

Human Resource Management Practices in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Survey Report, July 2020

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Introduction

This research project was initiated by the Department of Management at Aarhus University to investigate how Scandinavian HR practitioners experience the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aims to study organizational responses to the COVID-19 crisis from a people management perspective to better understand how HRM can contribute to crisis management.

The International Labour Organization¹ outlines that COVID-19 negatively affects the world of work in quantitative and qualitative terms. During the crisis, organizations around the world were forced to adapt where and how they work. Remote work, reductions in work hours, cuts in training and development activities or a ban on recruitment are only a few examples. But what about supporting activities that help to keep up firm performance or foster collaboration and communication in times of remote work?

Previous research underlines that HR practitioners can play a central role in supporting practices to improve business performance in times of a crisis². Yet, limited research investigated concrete practices. Taking up on this notion, this research project focuses on people management practices, which are outlined in the HRM literature as supportive to employee and firm performance, namely High Performance Work Systems and Employee Experience Management practices. The project answers the question: How do organizations adapt their HRM practices in times of COVID-19? Furthermore, the project aims to better understand the surrounding conditions under which those changes take place: How does top management support the efforts from an HRM perspective? Does the HR manager's proactive behavior affect the activities carried out?

Overall, we invited 1.238 HR managers to participate in our survey and distributed the questionnaire via our project website, a newsletter and via email. 273 HR managers filled out the complete survey, which results in a response rate of 22% (only measured on the number of emails sent).

This data report aims to provide an overview of the descriptive results from our survey. On the following pages, you will find detailed information for each question that was covered in the online questionnaire as well as a brief description of the study context, the sampling procedure and a summary of the key findings.

¹ ILO. (2020, 07-04-2020). ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Second edition Updated estimates and analysis. COVID-19 and the world of work. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_740877.pdf

² Gunnigle, P., Lavelle, J., & Monaghan, S. (2019). Multinational companies and human resource management in Ireland during recession: A retrospective from a highly globalized economy. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 61(3), 481-489. doi:10.1002/tie.21978

Background of the Study

Country Context

The project focuses on Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden, Norway) and HR managers in the related countries. The Scandinavian context was chosen since those countries share a similar culture, company landscape and labor markets. In addition, all three countries have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic around the same time. By sending out the survey in parallel within the selected countries, we aimed to control to a certain extent for potential cyclical factors within Scandinavia that might influence HR practices in the different countries.

Selection Criteria

The project is targeted to collect insights from HR practitioners in Scandinavia. Consequently, we contacted only practitioners from Denmark, Sweden and Norway, who have “HR” (or Human Resources), “People” or “Personal” in their job titles. We chose these criteria to ensure that survey respondents work within the HR domain. Exemplary job titles are: (senior) HR Manager, HR Business Partner, People Manager or Personalsjef. Besides the country and job criteria, we did not impose other selection criteria.

Collection of Contact Information

In order to contact our target group, we started our search on LinkedIn. We ran for each country (Denmark, Sweden, Norway) a search for people, whose current job title is HR manager. For each country, we received a list with 1000 people, resulting in 3000 names. With the help of a student assistant, we searched online for their email addresses. For Denmark we found 327 valid email addresses (32,6%), for Norway 352 (35,2%) and for Sweden 438 (43,8%), resulting in a total of 1.117 email addresses.

Invitation of Survey Participants

Participants were invited to partake in the survey via email. The invitation email consisted of a short project description, the survey link and some information about anonymity and cyber safety. In total, 1.117 people were directly contacted via email.

In addition, some LinkedIn profiles offer the option to contact the profile owner directly. For those HR managers, where we could not find an email address online but had the option to contact them on LinkedIn, we made use of this opportunity. In total, another 121 invitations were sent out on LinkedIn. 42 for Denmark, 43 for Sweden and 36 for Norway.

Taken together, we contacted 1.238 HR managers directly.

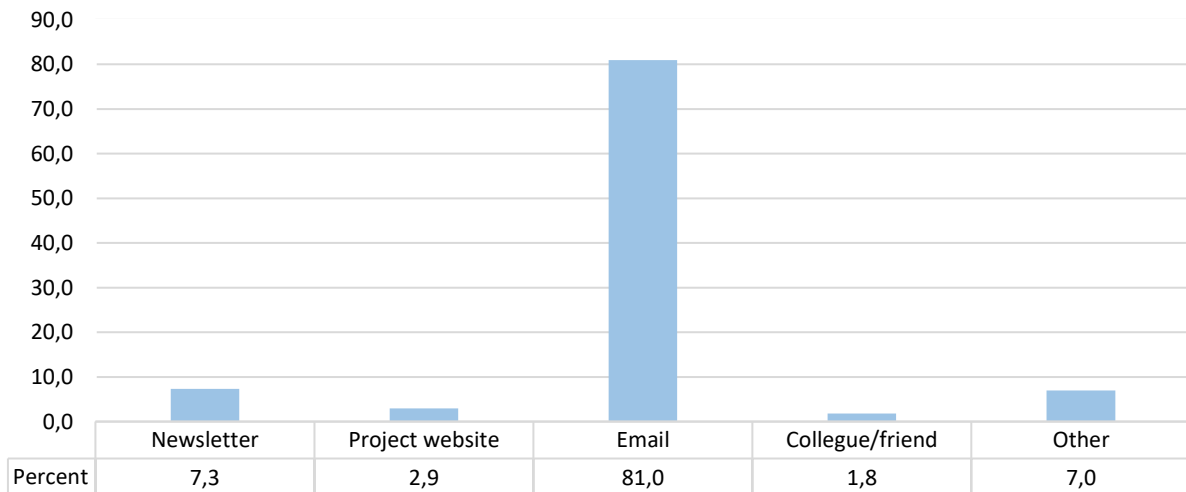
Finally, three different professional networks helped to distribute the survey. The questionnaire was distributed via a newsletter by *Dansk HR* - the largest HR network in Denmark with members throughout Scandinavia. Furthermore, two other HR networks mentioned the questionnaire in their internal feed. However, the latter two comprised mostly Danish HR managers.

Overview of Channels

The table below indicates more detailed via which channels responses were received. Most respondents (81%) learned about the survey from direct emails.

Note: "Other" answers include LinkedIn (9 respondents), the organization "Dansk HR", internet research, google searches, social media or direct contact from the researchers.

