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Attractiveness of Workation vs. Working from Home – Exploring Employee
Preferences

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Natalie Dederer B.A.

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Univ.-Prof. Dr. Oliver Fabel M.A.

Abstract

This master's thesis examines how employees evaluate two remote work models – working from home (WFH) and workation – and which factors determine their preferences for either setup. While WFH has developed into an established work format, workation, defined as the temporary relocation of work to a vacation environment, has emerged more recently and often remains unregulated. Using the framework of New Work and boundary theory, the study investigates how socio-demographic characteristics and individual approaches to separating work and personal life influence employees' preferences for these two models. A choice-based conjoint (CBC) analysis was conducted to identify the relative importance of different work-related attributes. The findings show that preferences between WFH and workation are mainly shaped by how individuals wish to manage the boundaries between professional and private life rather than by socio-demographic factors. Strong integration between professional and private spheres reduced the attractiveness of workation, while moderate blending increased openness to this model. Among all tested attributes, the *blurring of work and personal life* emerged as the strongest determinant in employees' choices and overall, WFH consistently remained the preferred option compared to workation.

Abstrakt

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht, wie Beschäftigte zwei Modelle von Remote-Arbeit – Homeoffice und Workation – bewerten und welche Faktoren ihre Präferenzen für das jeweilige Modell bestimmen. Während sich das Homeoffice zu einer etablierten Arbeitsform entwickelt hat, ist Workation, die vorübergehende Verlagerung der Arbeit an einen Urlaubsort, ein relativ neues und oft unreguliertes Konzept. Aufbauend auf den theoretischen Ansätzen von New Work und der Boundary Theory wird analysiert, wie soziodemografische Merkmale und individuelle Ansätze zur Trennung von Arbeit und Privatleben die Bewertung dieser beiden Modelle beeinflussen. Mithilfe einer Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) Analyse wurde die Bedeutung verschiedener arbeitsbezogener Attribute untersucht. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Präferenzen zwischen Homeoffice und Workation weniger durch soziodemografische Faktoren, als vielmehr durch individuelle Ansätze zur Gestaltung der Grenzen zwischen Berufs- und Privatleben bestimmt werden. Eine starke Vermischung beider Lebensbereiche verringerte deutlich die Attraktivität von Workation, während eine moderate Überschneidung die Offenheit für dieses Modell erhöhte. Unter allen getesteten Attributen erwies sich die Verschmelzung von Arbeit und Privatleben als der wichtigste Einflussfaktor, und insgesamt blieb das Homeoffice die bevorzugte Option gegenüber Workation.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance

The increasing normalization of flexible work arrangements in the course of COVID-19 has significantly shifted the discourse on how, where, and under what conditions employees perform their tasks. While working from home (WFH) has become a widely accepted and regulated model in many countries, workation – a temporary relocation of work to a vacation setting – has emerged as an innovative and attractive alternative in the past years. As organizations seek to retain talent and enhance employee satisfaction, understanding how different remote work models are perceived and which factors influence their attractiveness has become of increasing importance. However, it is also important to recognize that remote work is not universally beneficial: research has shown that it can lead to a loss of work-life boundaries, reduced social connectedness and obstacles in effective communication and collaboration, depending on individual circumstances and job characteristics.

This thesis focuses on the trade-off between WFH and workation, a comparison that reflects the direct decision-making process in employee contexts. Understanding this trade-off is relevant, as not all employees benefit equally from both models, nor do they weigh them the same. Individual factors such as age, relationship status, caregiving responsibilities, income, and educational background may significantly influence these preferences. Importantly, surveys show that especially younger generations expect more flexibility from their employers and are increasingly drawn to remote work opportunities that support their desired lifestyle (Berzsenyi et al., 2022; Deloitte, 2022; Domke, 2023; PwC, 2023; PwC, 2024). Moreover, personal boundary management and individual segmentation strategies between work and private life play a crucial role in determining which model aligns better with employees' needs and work styles, as they describe how individuals can create, maintain, or blur the boundaries between professional and personal life.

Moreover, while WFH has become mainstream, workation remains unregulated in many contexts and raises legal and logistical challenges. Investigating which model is preferred under which conditions can provide insights for HR policies and future workplace structures. For example, not all teams or job types are equally suited to either model, and preferences may depend on the individual situation.

1.2 Research Gap and Research Question

From a scientific perspective, the literature on WFH is already well established, but often without considering alternative remote models. In particular, direct comparisons between WFH and workation are rare, and empirical data on how individuals assess these two models in relation to one another remains scarce. The thesis concentrates on the context of Austria and Germany, where remote work models have become increasingly relevant in recent years, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although empirical data on workation is still limited, several recent studies from both countries provide valuable insights and serve as a foundation for this analysis. Nevertheless, the topic remains largely exploratory, especially regarding the direct comparison between WFH and workation.

This thesis aims to address this gap by empirically exploring the factors that influence employees' preferences between the two models, providing a foundation for further academic and organizational discourse in the field of New Work.

To examine this research gap, the following study focuses on two central questions:

RQ 1: What are the most important attributes influencing the preferences for WFH vs. workation?

RQ 2: How do socio-demographic characteristics and individual approaches to separating work and personal life influence employees' preferences between WFH and workation?

Together, these research questions seek to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the trade-off between the two remote work models.

From a practical perspective, these insights can be helpful for employers aiming to design flexible work policies that go beyond one-size-fits-all solutions. As workation is increasingly used as a branding tool to attract and retain talent, a nuanced understanding of employee preferences helps avoid mismatches between offerings and actual needs.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

Following the introduction, Chapter 2 provides a conceptual and theoretical foundation, including the broader framework of New Work, a review of remote work models (WFH and workation in detail) and an overview of relevant socio-demographic factors that may influence

employees' preferences. The chapter concludes with the introduction of boundary theory and its relevance to the integration and separation of work and private life, particularly in relation to WFH and workation. The subsequent chapter explains the methodological approach. It describes the research design, the choice-based conjoint (CBC) method that is used for measuring preferences, and the data collection process. The fourth chapter presents the empirical findings. After describing the sample, the results from the counts analysis, part-worth utilities, and importance scores are reported. This is followed by the market simulation results and an examination of how socio-demographic factors influence preferences between WFH and workation. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the empirical findings in relation to the theoretical framework and prior research, highlighting key insights and implications. This is followed by limitations of the thesis and suggestions for potential future research directions. The thesis ends with a conclusion summarizing the main findings and contributions.

2. Conceptual Foundations and Literature Review

The rise of flexible work arrangements in the last years and decades has shown that it is possible to carry out knowledge work location-independently (Voll et al., 2023). Especially the outbreak of COVID-19 has changed the way many employees engage with their jobs, as well as how employers adapt their business strategies. Companies have increasingly expanded their remote work offerings, providing their workforce with greater flexibility regarding time and location (Bassyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023).

In light of these developments, it is essential to consider the broader conceptual frameworks that shape today's understanding of flexible and remote work. One particularly influential concept in this context is "New Work," which critically reflects on how work is structured, experienced, and valued in modern societies. To understand how models such as WFH and workation align with current workplace trends and employee expectations, the following section introduces the theoretical foundations of New Work. This is followed by Chapter 2.2 which provides an overview of remote work models, clarifying key terminology and differentiating between commonly used concepts. Based on this conceptual framework, the subsequent sections introduce and explore the two core models at the center of this thesis, namely WFH and workation. Chapter 2.3 then investigates the role of socio-demographic factors in shaping individual preferences for these models. Chapter 2.4 introduces boundary theory, which offers a psychological perspective on how individuals manage the interplay between work and personal life. This framework is particularly relevant for understanding attitudes toward WFH and workation, as both involve varying degrees of overlap between professional and private domains. Together, these sections build the conceptual and empirical basis for the research questions and analysis that follow.

2.1 New Work

The term *New Work* was originally coined by the social philosopher Frithjof Bergmann (Bergmann, 2019; Helmold, 2023a). He argues that traditional, "Old Work" models, that are based on rigid schedules, hierarchical structures and a strict separation between work and private life, are outdated. Emphasizing efficiency, control, and extrinsic rewards as the primary motivation, these systems can lead to psychological stress (Bergmann 2019; Kalleberg et al., 2000). In contrast, New Work, as advocated by Bergmann, focuses on autonomy, self-esteem, meaningful work, personal development and social responsibility. Bergmann called for a slow

but fundamental transformation in the understanding of work in the 1980s, emphasizing that work should not only serve economic survival, but jobs should be in line with employees' values, desires, and abilities. New Work therefore refers to the transformation of work shaped by digitalization and globalization, with a deeper focus on flexibility and work-life integration (Bergmann, 2019; Helmold, 2023a).

However, over time, New Work has evolved from its original philosophical foundation into a broad management approach in corporate, media and social contexts, encompassing alternative flexible work arrangements. While not always fully aligned with Bergmann's holistic vision, these more flexible and location-independent models tend to deviate from the conventional employment model and are increasingly introduced under the collective label of New Work in the literature and in practice (Helmold & Dathe, 2023a; Helmold, 2023a; Spreitzer et al., 2017; Wilkesmann & Bassyouny, 2025). This may be particularly relevant for younger junior employees, as their priorities seem to have shifted away from traditional markers of success, such as salary and title, toward purpose, flexibility and self-fulfillment. As a result, New Work models are becoming more widespread, transforming both labor markets and the organization of work (Cappelli & Keller, 2013; Wilkesmann & Bassyouny, 2025). Technological advancements, particularly in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the adaptations followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, have significantly expanded the practical application of New Work concepts (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020; Messenger & Gschwind, 2016). Notably, the pandemic did not trigger but rather accelerated the establishment of work arrangements, that enabled New Work concepts to take shape through models like workations (Helmold, 2023a; Wilkesmann & Bassyouny, 2025).

Considering the discussion on New Work, the subsequent sections focus on remote work models and further on two specific forms that reflect its principles in practice: WFH and workation. As these two models represent the main focus of this thesis, they will be examined in greater detail with regard to their diffusion, implications, and contextual frameworks.

2.2 Remote Work Models

Terminology & Distinction

Remote work terminology in the literature varies considerably, and the boundaries between related concepts are often blurred or terms are used interchangeably. For the purposes of this thesis, the following model will be used to distinguish and categorize the different forms:

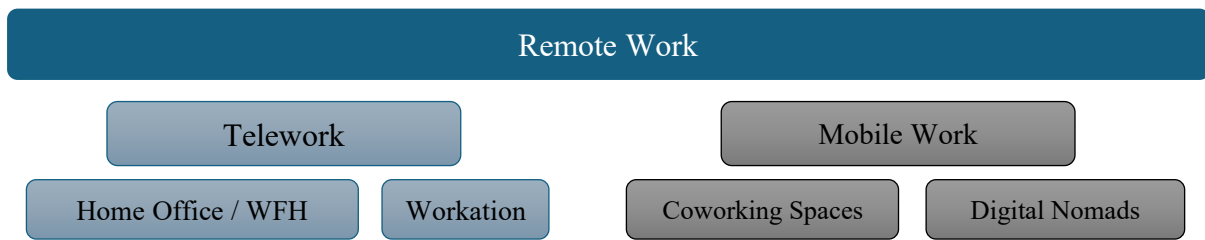


Figure 1: Distinction of Remote Work Models (own illustration)

Although terms like remote work, telework, mobile work, and WFH / home office are often used interchangeably, the latter three actually denote distinct subcategories within the broader concept of remote work (Qu & Yan, 2023). Remote work broadly refers to flexible work arrangements performed outside of traditional offices, typically using mobile devices to maintain communication and productivity across various locations (Di Martino & Wirth, 1990). Thus, it serves as a collective (international) umbrella term that describes location-independent and time-flexible working outside the office (Qu & Yan, 2023).

Telework it is often used synonymously with the term home office, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic (Kleemann, 2017). This is not entirely accurate anymore, as the home office can be considered a specific subtype of telework (Berzsenyi et al., 2022) and mostly involves a contractual agreement between employer and employee.

In Austria, a new Telework Act came into force on January 1, 2025. It represents an evolution of the previous legal framework and expands the scope beyond the traditional concept of home office. Accordingly, telework is defined as a general concept for work that is regularly performed from external locations outside the employer's office (Arbeiterkammer, 2025).

Within this framework, the home office refers exclusively to work carried out from the employee's private residence or that of close relatives (Berzsenyi et al., 2022). This was formalized through the Labour Contract Law Amendment Act (§ 2h para. 1 Arbeitsvertragsrechts-Anpassungsgesetz (AVRAG), see Arbeiterkammer, 2023).

The home office, here also referred to work from home (WFH) is the most prominent example for remote work models. It has been part of the workplace landscape for decades on a smaller scale: The concept dates back to the late 1970s and 1980s, when advancements in ICTs first enabled location-independent work for knowledge workers. (Kleemann, 2022; Johns & Gratton, 2013; Kravaritou-Manitakis, 1988) (in detail see chapter 2.2.1)

Workations are a relatively new phenomenon in which work is carried out from a vacation destination typically associated with leisure, relaxation, and travel (in detail see chapter 2.2.2.).

There are currently no explicit formal regulations. Therefore, from a legal perspective, workations are classified under the broader category of telework (Berzsenyi et al., 2022).

It is important to note that telework can only be implemented on a voluntary basis, which means employers cannot impose it unilaterally, nor do employees have a legal entitlement to demand it (Arbeiterkammer, 2025).

In contrast to telework, mobile work involves working while on the move or from alternative settings such as coworking spaces (Pfnür et al., 2022). This type of remote work, as well as coworking spaces and digital nomads are only addressed peripherally in this thesis. That is why they are marked grey in Figure 1.

To compensate for aspects that home offices cannot fulfill, employees have increasingly turned to so-called "third places". Originally coined by Oldenburg (1999), this term refers to informal, neutral spaces where people engage in social interactions outside of home and the office. Today, coworking spaces are the most prominent example of such third places, offering both professional infrastructure and opportunities for networking (Gauger, 2021). Such coworking spaces are also available for individuals who go on workations: so-called coworkations bring together individuals who work and stay together at recreational destinations, often featuring organized community activities (Voll et al., 2023). In contrast to traditional workations, which emphasize the relocation of home office work to vacation destinations, co-workations focus on working and traveling within a like-minded community (Bassiyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023; Wilkesmann & Bassiyouny, 2025; Voll et al., 2023).

Originating from early forms of telework, the concept of coworking gained attention in the 1990s with the rise of digitalization and took shape in the 2000s through dedicated physical spaces, i.e. coworking spaces, designed to combine professional work environments with social interaction (Avdikos & Merkel, 2020; Werther et al., 2021a). Initially, these spaces were primarily used by freelancers, startups, and digital nomads seeking collaboration, feedback, and a sense of community (Engstler & Heinzl, 2019; Meissner & Chang-Gusko, 2019). In recent years, the growth of coworking spaces has accelerated rapidly and expanded beyond big cities into smaller towns and rural regions (Amler, 2023; Matiaske & Seifert, 2022).

Another form of remote work can be found in digital nomadism. Digital nomads are individuals who make use of the flexibility that digital technologies offer to work location-independently, often combining their professional responsibilities with continuous international travel (Nash

et al., 2018; Reichenberger, 2018). In contrast to the so-called workationers – who engage in short-term, employer-approved stays abroad while maintaining a fixed residence – digital nomads tend to adopt a permanent, mobile lifestyle without a stable home base (Bassyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023; Wilkesmann & Bassyouny, 2025).

Opportunities and Challenges

In general, working remotely can offer opportunities for greater flexibility and autonomy (Gajendran & Harrison 2007; Helmold 2023b; Spreitzer et al., 2017). For many employees, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, this can contribute to an improved work-life balance, which is often seen as a significant advantage (Colley & Williamson, 2020; DAK-Gesundheit, 2020; Werther et al., 2021b). Moreover, the absence of a daily commute allows employees to utilize valuable time for other activities, while also eliminating the costs associated with commuting (Basile & Beauregard, 2016; Spreitzer et al., 2017). Also, offering remote work alternatives has been shown to provide employers with access to a broader talent pool (Brunelle & Fortin, 2021; Crummenerl et al., 2020). Geographic flexibility significantly expands the range of potential applicants and is particularly relevant in the ongoing competition for skilled labor (Schmidbauer et al., 2023).

However, remote work can also pose significant challenges in practice. While the diminishing boundaries between work and private life can be seen as an advantage for some individuals, others struggle with the blending of these spheres and perceive it as a burden (Domke, 2023; Werther et al., 2021a; Voll et al., 2023). It shows that WFH, over time, can foster feelings of isolation and loneliness (Bloom et al., 2015), since digital collaboration often fails to fully replicate the social environment and team cohesion found in traditional office spaces. This became especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to increased dissatisfaction due to the lack of social interaction and interpersonal relationships in the workplace – factors that are actually highly valued by employees (Jeschio, 2023; Pfnür et al., 2021). Moreover, the traditional end of the business day often disappears with WFH, as tasks are frequently completed late in the evening (Helmold & Dathe, 2023b). Furthermore, the constant possibility, and sometimes the expectation, of being reachable and engaging with work matters around the clock, can lead to exhaustion (von Gilsa, 2023). According to Voll et al. (2023), these negative effects can influence family dynamics, increase work-life conflict, and have an impact on general satisfaction, health, and overall well-being. It is important to note that, for instance, Haun et al. (2022) found elevated levels of stress and exhaustion among employees working from home, however, their study specifically examined individuals who were required to work

remotely during COVID-19 lockdowns. This special situation offered little choice or flexibility. In the post-pandemic context, preferences have shifted notably: hybrid work models are now highly appreciated by many employees (Rump & Eilers, 2022). The option to work remotely and with greater flexibility has become a decisive factor in job selection for lots of individuals (Deloitte, 2022; Dickes & Grenz, 2023; Wißfeld, 2023).

Overall, the literature points to a certain “remote work paradox” of mutually incompatible consequences for employees. Increased autonomy and flexibility can enhance individual outcomes such as work-life balance and job satisfaction, but can simultaneously lead to isolation, weakened workplace relationships, and the loss of clear boundaries between professional and personal spheres (Bellmann & Hübler, 2021; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Researchers have tried to determine whether remote work is “a good or bad thing” for a decade (Brunelle & Fortin, 2021) and the debate seems to be still ongoing. It is therefore important to note that many effects are ambivalent and heavily depend on individual circumstances, the nature of the work, and the organizational context (Bellmann & Hübler, 2021).

2.2.1 Work from Home

WFH refers to a work arrangement in which employees regularly perform their job tasks from their homes using ICTs instead of being physically present at the employer’s office (International Labour Organization, 2020; Wilkesmann & Bassyouny, 2025). It is considered a form of home-based telework (Tønnessen et al., 2021) and can either be used on a long-term basis or as a complement to working in the company’s office (Hackl et al., 2017).

In practice, WFH is in most cases not seen as a complete replacement for office work. Survey data from the Institute for Employment Research (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, short IAB, see in Frodermann et al., 2021) show that most employees in Germany prefer a hybrid work model combining home office and in-person presence, with the flexibility in choosing remote days (Frodermann et al., 2021; Rump & Eilers, 2022; Widuckel & Bellmann, 2023). In Austria, this hybrid work arrangement has become increasingly relevant for most employees as well (Deloitte, 2022). Typical patterns now include a 3-2 or 2-3 schedule, meaning employees alternate between three days in the office and two at home, or the reverse, considering a full-time employment (Deloitte, 2022; Pfnür et al., 2021; Rump & Eilers, 2022). Therefore, in this study, WFH refers to a model in which employees regularly perform part of their tasks from home, typically for one, two or three days per week, while remaining otherwise

connected to the office environment. Thus, WFH is not considered a full 100% remote work job with no connection to an office. This reflects the most common real-world implementation of WFH and aligns with current empirical findings (e.g., Deloitte, 2022; Dickes & Grenz, 2023; Frodermann et al., 2021; Rump & Eilers, 2022; Wißfeld, 2023).

Despite technological advances, WFH remained relatively uncommon before the COVID-19 pandemic. In Germany for instance, only about 12% of employees worked primarily or occasionally from home, although 30-40% of jobs would have probably allowed it (Brenke, 2016). A similar pattern applies to Austria: the Deloitte Flexible Working Study (Deloitte, 2022) shows that prior to the pandemic, only a small proportion of Austrian employees had access to regular home office arrangements.

The adoption of WFH before COVID-19 was often hindered by reservations from both employees and employers, as well as technical barriers and data protection concerns (Bellmann & Hübler, 2021; Rump & Eilers, 2022). The pandemic outbreak then triggered an exceptionally rapid and widespread transformation of work routines across the globe (Qu & Yan, 2023) leading to much broader acceptance and use of home office arrangements (Zhang et al., 2022). COVID-19 is consistently identified as a key factor driving this shift (Helmold, 2023a; Rump & Eilers, 2022). During the pandemic, companies were encouraged to enable WFH whenever possible. Surveys and studies conducted in Germany during this time show that at least one-third of employees worked in the home office in the first lockdown in March 2020 (Alipour et al., 2021; Möhring et al., 2020; Schröder et al., 2020).

However, the Flexible Working Study conducted by Deloitte in 2024 shows a clear decline in both the availability and the actual use of home office in Austria since the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a clear trend toward reduced home office flexibility: many companies have implemented return-to-office policies. Although home office remains widely available (about 60% of companies in Austria still offer it), the number of permitted days per week has shifted. Most companies now allow two to three days per week, the number of firms offering four to five days has halved, and those offering only one day have tripled since 2022. Although the pandemic-driven boom has somewhat declined, the current level of adoption of WFH remains higher than before the pandemic (Deloitte, 2024). This is consistent with the findings of the global study by Aksoy et al. (2025) published by the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Accordingly, after a decline from an average of 1,6 days in 2022 to 1,33 days

in 2023, WFH levels have stabilized on a global scale to approximately 1,27 days per week in 2024 (Aksoy et al., 2025).

