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Funktioniert Homeoffice für alle? Das Projekt „New ways of working“ der Erste Bank

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The *new ways of working* project by Erste Bank Group AG

Making the post-Covid world work



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Scientific aim: Analysis beyond mere description, to provide a valid basis for decision-making after Covid19

COVID-19 crisis becomes the catalyst for a new era in labor relations and work design. The WU Vienna [Institute for Public Management & Governance](#) (PM&G) and the Erste Group Bank AG joint forces to conduct a systematic investigation of the Covid-induced changes to the work situation and work environment. Comprehensive, theoretically guided research allows for a valid assessment of the effects of the new work situations, but also its antecedents and the mechanisms leading to these outcomes.

This research is part of the Institutes research cluster [The new public sector workforce](#)

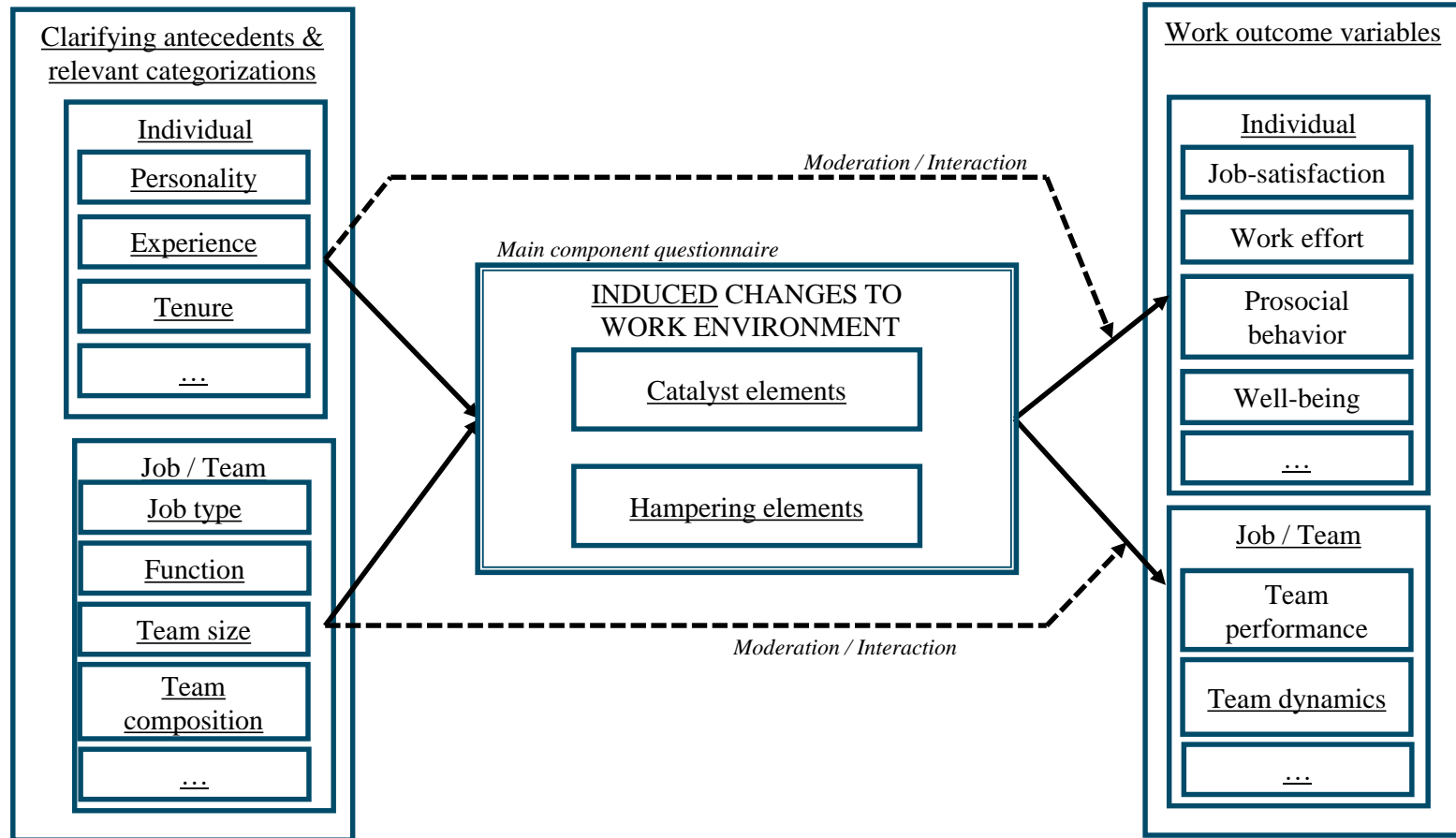
Method:

A large-scale quantitative survey among Erste Group Bank AG employees was deployed to gather valid data for advanced analyses. The survey covered all regular employees in seven nations (Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia) in the period from 22th of June to 3rd of July 2020, hence after the first wave of the Covid pandemic.

The survey produced 18.136 filled-in questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 51% of all addressed employees.

Research Design

Our guiding framework and survey measures



In-depth analysis

Selection of most striking findings

Home-office and

1. Gender differences
2. branch vs. head-office divide
3. Manager vs. employee divide
4. the mediating effect of distinct main challenges

The many facets of New ways of working: The limited relevance of HO for work performance

Please think about your professional experience in general (not only home office), which of the following elements have a positive or negative impact on your own work performance?