Figure 1. Channel of contact. Percent. N = 273.



Survey Setup

The questionnaire was administered online and designed with the professional survey tool SurveyXact. It was possible to run the survey on various devices such as tablet, smart phone or PC. The main criteria when designing the survey was that it is clear, easy to understand and easy to navigate through. The program saved respondents answers to ensure they can continue at the same page in cases of interruptions or technical issues.

The questionnaire started with an introduction page that outlined briefly the topic of the survey, the required time and the contact information of the researchers. Subsequently, participants were informed about the data handling (in accordance with GDPR rules), that the project is in accordance with the research ethics from Aarhus University and finally they were asked for their consent before proceeding to the questionnaire.

Different sections had introductory sentences such as *"In the following section we would like to learn a bit more about your background and yourself..."* to guide the respondent through the different sections. All questions required an answer and it was technically not possible to skip parts of the survey. Most questions asked the respondents to click on radio buttons while a few questions had the possibility to enter free text answers that was not limited to a certain amount of characters.

All respondents received all main questions, but the questionnaire was designed in a way that some follow-up questions (e.g. on remote work) were only posed to the participants who indicated that those questions are relevant for them.

Summary of Key Insights

The survey examines how HR managers perceive the current COVID-19 situation, how HR practices are carried out in times of a crisis and their perception of top management support. The survey report is based on 273 answers from HR managers (or similar positions with HR tasks) from small, medium-sized and large organization in Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

Overall, the survey indicates that top management support for HR is high in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most HR managers are satisfied how their organizations handled the crisis. There is a high focus on activities that foster the employee experience and most HR practices remain of relevance during the pandemic, especially communication to and among employees. However, most organizations provide no or less than 1 hour of training to their employees per week and there are rather moderate to loose ties between individual performance and pay raises or promotions in times of COVID-19. The majority of HR managers were able to maintain an appropriate work-life-balance during the COVID-19 and display a very proactive attitude towards their work.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact

- The majority of respondents (65%) agrees that the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted their organization, while a fifth indicates the opposite. 19 percent of HR managers do not see a negative impact of COVID-19 on their organization.
- There is great satisfaction among Scandinavian HR managers with the executive communication during the crisis. Almost 80 percent of the respondents indicate that their board communicated clearly and adequate about the crisis. A great percentage of the respondents (89%) show a strong sense of satisfaction of how their organizations handled the pandemic.
- Every second HR manager experiences changes in the type of the work, how their work is done and how their workplace is managed and organized.
- Most HR managers (70%) are not subject to work hour reductions, while a little more than a fifth of the respondents (22%) indicate some level of agreement that their working hours have been reduced since the pandemic.
- Only 11% of the HR managers did not work remotely during the crisis. The majority of the HR managers (80%), who worked remotely, are satisfied with the quality of their work that they delivered from home.
- Survey results indicate that more than half of HR managers were able to maintain their work-life-balance during the COVID-19 pandemic (57%), experienced low levels of time pressure (51%) and had enough flexibility in their job to meet responsibilities at home (75%).
- In contrast, every fifth HR manager faced time pressure at work (21%) and was unable to maintain an appropriate work-life balance (18%) during the crisis.

HR Practices during the Crisis

- In times of COVID-19, most organizations (66%) indicate rather moderate to loose ties between individual performance and pay raises or promotions.
- In most organizations (53%), less than 20% of the salary are linked to individual performance in times of the crisis.
- Recruitment activities have been put on hold in 37% of the organizations, while 30% indicate moderate to extensive recruitment activities.
- In every second organization (50%), no training or less than 1 hour of training is provided to employees per week in times of the crisis.
- In terms of communication, 65% of the organizations indicate that they make rather extensive use of formal meetings systems (incl. online meetings) to keep employees informed during COVID-19. Similarly, there is a high level of communication between employees. More than 80% of the organizations indicate that their employees communicate across departments to solve problems.

Employee Experience during the Crisis

- Also in times of a crisis, the majority of organizations focuses on the internal employee experience. Around two-third of the HR managers celebrate important moments in the lives of their employees (69%) and they focus on improving the journey of their employees (65%).
- Employees' needs and feelings remain also of importance during the COVID-19. Almost 80% of the HR managers collect insights from their employees in times of the crisis, co-create projects with their employees (70%) and adapt projects to individual needs (77%).
- In terms of the work environment, there is a high focus on promoting the company values and culture (76%) and on coaching managers on how they interact with their employees (83%).

Top Management Support

- Overall, HR managers indicate high levels of top management support. Less than one-fifth (17 %) of the HR managers emphasize a lack of management support.
- The majority of HR managers (70%) agrees that top management has stressed the importance of HRM in times of the COVID-19.
- However, 16% outline that top management has not actively encouraged employees to embrace HRM practices in their organization.

HR Manager's Proactive Personality

- Overall, the survey shows that Scandinavian HR managers show high levels of proactivity. For instance, 95% of the managers outline that they always look for better ways to do things.

Descriptive statistics

The following sections present descriptive statistics for all questions in the survey.

Background Information

This section includes descriptive statistics for all background questions asked to the survey participants.

Gender

The respondents in the survey are predominantly female (74,4 %).

Table 1 Gender.

	N (%)
Female	203 (74,4 %)
Male	67 (24,5 %)
Prefer not to answer	3 (1,1 %)
Total	273 (100 %)

Possible answers also included “*transgender female*”, “*transgender male*”, “*gender variant/non-conforming*” and “*not listed*”. No respondent opted for these gender categories.

Age

Respondents were given the opportunity to fill in their ages in whole years. For the sake of simplicity, data is presented in grouped categories. Respondents in the survey have the following ages:

Table 2. Age.

	N (%)
18-30 years	23 (8,5 %)
31-40 years	49 (18,1 %)
41-50 years	110 (40,6 %)
51-60 years	72 (26,6 %)
61 years or older	17 (6,3 %)
Total	271 (100 %)

The youngest respondent is 22 years old; the oldest is 73 years old. The average age is 46,5 years. Two answers were invalid.

Country of daily workplace

Respondents were asked to indicate the country of their daily workplace and could choose from a list of 196 countries. The distribution is as follows: Almost half of the respondents (48,4 %) work in Denmark. 23,8 % work in Norway and 22,3 % in Sweden.