Effects of WFH

Current research presents a mixed picture regarding the effects of WFH. Findings show that its impact depends heavily on the extent to which an employee works in the home office (Allen et al., 2021), as well as on situational fit (Bloom et al., 2015).

Studies highlight that when well-matched to employees' needs, WFH can increase job satisfaction (Bellmann & Hübler, 2021) and provide more autonomy and flexibility (Pfnür et al., 2021). Moreover, improved job performance, higher productivity (Bloom et al., 2015) and a better work-family balance was observed (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Jostell & Hemlin, 2018). At the same time, other researchers argue that WFH can intensify work-family conflict and reduce well-being if boundaries are not maintained. Moreover, the feeling of isolation and loneliness, psychological distress (Bloom et al., 2015; Chao et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2023), the pressure to be always online (Reinke, 2018), and the weakening of coworker and supervisor bonds due to reduced face-to-face interactions (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) have been pointed out.

Productivity

Studies on productivity while working from home show mixed results. On the one hand, research indicates that employees who work in the home office can experience higher (perceived) productivity. Reported performance increases range from 13% to 24% compared to traditional office settings (Bloom et al., 2015; Crummenerl et al., 2020; Kunze et al., 2020; Pfnür et al., 2021). These gains have been attributed to fewer breaks and sick days, more calls handled per minute, and improved concentration (Bloom et al., 2015). During the COVID-19 pandemic, employees perceived themselves as increasingly productive over time while working from home. According to Pfnür et al. (2021), this self-assessment of improved efficiency grew with continued experience in remote work. However, this trend may also be explained by factors such as improved home office equipment, growing familiarity with remote work routines, and the reopening of public childcare services in regard to the pandemic.

The latter has also been emphasized in several other studies. Frodermann et al. (2021), Guy & Arthur (2020), and a study by Fanomics (2021) all point out that challenges related to childcare responsibilities became more severe during the pandemic. These responsibilities are shown to have a negative impact on productivity when working from home.

Unlike home offices, where individuals often work in relative isolation, coworking spaces offer an alternative by bringing together people from diverse professional backgrounds in a more creative environment. This community-oriented culture can foster synergies in project work and expand personal networks (Amler, 2023). A 2017 study by the Fraunhofer Institute found that managers perceive their companies as more innovative when operating in alternative environments (Bauer et al., 2021). For freelancers, coworking spaces can also enhance feelings of productivity and motivation, as they allow them to interact with like-minded individuals and create a clearer boundary between work and private life (Werther et al., 2021a).

2.2.2 Workation

Against the backdrop of the core elements of New Work, workation not only embodies flexibility and autonomy on a macro level but also addresses potential individual employees' desire for the shift away from rigid, location-bound work toward more self-determined work experiences. The increase in WFH opportunities during the pandemic has created a growing interest among employees to take remote work a step further by blending work, leisure and travel, which has led to the emergence of workation.

Definition and Distinction

The term *workation* is a neologism composed of the two words 'work' and 'vacation' (Yoshida, 2021). While the concept lacks a standardized definition in the literature with researchers emphasizing different aspects depending on context and focus, in this thesis it is seen as a new form of „hybrid tourism“ that integrates work and leisure (Bassyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023). It refers to a time-limited period during which individuals carry out their professional tasks from vacation destinations (Voll et al., 2023). This allows them to fulfill work obligations while simultaneously finding themselves in typically recreational environments and leisure activities (Beno et al., 2024; Pecsek, 2018).

In line with the perspectives of Bassyouny & Wilkesmann (2023), Domke (2023), Wilkesmann & Bassyouny (2025), and Voll et al. (2023), this thesis defines workation as a temporary relocation of the usual work environment to a vacation setting to combine work and leisure. Common motivations include, for instance, a change of scenery adding variety to the daily work routine. Moreover, workations allow employees to spend extended periods of time abroad by prolonging their regular vacation with remote workdays (Domke, 2023; Shin et al., 2024). Additionally, employees can take advantage of local leisure opportunities immediately after

work which enables them to create a more time-efficient integration of work and personal life during their stay. For some, a workation also offers the chance to retreat from a stressful everyday environment and focus on their tasks away from regular workplace dynamics and family obligations. Notably, this work arrangement can per definition lead to a high work-life-leisure integration and the blurring of boundaries between leisure, travel and work. Users often appreciate this merging of domains, valuing the flexibility to integrate professional responsibilities with personal experiences (Voll et al., 2023).

A practical example of a workation might look like this: An employee travels to Greece for personal reasons and stays in a holiday apartment, where they continue to perform their regular job duties remotely. While enjoying a change of scenery, they remain digitally connected to their team and work from their vacation destination instead of their usual offices. This type of arrangement is typically initiated by the employee and combines temporary travel with continued professional responsibilities (Berzsenyi et al., 2022; Wasinger & Jobst, 2023). To make the most of their stay, employees may also choose to add vacation days immediately before or after the workation period. These additional days are taken as regular paid leave and are used exclusively for personal time, allowing for a longer stay at the destination. According to Helmold & Dathe (2023a), workations are usually not bound to a fixed schedule, which allows individuals to decide when to complete their tasks.

From a labor law perspective, the concept of workation fundamentally contradicts the traditional purpose of vacation, which is primarily intended for rest and recovery (USP Austria, 2025). Therefore, despite the literal meaning of the term workation, from a legal perspective it is advisable to avoid mixing work and vacation time. A more practical approach would be to extend the stay at a vacation destination and allow remote work to take place either directly before or after the agreed vacation period, as mentioned earlier. This helps maintain a clearer separation between working time and rest, which is beneficial both from a legal standpoint and in terms of employee well-being (Roberts & Kaindl, 2022).

It is important to emphasize that, in this thesis, a workation typically refers to working remotely from a location that is clearly associated with leisure or vacation, such as a seaside resort or a chalet in the mountains, rather than simply any place outside the office, like the family house in one's hometown. The concept is characterized by the intentional combination of professional duties and a temporary stay in a setting explicitly designed for relaxation and travel.

The academic discourse on workation remains fragmented, with various definitions and no consensus on a uniform understanding at the time of writing. Since this study focuses on employee preferences, the understanding of workation within this framework should primarily reflect its meaning from the employees' perspective. The focus is on permanently employed individuals who temporarily relocate for a workation with the consent of their employer. These arrangements, typically spanning several weeks, are characterized by the continued maintenance of the employee's primary residence and a return to their standard working model after completion.

Still, the idea of combining work and tourism is not a recent phenomenon. More than two decades ago, Uriely and Reichel (2000) pointed out the growing importance of this intersection, utilizing the typologies „travelling workers“ and „working tourists“ – concepts that remind of the digital nomads of today. However, this association is no longer entirely accurate. Although workation and digital nomadism overlap to some extent, it is important for the study to distinguish between the two. Digital nomads can be referred to as multilocal individuals, often entrepreneurs or freelancers, who work globally with minimal equipment, combining work and lifestyle without a fixed residence (Aroles et al., 2020; Bähr et al., n.d.; Chevtaeva & Denizci-Guillet, 2021; Hensellek & Puchala, 2021). In many cases, they take advantage of location-independent work opportunities to travel the world (Thompson, 2019). Characterized by this continuous and intentional travel lifestyle, they are often driven by a strong desire for freedom and self-determination (Reichenberger, 2018). Typically, digital nomads base themselves in countries with relatively low living costs (Cook, 2020; Thompson, 2019). However, as Nash et al. (2018) note, their ability to maintain productivity relies heavily on access to suitable workspaces. This means they are often dependent on coworking spaces, cafés, or accommodations like AirBnBs that offer the necessary technological infrastructure for effective remote work. Wang et al. (2020) argue, that since COVID-19, the trend of combining travel and work has expanded beyond digital nomads and freelancers and can now include regular employees within companies, resulting in the concept of workation, which is exactly the focus of this research.

Observations in this context have been made in Germany: Workations are increasingly available to permanent employees, enabling them to work temporarily from vacation destinations during a defined period (Domke, 2023; Pierenkemper et al., 2024; Voll et al., 2023). In this sense,

workation is similar to WFH, though work activities are carried out by the beach or in the mountains instead of in the home office.

A workation may be a viable option for employees whose roles allow them to work remotely without requiring on-site presence, either in the office or with clients. However, its suitability should be carefully assessed based on both organizational and individual factors. These include the type of tasks involved, the need for team collaboration, the company's work culture, and the employee's personal work style. Key considerations are whether the individual demonstrates a high degree of self-management and whether a strong foundation of trust exists between them and their employer (Pierenkemper et al., 2024).

The 2024 Deloitte study, which surveyed 350 Austrian company representatives and employees, shows that for those who are allowed and choose to take workations, the duration tends to be relatively short. Nearly half of respondents use this option for just one to two work weeks per year. About one third take workations lasting three to five weeks, while 13% report durations of five to eight weeks, and only 4% exceed eight weeks annually (Deloitte, 2024).

According to Pierenkemper et al. (2024), 15% of German companies allow employees to work abroad, which includes workations, though exact data on workation-specific offerings is limited. Generally, larger companies (more than 250 employees) are more likely to offer this option than small businesses, which often lack the resources or flexibility to support workations. In PwC's 2024 study, 1000 German employees were surveyed regarding their views on workation. The findings highlight its growing relevance as a factor in job decisions. Nearly one-third of respondents stated they would even reject a job offer if it did not include the possibility of taking a workation (PwC, 2024).

Opportunities and Challenges

But what makes a workation appealing to employees, and what drives them to pursue this option? The pandemic led to a fundamental rethinking of work routines, making remote work more positively perceived. Studies show that the initial key motivation for „workationers“ (referred to employees that perform a workation, see in Bassyiouny & Wilkesmann, 2023) has its roots in overcoming restrictions linked to COVID-19 in their home countries. Escaping daily routines and poor weather was the main priority (Deloitte, 2022; Wilkesmann & Bassyiouny, 2025). Users of workation are typically leisure-oriented and enjoy staying abroad (Werther et al., 2021c; Voll et al., 2023). Therefore, main motivations can include a strong investment in

personal lifestyle, an individualized workstyle, and the opportunity to maintain this balance in an inspiring location (Voll et al., 2023). According to a PwC survey from 2023, over 75% of participants of workations experienced positive effects in areas of creativity, job satisfaction, and motivation (PwC, 2023). Many individuals seek a workation to achieve better work-life balance (Benoit et al., 2024; Pierenkemper et al., 2024) yet it often results in work-life blending – the merging of work and leisure domains (Schifilliti et al., 2024; Wilkesmann & Bassiouny, 2025). This dissolves the traditional boundaries between work and personal life, allowing individuals to actively shape both spheres. Wilkesmann & Bassiouny (2025) consider this one of the main benefits of workation. Other advantages are increased work engagement and innovation, well-being and improved quality of life, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lee et al., 2024). The Deloitte Flexible Working Study (2022) indicates that this might be primarily the case for younger generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z.

While workations can be highly attractive to certain employee groups, they also present challenges. Work-life blending raises critical questions about its impact, for instance regarding constant availability (Helmold & Dathe, 2023b). The increased flexibility can give employees the impression that constant availability is expected, especially by their managers (Deloitte 2022; Reinke, 2018). Moreover, not everyone adapts well to the strong blurring of work and private life, and some prefer to maintain a clearer separation between the two (Voll et al., 2023). Lee et al. (2024) also found that workations can include communication challenges and distractions. Similar to WFH, the merging of work and vacation can, over time, contribute to elevated stress levels due to the absence of clearly defined recovery periods (DAK-Gesundheit, 2020; Kinnunen et al., 2016; Wepfer et al., 2018). Also, workations bring several legal and organizational challenges. As Domke (2023) explains, employers must provide digital infrastructure, clear processes, and build trust, as direct control is limited.

Interestingly, while Deloitte's 2022 Flexible Working Study predicted a high rise in workations in 2022, this boom has not materialized in Austrian companies. Although employee demand for location flexibility remains high, many companies still impose restrictions. Among the firms with access to workation, only a minority actually make use of the opportunity (Deloitte, 2022; Deloitte, 2024). One possible reason may be legal and organizational challenges, such as tax, social security, and data protection issues (Domke, 2023).

Institutional frame

In recent years, interest in working remotely from abroad has grown, and many companies have shown increasing openness to supporting such arrangements. However, the practical implementation on the employer side often seems challenging due to complex regulatory requirements concerning taxation, social security, and labor law in the cross-country context (Deloitte, 2022).

The chapter primarily refers to the legal and institutional framework in Austria. However, relevant sources and studies from Germany are also included where applicable, given the similarities in labor law and social security systems between the two countries. This is particularly relevant as the empirical part of this thesis will include respondents from both Austria and Germany.

As mentioned, there is no explicit legal regulation for workation under Austrian labor law. Therefore, general labor law provisions apply in such cases. From a legal standpoint, workation is considered a form of telework (Berzsenyi et al., 2022). Employees do not have a fundamental right to go on a workation. Similar to WFH, it must be mutually agreed upon between employer and employee (Berzsenyi et al., 2022; Domke, 2023).

According to BDO Austria (Berzsenyi et al., 2022), if the option of workation or telework in general is to be made available to a broader group of employees and a works council exists, the council should be informed in accordance with general information rights. In addition, collective agreements may contain specific provisions. When establishing a workation agreement, it is important to clearly define key aspects such as the geographic scope (e.g., whether workation is permitted only within the home country, within the EU/EEA, or also in third countries), rules regarding employee availability, the duration of the arrangement, conditions for returning to the regular workplace, costs, and data protection measures. It is therefore essential to establish a specific contractual agreement for workations, as existing arrangements, such as those for home office, are typically limited to domestic settings and are not sufficient for cross-border remote work (Roberts & Kaindl, 2022).

Within the EU, employees are generally free to choose their place of work under the principle of freedom of movement for workers, provided that the arrangement is agreed upon with the employer. However, when working from third countries a residence and work permit may be required (Berzsenyi et al., 2022; Roberts & Kaindl, 2022).

If the workation takes place within the EU, the applicable labor law is governed by the EU's Rome-I-Regulation. This means that, as long as the workation is temporary and the primary

place of employment remains in Austria, Austrian law generally continues to apply but host country regulations (e.g. working hours) may still come into effect. This is also the case in Germany (Berzsenyi et al., 2022; Domke, 2023; Knappertsbusch & Stute, 2023).

Workations can also have tax implications, both for employees and employers. In principle, income tax is generally due in the country where the work is physically carried out. A key reference point in this context is the so-called 6-months rule under double taxation agreements: employees typically remain subject to income taxation in their home country if their stay abroad does not exceed 183 days within a 12-month period and their salary is not paid by or charged to an entity in the host country. This is handled the same way both in Austria and in Germany. To mitigate potential tax risks, it is essential to maintain precise records of travel activity and to consider national specifics and treaty conditions (Adam, 2024; Berszenyi et al., 2022; Deloitte, 2022; Knappertsbusch & Stute, 2023).

Whether a stay abroad triggers social security obligations depends primarily on the destination country and the duration of the stay. Within the EU, EEA, and Switzerland, the so-called Regulation (EC) 883/2004 ensures that only one country's social security law applies at a time (Berszenyi et al., 2022). In most cases, employees on workation remain subject to the social security legislation of their home country (Adam, 2024; Deloitte, 2024). To formally confirm this status when working within the EU, EEA, or Switzerland, it is recommended to obtain a A1 certificate, which serves as official documentation (Pierenkemper et al., 2024). Without the document, individuals abroad may not be entitled to healthcare services in the event of illness (Technikerkrankenkasse, 2024).

In any case, employees must ensure that adequate insurance protection is in place, including supplementary private coverage, if necessary, particularly in case of work-related accidents (Adam, 2024; Knappertsbusch & Stute, 2023). Moreover, employees are required to provide proof that they hold a valid residence and work permit for the host country – or that such documentation is not required in the first place. This obligation helps to reduce administrative burden and mitigates potential legal risks for the employer (Knappertsbusch & Stute, 2023). In general, for employers, enabling workations requires them to give up some direct oversight and instead place greater trust in their employees. This shift necessitates not only the implementation or adaptation of digital tools to support remote collaboration, but also a cultural transformation within the organization. Beyond technological infrastructure, companies must foster a mindset that embraces flexibility and outcome-oriented work. To ensure clarity and

accountability, it is essential to establish transparent procedures, and communicate them clearly to all employees (Domke, 2023).

Although there is currently no scientific data on the exact cost structure of workations, it is generally assumed that employees bear the financial expenses for accommodation and travel. This assumption is based on the fact that workations are typically voluntary and initiated by the employee and therefore differ substantially from employer-mandated remote work.

Relevance & Retention

Offering flexible work arrangements has become a strategic tool for enhancing employer attractiveness. Candidates increasingly expect the option to work remotely, seeking greater autonomy in choosing their work location and aligning it with their individual needs and tasks. When supported by clearly defined company policies, such flexibility can contribute to improved work-life balance, reduce commuting time, and allow employees to structure their routines more efficiently. For existing staff, it can lead to higher job satisfaction and strengthen long-term employee retention (Breuer & Kienbaum, 2023)

Workation is increasingly regarded as a forward-looking model and a key trend within the evolving landscape of New Work. Especially for Generation Z and younger cohorts entering the labor market, strict in-office requirements can be considered a dealbreaker. In this context, location flexibility – such as the option to go on a workation – becomes a crucial factor in employer attractiveness (Domke, 2023). Companies that integrate workation options into their employment policies demonstrate a growing openness to flexible work models, which can make them more attractive to potential employees (Voll et al., 2023). Moreover, it is argued that workations can boost employee performance, motivation, and retention, making them a valuable tool in the competition for skilled talent (Pierenkemper et al., 2024).

A study by PwC (2023) shows that for the majority of employees whose jobs are compatible with WFH, the option to take a workation plays an important role when evaluating potential employers. It is highlighted that companies which integrate workation into their remote work policies can strengthen their position in the war for talent, as such flexibility is increasingly valued by potential employees (PwC, 2024). This trend is particularly noticeable among younger generations (here individuals under the age of 40), who increasingly value the opportunity to work temporarily from abroad.

2.3 Socio-demographic Influences on Remote Work Preferences

This chapter explores how socio-demographic factors may influence employees' preferences between WFH and workation. Based on existing literature and theoretical considerations, the following sections will introduce hypotheses regarding the potential impact of the variables age, relationship status, caregiving responsibilities, educational level, and income. These factors might shape not only the feasibility but also the attractiveness of WFH vs. workation.

However, as the current body of research in this area is still limited, inconsistent, or in some cases entirely lacking, the hypotheses are intentionally formulated in an open and exploratory manner rather than assuming clear directional effects.

2.3.1 Age

WFH

It has been shown that younger generations are driving the demand for WFH. While many older employees have willingly returned to the office after the pandemic, the disruption caused by COVID-19 has made younger employees even more confident in expressing their needs. This can be attributed to their strong desire for flexibility and autonomy (Schmidbauer et al., 2023). Generation Z in particular places high demands on the compatibility of work and personal life and work-life balance in general and actively seeks to realize these expectations (Dickes & Grenz, 2023).

Still, according to Pfnür et al. (2021), younger and less experienced employees often encounter challenges when working in the home office, as they may miss out on social interaction and learning opportunities from more senior colleagues. In the early stages of their careers, young professionals tend to identify strongly with their jobs, and the absence of in-person exchange may limit their perceived development and career prospects. In contrast, older and more experienced employees appear to manage home office conditions more effectively, reporting higher levels of satisfaction and productivity, possibly due to their ability to structure their workday independently and their reduced reliance on support of other colleagues (Pfnür et al., 2021).

Workation

Several sources emphasize that “work from anywhere” models, such as workation, are particularly appealing to younger employees. Generation Z and the “travel-loving millennials” are frequently cited in this context as key target groups (Deloitte, 2022; Domke, 2023; Wisskirchen, 2023). For these generations, rigid office requirements are increasingly seen as a

dealbreaker in job selection (Domke, 2023; Wisskirchen, 2023). As a result, companies that offer flexible formats like workation gain a distinct competitive advantage in the battle for skilled talent (Pierenkemper et al., 2024). A survey conducted by EY in 2021 revealed that 50% of the younger employees surveyed would consider quitting their jobs if there is no offer for a flexible work location. Moreover, 68% stated that they would prefer to go on a workation rather than continue working from home (Domke, 2023). According to the recent 2024 PwC study, workation will evolve from a temporary trend into a more established option, especially among younger generations. Among the 1000 survey respondents, 80% of those aged 18-29 indicated an affinity for workation. While only about half of respondents aged 60-65 expressed the same, the study notes a growing interest in this model across all age groups (PwC, 2024).

These findings suggest that preferences for either WFH or workation are not uniform across age groups. Rather, they reflect generational differences in priorities. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Age has an influence on employees' preferences between working from home and workation.

2.3.2 Relationship Status

WFH

According to Pfnür et al. (2021), individuals who are married or in a relationship tend to be more satisfied and productive when working from home compared to singles. This may be attributed to the availability of social interaction. While people in relationships have their partner present for conversation, communication, and daily social exchange, single individuals who work in the home office on a regular basis may lack this direct human contact, which cannot be fully replaced by digital communication tools. The downsides of WFH became particularly apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic: limited or absent social interaction, especially for those working exclusively from home during lockdowns, often led to feelings of isolation and loneliness (Matiske & Seifert, 2022). Individuals in relationships are generally better able to compensate for the lack of workplace interaction through their partner, whereas singles are more likely to experience the negative effects of social isolation due to the absence of in-person contact (Pfnür et al., 2021).

