(9)	(2,70%)
11	StudentConsulting AB	2,48%	(10)	(2,60%)
12	Tranpenad	2,35%	(12)	(2,38%)
13	Söder & Co.	2,16%	(14)	(1,98%)
14	PEMA People	2,07%	(13)	(2,04%)
15	NGS Group	1,65%	(-)	(-)
16	Palm Partners	1,59%	(16)	(1,60%)
17	Dedicare	1,57%	(17)	(1,49%)
18	Perido	1,52%	(19)	(1,41%)
19	Storesupport	1,38%	(20)	(1,37%)
20	Klara	1,36%	(18)	(1,42%)
21	Bravura	1,33%	(21)	(1,33%)
22	Speed	1,31%	(24)	(1,16%)
23	Wikan Personal	1,30%	(-)	(-)
24	Effektiv	1,16%	(22)	(1,27%)
25	Colligo Vård	1,14%	(25)	(1,13%)

Vänligen notera att urvalet för topplistorna baseras på de 35 medlemsföretag som är med i underlaget för kvartalsrapporten. De medlemsföretag som inte är med i urvalet kan inte vara med i topplistorna.

## **Appendix 2. Interview Guide for exploratory interviews.**

### *Background information*

- Vill du börja med att berätta lite om din roll och vad du gör i dagsläget?
  - Hur ser en vanlig dag ut för dig?
- Hur länge har du arbetat i din roll?
- Hur trivs du i din roll?

### *Working from home*

- Arbetar du hemifrån just nu, eller har gjort det under den senaste månaden?
- Hur mycket arbetar du hemifrån i snitt?
- Under hur lång tid har du arbetat hemifrån?
- Vad är enligt dig den största skillnaden mellan att arbeta hemifrån och arbeta på kontoret?
  - Fördelar?
  - Nackdelar?

### *Everyday work routines*

- Vad är de tre bästa sakerna med ditt arbete?
- Vad är de tre mest utmanande sakerna med ditt arbete?

### *Workload /stress levels*

- Hur upplever du din arbetsbelastning i dagsläget?
  - Har det förändrats sedan du började arbeta hemifrån?
- Har du de resurserna du har för att kunna klara av ditt arbete väl?

### *Contact with consultants and customers*

- Har din kontakt med dina **konsulter** eller **kunder** förändrats efter att du börjat arbeta hemifrån?
  - Vilka positiva utfall anser du att det har haft?
  - Vilka mindre positiva utfall anser du att det har haft?

### *Anything to add to this interview?*

- Har du något du skulle vilja tillägga till denna intervju?
- Några frågor till mig?

**Appendix 3. Coding Scheme developed from analysis in Nvivo.**

<b>Top code</b>	<b>Secondary codes</b>	<b>Frequency (times its been coded)</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>The HR-role</i>		49		
	Support from colleagues	10	Support and engagement in each other's work was something the participants all raised as an important part of their HR-role and their day to day work life.	<i>“Ja absolut, och skulle det vara så att jag behöver stöttning i något eller behöver liksom rena material så finns det alltid hjälp att få och tillgång till det”.</i>
	Social relationships	8	An important part of the HR-role for the participants were their social relations and day to day contact with consultants as well as customers.	<i>“Och sen så då på de uppdragen där det är ett bemanningsuppdrag ingår det också mycket att upprätthålla kontakten med de konsulterna och att schemalägga dem och stämna av angående sjukfrånvaro och sådär”.</i>
	Demands of the role	6	A demand that all the participants felt was a part of their HR-role was the contact with candidates and consultants when they had to give disappointing news. Another demand is also the measuring of their performance and the outcome of their work.	<i>“Ja men det är ju såklart det här med att liksom ta de tuffa samtalen och ibland behöva lämna tråkiga besked, för det är ändå människor du jobbar med”.</i>

	Control	12	The participants also mentioned how control was a part of their role. Not only does HR need to take control in order to do their job and accomplish results, they also have a certain degree of control when it comes to the recruitment process, the satisfaction of the customers etc.	<i>“Jag tycker att det är kul att ha uppgifter med lite mer tyngd i än det helt enkelt. Och få möjlighet att påverka konsulternas trivsel i arbetet och också kunderna såklart och naturligtvis servicegraden till kund liksom”.</i>
	Variation	3	All of the four participants raised that their role entailed a lot of variation. The role included many different work tasks and responsibilities which created a more varied workday.	<i>“Jag har insett att variation är jätteviktigt för mig och jag trivs ju också för att jag fått ta mycket eget ansvar”.</i>
<i>Potential stressors</i>		25		
	High workload	6	The participants raised a concern about them having a high workload, for example through having a lot of processes at once, always having new tasks as well as having the responsibility for several consultants.	<i>“Det händer ju saker hela tiden man behöver ju vara otroligt flexibel”.</i>
	Time pressure	6	Time pressure was something all the participants raised, independently if they worked from home or not. The HR-role	<i>“Högt tempo är det är ju också och det är jätteroligt på många sätt men det är också utmanande på andra sätt, att känna att man</i>