	Very negative impact (-3)	Negative impact (-2)	Slightly negative impact (-1)	No impact (0)	Slightly positive impact (+1)	Positive impact (+2)	Very positive impact (+3)
Your job satisfaction						1.97 H	
Flexibility in the organization of work						1.9 H	
Feedback from your manager						1.62 H	
Job and career related learning opportunities						1.54 H	
Working from home						1.25 H	
Face- to-face meetings						1.06 H	
Direct communication with colleagues on non- work related issues						0.96 H	
Virtual meetings						0.75 H	

Observations: n = 16935

Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

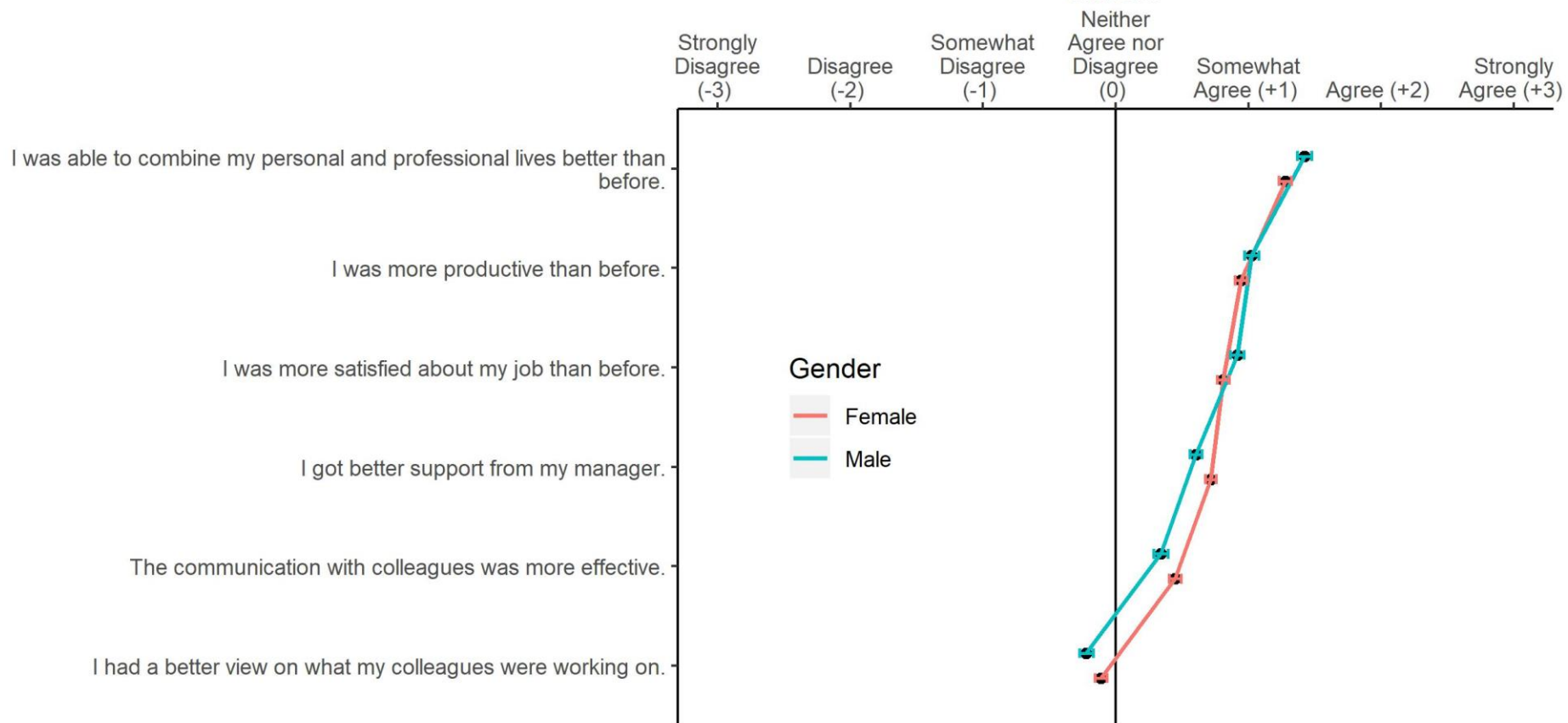
Findings:

1. Gender effects are surprisingly minor
2. Women miss the social aspects of on-site work somewhat more than men
3. Female managers see slightly fewer management challenges, and trust their subordinates less than their male peers.