Workation

Although the connection between relationship status and the preference for workation has not yet been empirically examined, and the overall body of research on this topic remains very limited, the following can be assumed: Individuals who are single may generally show a higher willingness to engage in workations. This may be due to their greater personal and professional flexibility, as they do not need to take into account the needs or obligations of a partner or family when planning such setups. As a result, organizing travel, accommodation, and a suitable work environment might be considerably easier for singles. Furthermore, workations offer opportunities to establish new social contacts, for example, in coworking spaces or during leisure activities. For individuals living alone, who are often more affected by social isolation in the home office (Pfnür et al., 2021), a workation can thus represent not only a professional but also a social enriching experience. However, this assumption may not be true in all cases. Beno et al. (2024) note that one challenge of a workation is the loneliness and lack of social interaction with team members, suggesting that workations can also be socially isolating, especially for individuals who perform the workation alone.

For those in a relationship without children, the decision to participate in a workation is likely to depend on whether both partners have the ability to work remotely. If so, a workation may be perceived as a shared experience that offers a refreshing change from daily work routines and an opportunity to combine work and travel in a meaningful way.

In sum, relationship status may be a relevant factor influencing the decision for WFH or workation, even though it has not been extensively studied in academic literature. One's private life situation can significantly shape the motivation and overall feasibility of adopting either working model.

Based on these theoretical considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Relationship status has an influence on employees' preferences between working from home and workation.

2.3.3 Caregiving Responsibilities

WFH

Childcare responsibilities or caring for family dependents is a common reason for choosing flexible work models. WFH is widely regarded as a way to enhance work-family balance and is cited as an argument for remote work (Widuckel & Bellmann, 2023). This is also reflected

in the global Stanford study by Aksoy et al. (2025), which found that employees with children are significantly more likely to adopt hybrid working arrangements, typically involving one to three days per week of remote work. In contrast, employees without children tend to work either entirely on-site (zero days at home) or fully remotely (five or more days per week). These patterns suggest that WFH can play a valuable role in helping employees better balancing caregiving duties with professional responsibilities (Genner, 2023; Pfnür et al., 2021).

However, greater flexibility does not necessarily mean reduced workload. A study by Lott (2019) shows that parents working from home may, in fact, be more likely to accumulate overtime hours compared to those who do not work remotely. Moreover, Aksoy et al. (2025) report that actual remote work rates are similar for men and women across major world regions, but women with children express a slightly stronger preference for WFH than women without children. Accordingly, the desire to work from home appears to be the highest among women with children (Aksoy et al., 2025).

Mendonca et al. (2023) explored how mothers in India navigated the balance between paid remote work and unpaid caregiving duties during COVID-19. Accordingly, the pandemic intensified the blurring of the boundaries between professional and domestic life. Despite the perceived flexibility of WFH, mothers experienced heightened emotional and organizational pressure. The growing burden of household and care responsibilities often came at the expense of their professional development (Çoban, 2022; O'Reilly, 2020).

Awada et al. (2021) found that employees working from home spent on average 1,5 more hours at their workstation per day, especially those with school-age children, potentially leading to overwork and exhaustion. Also, workers with infants at home showed lower productivity, likely due to constant caregiving demands (Russo et al., 2021), raising concerns about a deteriorating work-life balance (Bellman & Hübler, 2021).

Pfnür et al. (2021) emphasize that WFH is only effective when it can be carried out without significant obstacles. A survey of company executives found that women perceived greater disruptions to their remote work compared to men (Demmelhuber et al., 2020), which may be linked to the dual burden many women face when balancing professional duties with household and caregiving responsibilities while working from home.

Workation

Empirical research on workations with children or caregiving responsibilities remains scarce. Still, it is assumed that such responsibilities influence the feasibility and attractiveness of a workation.

Workations can be appealing to employees with children or family responsibilities, as they offer the opportunity to combine travel with work while avoiding physical separation from family members (Knappertsbusch & Stute, 2023). In addition, there are reports of companies introducing workation models as new "family benefits," allowing families to blend vacation and work in a location-independent way while simultaneously positioning the company as family-friendly (Rath, 2023).

According to the 2024 PwC study, while 68% of male employees express interest in workation, the percentage decreases to 60% among female employees. This gap may be attributed to the fact that women still take on a significant share of caregiving responsibilities, which makes it more difficult for them to envision integrating workation into their professional daily lives (PwC, 2024). On the other hand, Beno et al. (2024) found that as the number of children increases, the positive association with workations also grows. This suggests that workations may be more attractive to employees with children than to those without. However, one of the main challenges remains the question of childcare during such arrangements (Beno et al., 2024).

Taken together, these findings suggest that caregiving responsibilities can play a decisive role in shaping employees' preferences for different remote work models. WFH may offer better integration of care duties into daily routines, workations could be attractive under certain conditions, particularly for families seeking to combine mobility and togetherness. Given the lack of extensive empirical research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: The presence of caregiving responsibilities influences employees' preferences between working from home and workation.

2.3.4 Educational Level

WFH

According to Bonin et al. (2021), there are clear differences in the use of home office depending on employees' qualification levels. Even before the pandemic, employees with higher educational levels were significantly more likely to work from home compared to those with lower or intermediate educational level. During the pandemic, this gap widened further, as remote work adoption increased notably among highly educated employees, while remaining relatively unchanged among those with lower qualifications. These patterns illustrate that WFH is more common among individuals with higher levels of education (Widuckel & Bellmann, 2023).

Pfnür et al. (2021) emphasize that the growing prevalence of remote work could create a divide in the labor market, potentially producing many “losers” among those whose lack of qualifications prevents them from working remotely. The disadvantages are most pronounced for individuals in roles that cannot be relocated outside the physical office. This suggests that higher education is often associated with job profiles that are more compatible with home office arrangements, and that these groups are more likely to benefit from such flexibility. In contrast, lower educational level can limit access to remote work and reinforce structural inequalities. As Pfnür et al. (2021) conclude, the primary beneficiaries of WFH tend to be well-educated employees in more complex positions with greater responsibility.

Workation

There is no scientific research found linking levels of education to preferences for workation. Still, existing studies show a strong correlation between educational level and access to remote work opportunities, like WFH, as stated above. Higher-educated employees are more likely to perform knowledge-based tasks that can be carried out independently of location, making them more likely to work from home (Bonin et al., 2021; Widuckel & Bellmann, 2023). As workation is essentially an extension of the WFH model, often requiring even more autonomy, digital infrastructure, and job flexibility, it can be assumed that individuals with higher education levels are also more inclined and better equipped to engage in workations.

Given these associations between educational level and the feasibility of remote work, it is reasonable to expect that educational level may also influence how employees position themselves between workation and WFH. Though empirical studies on this direct comparison are lacking, preferences may differ depending on one’s educational background. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Educational level has an influence on employees’ preferences between working from home and workation.

2.3.5 Income

WFH

According to Pfnür et al. (2021), income and socio-economic status are positively correlated with higher satisfaction and productivity when working from home. This may be due to the fact that individuals with higher incomes are more likely to have better home office conditions,

including more spacious living environments and higher-quality equipment. Employees who have been professionally successful over time often live in more comfortable and well-equipped homes, which can enhance the overall WFH experience.

Moreover, working from home can generate additional expenses, such as costs for ergonomic furniture, increased heating and electricity use, or office and IT supplies that are not always covered by the employer. For employees with lower incomes, these costs may pose a financial burden and act as a barrier to effective remote work. Correspondingly, employees with lower incomes tend to report lower satisfaction and productivity when working from home, partly due to less favorable home office conditions (Pfnür et al., 2021).

Workation

Since there is currently no direct empirical evidence that links income and workation, assumptions will be made. Not all occupations are suited to combining work with travel (Werther et al., 2021c) and workation models are typically associated with knowledge-based or office-related professions (Kunze et al., 2020; Pfnür et al., 2021), which tend to offer higher salaries. It is therefore reasonable to assume that workation is more accessible and appealing to highly qualified and higher-earning individuals. In addition, the financial concerns commonly associated with working from home, such as costs for technical infrastructure or increased utility bills (Pfnür et al., 2021), also apply to workations. Moreover, workation arrangements often involve additional travel and accommodation expenses, which may further limit the feasibility of this model for lower-income employees.

In conclusion, both WFH and workation require certain financial and occupational conditions and income is likely to affect the overall feasibility and appeal of both models. However, it remains unclear which of the two models is preferred by higher- or lower-earning individuals. Therefore, the following hypothesis is also stated in a rather open form:

H5: Income has an influence on employees' preferences between WFH and workation.

2.4 Boundary Theory

In the following, boundary theory will be discussed to help understand why employees may show different preferences when choosing between forms of remote work. It offers valuable insights into how individuals manage the boundaries between work and private life, and why

workation, with its high integration of work and leisure, may appeal to some while others prefer clearer separation.

Boundary theory was shaped primarily by the work of Zerubavel (1993; 1996), Nippert-Eng (1996) and Ashforth et al. (2000). It explains how individuals classify roles and activities by grouping or separating them into distinct categories, shaped by social interactions (Zerubavel, 1993, 1996). Research on boundary theory and boundary management has examined how individuals navigate the interface between work and personal life, also against the backdrop of the growing prevalence of flexible work setups. In recent years, especially during the pandemic, it has been observed that such arrangements increasingly blur the boundaries between work and private life (Haun et al., 2022; Cho et al., 2025). Studies have also explored the role of specific tactics to navigate and reduce conflicts in the context of work and family (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek et al., 2006; Kreiner et al., 2009). Nippert-Eng (1996) applied this in the context of work and home, showing that people differ in how much they mentally integrate or separate these domains. Building on this, boundary management research defines boundary strategies as the principles that individuals can use to organize and separate work and home roles (Ernst-Kossek et al., 1999). This perspective can explain why employees have different preferences for remote work, like WFH and workation, depending on their need for integration or segmentation.

2.4.1 Segmentation vs. Integration

In the following, segmentation and integration will be outlined as fundamental strategies for managing the boundaries between work and personal life. This will be followed by an examination of how these principles can be applied to the specific contexts of WFH and workation.

According to boundary theory, boundaries define and separate roles through physical, temporal, or psychological limits that range from highly segmenting (“thick” boundaries that are rigid and closed) to highly integrating (“thin” boundaries that are flexible and open) (Ashforth et al., 2000). Accordingly, individuals are described as integrators or segmentors (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

Segmentors strive to maintain clear and distinct boundaries between their professional and personal lives, viewing them as mutually exclusive realms. For them, there should be minimal overlap between the two spheres, which leads to the creation of separate mentalities, behaviors,

and often even physical spaces for each domain. They tend to operate with two different "selves" – one for work and one for home – adjusting their behavior and mindset based on the current environment. This deliberate separation can manifest in practical routines, such as keeping separate calendars for professional and personal commitments, using distinct keys for office and home, or wearing different attire depending on the context. For example, a segmentor who works from home would still follow a fixed routine of dressing in business clothes, using a dedicated workspace, and logging off at a set time (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

Integrators, on the other hand, blend and intermix aspects of home and work, often viewing them as interconnected parts of their lives. They are more likely to adopt a flexible approach to time and space, allowing for overlap and integration of commitments and identities. Rather than switching between distinct roles, integrators feel comfortable transitioning between tasks and responsibilities without feeling the need to split their identity into work and private parts. This orientation often manifests in everyday habits: using a single calendar for both work and personal events or sharing personal aspects at work, thus maintaining a flexible approach that connects both areas (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

Concluding, in the context of remote work, integrators tend to be better positioned to benefit from constant digital connectivity. For segmentors, however, this might be more challenging, as workplace norms shaped by integrators' availability preferences could undermine segmentors' needs for clear boundaries between work and personal life (Genner, 2017). Notably, individuals might not fall strictly into the categories of pure integrators or segmentors. Instead, their position can vary along an integration-segmentation continuum, depending on personal circumstances and context (Kreiner et al., 2009).

2.4.2 Application on WFH and Workation

Building on the foundations of boundary theory and the distinction between segmentation and integration strategies, it can now be examined how these principles apply in the context of WFH and workation.

Boundary theory posits that individuals experience greater effectiveness when their boundary management preferences align with their work environment (Chen et al., 2009; Cho, 2020; Kreiner, 2006). Remote work models like WFH and workation tend to naturally promote the integration of work and home or family boundaries, making the distinction between working hours and leisure time increasingly ambiguous (Qu & Yan, 2023).

For segmentors, who prefer clear separation between roles, this can create a mismatch, making it harder to maintain balance (Rothbard et al., 2005). Still, individuals can actively apply segmentation strategies to counteract this tendency. Within the framework of boundary theory, Nippert-Eng (1996) introduced the term "boundary work" to describe the process by which individuals actively construct, adjust, and maintain the boundaries between work and home. To achieve their preferred level of work-home segmentation, individuals can use specific boundary tactics: temporal, communicative, behavioral, and physical (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

Temporal tactics involve consciously allocating specific times for work and others for personal life to maintain separation. Individuals often define clear start, end, and break times. Communicative tactics comprise setting clear expectations with work contacts about availability to prevent interruptions. Technological tactics focus on using tools, such as disabling notifications or filtering calls to try separate work and personal life. Lastly, physical tactics, such as working at a designated workspace or putting away work materials after hours, can help establish clear boundaries (Haun et al., 2022; Kreiner et al., 2009). A separate home office or well-defined workplace not only creates a physical barrier that supports segmentation and reduces the risk of work-life spillover but also enhances privacy and provides a psychological sense of "being at the office" (Allen et al., 2021).

These boundary tactics might be well-suited for a WFH setting, where employees typically operate in a familiar and stable environment that allows for routines and spatial arrangements. Since WFH is in this thesis understood as a hybrid format – meaning employees regularly return to the office during the week – it can facilitate a clearer mental and physical separation between work and personal life when compared to a workation.

For integrators, who are comfortable with blending different life domains, a workation may conceptually be a well-suited arrangement. Workation is, per definition, characterized by a strong tendency toward role integration, with blurred boundaries between leisure, travel, and work (Werther et al., 2021c). Many workationers see it as a convenient tool to shape their ideal balance between work and personal life over time (Ashforth et al., 2000; Wilkesmann & Bassyiouny, 2025). Workation emphasizes the ambiguity of these boundaries, as individuals predominantly perform their tasks in tourist destinations (Lee et al., 2024), and users value the blending of both spheres along with the easy access to leisure activities (Werther et al., 2021a).

It should be emphasized that these classifications reflect theoretically grounded tendencies and should not be considered absolute. Individual strategies, situational factors, and external conditions may influence how suitable WFH or workation is for different employees. While WFH theoretically offers more opportunities for boundary-setting, in practice, significant blurring between work and personal life can still occur.

In summary, while WFH also brings work physically into the home, thereby blurring boundaries, it allows individuals to actively counteract this effect through specific boundary management tactics. Although achieving full separation is more challenging than in traditional office settings, WFH might still offer better opportunities for maintaining boundaries than workation. This is particularly relevant given that WFH is considered a hybrid concept in this context, with employees maintaining regular on-site presence several days per week. WFH can be better suited for segmentors who seek clear distinctions between work and personal life. In contrast, workation emphasizes the deliberate blending and integration of work and leisure, making it possibly a more suitable option for integrators who are comfortable with merging these domains. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Individuals with a preference for segmenting work and personal life are more likely to choose WFH over workation.

2.5 Summary of Hypotheses

H1: Age has an influence on employees' preferences between working from home and workation.

H2: Relationship status has an influence on employees' preferences between working from home and workation.

H3: The presence of caregiving responsibilities influences employees' preferences between working from home and workation.

H4: Educational level has an influence on employees' preferences between working from home and workation.

H5: Income has an influence on employees' preferences between WFH and workation.

H6: Individuals with a preference for segmenting work and personal life are more likely to choose WFH over workation.

3. Methodology

To investigate which factors influence employees' preferences between working from home and workation, this study applies a quantitative research design based on a Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) analysis.

This chapter first introduces the broad research design followed by an introduction to CBC analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This thesis follows a quantitative research design combining a structured online questionnaire with a CBC experiment. The aim is to examine which work-related attributes shape employees' preferences between working from home and workation, and how socio-demographic characteristics influence these preferences.

To achieve this, the survey consists of two parts. The first section gathers information such as age, gender, net income, caregiving responsibilities, and work-home segmentation preferences (full questionnaire see in appendix). These variables allow for the testing of hypotheses concerning socio-demographic influences on remote work preferences. The second part involves a CBC experiment in which respondents repeatedly choose between different hypothetical WFH and workation scenarios composed of varying attributes and levels (see chapter 3.2.2). This design simulates decision-making situations and enables the estimation of preference structures using Hierarchical Bayes in Sawtooth Software.

The rationale behind this approach is to capture both the underlying preferences for remote work models and the contextual influences of socio-demographic factors. The questionnaire collects background data, which allows for statistical analysis of preference patterns across population subgroups. In parallel, the conjoint method enables a simulation of realistic trade-off decisions between WFH and workation options, based on systematically varied job attributes.

3.2 Conjoint Measurement

In order to determine and evaluate respondent preferences, conjoint analysis is an appropriate statistical model. While this approach has been widely and successfully applied in marketing, particularly for designing new products (Rao, 2014b), it can also be effectively used in other fields to analyze decision-making processes (Lieder et al., 2018). It is a widely used quantitative research method used for measuring individual preferences by examining how people evaluate different alternatives. The method is particularly valuable in understanding how the combination of diverse features influences decision-making. By analyzing these trade-offs, it becomes possible to see which aspects are more or less important to individuals (Rao, 2014b).

Choosing the right type of conjoint analysis depends on the goals of the research and the complexity of the decision-making scenario. Adaptive Conjoint Analysis (ACA) was developed to manage studies with a large number of attributes, up to 30 attributes with several levels each (Herrmann et al., 2009). It is particularly useful for product design tasks, but less effective for priced-focus research. While ACA was the most used conjoint method until the early 2000s, it has since been largely replaced by CBC due to its more realistic choice-based format and broader applicability (Orme, 2010).

3.2.1 Choice-based conjoint (CBC)

CBC analysis differs from traditional approaches by asking respondents to express their preferences through direct choices between sets of hypothetical alternatives, rather than by rating or ranking them individually (Orme, 2010; Sawtooth Software Inc., 2017). It has been widely used in many fields of social and business sciences and has the advantage that it can represent a real marketplace scenario as respondents are given several options (“choice sets of hypothetical profiles”), out of which they must decide on their favorite one (Rao, 2014a). The goal is to explain consumer decision-making by using a decompositional approach that estimates the value individuals place on specific product attributes (Balderjahn et al., 2009). Therefore, individuals repeatedly select an option from a set of alternatives, aiming to maximize their utility. It is assumed that the chosen option offers the individual the highest utility (Rao, 2014a). CBC method also allows for the inclusion of a “none” option (see Figure 3), which helps capture respondents’ lack of interest or their willingness to opt out of any given alternative

(Ben-Akiva et al., 2019). This is particularly effective for measuring price sensitivity (Sawtooth Software Inc., 2017).

Although CBC analysis is most commonly used in the field of physical products, its applications are not limited to these. The method is based on identifying preferences for different combinations of attributes and their characteristics. This logic can therefore be applied equally well to services, other non-physical alternatives or labor models, such as workation and WFH. Since CBC simulates real-life trade-offs between attributes, it provides a robust framework for understanding employee preferences. The high degree of realism in CBC analysis is evident, as customers frequently make trade-offs in real purchasing decisions or base their choices on personal priorities of specific product attributes (Orme, 2010). Therefore, this method will be utilized in this thesis.

CBC Example

The design of a CBC study is a crucial component of the research process and involves several key steps. To illustrate this idea and clarify the procedure, a simple example based on Rao (2014a, p.130) will be provided:

This example involves a CBC analysis carried out by a credit card company to determine the market potential for a new credit card. The new card (brand P) competes with three existing brands (Q, R and S). Main attributes were identified in which these credit cards differ, and the corresponding levels for each attribute are:

Brand name	Annual fee	Interest rates	Credit limit	Online purchase
P	none	10%	\$2,000	yes
Q	\$20	14%	\$5,000	no
R	\$40	18%	\$10,000	
S	\$60			

Figure 2: attributes and levels (Rao 2014a, p. 130)

As shown in Figure 2, the first step is to define the relevant attributes of the product or service and their specific levels that are expected to influence respondents' preferences (Herrmann et al., 2009). The number of attributes and levels should remain limited to avoid cognitive overload and to keep the number of possible profiles manageable. Afterwards, product profiles or concepts are created. Each product profile represents a unique combination of attribute and levels and forms the basis for the options shown to respondents (Lieder et al., 2018).

With these profiles, choice sets are created showing alternative marketplace conditions. A choice set can look as follows:

Option1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	No choice
Brand P \$40 Annual fee 10% Interest rate \$5,000 credit limit Online purchase	Brand Q \$60 Annual fee 18% Interest rate \$10,000 credit limit Online purchase	Brand R \$20 Annual fee 14% Interest rate \$2,000 credit limit No Online purchase	Brand S \$40 Annual fee 10% Interest rate \$5,000 credit limit Online purchase	None: I would defer my acquiring a card.

Figure 3: example of CBC choice sets (Rao, 2014a, p. 131)

Respondents are shown a series of choice sets, each consisting of multiple product profiles. They are then asked to select the alternative they prefer most in each set. In this example, the “none” option is included, allowing respondents to indicate that none of the presented alternatives match their preferences (Rao, 2014a). The number of choice tasks in a CBC study typically ranges between 6 and 15 (Balderjahn et al., 2009; Sawtooth Software Inc., 2017).

Part-worth Utilities

In CBC, part-worth utilities are key outcomes that provide insights into respondents’ preferences for specific levels of product attributes. They serve as the building blocks for calculating the overall utility of a product from the perspective of each individual. Part-worth utilities are numerical values that indicate how much each specific level of an attribute contributes to the overall utility of a product concept. They reflect the degree of preference a consumer has for a particular feature (Lieder et al., 2018; Orme, 2010).