5,5 % of the respondents have daily workplaces outside the three Scandinavian countries. The countries listed are Armenia (1), Bangladesh (1), France (1), Germany (1), India (1), Indonesia (1), Malaysia (1), Oman (1), Philippines (3), Russian Federation (1), Thailand (1) and United Kingdom (2).

Job description

Respondents were also asked to choose the description that fit their current job best.

Table 3. Job description.

	N (%)
Mostly HR	160 (58,8 %)
Mostly employee experience	8 (2,9 %)
Mostly HR and employee experience	104 (38,2 %)
Total	272 (100 %)

More than half of the respondents (58,8 %) work mostly with HR. 38,2 % work mostly with HR and employee experience, while only 2,9 % work mostly with employee experience alone.

Organization size

Given 6 categories, respondents were asked to indicate the size of their organization. The organizations included in the survey have the following sizes:

Table 4. Organization size.

	N (%)
1-9 employees	6 (2,2 %)
10-49 employees	31 (11,4 %)
50-249 employees	111 (40,7 %)
250-999 employees	80 (29,3 %)
1000-4999 employees	26 (9,5 %)
5000+ employees	19 (7,0 %)
Total	273 (100 %)

Most respondents works at organizations that have between 50 and 249 employees (40,7 %). Almost a third (29,3 %) have between 250 and 999 employees. Small organizations with less than 50 employees make up a total of 13,6 % of the organizations while 16,5 % of the respondents work in organizations with 1000 employees or more.

Tenure in current position

We asked respondents to indicate how many years they have been in their current position. Decimals have been rounded and for the sake of simplicity, data is presented in grouped categories.

Table 5. Tenure.

	N (%)
1 year or less	51 (18,7 %)
1-3 years	90 (33,0 %)
3-5 years	40 (14,7 %)
5-10 years	50 (18,3 %)
More than 10 years	42 (15,4 %)
Total	273 (100 %)

A third (33,0 %) of the respondents have held their current position between 1 and 3 years. The other categories are almost evenly distributed with a little less than one fifth of respondents in each.

Hierarchical Position

Respondents were instructed to specify if they are part of the executive team or not.

Table 6. Relation to the executive board.

	N (%)
Executive/report directly to CEO	155 (56,8 %)
Non-executive/do not report directly to CEO	118 (43,2 %)
Total	273 (100,0 %)

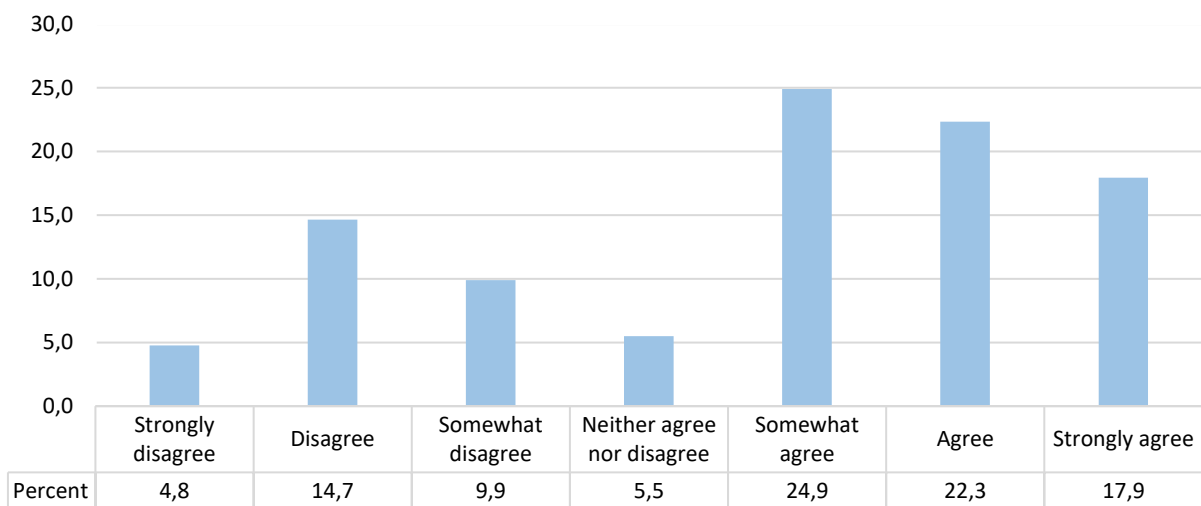
56,8 % of respondent hold executive positions or report directly to the CEO. 43,2 % describe themselves as non-executives and/or do not report directly to the CEO.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Organizations

We wanted to investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the participating organizations. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on three statements about organizational impact, executive communication and overall satisfaction with the organization's response to the pandemic. Answers range from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree" and are presented in figures 3-5 below.

Negative Impact of COVID-19

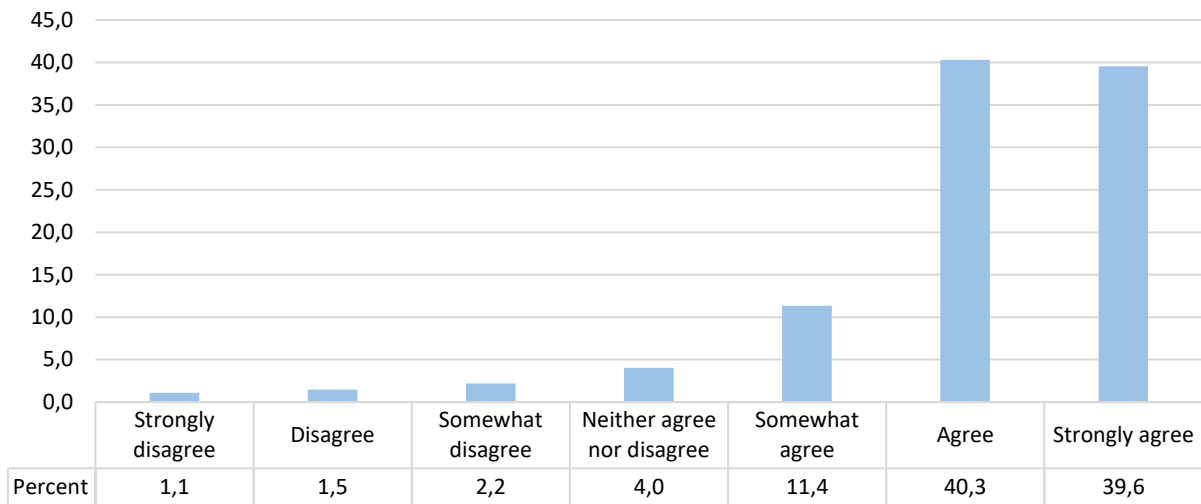
Figure 2. "Overall, my organization is negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic." Percent. N = 273.