			included a high tempo which made some participants feel that they did not have the time to complete their work tasks or give their consultants/customers the time they needed.	<i>inte riktigt räcker till, den känslan är ju väldigt vanligt förekommande absolut</i> ".
<i>Challenges when working from home</i>		40		
	More challenging to receive support	6	Many participants felt that receiving support from colleagues and superiors became more of a challenge during remote working. Mainly the communication became more time and effort consuming as well as lacked the personal connection that it entailed when working at the office.	<i>"Ehm, det blir ju på ett annat sätt när man måste boka in ett möte eller fråga, "kan jag ringa upp nu och diskutera det" och sådär"</i> .
	Less social contact	14	A clear challenge when working from home was the lack of social contact. Mainly this concerned the employees contact with other colleagues and superiors. Some participants raised that its was harder to talk about things that did not concern work and that they also lost social contact as they did not commute to work.	<i>"Alltså det blir inte det här naturliga igår gjorde jag detta och detta utan det säger man nu går vi in och så gör vi detta och sen kan alla logga ut"</i> .

	Hard to separate work and free-time	3	Some participants found it harder to differentiate the work day from the rest of the day. Since they spent the days at home and their work equipment was in their home, some participants were more likely to check their email and keep working after they ended.	<i>“Både att jag är i kontorsmiljö där jag arbetar på ett visst annat sätt till att jag kanske har svårare att se skillnad på när jag är ledig och när jag är på jobbet och sådär”.</i>
	Decrease in motivation	5	Some participants felt that their motivation lessened as they worked from home, mainly because they did not have their colleagues to support and incite them.	<i>“Jag skulle säga att jag mycket mindre motiverad när jag sitter hemifrån. Jag får alltid gjort det jag ska och det är liksom det går inte ut över någon annan, men jag känner inte samma liksom så här nu kör vi men som jag känner när jag är på kontoret”.</i>
<i>Advantages when working from home</i>		38		
	More focused	4	Three of the participants raised that they were more focused when they worked from home as they had fewer interruptions from colleagues and as they spent less time on communicating they had more time to work.	<i>“En stor fördel det är ju att man sitter mer fokuserat. Det är inte man, blir inte störd på samma sätt av att någon börjar prata med en eller så där, utan jag tycker att när jag sitter hemma då kan jag sitta mycket mer och fokusera på mitt”.</i>

	Flexibility	7	By working from home all participants felt that the work became more flexible. Mainly the location of the work task or customer became less important as the communication could be handled remotely. Working from home also increased the flexibility for when the HR-practitioner carried out more serious phone calls without being concerned about anyone hearing the conversation.	<i>“Det är lättare att lägga upp vardagen på det sättet, så det är ju väldigt skönt också att ha den möjligheten tycker jag”.</i>
	Less traveling	3	The participants mentioned that they saved a lot of time when they did not have to commute to their workplace. This in turn gave them more free time and flexibility in their everyday life.	<i>“Ja alltså jag får ju mer fritid, jag sparar ju väldigt mycket tid när jag inte pendlar liksom”.</i>

#### **Appendix 4. Cover Letter/questionnaire invitation.**

Hej!

Mitt namn är Frida Palshøj Warlo och jag läser just nu masterprogrammet i Human Resources, vid Lunds Universitet. Jag håller just nu på att genomföra en studie som har intresse av att undersöka arbetsmiljö i form av kontorsarbete och hemarbete, i förhållande till arbetstrivsel och välbefinnande.

Då jag har ett stort intresse för rekryterings- och bemanningsbranschen tycker jag att det är viktigt att förstå hur just denna bransch kan utveckla sin arbetsmiljö och arbetstrivsel löpande. Därav undrar jag om du skulle vara intresserad av att delta i min studie och på så sätt bidra till en ökad förståelse av hur den allt mer flexibla arbetsmiljön kan påverka HR-professionellas hälsa och välbefinnande? *Det enda kravet är att du just nu arbetar inom rekryterings- och bemanningsbranschen i Sverige.*

Isåfall får du jättegärna svara på min enkät via länken nedan:

<https://survey.mailing.lu.se/Survey/39136>

Enkäten tar ungefär 10 minuter att besvara, ibland kortare. Det går även bra att distribuera detta mail inom din organisation om du har möjlighet. Såklart kommer alla svar vara helt anonyma och det finns ingen möjlighet att återkoppla svararen till den enskilda svararen. Jag skulle verkligen uppskatta om du har tid och möjlighet att delta, då det skulle vara till stor hjälp i mitt arbete!