Part-worth utilities are interval-scaled. This means that the differences between values can be interpreted (e.g., the gap between two utility scores reflects a preference difference), but ratio-based statements, such as one level being twice as preferred as another, do not work. Also, a negative part-worth utility does not necessarily indicate that an attribute level is undesirable. Rather, it means that it is less preferred compared to other levels within the same attribute. Often, part-worth utilities within an attribute are rescaled to sum to zero, which allows for relative comparisons (Baier & Brusch, 2009; Orme, 2010).

Preference Estimation - Hierarchical Bayes Method

To estimate individual-level preferences in the CBC analysis, the Hierarchical Bayes (HB) estimation method can be applied. HB is a widely used technique in marketing and social research that allow for robust estimation of individual-level part-worth utilities, even when only limited data is available per respondent (Orme, 2010; Sawtooth Software, Inc., 2021).

The method operates on two levels: At the lower level, it evaluates how well the estimated part-worths fit each individual's responses. At the upper level, it estimates the average part-worths across the entire sample, as well as the variance and covariance of these estimates. One key strength of HB is its ability to "borrow strength" from the overall sample: when a respondent's answers are inconsistent or unusual, HB stabilizes their results by drawing on patterns from the broader population. For consistent respondents, this adjustment is minimal. As a result, HB provides more accurate and robust individual estimates than traditional methods, making it particularly valuable in applied research and real-world settings (Orme, 2010).

3.2.2 Selection of Attributes and Levels

For a successful CBC analysis, it is essential to formulate meaningful attributes and levels (Orme, 2010). As the subject of this thesis is somewhat more abstract than the example above, this point presents a greater challenge.

The chosen attributes should meet methodological criteria for conjoint studies. The attributes should be independent in content and empirical nature (Orme, 2010; Weiber & Mühlhans, 2009). For example, flexible working hours do not necessarily imply a higher or lower degree of work-life blending, which ensures conceptual clarity and avoids redundancy. Moreover, the attributes should be actionable (Rao, 2014c). Here for instance, different workation durations or enabling partially or fully flexible working hours are offered.

The chosen corresponding levels should reflect realistic yet diverse options that respondents could plausibly encounter in real-life work arrangements. To ensure comparability and reduce cognitive load, the number of levels per attribute was kept at 3 (except for the attribute location: one level) which aligns with methodological recommendations in conjoint research. This also helps maintain a manageable number of profiles while ensuring sufficient variation for meaningful trade-offs. Furthermore, the design avoids large discrepancies in the number of levels across attributes to prevent bias due to the "number-of-levels" effect, a tendency for attributes with more levels to be perceived as more important. This consistent structure enhances the validity and interpretability of the resulting part-worth utilities (Orme, 2010).

To ensure that the study reflects real-world decision-making processes, the attributes were selected based on theoretical foundations and practical relevance.

The final set includes four attributes: working location, working hours, duration, and blurring of work and personal life (see Figure 4).

Attribute	Level WFH	Level Workation
Working Location	At home	Vacation Destination
Working Hours	Fixed Hours	Fixed Hours
	Partially flexible	Partially flexible
	Fully flexible	Fully flexible
Duration WFH / Workation	One day per week WFH	Two weeks workation
	Two days per week WFH	Four weeks workation
	Three days per week WFH	Six weeks or longer workation
Blurring of work and personal life	Clear separation	Clear separation
	Moderate blending	Moderate blending
	Strong blending	Strong blending

Figure 4: Attributes and Levels for WFH and Workation

In this study, *working location* is treated as a fixed and defining feature of the two concepts that are being compared. As such, this first attribute is not varied across choice sets but serves as a structural differentiator between the two types of remote work models (referred to as “complete enumeration”, see in Chapter 3.2.3).

Working hours were included as an attribute as flexibility is often cited as one of the primary benefits and challenges of remote work. By contrasting „fixed hours“, „partially flexible“, and „fully flexible“ working hours, the design reflects different degrees of employee autonomy in terms of working time. In the survey, the level „fixed hours“ was characterized by a standard nine-to-five schedule. The level of „partially flexible hours“ refers to limited freedom, such as the possibility of adjusting start and end times within set boundaries, whereas the „fully flexible“ level represents complete autonomy in choosing when to work (Arbeiterkammer, 2025; Schmidbauer et al., 2023).

The attribute *duration* was adapted to the logic of each remote work model. For WFH, it refers to the number of home office days per week (one to three days), which reflects common hybrid arrangements. In contrast, for workation, duration describes the overall length of the stay.

In the literature, workations are typically regarded as a short- to medium-term concept, usually ranging from one to eight weeks (Benot et al., 2024; Deloitte, 2024). However, the available data on this is still rather limited. For the purpose of this thesis, durations of two, four, and six or more weeks were selected.

Blurring of work and personal life captures the integration between professional and private domains. Drawing on boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), this attribute distinguishes

between „clear separation“, „moderate blending“, or „strong blending“. The first one describes a situation in which work and personal life are kept clearly apart, for example through the use of separate calendars, distinct workspaces, and fixed routines (Nippert-Eng, 1996). „Moderate blending“ refers to an occasional mixing of both areas depending on the situation, such as checking a work email in the evening after official working hours. In contrast, „strong blending“ indicates a frequent integration of work and personal life, for instance by using a single calendar for all events (Nippert-Eng, 1996), applying time and space flexibly to both domains, and switching multiple times a day between work and personal tasks without maintaining clear boundaries.

Moreover, in this study, the “none” option was excluded from the choice sets to ensure that respondents actively engage in evaluating and prioritizing the presented scenarios. Including a „none“ option is most valuable when researching actual purchase intentions with pricing (Sawtooth Software, Inc., 2017). Here, the setup represents a so-called “binary choice experiment” (Rao, 2014a, p. 131), where the emphasis lies on relative preferences between two alternatives rather than absolute acceptance or rejection.

3.2.3 Survey Design

The survey was designed using Sawtooth's Lighthouse Studio software. To maximize participant reach, it was provided in both German and English. This was implemented in Lighthouse Studio using a skip logic mechanism that allows respondents to select their preferred language at the beginning of the survey. They are then automatically directed to the corresponding version (see appendix). Offering two language versions broadened the potential pool of respondents but also reduced the risk of excluding relevant participants due to language barriers. This also allows potential language-related selection effects to be taken into account.

After the initial language selection, the respondents were shown a brief introduction outlining general information about the study, followed by a conceptual introduction that provided clear definitions of WFH and workation (see appendix). This ensured a clear common understanding of the key terms. Next, participants answered demographic questions and items regarding previous experiences or familiarity with remote work concepts like WFH and workation. The survey then proceeded to the choice tasks of the CBC experiment. Before the actual conjoint tasks began, the attributes *working hours* and *blurring of work and personal life* and their respective levels were explained with concrete examples, to ensure that respondents clearly understood the distinctions between the categories.

CBC Design

In CBC, a design refers to the specific combinations of attributes and levels presented to respondents. An optimally efficient design allows for the estimation of all part-worth utilities with high precision, as the structure of the design minimizes the standard errors relative to the available number of observations (respondents $\times$ tasks) (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e).

For this study, a random CBC design was applied. Although no fixed tasks were included – i.e., tasks that are identically shown to all respondents with predefined product concepts (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e; Sawtooth Software Inc., 2017) – the random tasks are, strictly speaking, not really entirely random either. Instead, they are systematically controlled to ensure level balance and independence of attributes, which generally results in highly efficient designs. Such designs are considered effective, automated, and allow for substantial flexibility in subsequent analysis (Sawtooth Software Inc., 2017; Sawtooth Software, n.d.e).

Sawtooth offers researchers several alternative random design strategies to choose from (Sawtooth Software Inc., 2017, p.17):

- *Complete enumeration*: evaluates all possible concepts (except prohibited ones) to create an almost orthogonal design with “minimal overlap”, so that the concepts within each task are as different as possible. This ensures strong efficiency for estimating main effects but can become too complex with many attributes and levels. For studies with fewer attributes and levels, however, it runs acceptably fast. Complete enumeration designs are typically of very high quality.
- *Shortcut Method*: is a faster, simplified alternative to complete enumeration. It builds concepts by selecting the least frequently used attribute levels (one attribute at a time). If multiple levels are equally rare, ties are resolved by random selection. Like complete enumeration, it aims to minimize overlap within tasks and maximize differences between concepts, but it does so with less computational effort.
- *Random method*: selects concepts through random sampling with replacement, allowing level overlap within a task but preventing identical concepts. It is a highly efficient approach for estimating interaction effects, but less efficient for main effects.
- *Balanced overlap (default)*: is a middle ground between the random method and complete enumeration. It allows some level overlap within tasks while avoiding

duplicate concepts. It is almost as efficient as complete enumeration and shortcut for estimating main effects but performs better for estimating interaction effects.

For standard CBC studies, the *balanced overlap* or *complete enumeration* design strategies are generally recommended (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). For this survey, the *complete enumeration* approach was selected.

Firstly, it ensures very high-quality designs with minimal level overlap. Secondly, a central requirement of this study was that respondents should always choose between the two working models: WFH and workation. Therefore, the first attribute (*working location*) with its two levels („at home“ and „vacation destination“) had to be opposed in every single choice set. This logic is comparable to the use of brands in CBC designs, where each brand is displayed once per choice set in so-called natural level order (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). In this case, the *complete enumeration* strategy ensured that the levels „at home“ and „vacation destination“ were consistently presented against each other in all tasks (see Figure 5), without requiring prohibitions. This allowed respondents to make a clear binary decision between the two models, while still evaluating the additional attributes that varied across the tasks.

As noted earlier, CBC studies usually include between 6 and 15 choice tasks (Balderjahn et al., 2009; Sawtooth Software Inc., 2017; Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). In this survey, participants were asked to complete 10 choice sets.

If these were your options, which would you choose?

(1 of 10)

	Option 1	Option 2
Working Location	at home	vacation destination
Working hours	fixed hours	fully flexible
Duration	one day per week working from home	six weeks or longer workation
Blurring of work and personal life	strong blending	moderate blending
	Select	Select

Figure 5: Example of a CBC choice task (screenshot of the user interface of the online survey created with Sawtooth Lighthouse Studio)

Thirdly, a so-called alternative-specific design had to be applied for the attribute *duration* to ensure that the appropriate levels were displayed for each alternative (e.g., “one day per week”,

“two days per week” and “three days per week” for WFH and “two weeks”, “four weeks” and “six weeks or longer” for workation). In addition, a “merging row” was applied so that *duration of WFH* and *duration of workation*, including their respective levels, were presented uniformly within a single row. From a technical perspective, however, they still represent two distinct variables. For such alternative-specific designs, Sawtooth generally recommends the *complete enumeration* setting (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e).

It must be noted that alternative-specific designs are more complex than standard CBC designs, as they include conditional attributes that only appear for certain alternatives. Therefore, it is particularly important to use the “Test Design” procedure offered by the Software before hosting the survey. A design is considered deficient if the standard errors are very large. As a rule of thumb, standard errors for common attributes should not exceed 0.05, and for alternative-specific attributes should not exceed 0.10 (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e).

Attribute	Level	Std. Error, 150 resp.	Std. Error, 219 resp.	Label
1	1	0.02582	0.02137	at home
1	2	0.02582	0.02137	vacation destination
2	1	0.04217	0.03490	fixed hours
2	2	0.04218	0.03490	partially flexible
2	3	0.04218	0.03491	fully flexible
3	1	0.07335	0.06065	one day per week working from home
3	2	0.07309	0.06059	two days per week working from home
3	3	0.07317	0.06049	three days per week working from home
4	1	0.07333	0.06069	two weeks workation
4	2	0.07309	0.06054	four weeks workation
4	3	0.07324	0.06053	six weeks or longer workation
5	1	0.04217	0.03490	clear separation
5	2	0.04220	0.03493	moderate blending
5	3	0.04218	0.03492	strong blending

Figure 6: “Test Design” report

Based on the estimated sample size of 150 respondents (left side), the test showed the following results: As shown in Figure 6, the standard errors for the main effects are below 0.05 (highlighted in green), and for the alternative-specific effects below 0.10 (highlighted in yellow), as suggested. This indicates that the design is appropriate and can be considered

statistically robust (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). The final sample size increased to 219 respondents (right side), thus exceeding the initially targeted 150. As a result, the test performance can be considered even stronger.

Moreover, Sawtooth issues a warning whenever prohibitions (restrictions on specific attribute combinations) or alternative-specific design rules are specified. Technically, this means that certain combinations of attributes will never appear in the design (which is the case with the merged row attribute *duration*), and as a result, interaction effects between these attributes cannot be estimated (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). In this study, however, interaction effects between *duration of WFH* and *duration of workation* would not be meaningful or interpretable, since the two attributes are mutually exclusive by the design.

Sawtooth explicitly notes that if prohibitions or alternative-specific designs are used, the design should be tested and the efficiency of the estimates for the parameters of interest must be checked (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). As the parameter estimates in this study meet the suggested thresholds, the applied alternative-specific design is considered conceptually justified and the notification can be regarded as unproblematic.

3.2.4 Pretest and Data Collection

Before launching the survey, a pretest was conducted. For this purpose, the complete questionnaire was sent to ten individuals in order to identify and eliminate potential inconsistencies and to ensure comprehensibility of the survey. Prior to launching the final version of the study, several adjustments were made. In particular, the explanations of the attributes *working hours* and *blurring of work and personal life* were revised in little details.

Subsequently, the survey was hosted on a Sawtooth server (link: https://employeepreferences.sawtoothsoftware.com/cgi-bin/ciwweb.pl?hid_studyname=MASurvey&hid_pagenum=1; the link is no longer active as the study has been closed on August 30, 2025). The target was to reach at least 150 participants. To achieve this, the link was distributed within the researcher's private and professional network and shared on various social media platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook). Data collection took place between August 16 and August 30, 2025.

4. Results

This chapter presents the empirical results of the survey. After a brief description of the sample (Chapter 4.1), the subsequent sections report the findings from the counts analysis as an initial descriptive overview (Chapter 4.2), followed by the estimation of part-worth utilities (Chapter 4.3), importance scores (Chapter 4.4) and market simulations (Chapter 4.5). In Chapter 4.6, the potential influence of socio-demographic factors on employees' preferences are examined.

In total, 230 respondents completed the survey (219 in German, 11 in English). Given the very small size of the English subsample, only the German responses ($n = 219$) were included in the main analysis to make sure that the results are statistically meaningful. The control question was answered correctly by all participants.

4.1 Sample Description

This section provides an overview of the sample characteristics. Of the 219 survey participants, the majority (153 respondents) was located in Germany, followed by Austria (61 respondents), Switzerland (4 respondents) and the United Kingdom (1 respondent).

Regarding prior encounters with the topic workation, 61% of the respondents had heard of the concept before reading the introduction. 54% reported working from home on a regular basis, 17% occasionally, and 29% not at all. Of all respondents, only 15% have ever done a workation before.

At the time of the survey, 37% of the participants reported having the general option to work from home, while 24% indicated that their company offered the possibility for both WFH and workation. On the other hand, 37% had no option for either concept and 2% were not sure about the current policies of their company regarding this topic.

In terms of employment status, the majority (59%) were full-time employees, followed by 21% part-time employees and 11% students. The remaining participants were either self-employed (3%) or categorized as "other" (6%).

4.1.1 Age Distribution

As illustrated in Figure 7, the majority of respondents were between 25 and 30 years old ($n = 117$; 53,4%). Smaller shares were found in the age groups 31-40 years ($n = 38$; 17,4%) and 41-50 years ($n = 31$; 14,2%). 16 respondents (7,3%) were under 25 years old, while 14 participants (6,4%) were in the age group 51-60 years. Only 3 respondents (1,4%) were older than 60.

Overall, the sample can thus be characterized as predominantly young, with a clear concentration in the 25-30 age range.

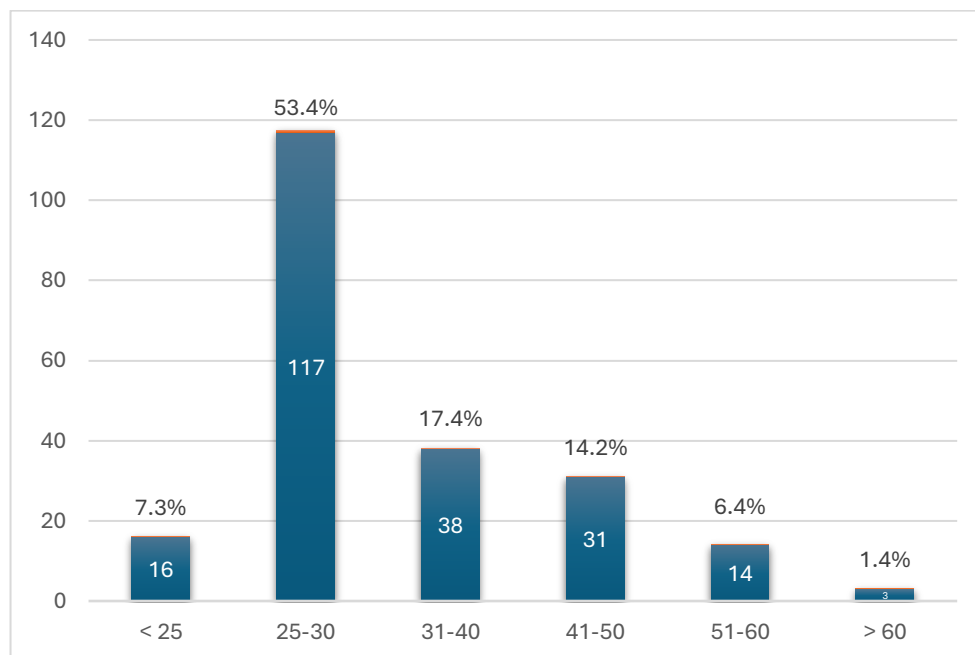


Figure 7: Age distribution

4.1.2 Gender Distribution

As shown in Figure 8, the sample consisted of 129 female respondents (58,9%) and 88 male respondents (40,2%). One participant identified as non-binary (0,5%), and one participant preferred to not disclose their gender (0,5%).

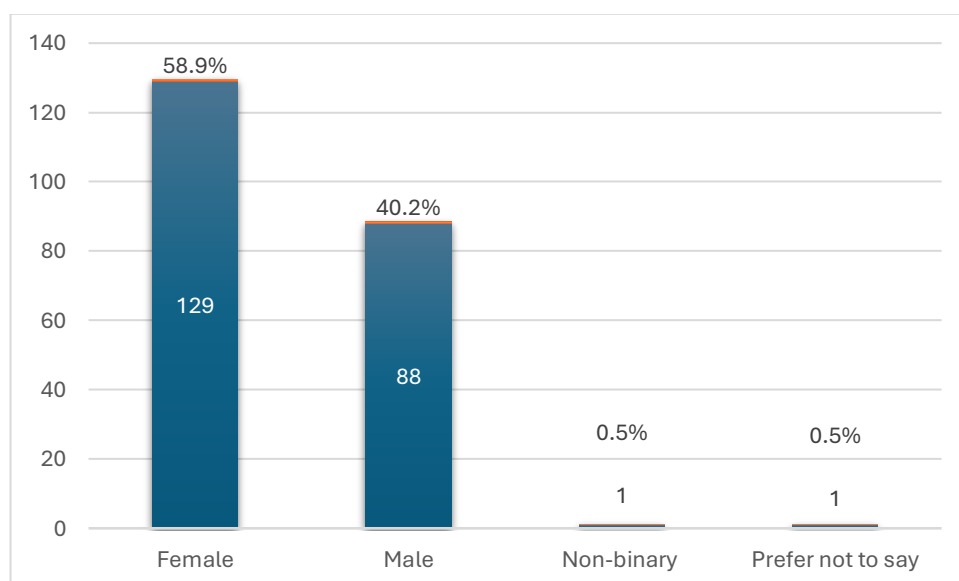


Figure 8: Gender distribution

4.1.3 Distribution of Relationship Status

Figure 9 illustrates the distribution of relationship status among the respondents. 86 participants (39,3%) reported being in a relationship, 72 respondents (32,9%) indicated that they were single, and 57 (26%) were married. Two respondents each reported being divorced or selected “other” (0,9%, respectively).

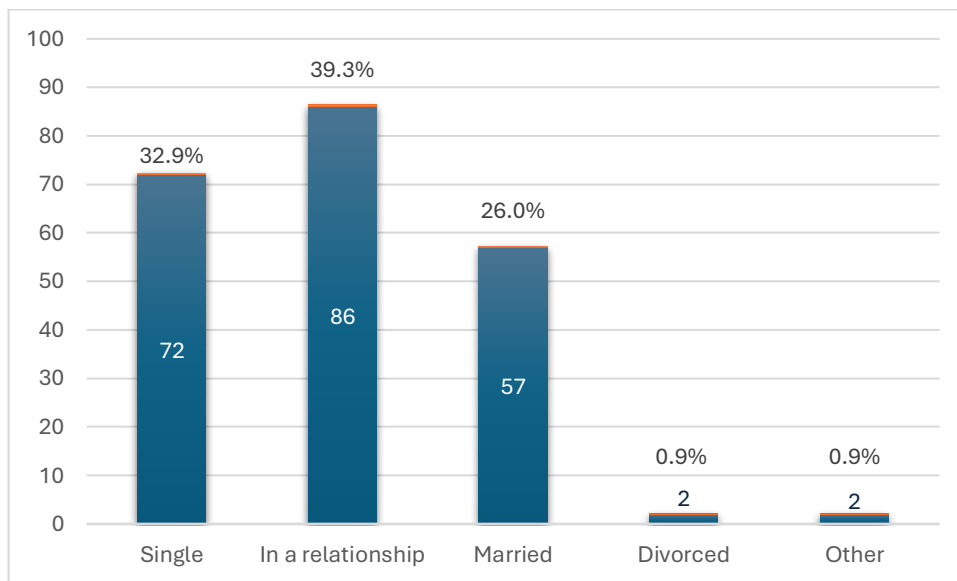


Figure 9: Distribution of relationship status

4.1.4 Distribution of Caregiving Responsibilities

As shown in Figure 10, 48 respondents (21,9%) reported having caregiving responsibilities, while the majority of 171 participants (78,1%) indicated that they did not.