Gender

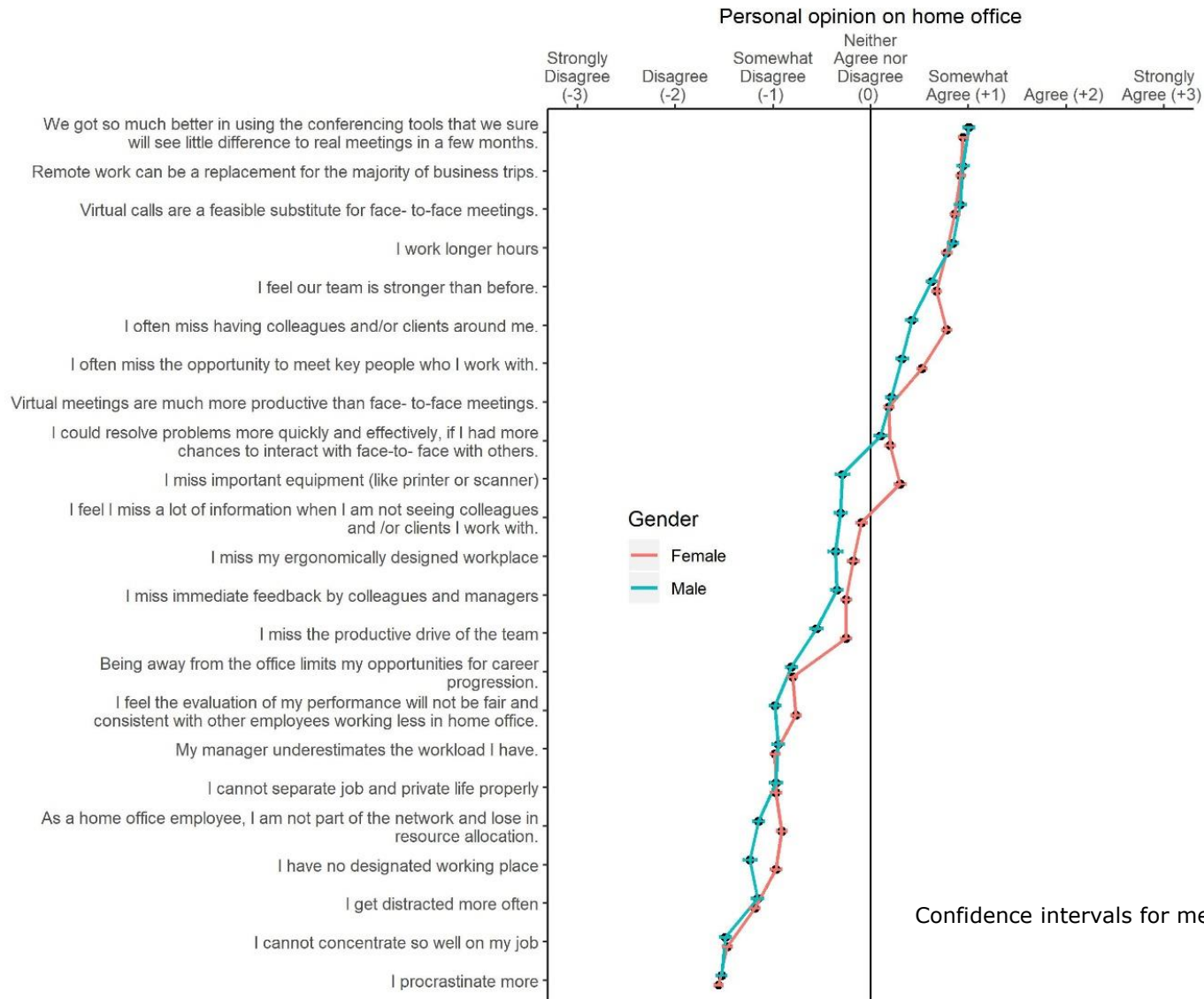
Home office experience

Please tell us your opinion on the following statements with respect to your home office experiences during the COVID-19 situation. In home office...



Gender

Personal opinion on home office

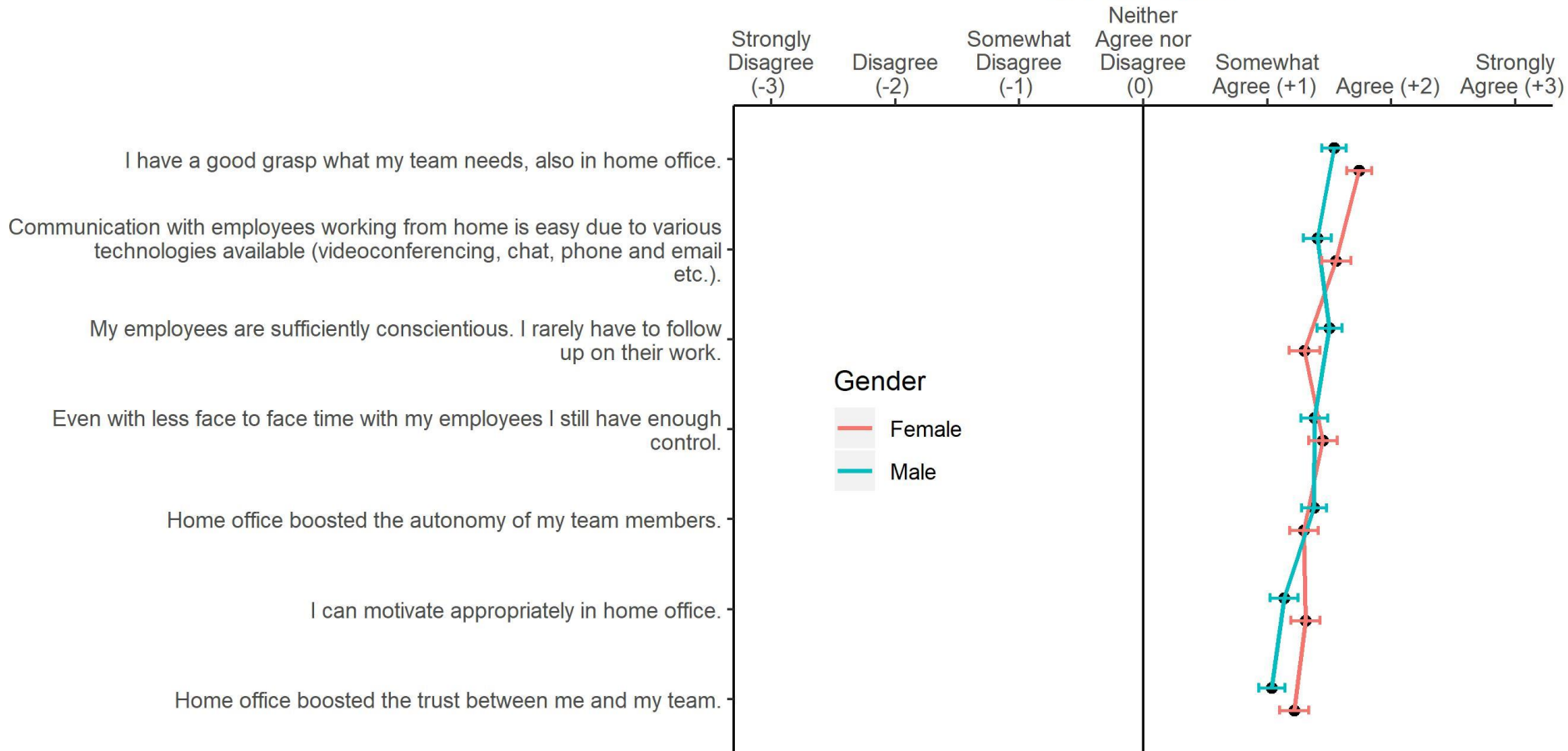


Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

Gender Leadership challenges

FOR MANAGERS: How do you evaluate the following leadership challenges in home office:



Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

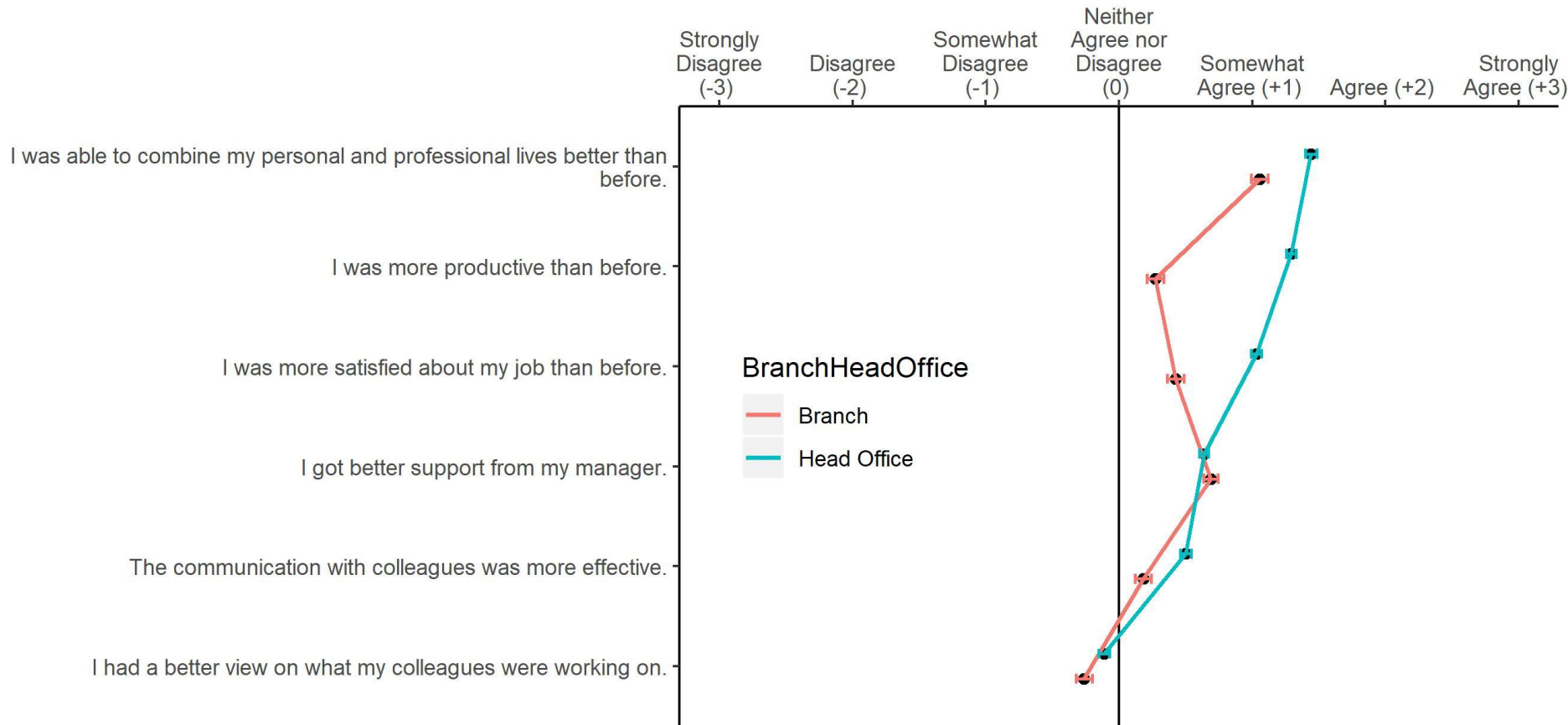
Findings:

- Overall Home Office experience is slightly positive: both in branches and head offices
- Branch staff's experiences are significantly worse than their peers' in head offices
- Branch staff misses social interaction and struggles more with technological solutions and self-management

Branch vs. Head Office

Home office experience

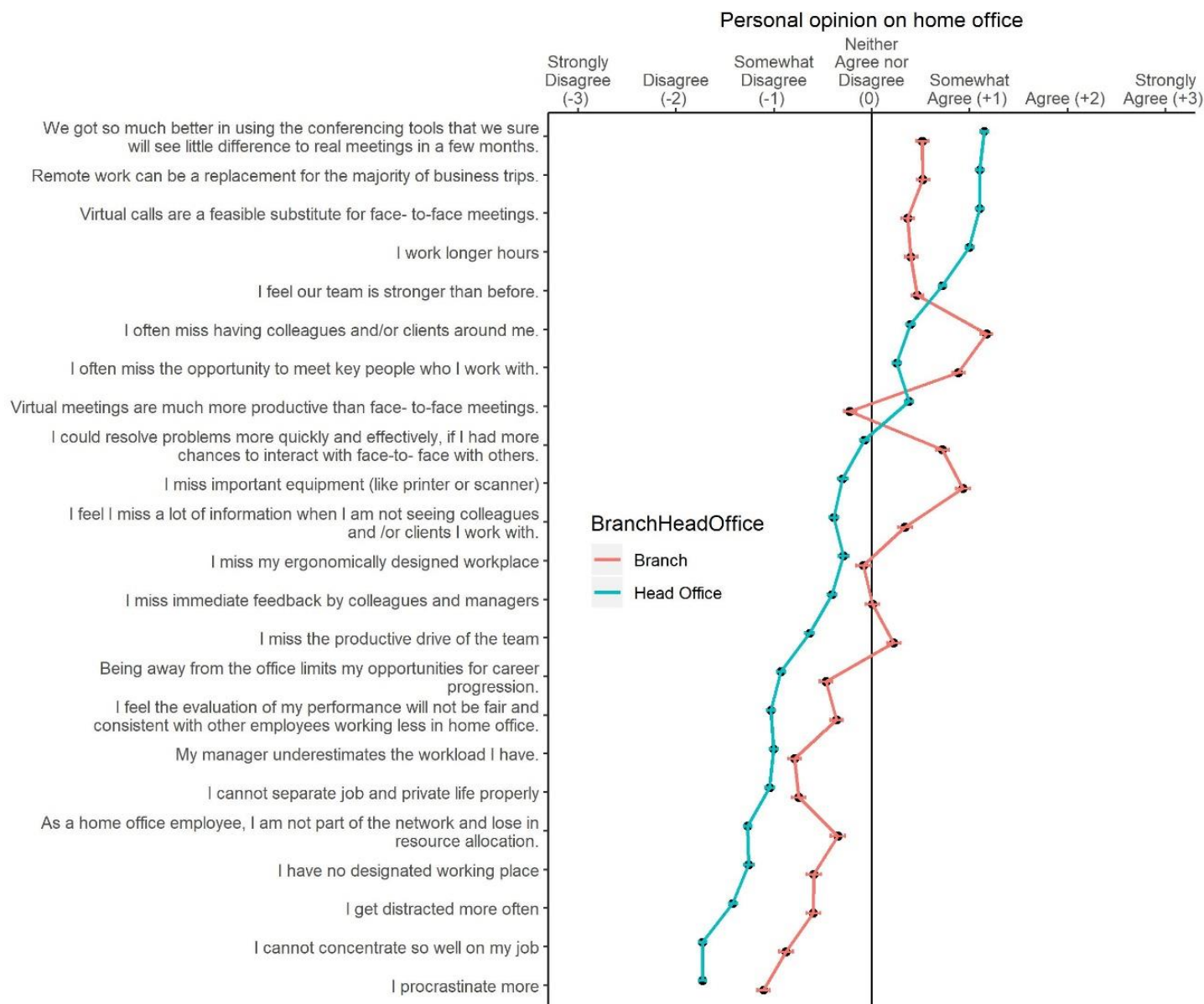
Please tell us your opinion on the following statements with respect to your home office experiences during the COVID-19 situation. In home office...



Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

Branch vs. Head Office

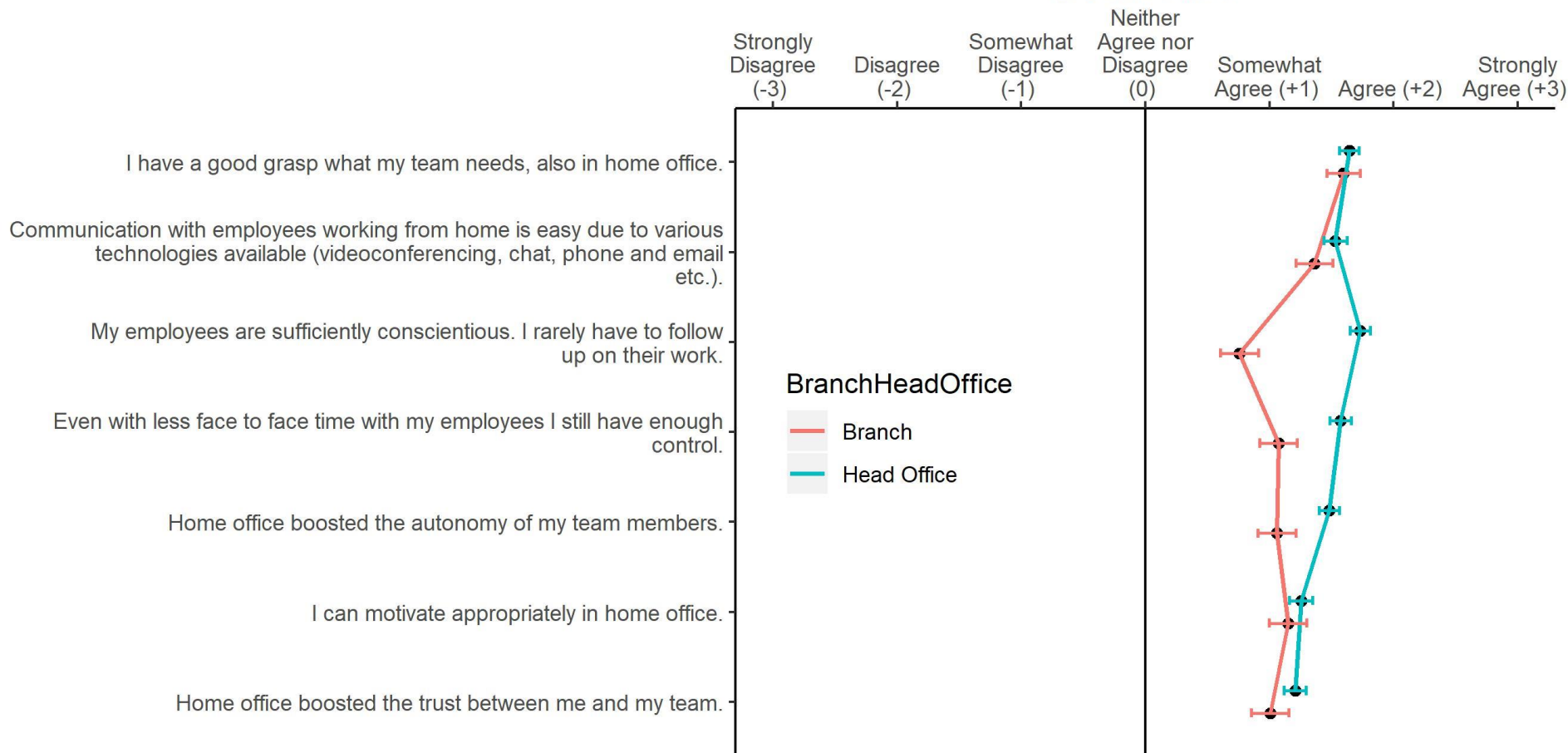
Personal opinion on home office



Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

Leadership challenge Branch vs. Head Office

FOR MANAGERS: How do you evaluate the following leadership challenge in home office:



Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

Findings:

- Managers struggle more with the HO situations than employees
- Managers have more problems to resolve problems in HO