40,3 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that their organization is negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. 24,9 % somewhat agree with the statement, while 29,3 % are on the side of disagreement.

Executive Board Communication

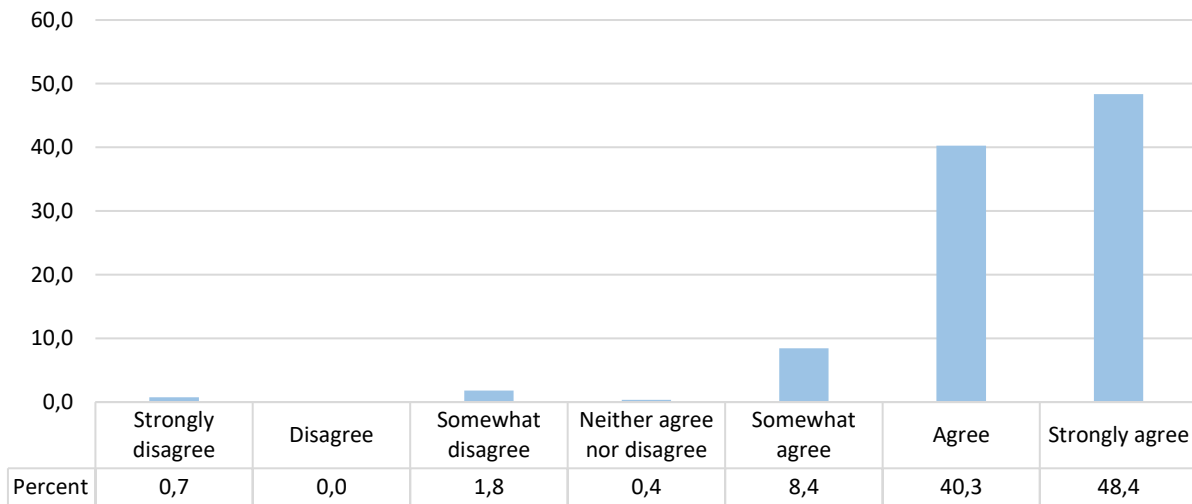
Figure 3. “The executive board communicated clearly and adequately about the COVID-19 pandemic.” Percent. N = 273.



The distribution of answers to this question appears left skewed: 79,9 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that their executive board has communicated clearly and adequately about the COVID-19 pandemic. 11,4 % somewhat agree and only 4,8 % either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

Satisfaction with Organizational Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Figure 4. "Overall, I am pleased with how my workplace handles the COVID-19 pandemic." Percent. N = 273.



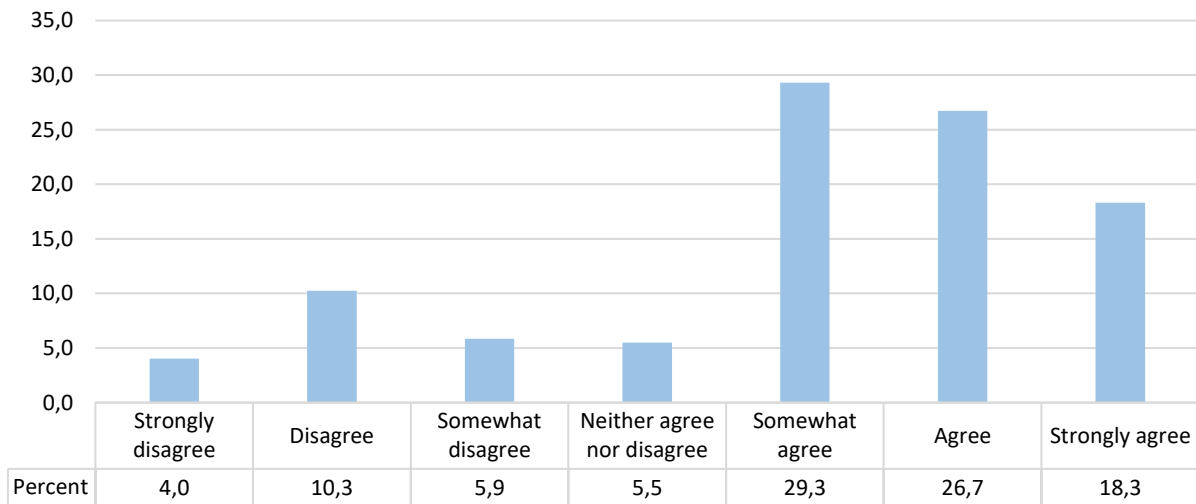
This answer distribution is also left skewed as 88,6 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statement "Overall, I am pleased with how my workplace handles the COVID-19 pandemic." 8,4 % somewhat agree and only 2,6 % choose answers that indicate disagreement.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Work Level

This section details how the respondents experienced changes in their workday and/or to the management and organization of their work. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a number of statements beginning with *“Since the COVID-19-pandemic...”*. Answers range from 1 *“Strongly disagree”* to 7 *“Strongly agree.”* The distributions are presented below.