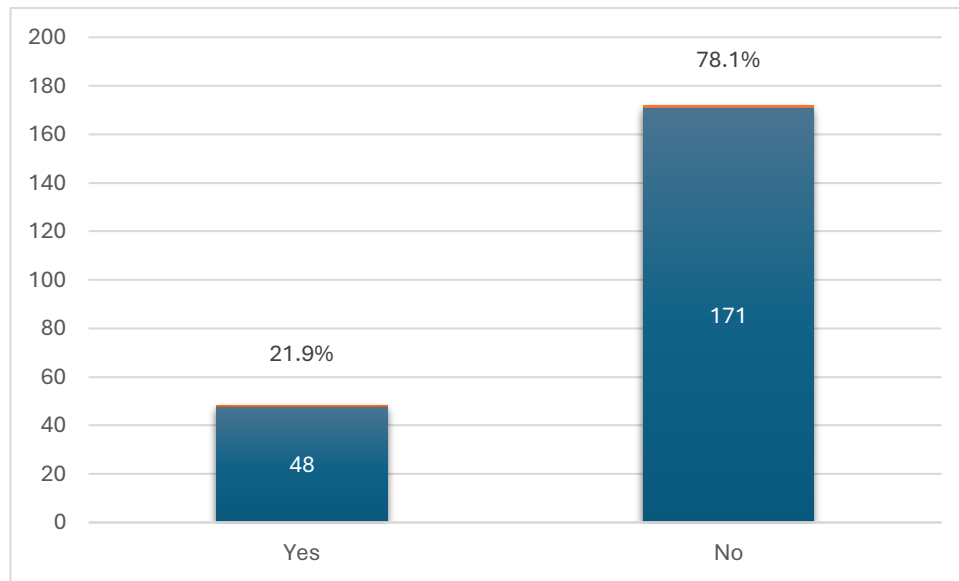


Figure 10: Distribution of caregiving responsibilities

4.1.5 Distribution of Educational Level

Figure 11 displays the distribution of the respondents by educational level. The largest share held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent ($n = 77$; 35,2%), followed by participants with a Master's degree ($n = 48$, 21,9%). Apprenticeship/Vocational training accounts for 19,6% ($n = 43$), and upper secondary education for 16,4% ($n = 36$). 9 participants (4,1%) indicated lower secondary education and six respondents (2,7%) selected "other". None of the participants reported holding a doctoral degree.

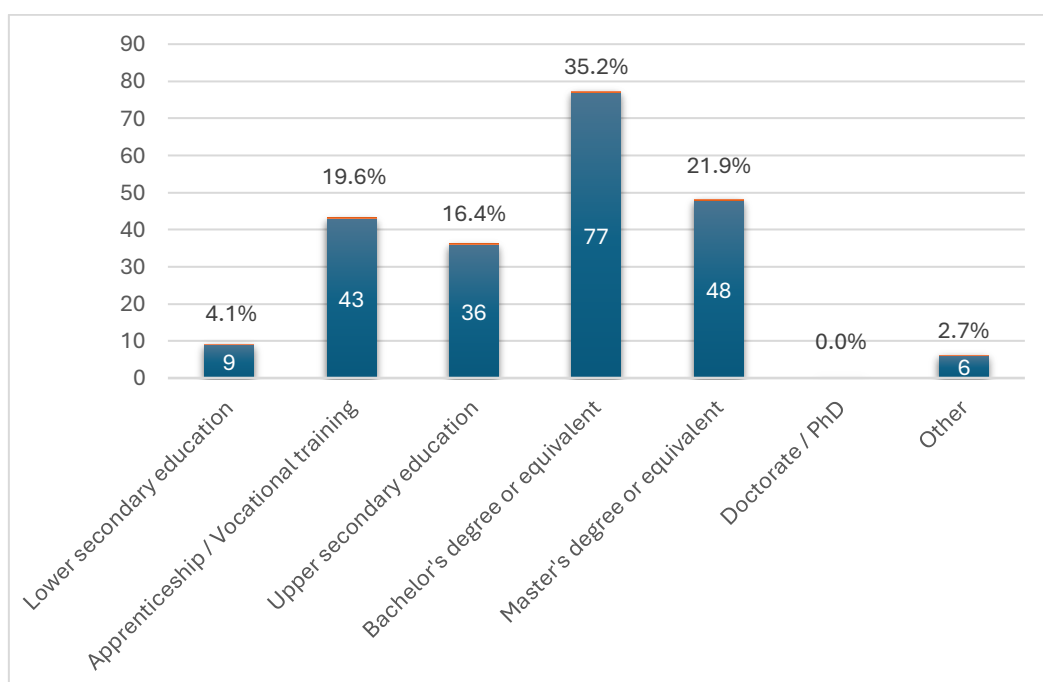


Figure 11: Distribution of educational level

4.1.6 Distribution of Income

Figure 12 presents the distribution of the respondents' monthly net income. The largest share reported an income between 2.001€ and 3.000€ (n = 71; 32,4%), followed by 1.000€ to 2.000€ (n = 54; 24,7%) and 3.001€ to 4.000€ (n = 37; 16,9%). Smaller shares reported incomes below 1.000€ (n = 18; 8,2%), above 5.000€ (n = 16; 7,3%), or between 4.001€ and 5.000€ (n = 13; 5,9%). 10 participants (4,6%) preferred not to disclose their income.

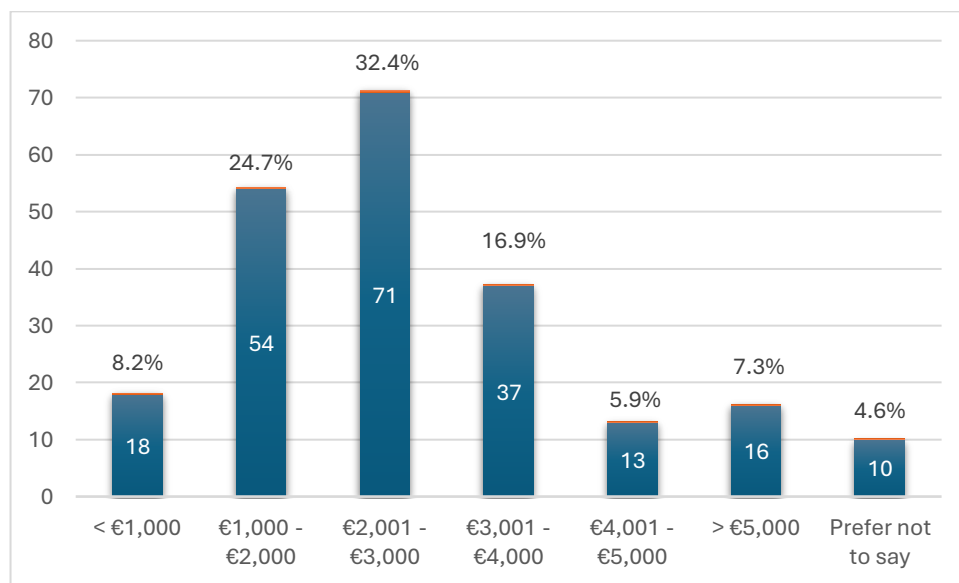


Figure 12: Distribution of educational level

4.2 Counts Analysis

The counts analysis provides a quick, descriptive estimation of main and joint effects of CBC data. For each level, it calculates the proportion of times a concept including that level was chosen relative to the number of times the level was presented. Counts analysis is methodologically rather simple, but it offers a useful overview of the results and allows for an initial summary of the data. The Chi-square tests show whether the distributions are significant (Sawtooth Software, Inc., 2017).

Working Location		Working hours	
	Total		Total
Total Respondents	219	Total Respondents	219
at home	0,529	fixed hours	0,398
vacation destination	0,471	partially flexible	0,531
		fully flexible	0,571
Within Att. Chi-Square	7,249	Within Att. Chi-Square	47,854
D.F.	1	D.F.	2
Significance	p < .01	Significance	p < .01

Duration WFH		Duration workation	
	Total		Total
Total Respondents	219	Total Respondents	219
one day per week working from home	0,471	two weeks workation	0,451
two days per week working from home	0,558	four weeks workation	0,484
three days per week working from home	0,556	six weeks or longer workation	0,479
Within Att. Chi-Square	6,829	Within Att. Chi-Square	0,975
D.F.	2	D.F.	2
Significance	p < .05	Significance	not sig

Blurring of work and personal life	
	Total
Total Respondents	219
clear separation	0,630
moderate blending	0,598
strong blending	0,273
Within Att. Chi-Square	227,809
D.F.	2
Significance	p < .01

Figure 13: Results of Counts Analysis

As shown in Figure 13, for all attributes, except for *duration of workation* the Chi-Square tests confirm statistical significance. That means, that, in contrast to the attributes *working location*, *working hours*, and *blurring of work and personal life*, the attribute *duration of workation* did not significantly affect respondents' choices.

For *working location* the respondents slightly preferred the level "at home" (52,9%) over "vacation destination" (47,1%), which indicates a general tendency towards WFH. However, the counts analysis should not be interpreted as a direct statement about the overall preference, it only provides an initial overview (Sawtooth Software, Inc., 2017).

For the attribute *working hours* the most frequently chosen level was “fully flexible” (57,1%), followed by “partially flexible” (53,1%). The level “fixed hours” was selected less often, with only 39,8% of choices.

The counts analysis results for *duration of WFH* show that both “two days per week” (55,8%) and “three days per week” (55,6%) were selected more frequently than the level “one day per week” (47,1%).

As mentioned, *duration of workation* was not significant ($\chi^2 (2) = 0,975$, not significant). The distribution across the three levels “two weeks” (45,1%), “four weeks” (48,4%) and “six weeks or longer” (47,9%) was very balanced. This indicates that respondents did not show a clear preference for a specific length of workation.

Finally, for *blurring of work and personal life*, the Chi-Square test showed a highly significant effect ($\chi^2 (2) = 227,809$, $p < 0,01$). Respondents strongly favored “clear separation” (63%) and “moderate blending” (59,8%), while “strong blending” was chosen much less frequently (27,3%).

4.3 Part-worth utilities – Hierarchical Bayes Estimation

While Counts Analyses are useful for providing a quick, top-line summary of the results, Sawtooth strongly recommends the use of Hierarchical Bayes estimation (see Chapter 3.2.1) for the final models (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). Lighthouse Studio includes a built-in HB tool that enables the estimation of part-worth utilities directly within the CBC system (Sawtooth Software, Inc., 2017). The part-worth utility function has become the most widely applied approach in CBC experiments, as it allows for a detailed understanding of preferences at the attribute level (Neibecker & Kohler, 2009; Orme, 2010; Sawtooth Software, n.d.d).

The part-worth utilities represent the relative likelihood of a concept being chosen if a given level is included. Because utilities are zero-centered within each attribute, the absolute values of part-worths are not directly meaningful. A negative score does not necessarily indicate that respondents dislike a level, but rather that it is valued less relevant to the other levels within the same attribute. Likewise, a positive score only reflects a relative preference. Thus, it is the differences between the part-worths within an attribute that capture the relative strength of preferences and are interpretable (Orme, 2009; Sawtooth Software, n.d.e). A high positive utility value for a specific level indicates that, relative to other levels within the same attribute, respondents were more likely to choose a concept containing this level. Conversely, a high negative value suggests that the inclusion of this level made a concept relatively less likely to

be chosen compared to the alternatives (Sawtooth Software, n.d.b). Moreover, utilities can only be compared within the same attribute, not across attributes (Sawtooth Software, n.d.e)

In Figure 14, the average part-worth utilities for each attribute level are shown:

Average Utilities (Zero-Centered Diffs)	Average Utilities	Standard Deviation
Working Location		
at home	10,95	70,38
vacation destination	-10,95	70,38
Working hours		
fixed hours	-39,94	36,51
partially flexible	10,65	20,26
fully flexible	29,29	29,73
Duration WFH		
one day per week working from home	-34,04	29,03
two days per week working from home	15,86	24,68
three days per week working from home	18,19	30,52
Duration workation		
two weeks workation	4,49	33,73
four weeks workation	-10,26	24,11
six weeks or longer workation	5,77	31,87
Blurring of work and personal life		
clear separation	55,51	43,44
moderate blending	39,72	21,61
strong blending	-95,23	53,11

Figure 14: HB Analysis – average part-worth utilities

The HB estimation results show that regarding *working location*, working at home was preferred over working at a vacation destination (10,95 vs. -10,95).

For *working hours*, fully flexible schedules were most strongly favored (29,29), followed by partially flexible arrangements (10,65). Fixed hours, on the other hand, were clearly rejected (-39,94).

For the duration of working from home, two days (15,86) and three days per week (18,19) were clearly preferred over only one day in the home office per week (-34,04).

The utilities for the attribute *workation duration*, six weeks or longer (5,77) were preferred over two weeks (4,49) and four weeks (-10,26). However, as the counts analysis showed, the distribution of preferences across the levels was very balanced, therefore it is assumed that respondents did not display a significant preference for a specific duration.

The strongest effects were observed for *blurring of work and personal life*. Clear separation (55,51) and moderate blending (39,72) were strongly preferred, while strong blending was clearly rejected (-95,23). This tendency had also already become apparent in the counts analysis.

Overall, the HB estimation indicates that respondents generally preferred working at home over working in a vacation destination, favored flexible over fixed working hours, and expressed strong preferences for a clear separation of work and personal life. Altogether, this pattern suggests a general tendency towards WFH rather than workation.

4.4 Importance Scores

HB estimation also offers insights into the relative importance of attributes in a CBC analysis. Importance scores indicate how strongly each attribute influences respondents' choices, relative to the other attributes in the study. They are calculated by comparing the utility ranges across levels of each attribute and then normalizing these values so that they sum up to 100%. (calculation example see in appendix). Since the importance depends on the range of levels defined in the study, these scores should be interpreted as relative indicators rather than absolute measures (Sawtooth Software, n.d.f)

Average Importances	Average Importances	Standard Deviation
Working Location	23,00	16,75
Working hours	16,14	10,95
Duration WFH	15,44	7,86
Duration workation	12,93	6,12
Blurring of work and personal life	32,50	16,67

Figure 15: Importance Scores

These results show that the attribute *blurring of work and personal life* has the highest relative importance (32,50%), which indicates that it was the most influential factor in respondents' choices, followed by *working location* (23%). *Working hours* (16,14%), *duration of WFH* (15,44%), and *duration of workation* (12,93%) had lower importance scores, meaning that these attributes influenced choices to a lesser degree. These insights indicate that the decision between WFH and workation is mostly driven by the perceived boundaries between their private and professional lives, meaning that clear separation of work and personal life is the most important decisive factor that shapes overall preferences.

Given that WFH is generally perceived as a context in which boundaries between work and personal life can be maintained more effectively compared to workation, these findings provide an explanation for the overall preference for WFH. In contrast, workation might intuitively be linked to greater overlap between professional and private spheres, which could make it less attractive to the respondents.

4.5 Market Simulation Results

The market simulator (or choice simulator) is regarded as the key decision-making tool in conjoint analysis. It uses the part-worth utilities from conjoint analysis to predict how respondents would choose among competing alternatives. By defining products through the attributes and levels included in the study, it estimates the share of respondents likely to choose each alternative. For each respondent, the total utility of each alternative is calculated, and the alternative with the highest utility is assumed to be chosen. Aggregating these choices across respondents shows market share predictions that sum to 100% (Orme, 2010; Sawtooth Software, n.d.a)

The choice simulator estimates the share of respondents who would prefer each product concept, assuming these were the only available options in the market. Compared to analyzing only utilities and importance scores, simulations can provide more practical insights by combining preference data with specific market scenarios. This allows researchers to assess which alternatives are favored and to explore opportunities for improving existing options or introducing new ones (Sawtooth Software, n.d.c)

While market simulators can approximate long-term market shares under ideal conditions, they cannot capture real-world influences such as advertising, distribution, or brand awareness. That is why simulator outputs should not be interpreted as actual market shares, but rather as relative preference indicators based on the attributes and levels included in the study (Sawtooth Software, n.d.a)

Once the conjoint data had been collected and utilities estimated, market scenarios of competing product concepts were constructed. In line with best practice, the number of alternatives in each simulation was kept consistent with the CBC questionnaire design (here: two alternatives). Since the “none” option was excluded in the experiment, it was also not included in the simulations. Among the available choice rules (Randomized First Choice, Share of Preference, First Choice, Purchase Likelihood, Total Utility), the *Share of Preference* method was applied. This approach is recommended by Sawtooth in cases where only two alternatives are compared,

as in the present study (WFH vs. Workation). As a starting point, simulations typically define a “base case scenario” (Simulation 1), representing either the current market situation or a relevant future setup (Sawtooth Software, n.d.a)

In the subsequent simulations (Simulation 2, 3 and 4), the levels of the other attributes (*working hours*, *duration of WFH*, *duration of workation*, and *blurring of work and personal life*) were systematically varied to observe how preferences change when one attribute is modified, while all others remain constant (as in the base case scenario). For the attribute *working location*, no separate simulation was conducted since WFH is automatically linked to the level “at home” and workation to “vacation destination” (complete enumeration, see Chapter 3.2.2).

Simulation 1 – Base Case Scenario

In the context of this study, the base case scenario was defined as the choice between the two concepts WFH and workation with levels selected to align with a realistic setting that reflects the theoretical background discussed in the literature part of this thesis. This ensures that the simulated alternatives represent plausible and meaningful options for the respondents.

The simulation settings reflect two plausible alternatives that most closely align with real-world associations:

- **WFH** with the working location “at home,” partially flexible working hours, two days of home office per week, and a moderate overlap between work and private life.
- **Workation** with the working location “vacation destination,” fully flexible working hours, a duration of two weeks, and strong blurring of work and personal life.

N/A (not applicable) indicates that the level does not apply to the respective alternative. The attribute *duration of WFH* is only relevant for the WFH scenario, whereas *duration of workation* is only applicable to the workation scenario.

Label / Attribute	WFH	Workation
Working Location	at home	vacation destination
Working Hours	partially flexible	fully flexible
Duration WFH	two days per week	N/A
Duration Workation	N/A	two weeks
Blurring of work and personal life	moderate blending	strong blending
<i>Shares of Preferences</i>	82,4%	17,6%
<i>Std Error</i>	1,8%	1,8%

Figure 16: Simulation 1 – Base Case Scenario

As also indicated by the part-worth utilities from the HB estimation (see Chapter 4.4), respondents show a strong preference for WFH over workation, as illustrated in Figure 16. When presented with these two realistic scenarios, 82,4% of respondents would opt for WFH, while only 17,6% would choose workation.

This outcome aligns with the earlier findings from the average part-worth utilities and importance scores: the respondents generally prefer a clear separation of work and private life, which is more strongly associated with WFH than workation. It should be noted that the fact that this workation scenario includes “strong blending” as a level for the attribute *blurring of work and personal life*, likely contributed to its lower preference share. Nevertheless, this is consistent with the insights from the literature and therefore “strong blending” represents a scenario that can be considered realistic.

Simulation 2 – Working Hours

In Simulation 2, only the levels for the attribute *working hours* for WFH and workation were adjusted, while all other attributes remain the same as in the base case scenario. The simulation includes four adjustments to observe how the shares of preference change. On the left side, changes are made to the WFH levels, while on the right side the workation levels are adjusted. The levels that were adjusted are highlighted in yellow in Figure 17.

Label / Attribute	WFH	Workation	WFH	Workation
Working Hours	fixed schedule	fully flexible	partially flexible	fixed schedule
Shares of Preferences	69,2%	30,8%	95,4%	4,6%
Std Error	2,5%	2,5%	0,7%	0,7%
Working Hours	fully flexible	fully flexible	partially flexible	partially flexible
Shares of Preferences	86,4%	13,6%	86,4%	13,6%
Std Error	1,5%	1,5%	1,5%	1,5%

Figure 17: Simulation 2

The results of Simulation 2 illustrate how working hours influence preference shares between WFH and workation (everything else being equal): When WFH is associated with a fixed schedule, 69,2% of respondents would choose WFH, while 30,8% would prefer a workation. When combined with fully flexible working hours, WFH reaches preference shares over 86%. In contrast, when workation is tied to a fixed schedule, only 4,6% would choose this option. This highlights that workation is only attractive under the condition of flexibility, while WFH remains more robust, even under less favorable conditions.

Simulation 3 – Duration

In simulation 3, everything was kept equal to the base scenario, except for the attribute *duration*. Four adjustments were made to test changes in preferences for WFH (left) and workation (right).

Label / Attribute	WFH	Workation	WFH	Workation
Duration WFH / Workation	one day per week	two weeks	two days per week	four weeks
Shares of Preferences	68,7%	31,3%	79,0%	21,0%
Std Error	2,4%	2,4%	2,1%	2,1%
Duration WFH / Workation	three days per week	two weeks	two days per week	six weeks +
Shares of Preferences	80,1%	19,9%	76,0%	24,0%
Std Error	2,0%	2,0%	2,3%	2,3%

Figure 18: Simulation 3

Simulation 3 shows that when WFH is limited to only one day per week, its preference share decreases to 68,7% compared to two days. When three days per week are offered for WFH, 80,1% would choose this option.

For workation, an extension of the duration from two to four or six weeks (or longer) does not substantially increase its attractiveness. This is consistent with the results of the counts analysis (Chapter 4.2) which already showed that the duration of workation did not significantly affect respondents' choices.

Simulation 4 – Blurring of Work and Personal Life

Simulation 4 shows the changes in preferences when adjusting the attribute *blurring of work and personal life* for WFH (left) or workation (right), while all other conditions remain identical to the base scenario.