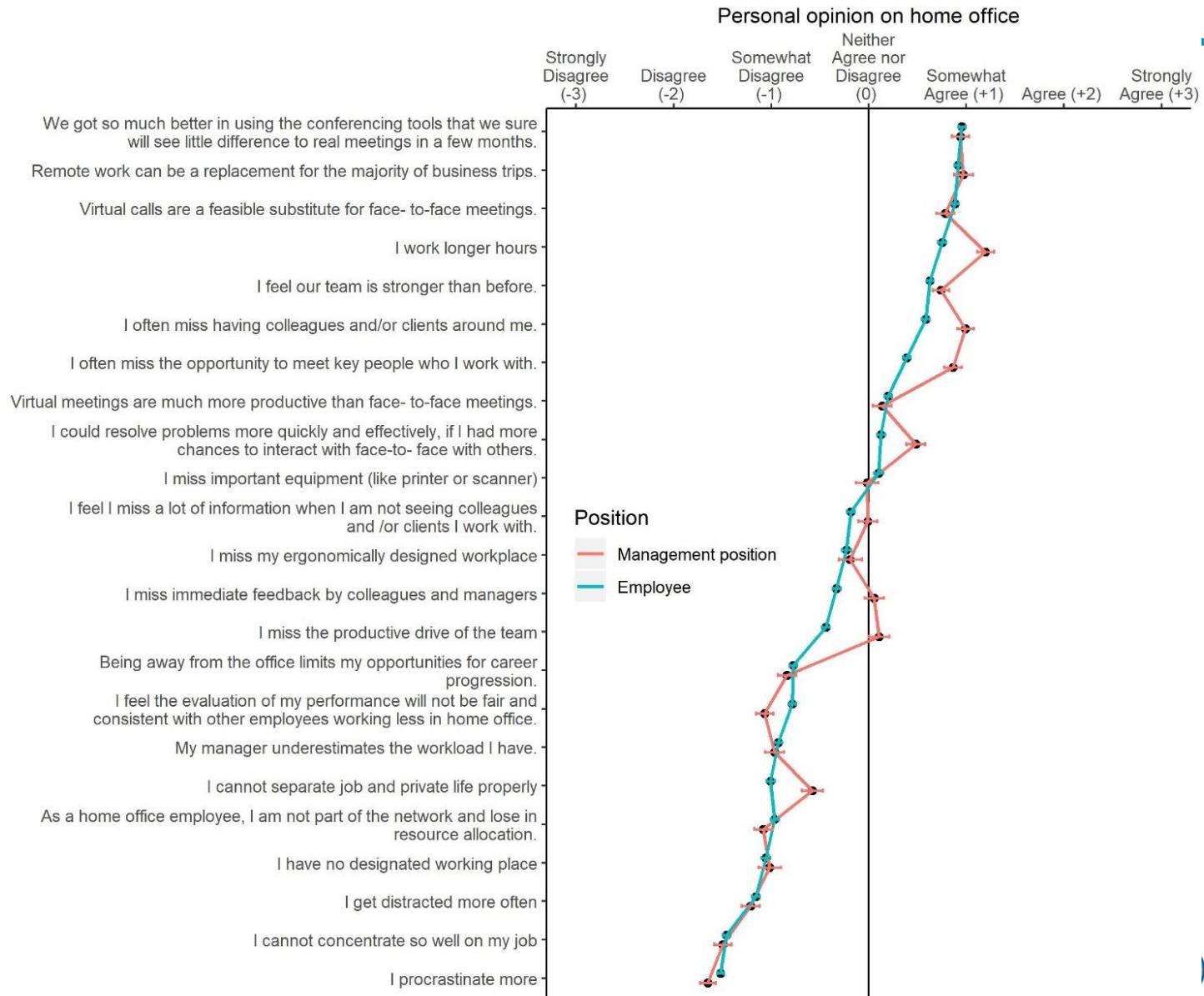
Leadership challenge Managers

FOR MANAGERS: How do you evaluate the following leadership challenge in home office:

	Strongly Disagree (-3)	Disagree (-2)	Somewhat Disagree (-1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (0)	Somewhat Agree (+1)	Agree (+2)	Strongly Agree (+3)
I have a good grasp what my team needs, also in home office.						1.63	
Communication with employees working from home is easy due to various technologies available (videoconferencing, chat, phone and email etc.).						1.48	
My employees are sufficiently conscientious. I rarely have to follow up on their work.						1.41	
Even with less face to face time with my employees I still have enough control.						1.41	
Home office boosted the autonomy of my team members.						1.34	
I can motivate appropriately in home office.						1.22	
Home office boosted the trust between me and my team.						1.14	

Observations: n = 2233

Managers & Employees



Confidence intervals for mean reported values: 99%

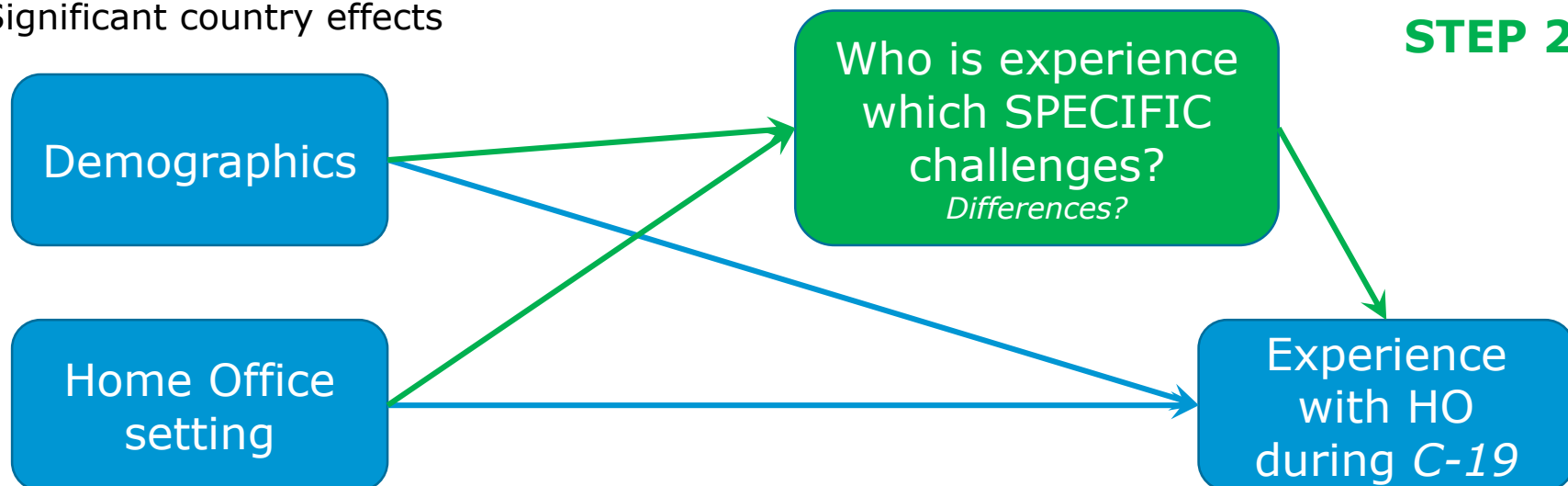
Explaining HO experience Mediation Analyses – on challenge evaluation

Findings:

- Challenges of Home Office:
 - Self-management (!)
 - Family (The categories Care and Family collapse almost completely)
 - Technical
- Consistently Confirmed- Substantial Branch – Head Office divide
- Significant country effects