Change in the Type of Work

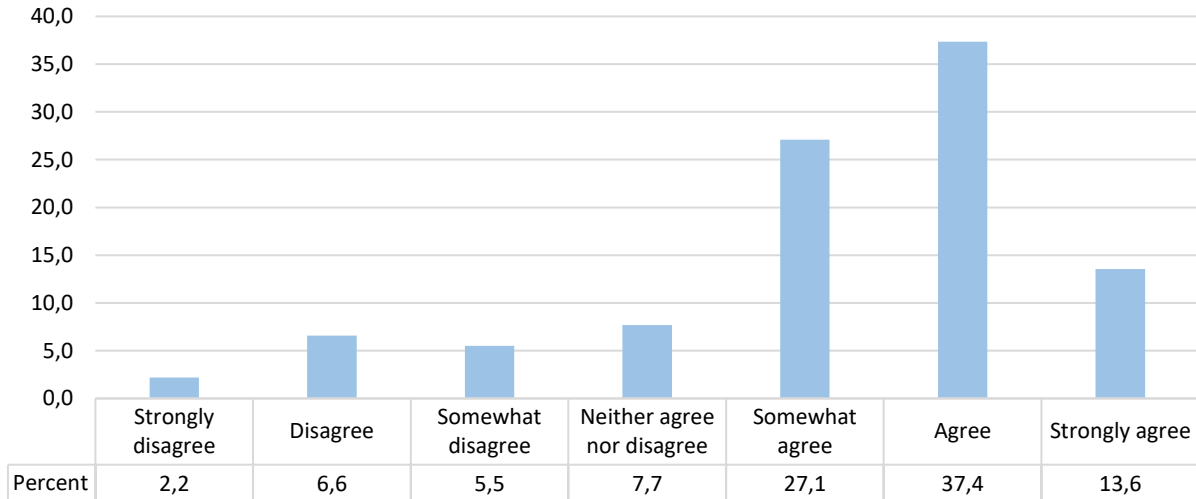
Figure 5. “I experience a change in the type of my work (e.g. your tasks).” Percent. N = 273.



45,1 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they experience a change in their type of work (e.g. their tasks) since the COVID-19 pandemic. 29,3 % somewhat agree, while a fifth of respondents (20,1 %) choose answers that indicate some level of disagreement.

Change in the Way of Working

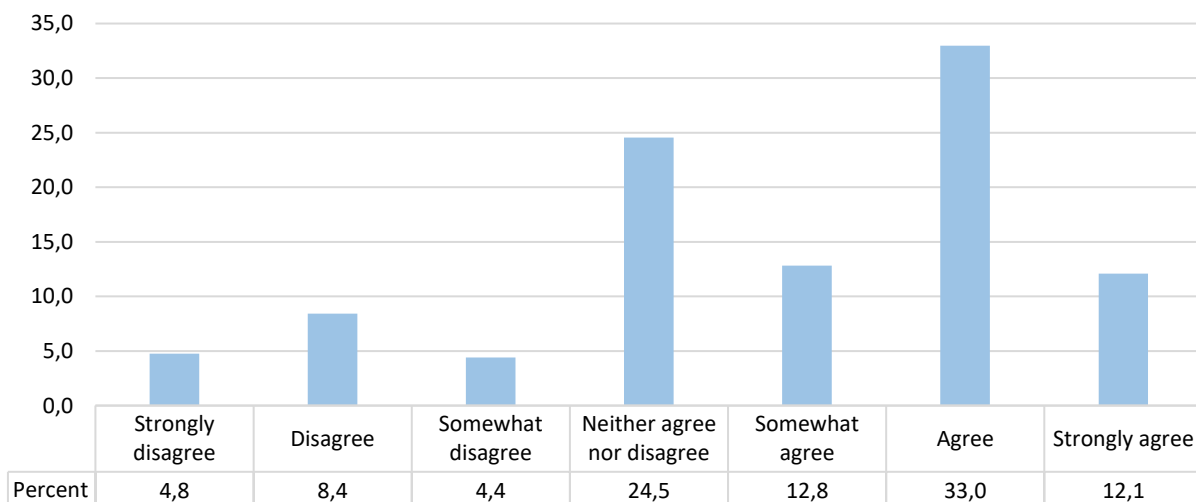
Figure 6. “I experience a change in how I do my job.” Percent. N = 273.



Half the respondents (50,9 %) either agree or strongly agree that since the COVID-19 pandemic, they experience a change in how they do their job. An additional 27,1 % somewhat agree with the statement. Only 14,1 % either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

Change in Job Responsibilities

Figure 7. “I am consulted about any changes concerning my job responsibilities.” Percent. N = 273.

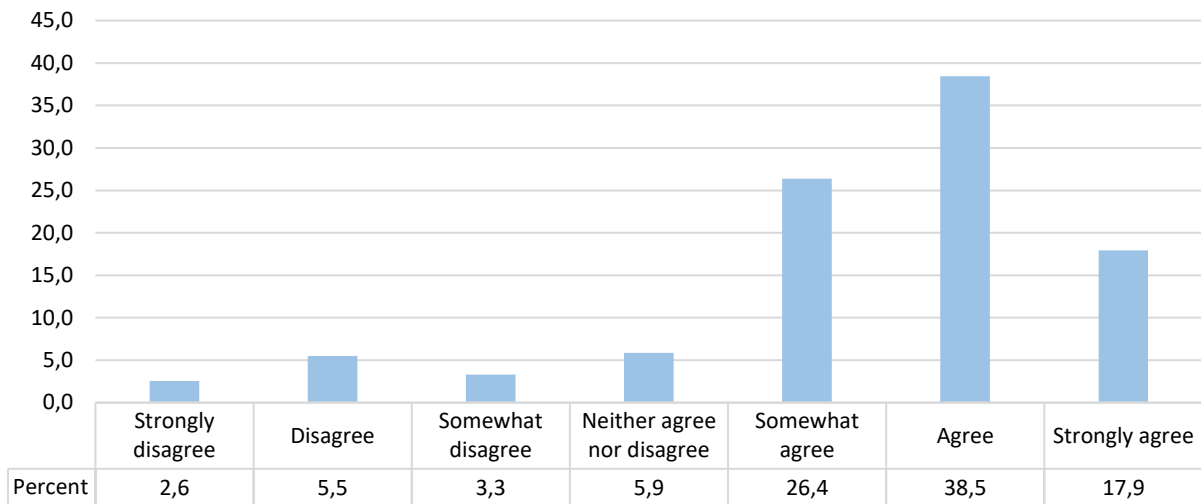


45,1 % either agree or strongly agree on the statement *“Since the COVID-19 pandemic, I am consulted about any changes concerning my job responsibilities.”* 12,8 % somewhat agree. However, this distribution is less left skewed than those above. Almost one quarter

of respondent – 24,5 % – neither agree nor disagree that they are consulted and 17,5 % choose answers that indicate some level disagreement.