Label / Attribute	WFH	Workation	WFH	Workation
Blurring of work and personal life	clear separation	strong blending	moderate blending	clear separation
Shares of Preferences	82,8%	17,2%	44,8%	55,2%
Std Error	1,8%	1,8%	2,4%	2,4%
Blurring of work and personal life	strong blending	strong blending	moderate blending	moderate blending
Shares of Preferences	50,8%	49,2%	50,8%	49,2%
Std Error	2,3%	2,3%	2,3%	2,3%

Figure 19: Simulation 4

Figure 19 demonstrates how strongly preferences are influenced by the degree of separation or blending between work and personal life.

When WFH is combined with clear separation, 82,2% of respondents would choose this scenario. Interestingly, when workation is tied to clear separation, 55,2% would prefer this option.

When both WFH and workation involve strong blending, preferences are nearly evenly split (around 50%). This indicates that the negative effect of strong blending reduces the dominance of WFH and confirms what was already evident in the HB analysis. Clear separation between work and private life is the most important factor for the respondents.

4.6 Demographic Influences on Preferences

In the following section, the potential influence of socio-demographic factors on employees' preferences between WFH and workation is examined. Specifically, the factors age, relationship status, caregiving responsibilities, educational level, income and preferences for segmenting work and personal life are considered.

For each segment, the analyses combine the tools of Sawtooth Lighthouse and SPSS. First, part-worth utilities and importance scores are examined, followed by market simulations for the respective segment.

On the one hand, importance scores indicate how strongly each attribute influences respondents' choices, relative to the other attributes in the study. The two work concepts WFH and workation are in this study defined by the attributes *working location*, *working hours*, *duration of WFH / duration of workation* and *blurring of work and personal life*. Differences in the importance scores for these attributes across specific socio-demographic groups can therefore provide information about preferences for WFH versus Workation.

On the other hand, market simulations segmented by subgroups is intended to provide insights into which preferences emerge under a given set of offerings for different groups of individuals. The market simulations are based on the base case scenario, complemented by an alternative scenario to provide additional insights. As explained in Chapter 4.5, the base case scenario was designed to reflect a realistic situation or a real life or future set-up. In that scenario, the workation concept was assigned the level "strong blending" for the attribute *blurring of work and personal life*. The counts analysis (Chapter 4.2) and the HB part-worth utility estimation (Chapter 4.3) revealed that respondents disfavor this attribute level. Therefore, in addition to the base case scenario, an alternative scenario was simulated in order to demonstrate how percentage preference shares can change when both concepts (WFH and Workation) are characterized by the level "moderate blending" instead of "strong blending".

As the attribute *duration of workation* was not significant in the counts analysis (Chapter 4.3, $p > 0.05$) it is also not emphasized in the interpretation of the following results.

4.6.1 Age

For the analysis of differences regarding age, the original age distribution (see Figure 7) was adjusted to three broader categories in Sawtooth Lighthouse (< 30, 30-45, and > 45 years) to ensure robustness and interpretability.

Utility Values und Importance Scores

Average Utility Values (by Segment)

Utility Scaling Method Zero-Centered Differences

		Total	Under 30	30 to 45	Over 45
Respondent Count		219	128	57	34
		Utility			
Label		Total	Under 30	30 to 45	Over 45
	at home	10,95	5,75	2,33	44,98
	vacation destination	-10,95	-5,75	-2,33	-44,98
	fixed hours	-39,94	-37,46	-49,22	-33,73
	partially flexible	10,65	9,21	14,74	9,22
	fully flexible	29,29	28,25	34,49	24,51
	one day per week working from home	-34,04	-34,64	-38,50	-24,32
	two days per week working from home	15,86	13,75	21,73	13,92
	three days per week working from home	18,19	20,89	16,77	10,40
	two weeks workation	4,49	0,68	-0,20	26,70
	four weeks workation	-10,26	-7,57	-8,77	-22,90
	six weeks or longer workation	5,77	6,89	8,97	-3,80
	clear separation	55,51	60,66	47,88	48,90
	moderate blending	39,72	42,60	35,17	36,52
	strong blending	-95,23	-103,26	-83,05	-85,42

Average Importances (by Segment)

		Importance			
Attribute		Total	Under 30	30 to 45	Over 45
	Working Location	23,00	22,75	22,73	24,38
	Working hours	16,14	15,31	17,94	16,26
	Duration WFH	15,44	15,16	16,95	13,97
	Duration workation	12,93	12,38	13,34	14,28
	Blurring of work and personal life	32,50	34,40	29,04	31,11

Figure 20: Utility Values and Importance Score – segmented by age groups

The comparison of part-worth utilities and importance scores across the three age groups shows similar patterns. For almost all attributes, the same levels were preferred with only minor variations regarding *duration of WFH*. Respondents under 30 years old most preferred three days per week WFH, whereas the other age groups most favored two days per week. All groups prefer fully flexible schedules and clear separation between work and personal life over blending.

It becomes evident that the attribute *blurring of work and personal life* emerges as the most important factor in all groups, but especially important for those who are under 30 years old (34,40%).

Market Simulation – Segmented by Age Groups

The table below summarizes how preferences differ across the three age groups in the base case scenario and in the alternative scenario.

Total		Respondent Count	219			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,4%	1,8%	78,9%	85,9%	
	Workation	17,6%	1,8%	14,1%	21,1%	
Alternative	WFH	50,8%	2,3%	46,3%	55,2%	
	Workation	49,2%	2,3%	44,8%	53,7%	
Under 30		Respondent Count	128			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,9%	2,3%	78,4%	87,4%	
	Workation	17,1%	2,3%	12,6%	21,6%	
Alternative	WFH	48,4%	3,0%	42,5%	54,2%	
	Workation	51,6%	3,0%	45,8%	57,5%	
30 to 45		Respondent Count	57			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	78,3%	3,8%	70,6%	86,0%	
	Workation	21,7%	3,8%	14,0%	29,4%	
Alternative	WFH	46,8%	4,5%	37,7%	55,8%	
	Workation	53,2%	4,5%	44,2%	62,3%	
Over 45		Respondent Count	34			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	87,2%	3,5%	80,0%	94,4%	
	Workation	12,8%	3,5%	5,6%	20,0%	
Alternative	WFH	66,5%	5,0%	56,2%	76,7%	
	Workation	33,5%	5,0%	23,3%	43,8%	

Figure 21: Market Simulation – segmented by age groups

The market simulation for the base case scenario shows that all age groups would rather choose WFH than going on a vacation. The age group for over 45 showed the highest interest in WFH (87,2%) and the age group from 30 to 45 towards workation (21,7%) in the base case scenario compared to the other subgroups.

The results for the alternative scenario show that there is a much more balanced outcome when both WFH and workation are linked to the level “moderate blending” (average: WFH 50,8% vs. workation 49,2%). Among the respondents under 30 and the age group 30-45, the preference

shifts slightly in favor of workation (51,6% and 53,2%). The subgroup of respondents over 45 still favors WFH (66,5%).

The base case scenario serves as the main reference, as it reflects theoretical assumptions by linking workation with *strong blurring of work and personal life*. This configuration is considered most realistic. The alternative scenario with *moderate blurring* for both WFH and workation was added to illustrate how sensitive preferences can be to this attribute.

These results suggest that clear tendencies between age groups only become apparent when the base case scenario is modified. In the original base case scenario similar preference shares (82,9%; 78,3%; 87,2%) in favor of WFH across all age groups were observed. Once the attribute *blurring of work and personal life* is adjusted to “moderate blending” (instead of “strong blending”), generational tendencies become visible, with younger respondents (under 30 years and 30-45 years) leaning slightly toward workation, while older respondents continue to prefer WFH.

An ANOVA was conducted in SPSS to test whether these differences between the three age groups were statistically significant. The test compared the mean importance scores across groups for all attributes. It showed no significant differences (all $p > 0,05$; see appendix). This indicates that the different age groups do not show systematic differences in how they perceive the relative importance of the attributes that define WFH and workation. It can be assumed that age does not have an influence on employees’ preferences between working WFH and workation in this sample. Therefore, H1 cannot be supported.

4.6.2 Relationship Status

Utility Values and Importance Scores

For the analysis of differences regarding relationship status, the subgroups „divorced“ and „other“ (both $n = 2$) are not meaningful due to the very small sample size and therefore not further interpreted.

Average Utility Values (by Segment)						
Zero-Centered						
Utility Scaling Method Differences						
	Total	Single	In a relationship	Married	Divorced	Other
Respondent Count	219	72	86	57	2	2
Utility						
Label	Total	Single	In a relationship	Married	Divorced	Other
at home	10,95	9,01	-4,37	36,83	-19,32	32,49
vacation destination	-10,95	-9,01	4,37	-36,83	19,32	-32,49
fixed hours	-39,94	-	-41,56	-40,58	-46,13	23,44
partially flexible	10,65	7,63	13,58	9,91	30,51	-5,32
fully flexible	29,29	31,45	27,99	30,67	15,62	-18,12
one day per week working from home	-34,04	-	-35,62	-31,71	-24,32	11,57
two days per week working from home	15,86	15,25	17,59	16,33	6,81	-41,29
three days per week working from home	18,19	20,30	18,03	15,38	17,51	29,73
two weeks workation	4,49	3,06	-4,86	17,98	39,63	38,98
four weeks workation	-10,26	-8,47	-8,33	-14,30	-30,53	-22,36
six weeks or longer workation	5,77	5,41	13,19	-3,68	-9,11	-16,62
clear separation	55,51	58,99	60,58	42,01	95,26	57,17
moderate blending	39,72	39,72	41,40	36,31	44,46	59,90
strong blending	-95,23	-	-101,98	-78,32	-139,72	-
		98,71				117,07
Average Importances (by Segment)						
Importance						
Attribute	Total	Single	In a relationship	Married	Divorced	Other
Working Location	23,00	24,38	20,68	25,53	10,87	13,00
Working hours	16,14	15,77	16,00	17,06	15,33	9,88
Duration WFH	15,44	14,87	16,22	15,09	9,12	18,66
Duration workation	12,93	12,19	12,76	13,80	17,69	16,63
Blurring of work and personal life	32,50	32,78	34,35	28,52	46,99	41,83

Figure 22: Utility Values and Importance Scores – segmented by relationship status

Figure 22 shows that across all groups, fully flexible working hours are preferred over fixed schedules and clear separation of work and personal life is favored. Interestingly, singles and married respondents tended to prefer home as their working location over a vacation destination. Respondents who were in a relationship show the opposite tendency. Regarding

WFH duration, singles and individuals who were in a relationship preferred three days per week, while married respondents favored two days.

The importance scores indicate that the most important attribute across all relationship statuses is *blurring of work and personal life*, with the highest value for respondents in a relationship (34,35%).

Market Simulation – Segmented by Relationship Status

The results for the groups “divorced” and “other” are not part of the interpretation due to small sample sizes (preference shares for these groups can be found in appendix).

Total		Respondent Count	219			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,4%	1,8%	78,9%	85,9%	
	Workation	17,6%	1,8%	14,1%	21,1%	
Alternative	WFH	50,8%	2,3%	46,3%	55,2%	
	Workation	49,2%	2,3%	44,8%	53,7%	
Single		Respondent Count	72			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	80,7%	3,4%	74,0%	87,4%	
	Workation	19,3%	3,4%	12,6%	26,0%	
Alternative	WFH	47,3%	4,2%	39,0%	55,7%	
	Workation	52,7%	4,2%	44,3%	61,0%	
In a relationship		Respondent Count	86			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,6%	2,7%	77,3%	87,9%	
	Workation	17,4%	2,7%	12,1%	22,7%	
Alternative	WFH	45,6%	3,5%	38,6%	52,7%	
	Workation	54,4%	3,5%	47,3%	61,4%	
Married		Respondent Count	57			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	84,3%	3,4%	77,5%	91,1%	
	Workation	15,7%	3,4%	8,9%	22,5%	
Alternative	WFH	63,2%	4,1%	55,1%	71,4%	
	Workation	36,8%	4,1%	28,6%	44,9%	

Figure 23: Market Simulation – segmented by relationship status

The market simulation for the base case scenario indicates that 84,3% of the married respondents would choose WFH over workation, which is the highest preference share among

the subgroups. Single participants show the highest interest in workation (19,3%). Overall, there is not much variation in the base scenario as all subgroups show a general preference towards WFH.

The results for the alternative scenario show that now, 52,7% of the single respondents and 54,4% of the ones in a relationship would choose to go on workation. 63,2% of married participants would still prefer WFH.

This shows that workation can become a much more viable option for singles and individuals in a relationship, depending on the factor of work-life blending, compared to married respondents.

In an ANOVA, the average importance scores of singles, individuals in a relationship, and married respondents were compared. The group of divorced respondents and those who classified as “other” were excluded in the test in SPSS (therefore, total $n = 215$).

The results did not reveal any statistically significant differences ($p > 0,05$; see appendix), which suggests that the different relationship groups do not differ in the way they consider the relative importance of the attributes that define WFH and workation. Consequently, it is assumed that relationship status does not influence employees’ preferences between the two options in this sample. Therefore, H2 must be rejected.

4.6.3 Caregiving Responsibilities

Utility Values and Importance Scores

Average Utility Values (by Segment)

Utility Scaling Method Zero-Centered Differences

		Total	Yes	No
Respondent Count		219	48	171
		Utility		
Label		Total	Yes	No
	at home	10,95	25,56	6,85
	vacation destination	-10,95	-25,56	-6,85
	fixed hours	-39,94	-41,86	-39,40
	partially flexible	10,65	10,95	10,57
	fully flexible	29,29	30,91	28,84
	one day per week working from home	-34,04	-34,94	-33,79
	two days per week working from home	15,86	18,11	15,22
	three days per week working from home	18,19	16,83	18,57
	two weeks workation	4,49	11,32	2,58
	four weeks workation	-10,26	-15,20	-8,88
	six weeks or longer workation	5,77	3,88	6,30
	clear separation	55,51	48,25	57,55
	moderate blending	39,72	40,85	39,40
	strong blending	-95,23	-89,09	-96,95

Average Importances (by Segment)

		Importance		
Attribute		Total	Yes	No
	Working Location	23,00	23,53	22,85
	Working hours	16,14	17,11	15,87
	Duration WFH	15,44	15,38	15,46
	Duration workation	12,93	13,29	12,82
	Blurring of work and personal life	32,50	30,69	33,01

Figure 24: Utility Values and Importance Score – Caregiving Responsibilities

The comparison of utilities between respondents with and without caregiving responsibilities shows similar preferences. Both groups favor working at home over a vacation destination and prefer fully flexible schedules. Interestingly, caregivers show a higher preference for two days per week in the home office, while non-caregivers prefer three days per week. Both segments favor clear separation and reject strong blending of work and personal life. This attribute also has the highest importance score. Notably, for non-caregivers the attribute *blurring of work and personal life* is even more important than for caregivers (33,01% vs. 30,96%).

Market Simulation – Segmented by Caregiving Responsibilities

		Total				
		Respondent Count	219			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,4%	1,8%	78,9%	85,9%	
	Workation	17,6%	1,8%	14,1%	21,1%	
Alternative	WFH	50,8%	2,3%	46,3%	55,2%	
	Workation	49,2%	2,3%	44,8%	53,7%	
		Yes				
		Respondent Count	48			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	84,8%	3,6%	77,6%	92,1%	
	Workation	15,2%	3,6%	7,9%	22,4%	
Alternative	WFH	58,6%	4,7%	49,1%	68,1%	
	Workation	41,4%	4,7%	31,9%	50,9%	
		No				
		Respondent Count	171			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	81,7%	2,0%	77,7%	85,7%	
	Workation	18,3%	2,0%	14,3%	22,3%	
Alternative	WFH	48,6%	2,6%	43,5%	53,7%	
	Workation	51,4%	2,6%	46,3%	56,5%	

Figure 25: Market Simulation – segmented by caregiving groups

In the base case scenario, 84,8% of caregivers and 81,7% of non-caregivers would choose WFH. The interest in workation is therefore slightly higher among non-caregivers (18,3% vs. 15,2%).

The alternative scenario revealed that caregivers still have a higher preference for WFH (58,6%), whereas 51,4% of non-caregivers would now favor a workation over WFH. The simulation shows that caregivers prioritize WFH in either setting, but non-caregivers are more open to a workation under modified conditions.

The t-test in SPSS revealed that none of the differences in the average importance scores between caregivers and non-caregivers reached statistical significance (all $p > 0,05$; see appendix). These results indicate that caregivers and non-caregivers evaluate the relative importance of the attributes that define WFH and workation in a similar way. Hence, it can be assumed that caregiving responsibilities do not influence employees' preferences between WFH and workation in this sample. Thus, H3 cannot be accepted.

4.6.4 Educational Level

Utility Values and Importance Scores

As the sample sizes of the subgroups „Lower Secondary Education“ (n = 9), „Doctorate / PhD“ (n = 0), and „Other“ (n = 6) are too small, these results were not further interpreted in the market simulation.

Average Utility Values (by Segment)

Utility Scaling Method Zero-Centered Differences

	Total	Lower Secondary Education	Apprenticeship / Vocational Training	Upper Secondary Education	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate / PhD	Other
Respondent Count	219	9	43	36	77	48	0	6
Utility								
Label	Total	Lower Secondary Education	Apprenticeship / Vocational Training	Upper Secondary Education	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate / PhD	Other
at home	10,95	8,16	25,35	15,80	1,73	12,13	0,00	-8,27
vacation destination	-10,95	-8,16	-25,35	-15,80	-1,73	-12,13	0,00	8,27
fixed hours	-39,94	-36,33	-27,50	-40,39	-42,47	-45,09	0,00	-58,19
partially flexible	10,65	13,26	3,77	12,98	12,48	10,72	0,00	17,99
fully flexible	29,29	23,07	23,73	27,41	29,99	34,36	0,00	40,20
one day per week working from home	-34,04	-26,86	-26,64	-34,82	-34,16	-39,16	0,00	-50,71
two days per week working from home	15,86	20,49	10,04	15,74	17,17	16,69	0,00	27,69
three days per week working from home	18,19	6,36	16,59	19,08	16,99	22,47	0,00	23,02
two weeks workation	4,49	4,89	13,15	6,85	2,73	-0,82	0,00	-7,14
four weeks workation	-10,26	-18,52	-15,14	-11,08	-11,31	-3,22	0,00	-0,90
six weeks or longer workation	5,77	13,62	1,99	4,22	8,59	4,04	0,00	8,04
clear separation	55,51	55,52	52,57	53,08	59,45	53,95	0,00	53,06
moderate blending	39,72	35,80	35,85	37,41	44,77	39,78	0,00	21,84
strong blending	-95,23	-91,32	-88,42	-90,49	-104,23	-93,73	0,00	-74,89

Average Importances (by Segment)

Attribute	Importance							
	Total	Lower Secondary Education	Apprenticeship / Vocational Training	Upper Secondary Education	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate / PhD	Other
Working Location	23,00	27,23	27,84	26,62	19,37	21,20	0,00	21,30
Working hours	16,14	14,56	12,80	15,89	16,50	18,25	0,00	22,33
Duration WFH	15,44	11,23	13,42	14,17	16,16	17,46	0,00	18,34
Duration workation	12,93	14,21	15,07	12,87	12,83	11,19	0,00	11,04
Blurring of work and personal life	32,50	32,77	30,87	30,46	35,13	31,90	0,00	26,99

Figure 26: Utility Values and Importance Scores – segmented by educational level

Figure 26 shows that all education groups prefer working at home over working in a vacation destination, fully flexible schedules and clear separation of work and personal life. Differences emerged with the attribute *duration of WFH*, where respondent's holding a Bachelor's degree favor two days per week while the other groups prefer three days per week.

In terms of attribute importance, *blurring of work and personal life* was for all groups the most influential factor. For participants with a Bachelor's degree it was the most important attribute (35,13%).

Market Simulation – Segmented by Educational Levels

The results for the groups “Lower Secondary Education”, “Doctorate / PhD” and “Other” are not part of the interpretation due to small sample sizes (preference shares for these groups can be found in appendix).

Total		Respondent Count	219			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,4%	1,8%	78,9%	85,9%	
	Workation	17,6%	1,8%	14,1%	21,1%	
Alternative	WFH	50,8%	2,3%	46,3%	55,2%	
	Workation	49,2%	2,3%	44,8%	53,7%	
Apprenticeship / Vocational Training						
		Respondent Count	43			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	80,2%	4,6%	71,0%	89,4%	
	Workation	19,8%	4,6%	10,6%	29,0%	
Alternative	WFH	55,5%	5,7%	44,1%	67,0%	
	Workation	44,5%	5,7%	33,0%	55,9%	
Upper Secondary Education						
		Respondent Count	36			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	83,3%	4,4%	74,4%	92,2%	
	Workation	16,7%	4,4%	7,8%	25,6%	
Alternative	WFH	53,3%	6,3%	40,5%	66,0%	
	Workation	46,7%	6,3%	34,0%	59,5%	
Bachelor's Degree						
		Respondent Count	77			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	84,9%	2,6%	79,7%	90,1%	
	Workation	15,1%	2,6%	9,9%	20,3%	
Alternative	WFH	46,2%	3,5%	39,3%	53,2%	
	Workation	53,8%	3,5%	46,8%	60,7%	
Master's Degree						
		Respondent Count	48			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	81,6%	3,9%	73,8%	89,4%	
	Workation	18,4%	3,9%	10,6%	26,2%	
Alternative	WFH	52,2%	4,7%	42,8%	61,6%	
	Workation	47,8%	4,7%	38,4%	57,2%	

Figure 27: Market Simulation – segmented by educational levels

In the base case scenario, the preference for WFH over vacation is consistent over all education groups. Participants holding a Bachelor's degree show the highest share of preference for WFH with 84,9%, whereas respondents with an apprenticeship / vocational training report the lowest with 80,2%. Respondents with a Master's degree and upper secondary education have similar preference shares for WFH with 81,6% and 83,3%, respectively.