Om du har några frågor eller funderingar är du välkommen att höra av dig till huvud forskaren, Frida Palshøj Warlo via mail: fr7531wa-s@student.lu.se.

Tusen tack på förhand för din tid och jag önskar dig en fortsatt fin dag!

Med vänliga hälsningar,  
Frida Palshøj Warlo



## **Appendix 5. *Consent form.***

Hej!

Detta är en studie som är intresserad av att undersöka den psykosociala arbetsmiljön för HR-medarbetare inom rekryterings- och bemanningsbranschen. Främsta fokus handlar om skiftet till hemarbete och individens välbefinnande.

Jag, Frida Palshøj Warlo, läser just nu sista året på Masterprogrammet i Personal- och Arbetslivsfrågor vid Lunds Universitet, och har ett stort intresse för det psykologiska perspektivet på arbetsmiljö och arbetslivet. På bakgrund av detta är det i denna studie av intresse att undersöka hemarbete i förhållande till arbetstrivsel och välbefinnande, så som exempelvis stress.

Enkäten är beräknad att ta ungefär 10 minuter av din tid, ibland mindre, och det finns inga förväntade risker för dig som deltagare.

Genom att delta i denna studie kan du bidra till en ökad förståelse av hur den allt mer flexibla arbetsmiljön kan påverka HR-medarbetares hälsa och välbefinnande. Förhoppningsvis kan detta vara ett första steg i riktningen mot en ökad förståelse av hemarbete och vad denna nya arbetsform kan bringa HR-medarbetare inom rekryterings- och bemanningsbranschen i Sverige.

För att värna om din integritet och anonymitet kommer flera åtgärder att vidtas i denna studie. Dina svar kommer att vara helt anonyma och ingen information kommer att kunna härledas tillbaka till dig. Enkätens svar kommer endast att vara tillgängliga för huvud forskaren samt en handledare. Viktigt att nämna är dock att inga namn eller personlig information om deltagarna kommer att inkluderas. Ditt deltagande är helt frivilligt och du som deltagare har även möjlighet att dra dig ur studien vid vilket tidpunkt som helst, även utan anledning.

Studiens resultat kommer att presenteras i en uppsats som kommer att publiceras via Lunds Universitets hemsida.

Om du har några frågor eller funderingar går det bra att höra av dig till mig, Frida Palshøj Warlo, via mail: [fr7531wa-s@student.lu.se](mailto:fr7531wa-s@student.lu.se).

Tack för din tid och din medverkan!

Genom att trycka dig vidare nedan samtycker du till deltagande samt ovanstående information!

## Appendix 6. *The questionnaire.*

### En undersökning av den psykosociala arbetsmiljön för HR-medarbetare inom rekryterings- och bemanningsbranschen

#### Sektion 1 - Explorativa frågor

Denna del av enkäten kommer fokusera på svararen och hens arbetsvanor. Du uppmanas att svara kring hur ditt arbete är upplagt.

#### 1. Vad identifierar du dig som?

- Kvinna
- Man
- Annat

#### 2. Hur många års erfarenhet har du inom HR-branschen?

- 0-1 år
- 2-3 år
- 4-5 år
- 6-10 år
- 11-25 år
- 16-20 år
- 21-25 år
- 26 år eller fler

#### 3. Har du en utbildning inom Human resources (Kandidat eller master i personal- och arbetslivsfrågor)?

- Ja
- Nej
- Vet inte

#### 4. Vad är din ålder?

- 20 år eller yngre
- 21-30 år
- 31-40 år
- 41-50 år
- 51-60 år
- 60 år eller äldre

#### **5. Vad är din nuvarande roll? (Det går att välja flera alternativ)**

- Konsultansvarig/kundansvarig
- Rekryterare
- Rekryteringsassistent
- Administratör
- Bemanningskoordinator
- Chef
- Annat

#### **6. Hur många procent jobbar du?**

- 0-24 %
- 25-49 %
- 50-74 %
- 75-100 %

#### **7. Hur många gånger i veckan arbetar du hemifrån (i snitt)?**

- 0 gång per vecka
- 1 gång per vecka
- 2 gånger per vecka
- 3 gånger per vecka
- 4 gånger per vecka
- 5 gånger eller fler per vecka

## **Sektion 2 - Dina känslor**

Denna del av enkäten kommer att handla om dina känslor och tankar under den senaste månaden. Du ska fylla i hur ofta du har känt eller tänkt på ett visst sätt.