Changes in the Management/Organization of the Work

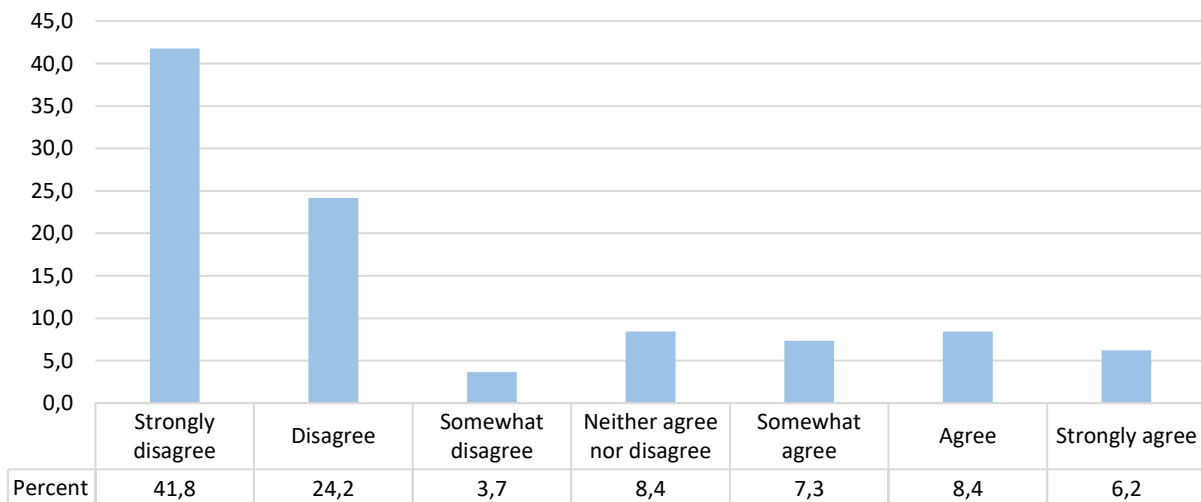
Figure 8. “I experience changes in the way my workplace is managed or organized.” Percent. N = 273.



A little more than half of respondents (56,4 %) either agree or strongly agree that there have been changes to the management or organization of their workplace since the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional quarter (26,4 %) somewhat agree while only 11,4 % of respondent either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

Reduction in Working Hours

Figure 9. “I experience a reduction in my working hours.” Percent. N = 273.



The distribution of answers to this question appears highly right skewed as 41,8 % of respondents strongly disagree that their working hours have been reduced since the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional 27,8 % either disagree or somewhat disagree. A little more than a fifth of the respondents (22,0 %) indicate some level of agreement that their working hours have been reduced since the pandemic.

Remote Work

As part of changes related to the work level, this section investigates the use of and reactions to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Level of remote work

In order to learn about the level of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, we started asking respondents “Do you/did you work remotely since the COVID-19 pandemic?”. Those, who indicated that they work remotely, received a follow-up question that detailed the level of the current remote work (“How is/was the level of your remote work since the COVID-19 pandemic?”). Answer distributions are presented in tables 9 and table 10 respectively.

Table 7. Remote work since the COVID-19 pandemic.

	N (%)
Yes, completely	103 (37,7%)
Yes, >50 %	75 (27,5 %)
Yes, <50 %	65 (23,8 %)
No, not at all	30 (11,0 %)
Total	273 (100,0 %)

Only 11,0 % of respondents did not work remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those without remote work did not receive the subsequent follow-up questions about the level and quality for their remote work.

Among those who did work remote, 37,7 % worked completely remote and 27,5 % worked remotely more than half the time. 23,8 % worked remotely, but less than 50 % of the time.

Table 8. Level of remote work since the COVID-19 pandemic.

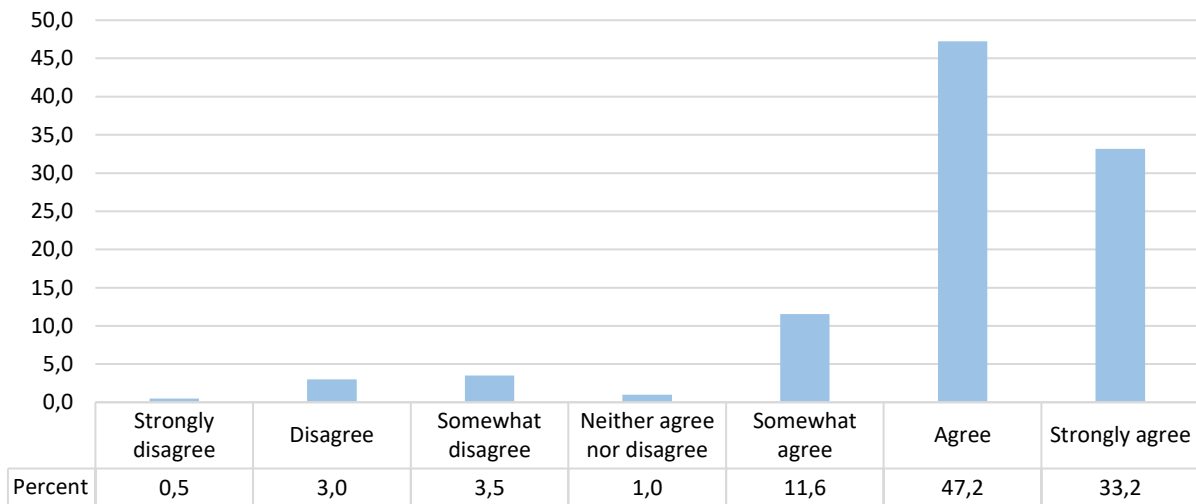
	N (%)
Less remote work	22 (9,1 %)
Unchanged level of remote work	22 (9,1 %)
More remote work	199 (81,9 %)
Total	243 (100 %)

Among the 243 respondents who work remotely, 81,9 % experience an increase in the level of remote work during the pandemic. Both “*less remote work*” and “*unchanged level of remote work*” house 9,1 % of respondents (respectively).

Quality of Remote Work

We also asked respondents, who work more remotely (N=199) about the quality of their remote work. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the statement: *"I believe I am/was able to do my job remotely to a satisfactory quality."* Answers range from 1 *"Strongly disagree"* to 7 *"Strongly agree."* Distributions are presented in figure 9.

Figure 10. Quality of remote work. Percent. N = 199.