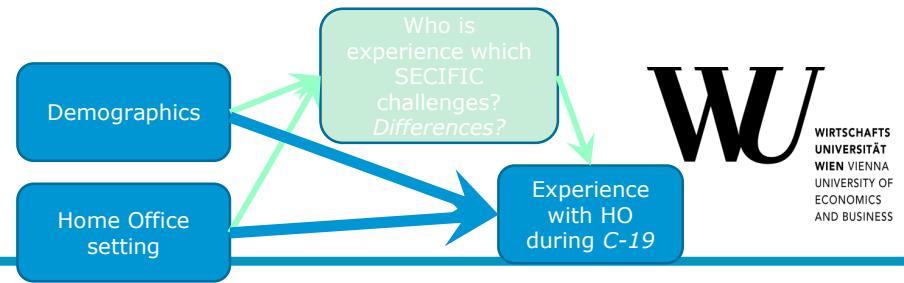
STEP 1

STEP 2



- Important note: to have meaningful interpretations: scores for the Challenge questions were recoded: (Recoded: 4 = Very difficult; 1 Not difficult or not applicable)

STEP 1



Predictors	Experience HO (Covid)			Experience HO (Covid)		
	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.12	-0.03 – 0.27	0.107	-0.04	-0.19 – 0.12	0.645
26-35	-0.06	-0.18 – 0.06	0.33	-0.06	-0.18 – 0.06	0.322
36-45	-0.23	-0.35 – -0.11	<0.001	-0.23	-0.35 – -0.11	<0.001
46-55	-0.26	-0.39 – -0.14	<0.001	-0.27	-0.39 – -0.15	<0.001
56 and older	-0.3	-0.45 – -0.15	<0.001	-0.32	-0.47 – -0.17	<0.001
Male	0.03	-0.02 – 0.08	0.28	0.03	-0.02 – 0.08	0.287
Other/I prefer not to disclose	-0.17	-0.30 – -0.05	0.005	-0.18	-0.30 – -0.06	0.003
Part-time	-0.09	-0.18 – 0.01	0.073	-0.1	-0.20 – -0.01	0.029
Head Office	0.69	0.63 – 0.74	<0.001	0.57	0.51 – 0.63	<0.001
Employee	0.33	0.25 – 0.40	<0.001	0.33	0.26 – 0.40	<0.001
Czech Republic	0.02	-0.06 – 0.09	0.668	0.12	0.04 – 0.19	0.002
Croatia	-0.08	-0.21 – 0.04	0.171	-0.13	-0.25 – -0.01	0.039
Hungary	0.32	0.22 – 0.42	<0.001	0.33	0.23 – 0.43	<0.001
Romania	-0.09	-0.17 – -0.02	0.015	-0.24	-0.31 – -0.17	<0.001
Serbia	-0.49	-0.66 – -0.33	<0.001	-0.63	-0.78 – -0.47	<0.001
Slovakia	0.1	-0.01 – 0.21	0.065	0.12	0.02 – 0.23	0.025
Home office before	0.37	0.31 – 0.42	<0.001			
Home office now				0.54	0.47 – 0.61	<0.001

Age. Reference Category: "Under 25"

Gender. Reference Category: "Female"

Status. Reference Category: "Full Time"

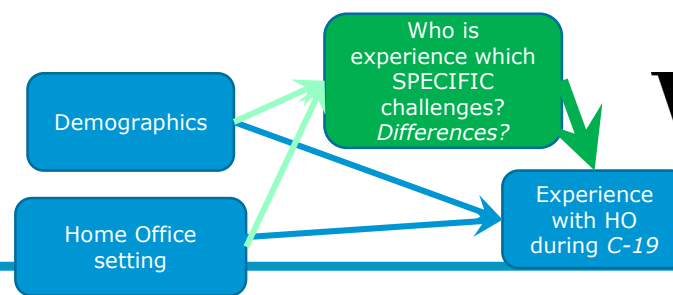
Office. Reference Category: "Branch"

Position. Reference Category: "Manager"

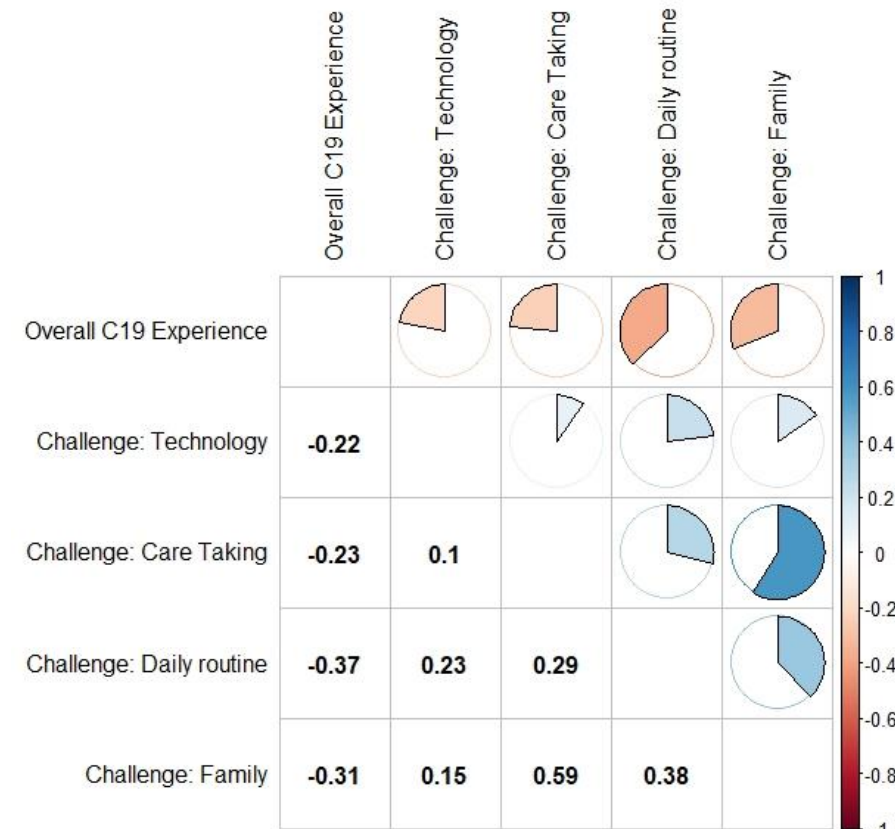
Country. Reference Category: "Austria"