### **8. Under den senaste månaden, hur ofta har du varit upprörd över något som hände helt oväntat?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Väldigt ofta

### **9. Under den senaste månaden, hur ofta har du känt att du var oförmögen att kontrollera de viktiga sakerna i ditt liv?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Väldigt ofta

### **10. Under den senaste månaden, hur ofta har du känt dig nervös och "stressad"?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Väldigt ofta

### **11. Under den senaste månaden, hur ofta har du litat på din förmåga att hantera dina personliga problem?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Veldig oft

**12. Under den senaste månaden, hur oft har du känt att saker och ting har gått din väg?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Veldig oft

**13. Under den senaste månaden, hur oft har du känt att du inte kunnat hantera allt som du måste göra?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Veldig oft

**14. Under den senaste månaden, hur oft har du klarat av att kontrollera irritationsmoment i ditt liv?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Veldig oft

**15. Under den senaste månaden, hur ofta har du känt att du haft kontroll?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Veldig oft

**16. Under den senaste månaden, hur ofta har du varit arg över sådant som hänt och varit utanför din kontroll?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Veldig oft

**17. Under den senaste månaden, hur ofta har du känt att svårigheter hopat sig så att du inte kunnat hantera dem?**

- Aldrig
- Nästan aldrig
- Ibland
- Ganska ofta
- Veldig oft

**Sektion 3 - Ditt arbetsliv**

Denna del av enkäten kommer att omhandla dina känslor och tankar kring ditt arbetsliv och arbetsmiljö. Främsta fokus kommer att ligga på din upplevelse av ditt arbete och de förutsättningar du har i arbetet.

**18. Är din arbetsbörda ojämnt fördelad så att arbete samlas på hög?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/nästan aldrig

### **19. Hur ofta händer det att du inte hinner slutföra alla dina arbetsuppgifter?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/nästan aldrig

### **20. Kommer du efter med ditt arbete?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/nästan aldrig

### **21. Är du tvungen att arbeta väldigt snabbt?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/nästan aldrig

### **22. Arbetar du i ett högt tempo under hela dagen?**

- I mycket hög grad
- I hög grad
- Delvis
- I låg grad
- I mycket låg grad

### **23. Hamnar du genom ditt arbete i känslomässigt påfrestande situationer?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

### **24. Måste du hantera andra människors personliga problem i ditt arbete?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

### **25. Är ditt arbete känslomässigt krävande?**

- I mycket hög grad
- I hög grad
- Delvis
- I låg grad
- I mycket låg grad

### **26. Har du möjlighet att påverka väsentliga beslut som gäller ditt arbete?**



- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

#### **27. Kan du påverka vem du arbetar tillsammans med?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

#### **28. Kan du påverka din arbetsmängd?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/nästan aldrig

#### **29. Kan du påverka vad du gör i ditt arbete?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

#### **30. Om du behöver är din närmsta chef beredd att lyssna på problem som rör ditt arbete?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

**31. Om du behöver, får du stöd och hjälp med ditt arbete från din närmsta chef?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

**32. Om du behöver, får du hjälp och stöd från dina kollegor?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

**33. Om du behöver, är dina kollegor beredda att lyssna på dina problem med arbetet?**

- Alltid
- Ofta
- Ibland
- Sällan
- Aldrig/ nästan aldrig

**Följande frågor avser hur du har haft det under de senaste 4 veckorna.**

### 34. Hur ofta har du haft svårt att koppla av?

- Hela tiden
- En stor del av tiden
- En del av tiden
- En liten del av tiden
- Inte alls

### 35. Hur ofta har du varit lättretlig?

- Hela tiden
- En stor del av tiden
- En del av tiden
- En liten del av tiden
- Inte alls

### 36. Hur ofta har du varit anspänd?

- Hela tiden
- En stor del av tiden
- En del av tiden
- En liten del av tiden
- Inte alls

## Sektion 4 - Din roll

Denna sektion kommer att omhandla din roll som HR-medarbetare inom rekryterings- och bemanningsbranschen samt kring din trivsel i rollen.

### 37. Med tanke på den ansträngning jag lägger ner och det jag presterar i arbetet får jag den uppskattning jag förtjänar.

- Stämmer mycket dåligt
- Stämmer ganska dåligt
- Stämmer ganska bra

- Stämmer mycket bra

### **38. Mitt arbete motiverar mig.**

- Stämmer mycket dåligt
- Stämmer ganska dåligt
- Stämmer ganska bra
- Stämmer mycket bra

### **39. Jag är motiverad att göra mitt arbete, även när jag arbetar hemifrån.**

- Stämmer mycket dåligt
- Stämmer ganska dåligt
- Stämmer ganska bra
- Stämmer mycket bra

### **40. Jag upplever att jag har samma möjlighet att få det stödet jag behöver från kollegor och överordnade, även när jag arbetar hemifrån.**

- Stämmer mycket dåligt
- Stämmer ganska dåligt
- Stämmer ganska bra
- Stämmer mycket bra