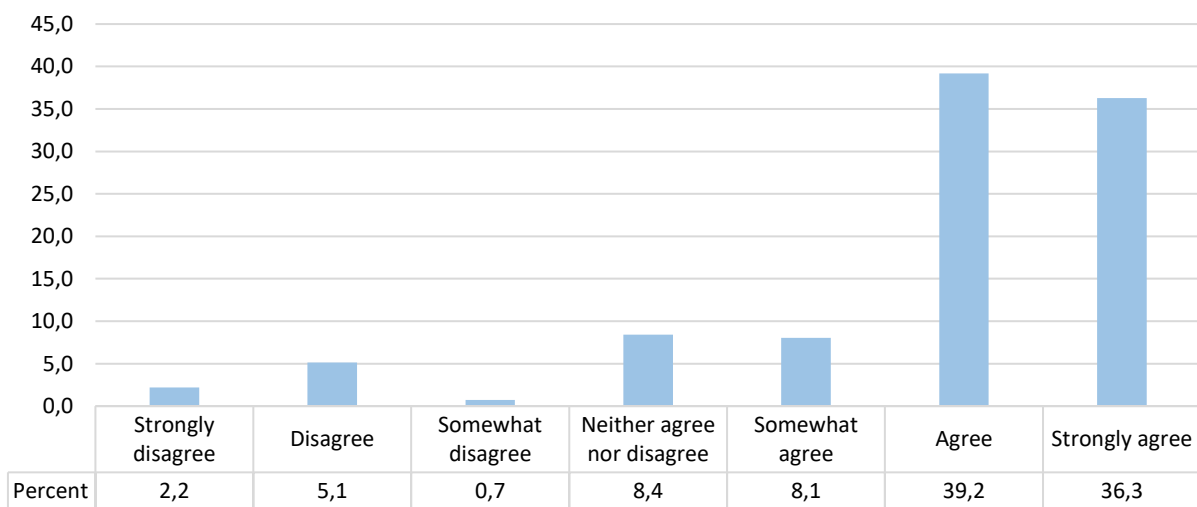
The distribution of answers on this question is highly left skewed. 80,4 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they were able to deliver a satisfactory quality of work remotely. An additional 11,6 % somewhat agree while only 7 % choose answers that indicate disagreement.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Individual

We also wanted to investigate respondents work-life balance during the pandemic and asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to three statements about this. They all began with *“Since the COVID-19 pandemic...”* and answers ranged from 1 *“Strongly disagree”* to 7 *“Strongly agree.”* Distributions are presented below.

Compatibility of Work and Private Life

Figure 11. “I have sufficient flexibility in my work for me to meet my other responsibilities at home (e.g. childcare, teaching children, caring for family members).” Percent. N = 273.

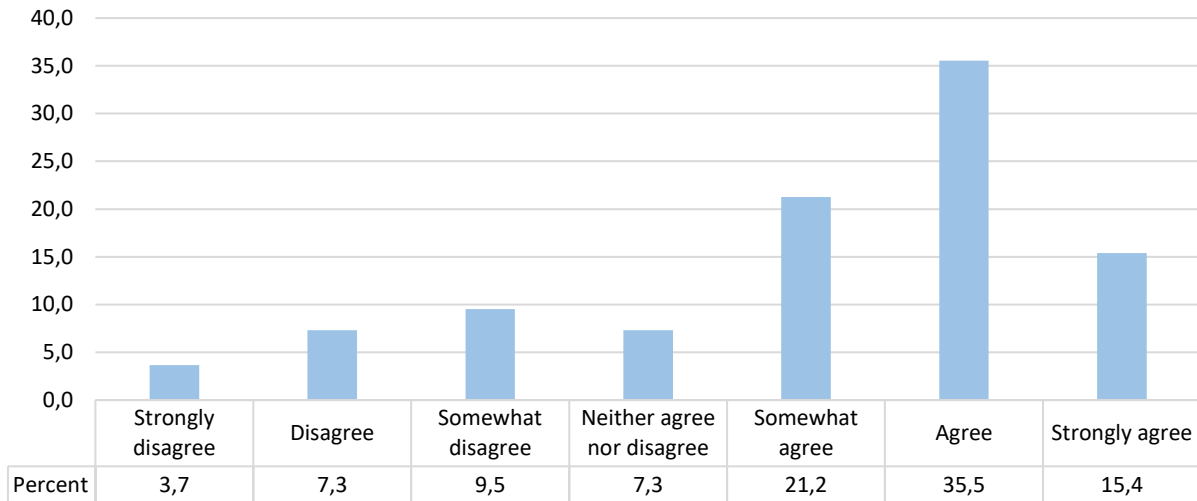


Three quarters of the respondents (75,5 %) either agree or strongly agree that since the COVID-19 pandemic, they have enough flexibility in their work to meet other responsibilities at home. The distribution is thus highly left skewed; only 8,1 % of respondents choose answers that indicate disagreement.

Work Stress

In order to learn about the individual well-being of HR managers, respondents were asked about the balance between the tasks they have and the time available for those tasks.

Figure 12. “There is a balance between my tasks and the time available to do them.”
Percent. N = 273.

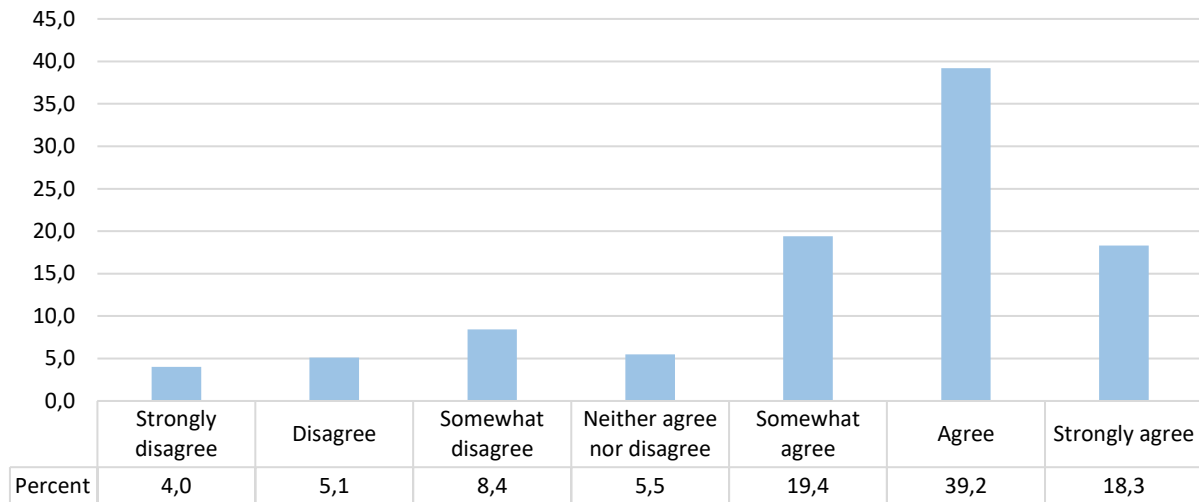


About half of the respondents (50,9 %) either agree or strongly agree that there is a balance between their tasks and the time available to do them. An additional fifth of respondents (21,2 %) somewhat agree and another fifth (20,5 %) either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

Work-Life Balance

Finally, respondents were asked about their work-life balance.