HO. Reference Category: "NO HO (before or now)"

STEP 2a

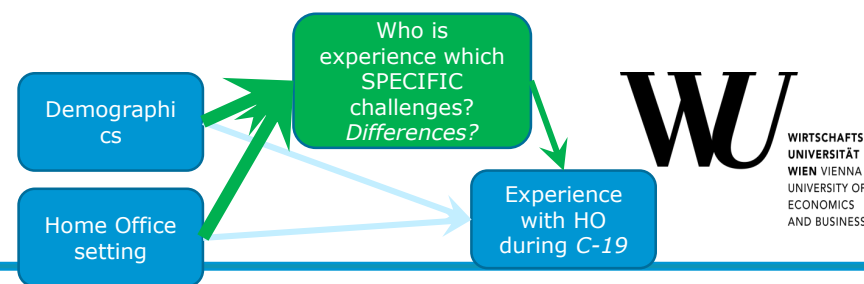


<i>Predictors</i>	Experience HO (Covid)		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	0.84	0.70 – 0.98	< 0.001
26-35	0.01	-0.11 – 0.12	0.893
36-45	-0.02	-0.13 – 0.09	0.73
46-55	-0.21	-0.32 – -0.09	< 0.001
56 and older	-0.32	-0.46 – -0.18	< 0.001
Male	0.01	-0.04 – 0.06	0.603
Other/I prefer not to disclose	-0.07	-0.19 – 0.04	0.197
Part-time	0.02	-0.06 – 0.11	0.6
Head Office	0.58	0.53 – 0.63	< 0.001
Employee	0.27	0.20 – 0.34	< 0.001
Czech Republic	0.01	-0.05 – 0.08	0.749
Croatia	-0.09	-0.20 – 0.03	0.132
Hungary	0.35	0.26 – 0.45	< 0.001
Romania	-0.23	-0.30 – -0.17	< 0.001
Serbia	-0.54	-0.69 – -0.40	< 0.001
Slovakia	0.15	0.05 – 0.25	0.003
Challenge Technology	-0.31	-0.36 – -0.27	< 0.001
Challenge Care Taking	-0.1	-0.13 – -0.07	< 0.001
Challenge Daily Routine	-0.61	-0.64 – -0.57	< 0.001
Challenge Family	-0.38	-0.42 – -0.34	< 0.001
Observations	15266		
R ² / R ² adjusted	0.246 / 0.245		



Raw correlation plot

STEP 2b



Predictors	Challenge Technology			Challenge Family			Challenge Daily Routine		
	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.19	0.14 – 0.24	<0.001	0.44	0.37 – 0.51	<0.001	0.6	0.54 – 0.67	<0.001
26-35	0.02	-0.02 – 0.06	0.411	0.05	-0.01 – 0.11	0.086	-0.02	-0.07 – 0.04	0.521
36-45	0.06	0.02 – 0.10	0.004	0.24	0.18 – 0.30	<0.001	-0.04	-0.09 – 0.01	0.153
46-55	0.15	0.12 – 0.19	<0.001	0.03	-0.02 – 0.09	0.262	-0.14	-0.19 – -0.08	<0.001
56 and older	0.26	0.21 – 0.30	<0.001	-0.11	-0.18 – -0.04	0.002	-0.17	-0.23 – -0.10	<0.001
Male	-0.07	-0.09 – -0.05	<0.001	-0.01	-0.04 – 0.01	0.375	0	-0.02 – 0.03	0.783
Other/I prefer not to disclose	0.04	-0.00 – 0.08	0.06	0.08	0.02 – 0.14	0.005	0.11	0.06 – 0.16	<0.001
Part-time	0	-0.03 – 0.03	0.975	0.15	0.11 – 0.20	<0.001	0.05	0.01 – 0.09	0.011
Head Office	-0.1	-0.12 – -0.09	<0.001	-0.12	-0.15 – -0.10	<0.001	-0.17	-0.19 – -0.14	<0.001
Employee	0.03	0.01 – 0.06	0.006	-0.06	-0.09 – -0.02	0.001	-0.08	-0.11 – -0.05	<0.001
Czech Republic	-0.02	-0.04 – 0.00	0.088	0.02	-0.01 – 0.05	0.208	0.05	0.02 – 0.08	0.003
Croatia	0.02	-0.02 – 0.06	0.337	0.1	0.04 – 0.15	0.001	0.01	-0.04 – 0.07	0.636
Hungary	-0.05	-0.08 – -0.02	0.002	0.01	-0.04 – 0.06	0.688	0.03	-0.02 – 0.07	0.233
Romania	0.06	0.03 – 0.08	<0.001	-0.13	-0.17 – -0.10	<0.001	0.01	-0.02 – 0.04	0.571
Serbia	0.08	0.03 – 0.13	0.001	0.06	-0.02 – 0.13	0.142	0.13	0.06 – 0.20	<0.001
Slovakia	0.03	-0.00 – 0.07	0.054	0.11	0.06 – 0.16	<0.001	0.06	0.01 – 0.11	0.01
Observations	15507			15483			15508		
R ² / R ² adjusted	0.043 / 0.042			0.039 / 0.038			0.023 / 0.022		

Take-aways and starting points for future research in the public sector

- No simple correlations
- Complex interactions, depending on age, tasks, and personal situation

Hypotheses:

1. Problems are gender-neutral, already?
 - Current research: Problem focus vs. Group focus?
2. Work through the leaders
 - Current research: Senior Civil Servant' Survey (*Politisch-Administrative Elite* Germany)
3. Difference between front- and backoffice work
 - Current research: Public service quality and measurement – Reputation / Stereotypes / Public Value

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- Our business: As part of the [Department of Management](#) at WU, we focus on organizational challenges in complex environments.
- Our Philosophy: We support evidence-based decision-making.
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- Our Research: We conducts a diverse variety of empirical research projects, and provide high-quality scientific insights with high practical relevance for decision makers across all sectors.
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- Contact: [Univ.-Prof. Dr. Jorgen WILLEMS](#)
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Our recent COVID-19 related studies:

<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/pubmgt/researchandpublications/prosocial-and-societal-behavior/covid19>