The alternative scenario reflects how preference shares shift with modified conditions for workation. Here, academics (respondents with a Bachelor's or Master's degree) display more openness towards workation (53,8% and 47,8%) compared to the two lower-educated groups (44,5% and 46,7%).

To test whether the evaluation of attributes differed significantly, the respondent were further grouped into academics (including Bachelor's and Master's degree) and non-academics (including compulsory schooling, vocational training and high school) (see appendix). This resulted in a total sample size of $n = 213$, as respondents that classified as "Other" were excluded. The t-test revealed that educational level has a significant effect on two attributes. Academics considered the attribute *working location* significantly more important ($p < 0,05$), whereas non-academics attributed greater importance to the *duration of WFH* ($p < 0,05$). This means, when deciding between WFH and workation, academics pay more attention to where the work is performed, whereas non-academics are more concerned with the amounts of home office days per week. It can therefore be assumed that the drivers of employees' choice between WFH and workation differ by educational level in this sample. Consequently, H4 can be accepted.

4.6.5 Income

Utility Values and Importance Scores

Average Utility Values (by Segment)

Utility Scaling Method Zero-Centered Differences

		Total	< 1.000 €	1.000–2.000 €	2.001–3.000 €	3.001–4.000 €	4.001–5.000 €	> 5.000€	Prefer not to say
Respondent Count		219	18	54	71	37	13	16	10
		Utility							
Label		Total	< 1.000 €	1.000–2.000 €	2.001–3.000 €	3.001–4.000 €	4.001–5.000 €	> 5.000€	Prefer not to say
at home		10,95	42,23	1,66	8,63	4,10	-3,00	64,81	-21,43
vacation destination		-10,95	-42,23	-1,66	-8,63	-4,10	3,00	-64,81	21,43
fixed hours		-39,94	-30,13	-38,72	-39,81	-43,68	-45,84	-46,36	-33,39
partially flexible		10,65	0,01	11,77	10,38	14,01	17,03	4,16	15,33
fully flexible		29,29	30,12	26,94	29,43	29,67	28,81	42,20	18,06
one day per week working from home		-34,04	-29,17	-36,15	-35,06	-41,12	-21,38	-20,39	-36,26
two days per week working from home		15,86	15,54	14,60	14,81	18,44	15,25	20,29	14,69
three days per week working from home		18,19	13,64	21,55	20,25	22,68	6,13	0,11	21,57
two weeks workation		4,49	16,63	4,48	1,93	0,12	2,53	22,76	-9,64
four weeks workation		-10,26	-21,91	-11,71	-8,42	-3,95	-12,47	-16,10	-5,71
six weeks or longer workation		5,77	5,28	7,23	6,48	3,83	9,94	-6,66	15,35
clear separation		55,51	54,11	59,49	56,45	57,48	42,49	34,14	73,68
moderate blending		39,72	41,35	39,89	41,44	40,03	34,78	27,45	48,54
strong blending		-95,23	-95,46	-99,38	-97,89	-97,51	-77,27	-61,59	-122,22

Average Importances (by Segment)

		Importance							
Attribute		Total	< 1.000 €	1.000–2.000 €	2.001–3.000 €	3.001–4.000 €	4.001–5.000 €	> 5.000€	Prefer not to say
Working Location		23,00	26,68	22,01	22,80	19,73	24,99	32,80	16,93
Working hours		16,14	13,36	16,17	15,76	17,64	16,53	19,67	11,95
Duration WFH		15,44	12,89	15,44	15,82	17,46	15,12	11,39	16,80
Duration workation		12,93	15,42	12,89	12,56	12,02	14,37	12,40	13,55
Blurring of work and personal life		32,50	31,65	33,49	33,06	33,15	29,00	23,74	40,77

Figure 28: Utility Values and Importance Scores – segmented by income

Focusing on the three largest income groups (1.000€ - 4.000€), it becomes clear that working at home is preferred over working from a vacation destination and for all groups, flexible working hours are favored, while fixed schedules are rejected. The preferred duration for WFH

is three days per week for all groups, as well as clear separation when it comes to *blurring of work and personal life*. This has also emerged as the most important attribute with around 33% for the largest income groups. Overall, Figure 28 does not show any substantial differences among the income groups.

Market Simulation – Segmented by Income Levels

The results for the income groups “< 1.000”, “4.001–5.000€”, “> 5.000€” and “Prefer not to say” are not part of the interpretation due to small sample sizes (preference shares for these groups can be found in appendix).

Total		Respondent Count	219			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,4%	1,8%	78,9%	85,9%	
	Workation	17,6%	1,8%	14,1%	21,1%	
Alternative	WFH	50,8%	2,3%	46,3%	55,2%	
	Workation	49,2%	2,3%	44,8%	53,7%	
1.000–2.000 €		Respondent Count	54			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	80,6%	3,8%	73,1%	88,2%	
	Workation	19,4%	3,8%	11,8%	26,9%	
Alternative	WFH	46,8%	4,6%	37,6%	56,0%	
	Workation	53,2%	4,6%	44,0%	62,4%	
2.001–3.000 €		Respondent Count	71			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	83,6%	3,0%	77,6%	89,5%	
	Workation	16,4%	3,0%	10,5%	22,4%	
Alternative	WFH	49,2%	4,1%	41,0%	57,4%	
	Workation	50,8%	4,1%	42,6%	59,0%	
3.001–4.000 €		Respondent Count	37			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	
Base Case	WFH	82,4%	4,0%	74,3%	90,6%	
	Workation	17,6%	4,0%	9,4%	25,7%	
Alternative	WFH	49,0%	5,0%	38,9%	59,1%	
	Workation	51,0%	5,0%	40,9%	61,1%	

Figure 29: Market Simulation – segmented by income

In the base case scenario, it can be observed that the lowest income segment (1.000 – 2.000€) has the lowest preference share for WFH (80,6%) and therefore the highest share for workation (19,4%). Furthermore, only 16,4% of respondents of the income group 2.001€ – 3.000€ and 17,6% of the income group 3.001€ – 4.000€ would choose a workation.

In the alternative scenario this tendency remains similar with the lowest income group (1.000 – 2.000€) still showing the highest interest in workation with 53,2%. However, the two other income segments now also show much higher interest in workation (50,8% and 51,8%) compared to the base case scenario.

To ensure sufficient sample sizes for each subgroup and to allow meaningful statistical testing in SPSS, the original income categories were adjusted. Respondents with incomes below 1.000€ and 1.000€ – 2.000€ were merged into one group (low income), and those with incomes above 4.000€ were also combined into one category (high income). The subgroup “lower-middle income” includes respondents with an income of 2.001 – 3.000€, and the subgroup “upper-middle income” those with an income of 3.001 – 4.000€ per month. The response option “I prefer not to answer” was excluded due to its small sample size ($n = 10$). This resulted in a total sample size of $n = 209$ for the ANOVA. The results showed no statistical significance (all $p > 0,05$, see appendix) when comparing the mean importance scores across the income groups. This indicates that respondents of different income segments do not show significant differences in how they perceive the relative importance of the attributes that define WFH and workation. Thus, it can be assumed that income does not have an influence on employees’ preferences between WFH and workation in this sample. H5 can therefore not be supported.

4.6.6 Segmentation of Work and Personal Life

Utility Values and Importance Scores

As those respondents who would like to fully integrate work and personal life ($n = 5$) and those who said to be not sure ($n = 2$) are too small, they are not included in the following interpretation.

Average Utility Values (by Segment)

Utility Scaling Method Zero-Centered Differences

		Total	Prefer a clear separation	Comfortable with some mixing	Prefer fully integration	Not sure
Respondent Count		219	79	133	5	2
		Utility				
Label		Total	Prefer a clear separation	Comfortable with some mixing	Prefer fully integration	Not sure
	at home	10,95	35,78	-5,44	31,85	67,90
	vacation destination	-10,95	-35,78	5,44	-31,85	-67,90
	fixed hours	-39,94	-25,04	-49,17	-35,12	-27,24
	partially flexible	10,65	5,39	13,52	17,82	9,65
	fully flexible	29,29	19,65	35,65	17,30	17,60
	one day per week working from home	-34,04	-24,83	-40,06	-16,83	-40,85
	two days per week working from home	15,86	7,84	21,26	3,52	4,09
	three days per week working from home	18,19	16,99	18,80	13,31	36,76
	two weeks workation	4,49	14,17	-1,70	10,57	18,67
	four weeks workation	-10,26	-18,88	-5,41	-11,39	10,23
	six weeks or longer workation	5,77	4,71	7,11	0,82	-28,89
	clear separation	55,51	69,26	48,63	30,80	31,92
	moderate blending	39,72	38,82	39,80	49,89	44,19
	strong blending	-95,23	-108,08	-88,43	-80,69	-76,11

Average Importances (by Segment)

		Importance				
		Total	Prefer a clear separation	Comfortable with some mixing	Prefer fully integration	Not sure
Attribute						
	Working Location	23,00	24,92	21,16	37,61	32,72
	Working hours	16,14	12,29	18,59	13,87	10,86
	Duration WFH	15,44	13,17	17,03	8,42	16,73
	Duration workation	12,93	13,16	12,76	12,72	15,63
	Blurring of work and personal life	32,50	36,46	30,46	27,37	24,06

Figure 30: Utility Values and Importance Scores – segmented by blurring of work and personal life preferences

The analysis of utility values segmented by work-life segmentation preferences shows differences between the groups. Respondents who prefer a clear separation of work and personal life favor working at home (35,78) over working from a vacation destination. In contrast, respondents who are indifferent to some overlap between work and private life show a stronger preference for working from a vacation destination (5,44).

Both groups prefer fully flexible working schedules. Interestingly, those who like clear separation favor to work from home three days per week (16,99), while those who do not mind some mixing of work and personal spheres, prefer two days of WFH (21,26).

Surprisingly, even respondents who do not mind some overlap, ultimately show highest utility values for maintaining a clear separation (48,63), same as the clear separation group (69,26). The importance scores show that the separation of work and personal life is still the most important factor for both groups, but for those who wish to clearly separate work and personal life, this factor is more important (36,46%) compared to those who are indifferent to some overlap (30,46%).

Market Simulation – Segmented by Segmentation of Work and Personal Life

The results for the groups “I prefer to fully integrate work and personal life” and “I am not sure” are not part of the interpretation due to small sample sizes (preference shares for these groups can be found in appendix).

Total					
Respondent Count		219			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
	WFH	82,4%	1,8%	78,9%	85,9%
Base Case	Workation	17,6%	1,8%	14,1%	21,1%
Alternative	WFH	50,8%	2,3%	46,3%	55,2%
	Workation	49,2%	2,3%	44,8%	53,7%
Prefer a clear separation					
Respondent Count		79			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
	WFH	91,1%	1,9%	87,2%	95,0%
Base Case	Workation	8,9%	1,9%	5,0%	12,8%
Alternative	WFH	63,3%	3,6%	56,1%	70,5%
	Workation	36,7%	3,6%	29,5%	43,9%
Comfortable with some mixing					
Respondent Count		133			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
	WFH	77,0%	2,5%	72,1%	81,9%
Base Case	Workation	23,0%	2,5%	18,1%	27,9%
Alternative	WFH	42,6%	2,8%	37,1%	48,1%
	Workation	57,4%	2,8%	51,9%	62,9%

Figure 31: Market Simulation – segmented by blurring of work and personal life preferences

The base case scenario shows that around 91% of those who prefer clear separation between work and personal life would choose to work from home. Among those who are comfortable with some mixing, 77% opt for WFH and 23% would choose to go on workation.

In the alternative scenario, the majority of the clear separation group would still choose WFH (63,3%) over workation, while 57,4% of the mixing group shifts toward workation under the new conditions.

Overall, these findings suggest that work-life segmentation preferences influence whether respondents are more likely to choose WFH or workation, with those who seek stronger boundaries between work and personal life tend to favor home-based work.

For the t-test in SPSS, respondents who would like to fully integrate work and personal life ($n = 5$) and those who said to be not sure ($n = 2$) were excluded due to small sample size. The total sample size is therefore $n = 212$. The two analyzed groups are therefore the respondents who prefer a clear separation between work and personal life ($n = 79$) and those who do not mind some overlap between the two spheres ($n = 133$).

The results show statistical significance for the importance scores for *working hours*, *duration of WFH* and *blurring of work and personal life* (see appendix).

Accordingly, respondents who are comfortable with some overlap, attribute significantly higher importance to *Working hours* compared to those who prefer a strict separation (18,59 vs. 12,29; $p < 0,001$) and to the *Duration of WFH* (17,03 vs. 13,17; $p < 0,001$), while those who wish to clearly separate work and personal life assign significantly higher importance to the attribute *blurring of work and personal life* compared to the overlap group (36,46 vs. 30,46; $p < 0,05$). This means, when deciding between WFH and workation, individuals with a preference for clear separation focus evidently more strongly on maintaining boundaries. In contrast, those who are comfortable with some mixing emphasize flexibility in working schedules and home office days. It can therefore be assumed that the drivers of employees' choice between the two work concepts differ depending on their general segmentation preferences. Taken together, these results support H6.

Overall, these results reveal that the respondents generally preferred WFH over workation. The strong preference for clear boundaries between professional and private life is also an indicator for the overall dominance of WFH over workation. The fact that H6 can be accepted, shows that individual needs regarding boundary management or segmentation preferences lay a meaningful role in shaping choices between WFH and workation, rather than most demographic factors.

5. Discussion

This thesis aimed to address employees' choice between the increasingly relevant work models WFH and workation. Two central questions guided the analysis: first, which work-related attributes shape preferences between WFH and workation (RQ1), and second, whether and how socio-demographic characteristics and individual approaches to separating work and personal life significantly affect this decision (RQ2). The findings revealed differences in the relative importance of attributes and further demonstrated that factors related to boundary management and segmentation preferences play a more decisive role than demographic variables.

Key drivers of preferences (RQ 1)

Across all analytical methods, the attribute *blurring of work and personal life* emerged as the most influential one when deciding between WFH and workation. Respondents consistently assigned the highest importance to maintaining clear boundaries, and strong blurring significantly reduced the attractiveness of workation. This finding indicates that the core trade-off between WFH and workation is not primarily about geographic location or duration, but rather about perceived boundary control between professional and personal spheres. It furthermore shows that, although WFH was generally preferred over workation, location alone did not drive choice. Instead, preferences were shaped by psychological conditions under which work occurs, consistent with prior WFH studies highlighting the importance of situational fit and individual circumstances for remote work outcomes (Allen et al., 2021; Bloom et al., 2015). Taken together, RQ1 can be answered by concluding that preferences between WFH and workation are primarily influenced by boundary-related attributes, not by logistical or locational characteristics.

Influence of socio-demographic factors and segmentation preferences (RQ 2)

Based on the theoretical part, it was expected that variables such as age, relationship status, caregiving responsibilities, education level, and income would shape preferences between WFH and workation. However, the empirical findings of this thesis showed no significant differences for most of them.

Previous assumptions derived from theoretical discourse suggested that younger employees might be more open to workations (Schmidbauer et al., 2023; Domke, 2023; PwC, 2024). Similarly, singles were expected to show greater interest in workation compared to individuals in relationships due to higher flexibility and potentially different needs for social interaction (Matiske & Seifert, 2022; Pfnür et al., 2021). Differences in preferences between caregivers

and non-caregivers were also anticipated, also regarding childcare responsibilities and their compatibility with remote work models (Aksoy et al., 2025; Beno et al., 2024; Knappertsbusch & Stute, 2023; Pfnür et al., 2021). Furthermore, it was assumed that higher-income groups might be more open to workations due to fewer financial barriers (Pnür et al., 2021). Despite these theoretical expectations derived from prior research, these factors did not translate into measurable divergences in choice behavior for this sample. Interestingly, the factor educational level showed a meaningful difference. Academics placed significantly higher importance on the working location, while non-academics focused more on the attribute of home office days. This aligns with existing research showing that higher-educated employees are more likely to perform knowledge-based tasks that enable greater flexibility (Bonin et al., 2021; Widuckel & Bellmann, 2023), which might make workation a more accessible option for them.

The most meaningful differences were found in individual approaches to segmenting work and personal life. Hand in hand with boundary theory, the study showed that individuals who prefer clear separation between work and private life showed a strong preference for WFH, while those who are comfortable with more integration displayed greater openness toward workation. This alignment between boundary preferences and the chosen work model can be drawn back to the theoretical perspectives on integrators and segmentors by Nippert-Enz (1996) and Ashforth et al. (2000), and highlights the significance of individual boundary management in shaping remote work preferences. The ultimate result of strong preferences for clear boundaries between professional and private life also supports prior findings indicating that not all individuals are equally capable of coping with excessive boundary blurring (Voll et al., 2023). Altogether, RQ2 can be answered by concluding that, for this sample, socio-demographic characteristics play only a minor role in shaping employees' preferences between WFH and workation. Instead, individual boundary management and segmentation preferences appear to be more the more decisive factors influencing which model employees perceive as more suitable.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This thesis provides empirical insights into a relevant topic, yet several limitations and weaknesses must be acknowledged.

The study relies on a CBC experiment. While this method is powerful in simulating decision-making, respondents' choices are processed in hypothetical scenarios rather than utterly real situations. Also, only five attributes were considered to define the concepts of WFH and workation. Although these attributes were chosen based on theoretical relevance and practical feasibility, they cannot fully capture the complexity of decisions concerning remote work setups in reality. Especially for workation, additional factors such as employer support and cost coverage may play a decisive role for employees. This goes hand in hand with the definition of the base case scenario, which was strongly guided by the theoretical assumptions. The assignment of the level "strong blending" to the workation concept might have led to the overall outcome that consistently higher preferences for WFH were observed in the study. For this reason, the alternative scenario with "moderate blending" was introduced to examine whether preference patterns would change under different conditions. However, a truly realistic representation of workation remains challenging due to the limited theoretical and empirical groundwork that is currently available. Future studies may arrive at different results depending on how workation is defined and operationalized.

While CBC is generally well suited to simulate realistic decision-making processes compared to other conjoint methods, it also has practical limitations. Repeated exposure to similar choice tasks may lead participants to perceive the questionnaire as repetitive, monotonous, or irrelevant. As a result, some respondents may quickly select options without carefully evaluating the presented alternatives. According to Orme (2010), many CBC tasks are completed in under 15 seconds, suggesting that a thorough consideration of trade-offs may not always be the case. This can impair data quality and potentially reduce the validity of the estimated utilities.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents were relatively young and highly educated. As a result, the study may underrepresent the perspectives of older and lower educated employees, whose attitudes towards WFH and workation could differ. Also, the survey focused primarily on Austria and Germany, which provides valuable insights within a central European context. Still, national labor regulations and specific organizational cultures differ across these countries and can influence how remote work models are perceived and adopted.

Future conjoint studies in this field could include additional attributes, such as financial support by the employer, digital infrastructure or organizational culture to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the trade-off when employees choose between WFH and workation. Especially the cost dimension might be substantially relevant and shift preferences. Moreover, research could move towards qualitative follow-up studies observing individuals who have already experienced workations and have better insights into long-term effects on job satisfaction, productivity and work-life boundaries. These observations would be interesting in different cultural and legal contexts, as remote work practices and regulatory constraints vary across countries.

7. Conclusion

The main contribution of this thesis lies in examining how employees evaluate two prominent remote work models, namely WFH and workation, and which factors determine their preferences. By applying a CBC approach, the study provided empirical insights into the attributes that drive employees' choices and examined whether and how socio-demographic characteristics and work-life segmentation preferences influence the decision between WFH and workation. As highlighted in the introduction, existing research has mostly focused on WFH in isolation, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, while workation has rarely been examined as a direct alternative. The present study therefore sought to address this gap by adopting a comparative approach, focusing on the concrete decision between two remote work models. The relevance of this comparison lies in supporting organizations in understanding which remote work setup is desired by different employee groups to retain talent and to enhance employee satisfaction.

The findings show that preferences between WFH and workation are primarily shaped by boundary considerations concerning work and personal life. Among the tested attributes of the remote work models, *blurring of work and personal life* emerged as the strongest factor of choice. Strong blending between work and private spheres made workation settings lose attractiveness, while with moderate blending preference shares grew towards workation. It can be interpreted that the core trade-off between WFH and workation is more a personal or psychological wish to control the boundaries between work and personal life, and that it is not primarily about where the work is performed. Furthermore, the study revealed that preferences between WFH and workation are not primarily determined by traditional socio-demographic factors such as age, relationship status, caregiving responsibilities, or income. Only the factor of educational level and individual segmentation preferences showed meaningful differences in how individuals weigh certain aspects of remote work. The most decisive characteristic in the choice between the two concepts appears to be how individuals manage boundaries between their professional and private lives. Employees who seek clear separation tend to favor home-based work, while those who are comfortable with more fluid role boundaries show greater openness towards workation.

Taken together, this research contributes to the debate on New Work by demonstrating that the choice between WFH and workation cannot be reduced only to socio-demographic categories. Instead, in this sample, employees' internal strategies for managing the interface between work

and life are what ultimately determine which remote model they prefer. This supports the theoretical assumptions on remote work not being universally beneficial. Although WFH clearly emerged as the more attractive option in this sample, it is important to recall the outcome from other studies that indicate a decline in WFH offerings, while workations might evolve from a temporary trend into a more established practice in the future (Deloitte, 2022; PwC, 2024). Employee preferences and the attractiveness of either model should therefore not be regarded as static, especially as technology and organizational cultures continue to evolve. Given the exploratory nature of this field, ongoing observation of how employees' expectations and working habits develop in the context of New Work will be crucial. By doing so, organizations can have the chance to design sustainable remote work strategies and policies that align with future workforce dynamics.

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Appendix

Screenshots of the survey hosted via Sawtooth Lighthouse Studio

Welcome! Hallo!

Which language would you prefer for this questionnaire?

In welcher Sprache möchten Sie diese Umfrage beantworten?

☐ English

☐ Deutsch

Next

0% 100%

English Version

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in this survey. This study is conducted as part of a master's thesis at the University of Vienna.

This survey will take around 10 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. No personal data (such as name, email address, or IP address) will be collected. All responses will be used solely for academic research purposes and will not be shared with third parties.

By clicking "Next", you confirm that:

- you are participating voluntarily
- you have been informed about the data collection and usage,
- and you agree to the anonymous analysis of your responses

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Natalie Dederer, a12307368@unet.univie.ac.at

Before you begin, please read the following definitions carefully. These terms are essential for answering the following questions accurately.

Back Next

Windows
Wechseln Sie
aktivieren.

Working from Home (WFH):

In this survey, WFH refers to a work model in which employees regularly perform their job duties from home, typically on one to three days per week. On the remaining days, they are physically present at their company's office. It does **not** describe a fully remote position without any office presence.

Workation:

The term workation (word composed of "work" + "vacation") describes the temporary relocation of work to a vacation destination, for example to the sea or the mountains. It does **not** refer to just any place outside the office, such as one's family home in their hometown. Employees carry out regular work tasks remotely using their laptop or other necessary work equipment - in agreement with the employer. Employees can also take advantage of the opportunity to add paid holiday days before or after the workation to extend their stay at the chosen location. In this survey, workation applies to regular employees who return to their normal work routines afterwards, meaning the arrangement is limited in time. In most cases, the costs for travel and accommodation during a workation are covered by the employee. However, specific arrangements may vary depending on the employer and internal company policies.

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Windows aktivieren
Wechseln Sie zu den Einstellungen
aktivieren.

How old are you?

Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Current Relationship Status

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Other

Do you currently have care giving responsibilities (e.g.children, elderly, dependents)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ Lower secondary education
- ☐ Apprenticeship / Vocational training
- ☐ Upper secondary education
- ☐ Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- ☐ Master's degree or equivalent
- ☐ Doctorate / PhD
- ☐ Other

What is your approximate monthly net income?

- ☐ < €1,000
- ☐ €1,000 - €2,000
- ☐ €2,001 - €3,000
- ☐ €3,001 - €4,000
- ☐ €4,001 - €5,000
- ☐ > €5,000
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Which statement best describes your attitude concerning work-home segmentation preferences?

- ☐ I prefer a clear separation between work and private life
- ☐ I'm comfortable with some mixing of work and private life
- ☐ I prefer to fully integrate work and private life
- ☐ I'm not sure

Before reading the introduction, were you familiar with the concept of workation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you worked from home before?

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, occasionally
- ☐ No

Have you ever been on a workation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you currently have the option to work remotely (WFH or workation)?

- ☐ Yes, both (WFH and Workation)
- ☐ Yes, WFH
- ☐ Yes, Workation
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'm not sure

What is your current employment status?

- ☐ Full-time employee
- ☐ Part-time employee
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other

In which country do you currently live?

Control question: Please select "agree" to show you are paying attention

- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree

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In this section, you will be presented with 10 hypothetical scenarios. Each scenario includes different combinations of work-related attributes, such as location, working hours, duration, and the blurring between work and personal life. Please select the option that best matches your preferences for each choice set.

The attribute **"working hours"** refers to the level of flexibility in setting working times:

- *Fixed hours*: e.g., a nine-to-five schedule
- *Partially flexible*: some freedom, e.g., adjustable start and end times within set limits
- *Fully flexible*: complete autonomy to choose when to work

The attribute **"blurring of work and personal life"** describes the extent to which professional and private domains overlap:

- *Strict separation*: Work and personal life are kept clearly apart, e.g., separate calendars, distinct workspaces, and fixed routines
- *Moderate blending*: Occasional mixing depending on the situation, e.g., checking a work email in the evening after hours
- *Strong blending*: Frequent integration of work and personal life, e.g., one calendar for all events, flexible use of time and space for both areas, switching between work and personal tasks multiple times a day without clear boundaries

Please note: There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Your responses will reflect your personal preferences and priorities.

If these were your options, which would you choose?

(1 of 10)

	Option 1	Option 2
Working Location	at home	vacation destination
Working hours	fixed hours	fully flexible
Duration	one day per week working from home	six weeks or longer workation
Blurring of work and personal life	strong blending	moderate blending
	Select	Select

Windows ak

Remark: Each participant was presented with 10 randomly generated choice sets.

Thank you for your participation!

Your responses have been successfully recorded.

You may now close the window.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Natalie Dederer, a12307368@unet.univie.ac.at

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German Version

Willkommen!

Vielen Dank für Ihr Interesse an dieser Umfrage. Diese Studie wird im Rahmen einer Masterarbeit an der Universität Wien durchgeführt.

Die Umfrage dauert etwa 10 Minuten. Die Teilnahme ist freiwillig und anonym. Es werden keine personenbezogenen Daten (wie Name, E-Mail-Adresse oder IP-Adresse) erhoben. Alle Antworten werden ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet und nicht an Dritte weitergegeben.

Mit einem Klick auf "Next" bestätigen Sie:

- dass Sie freiwillig teilnehmen,
- dass Sie über die Datenerhebung und -nutzung informiert wurden,
- und dass Sie der anonymen Auswertung Ihrer Antworten zustimmen

Falls Sie Fragen zur Umfrage haben, wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Natalie Dederer, a12307368@unet.univie.ac.at

Bevor Sie beginnen, lesen Sie sich bitte die folgenden Definitionen sorgfältig durch. Diese Begriffe sind wichtig, um die folgenden Fragen korrekt beantworten zu können.

Windows a

Arbeit von zu Hause (Home Office):

In dieser Umfrage bezeichnet Homeoffice ein Arbeitsmodell, bei dem Arbeitnehmer:innen ihre Aufgaben regelmäßig von zu Hause aus erledigen – typischerweise an ein bis drei Tagen pro Woche. An den übrigen Tagen sind sie physisch im Büro ihres Unternehmens anwesend. Es handelt sich also dabei **nicht** um eine vollständig ortsunabhängige Tätigkeit ohne jegliche Präsenz im Büro.

Workation:

Der Begriff Workation (zusammengesetzt aus „Work“ = Arbeit und „Vacation“ = Urlaub) beschreibt die vorübergehende Verlagerung der Arbeit an einen Urlaubsort – zum Beispiel ans Meer oder in die Berge. Es handelt sich **nicht** um beliebige Orte außerhalb des Büros, wie z. B. das Elternhaus im Heimatort. Die regulären beruflichen Aufgaben werden dabei mit dem eigenen Laptop bzw. notwendigem Arbeits-Equipment aus der Ferne erledigt – in Absprache mit dem Arbeitgeber. Arbeitnehmer:innen können zudem die Möglichkeit nutzen, vor oder nach der Workation bezahlte Urlaubstage anzuhängen, um den Aufenthalt am gewählten Ort zu verlängern. In dieser Umfrage bezieht sich Workation auf regulär angestellte Personen, die nach der Workation wieder in ihren normalen Arbeitsalltag zurückkehren. Das Modell ist also zeitlich begrenzt. In den meisten Fällen tragen Arbeitnehmer:innen die Kosten für Reise und Unterkunft während einer Workation selbst. Je nach Arbeitgeber und internen Richtlinien kann es jedoch unterschiedliche Regelungen geben.

Wie alt sind Sie?

Geschlecht

- ☐ Weiblich
- ☐ Männlich
- ☐ Nicht-binär / Divers
- ☐ Möchte ich nicht angeben

Aktueller Beziehungsstatus

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In einer Beziehung
- ☐ Verheiratet
- ☐ Geschieden
- ☐ Sonstiges

Haben Sie derzeit Betreuungsverpflichtungen (z.B. für Kinder, ältere Personen oder andere Angehörige)?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

Was ist Ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

- ☐ Pflichtschule / Hauptschule / Realschule
- ☐ Berufsausbildung / Lehre / Fachschule
- ☐ Abitur / Matura / gleichwertiger Abschluss
- ☐ Bachelorabschluss
- ☐ Masterabschluss
- ☐ Doktorat / PhD
- ☐ Andere

Wie hoch ist Ihr ungefähres monatliches Nettoeinkommen?

- ☐ Unter 1.000 €
- ☐ 1.000–2.000 €
- ☐ 2.001–3.000 €
- ☐ 3.001–4.000 €
- ☐ 4.001–5.000 €
- ☐ Über 5.000€
- ☐ Möchte ich nicht angeben

Präferenz zur Trennung von Arbeit und Privatleben.

Welche Aussage beschreibt Ihre Haltung am besten?

- ☐ Ich möchte Arbeit und Privatleben klar voneinander trennen
- ☐ Ich habe nichts dagegen, wenn sich Arbeit und Privatleben teilweise überschneiden
- ☐ Ich möchte Arbeit und Privatleben möglichst vollständig miteinander verbinden
- ☐ Ich bin mir nicht sicher

Kannten Sie den Begriff "Workation" bereits, bevor Sie die Einleitung gelesen haben?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

Haben sie bereits im Homeoffice gearbeitet?

- ☐ Ja, regelmäßig
- ☐ Ja, gelegentlich
- ☐ Nein

Haben Sie schon einmal eine Workation gemacht?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

Haben Sie derzeit die Möglichkeit, ortsunabhängig zu arbeiten (Home Office oder Workation)?

- ☐ Ja, beides (Homeoffice und Workation)
- ☐ Ja, Homeoffice
- ☐ Ja, Workation
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Ich bin mir nicht sicher

Was ist ihr aktueller Beschäftigungsstatus?

- ☐ Vollzeit
- ☐ Teilzeit
- ☐ Selbstständig
- ☐ Student:in
- ☐ Andere

Wir

In welchem Land leben Sie derzeit?

Kontrollfrage: Bitte wählen Sie "Stimme zu" aus, um zu zeigen, dass Sie aufmerksam lesen:

- ☐ Stimme zu
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Stimme nicht zu

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Wiederholen

In diesem Abschnitt werden Ihnen 10 hypothetische Szenarien vorgestellt. Jedes Szenario enthält unterschiedliche Kombinationen arbeitsbezogener Merkmale, wie Arbeitsort, Arbeitszeit, Dauer sowie das Ausmaß der Verschmelzung von Arbeit und Privatleben. Bitte wählen Sie in jedem Auswahlset die Option aus, die am meisten Ihren persönlichen Präferenzen entspricht.

Das Attribut **“Arbeitszeiten”** beschreibt, wie flexibel die Arbeitszeiten gestaltet werden können:

- *Feste Arbeitszeiten*: z. B. klassischer Arbeitstag von 9 bis 17 Uhr
- *Teilweise flexibel*: gewisse Freiheiten, z.B. flexible Start- und Endzeiten innerhalb eines festgelegten Rahmens
- *Vollständig flexibel*: vollständige Freiheit, selbst zu entscheiden, wann gearbeitet wird

Das Attribut **“Verschmelzung von Arbeit und Privatleben”** beschreibt, in welchem Maß sich berufliche und private Bereiche überschneiden:

- *Klare Trennung*: Arbeit und Privatleben sind klar voneinander getrennt, z.B. getrennte Kalender, eigener Arbeitsplatz und feste Routinen
- *Etwas Überschneidung*: Gelegentliche Überschneidungen je nach Situation, z. B. eine kurze Arbeits-E-Mail nach Feierabend
- *Starke Vermischung*: Häufige Überschneidungen, z. B. ein gemeinsamer Kalender für alle Termine, flexible Gestaltung von Arbeitszeit und -ort für berufliche und private Aktivitäten, täglich mehrfacher Wechsel zwischen Arbeitsaufgaben und persönlichen Erledigungen ohne feste Grenzen

Bitte beachten Sie: Es gibt keine „richtigen“ oder „falschen“ Antworten. Ihre Angaben spiegeln lediglich Ihre persönlichen Vorlieben und Prioritäten wider.

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Wenn dies Ihre Optionen wären, welche würden Sie wählen?

(1 von 10)

	Option 1	Option 2
Arbeitsort	Zu Hause	Urlaubsort
Arbeitszeiten	Vollständig flexibel	Teilweise flexibel
Dauer	Ein Tag pro Woche im Homeoffice	Vier Wochen Workation
Verschmelzung von Arbeit und Privatleben	Klare Trennung	Starke Vermischung
	Auswählen	Auswählen

Windows aktiv

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Ihre Antworten wurden erfolgreich gespeichert.

Sie können nun das Fenster schließen.

Falls Sie Fragen zur Umfrage haben, wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Natalie Dederer, a12307368@unet.univie.ac.at

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Importance Scores - Calculation

	Range	Percent Importance
Brand (B - C)	60 - 20 = 40	26.7
Color (Red - Pink)	20 - 0 = 20	13.3
Price (\$50 - \$100)	90 - 0 = 90	60.0
	----	----
	150	100.0

Source: <https://sawtoothsoftware.com/the-basics-of-interpreting-conjoint-utilities>

Market Simulation – segmented by relationship groups

Excluded groups „divorced“ and „other“

Divorced					
Respondent Count		2			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	73,7%	25,6%	0,0%	100,0%
	Workation	26,3%	25,6%	0,0%	100,0%
Alternative	WFH	37,1%	25,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	Workation	62,9%	25,0%	0,0%	100,0%

Other					
Respondent Count		2			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	90,9%	8,8%	52,8%	100,0%
	Workation	9,1%	8,8%	0,0%	47,2%
Alternative	WFH	53,1%	34,1%	0,0%	100,0%
	Workation	46,9%	34,1%	0,0%	100,0%

Market Simulation – segmented by educational levels

Excluded groups „Lower Secondary Education“, „Doctorate / PhD“ and „other“

Lower Secondary Education					
Respondent Count		9			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	78,6%	9,7%	56,7%	100,0%
	Workation	21,4%	9,7%	0,0%	43,3%
Alternative	WFH	55,5%	13,2%	25,7%	85,3%
	Workation	44,5%	13,2%	14,7%	74,3%

Doctorate / PhD					
Respondent Count		0			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	0,0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Workation	0,0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alternative	WFH	0,0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Workation	0,0%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other					
Respondent Count		6			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	72,3%	12,5%	41,7%	100,0%
	Workation	27,7%	12,5%	0,0%	58,3%
Alternative	WFH	40,9%	14,4%	5,6%	76,2%
	Workation	59,1%	14,4%	23,8%	94,4%

Market Simulation – segmented by income groups

Excluded groups „< 1.000€“, „4.001–5.000 €“, „> 5.000€“ and „Prefer not to say“

< 1.000 €					
Respondent Count		18			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	92,6%	2,7%	86,9%	98,3%
	Workation	7,4%	2,7%	1,7%	13,1%
Alternative	WFH	62,4%	8,2%	45,2%	79,5%
	Workation	37,6%	8,2%	20,5%	54,8%

4.001–5.000 €					
Respondent Count		13			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	66,9%	10,8%	43,7%	90,1%
	Workation	33,1%	10,8%	9,9%	56,3%
Alternative	WFH	47,3%	10,8%	24,1%	70,6%
	Workation	52,7%	10,8%	29,4%	75,9%

> 5.000€					
Respondent Count		16			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	84,1%	6,1%	71,1%	97,1%
	Workation	15,9%	6,1%	2,9%	28,9%
Alternative	WFH	74,1%	6,9%	59,5%	88,7%
	Workation	25,9%	6,9%	11,3%	40,5%

Prefer not to say					
Respondent Count		10			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	82,5%	9,1%	62,3%	100,0%
	Workation	17,5%	9,1%	0,0%	37,7%
Alternative	WFH	35,7%	9,4%	14,6%	56,7%
	Workation	64,3%	9,4%	43,3%	85,4%

Market Simulation – segmented by income groups

Excluded groups „I prefer to fully integrate work and personal life” and “I am not sure”

Prefer fully integration					
Respondent Count		5			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	81,1%	17,3%	36,7%	100,0%
	Workation	18,9%	17,3%	0,0%	63,3%
Alternative	WFH	59,6%	20,1%	7,8%	100,0%
	Workation	40,4%	20,1%	0,0%	92,2%

Not sure					
Respondent Count		2			
	Label	Shares of Preference	Std Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Base Case	WFH	99,0%	0,8%	95,7%	100,0%
	Workation	1,0%	0,8%	0,0%	4,3%
Alternative	WFH	79,1%	19,6%	0,0%	100,0%
	Workation	20,9%	19,6%	0,0%	100,0%

Importance Scores – Tests in SPSS

Significance Estimation – ANOVA Age Groups

Attribute	Age Group	N	Average Importance	Std. Deviation	F	p	
Working Lokation							
	< 30	128	22,75	15,84	0,136	0,873	not sign.
	30-45	57	22,73	17,37			
	> 45	34	24,38	19,31			
Working Hours							
	< 30	128	15,31	10,60	1,141	0,321	not sign.
	30-45	57	17,94	11,20			
	> 45	34	16,26	11,75			
Duration WFH							
	< 30	128	15,16	7,28	1,737	0,178	not sign.
	30-45	57	16,95	8,55			
	> 45	34	13,97	8,58			
Duration Workation							
	< 30	128	12,38	6,08	1,474	0,231	not sign.
	30-45	57	13,34	5,91			
	> 45	34	14,28	6,56			
Blurring							
	< 30	128	34,40	16,32	2,200	0,113	not sign.
	30-45	57	29,04	16,02			
	> 45	34	31,11	18,42			

Significance Estimation – ANOVA Relationship Groups

Attribute	Relationship Group	N	Average Importance	Std. Deviation	F	p	
Working Lokation	Single	72	24,38	16,50	1,703	0,185	not sign.
	In a relationship	86	20,68	14,98			
	Married	57	25,53	19,40			
Working Hours	Single	72	15,77	10,86	0,240	0,787	not sign.
	In a relationship	86	16,00	9,86			
	Married	57	17,06	12,89			
Duration WFH	Single	72	14,87	7,43	0,658	0,519	not sign.
	In a relationship	86	16,22	7,18			
	Married	57	15,09	9,33			
Duration Workation	Single	72	12,19	5,53	1,142	0,321	not sign.
	In a relationship	86	12,76	6,09			
	Married	57	13,80	6,57			
Blurring	Single	72	32,78	16,59	2,160	0,118	not sign.
	In a relationship	86	34,35	15,74			
	Married	57	28,52	17,88			

Significance Estimation – t-Test Caregiving Responsibility

Attribute	Caregiving Responsibility	N	Average Importance	Std. Deviation	t	p	
Working Lokation	Yes	48	23,53	18,23	0,248	0,804	notsign.
	No	171	22,85	16,26			
Working Hours	Yes	48	17,11	12,08	0,692	0,489	notsign.
	No	171	15,87	10,64			
Duration WFH	Yes	48	15,38	8,61	-0,056	0,956	notsign.
	No	171	15,46	7,67			
Duration Workation	Yes	48	13,29	5,79	0,469	0,640	notsign.
	No	171	12,82	6,23			
Blurring	Yes	48	30,69	18,38	-0,851	0,396	notsign.
	No	171	33,01	16,18			

Significance Estimation – t-Test Education Groups

Attribute	Education Group	N	Average Importance	Std. Deviation	t	p	
Working Lokation	Academics	88	27,27	18,45	3,037	0,003	sign.
	Non-Academics	125	20,07	14,83			
Working Hours	Academics	88	14,24	9,52	-1,962	0,051	not sign.
	Non-Academics	125	17,17	11,53			
Duration WFH	Academics	88	13,51	7,86	-2,939	0,004	sign.
	Non-Academics	125	16,66	7,62			
Duration Workation	Academics	88	14,08	6,46	2,223	0,027	not sign.
	Non-Academics	125	12,20	5,8			
Blurring	Academics	88	30,90	16,74	-1,289	0,199	not sign.
	Non-Academics	125	33,89	16,65			

Significance Estimation – ANOVA Income Groups

Attribute	Income Groups	N	Average Importance	Std. Deviation	F	p	
Working Lokation	Low Income	72	23,18	16,34	1,822	0,144	not sign.
	Lower-middle income	71	22,80	16,71			
	Upper-middle income	37	19,73	15,69			
	High income	29	29,30	19,05			
Working Hours	Low Income	72	15,47	9,98	0,664	0,575	not sign.
	Lower-middle income	71	15,76	10,11			
	Upper-middle income	37	17,64	11,68			
	High income	29	18,26	15,11			
Duration WFH	Low Income	72	14,80	8,01	1,927	0,126	not sign.
	Lower-middle income	71	15,81	8,08			
	Upper-middle income	37	17,46	7,7			
	High income	29	13,06	6,74			
Duration Workation	Low Income	72	13,53	6,8	0,591	0,621	not sign.
	Lower-middle income	71	12,56	5,86			
	Upper-middle income	37	12,02	6,5			
	High income	29	13,28	5,26			
Blurring	Low Income	72	33,03	15,85	1,486	0,220	not sign.
	Lower-middle income	71	33,06	16,25			
	Upper-middle income	37	33,15	18,52			
	High income	29	26,10	15,97			

Significance Estimation – t-Test Segmentation Preferences

Attribute	Segmentation Group	N	Average Importance	Std. Deviation	t	p	
Working Lokation	Clear Separation	79	24,92	19,23	1,502	0,135	not sign.
	Some Overlap	133	21,16	14,52			
Working Hours	Clear Separation	79	12,29	8,57	-4,515	< 0,001	sign.
	Some Overlap	133	18,59	11,61			
Duration WFH	Clear Separation	79	13,17	7,57	-3,595	< 0,001	sign.
	Some Overlap	133	17,03	7,58			
Duration Workation	Clear Separation	79	13,16	6,08	0,460	0,646	not sign.
	Some Overlap	133	12,16	6,29			
Blurring	Clear Separation	79	36,46	18,06	2,548	0,012	sign.
	Some Overlap	133	30,46	15,63			