Figure 13. "I have an appropriate work-life balance." Percent. N = 273.



Most respondents find that since the COVID-19 pandemic, they have an appropriate work-life balance. 57,5 % thus either agree or strongly agree with the statement while another 19,4 % somewhat disagree. 17,6 % of respondents either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

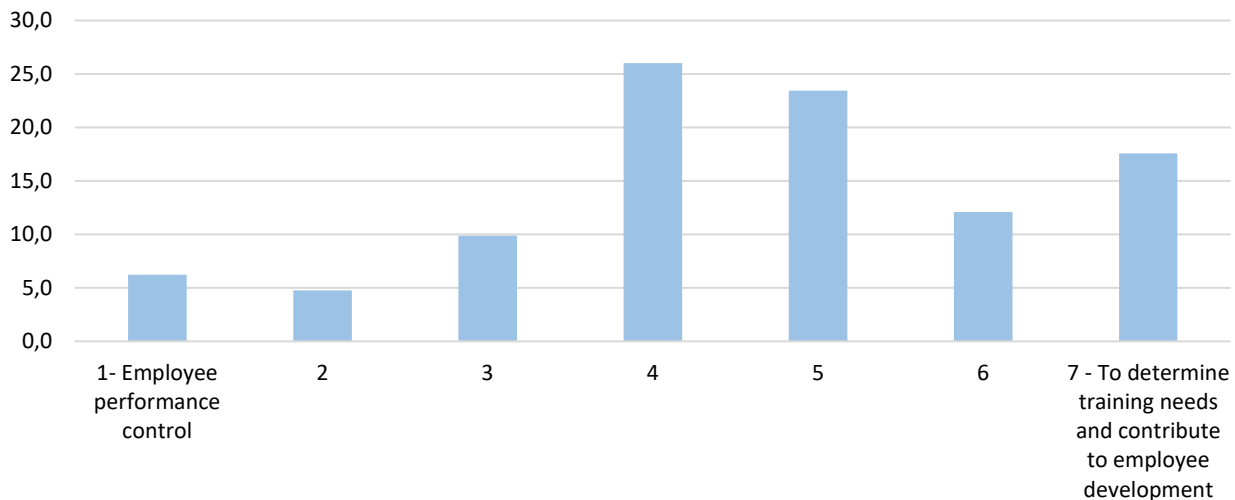
HRM Practices during COVID-19

In this section, we present answers to questions intended to learn more about the organizations and their HRM approaches. The questions relate to use of performance evaluation systems, selection of new employees in times of COVID-19, employee training and participation.

Performance Evaluation Process

Wanting to learn how organizations use performance evaluation processes during COVID-19, we asked respondents *“What is currently the main purpose of the performance evaluation processes in your organization?”* Answers were given on a 7-point scale from (1) *“Employee performance control”* to (7) *“To determine training needs and contribute to employee development.”* The distribution of answers is shown in figure 15.

Figure 14. Purpose of performance evaluation processes. Percent. N = 273.

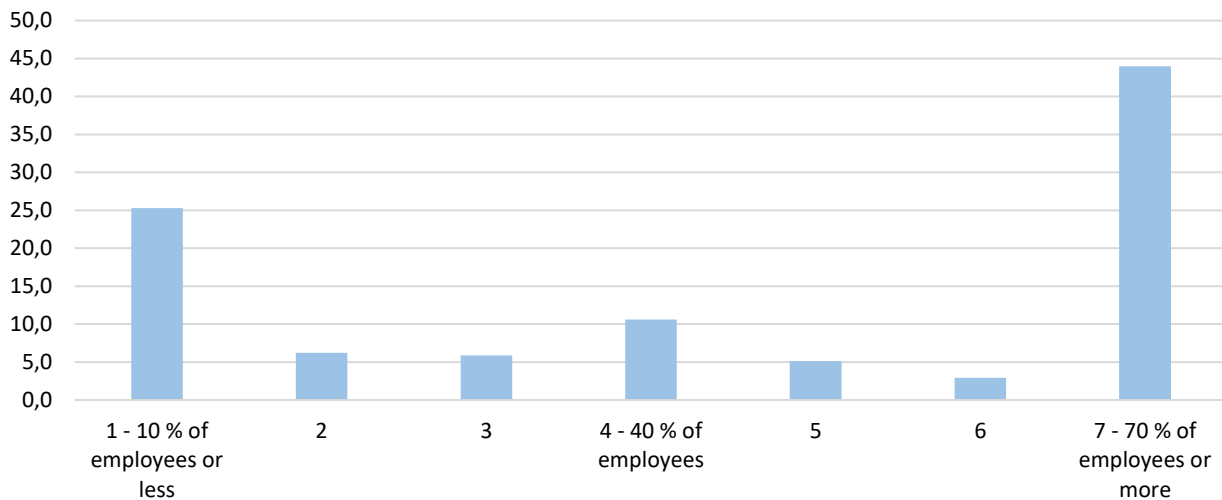


Most respondents tend to view the purpose of their organization's performance evaluation process more as a tool used to identify training and development needs and less as a tool for performance control.

Use of Performance Appraisal Systems

We asked respondents “What percentage of employees in your organizations is currently covered by performance appraisal systems?” Answers were given on a 7-point scale from (1) “10 % of employees or less” to (7) “70 % of employees or more”

Figure 15. Percentage of employees covered by performance appraisal systems. Percent. N = 273.

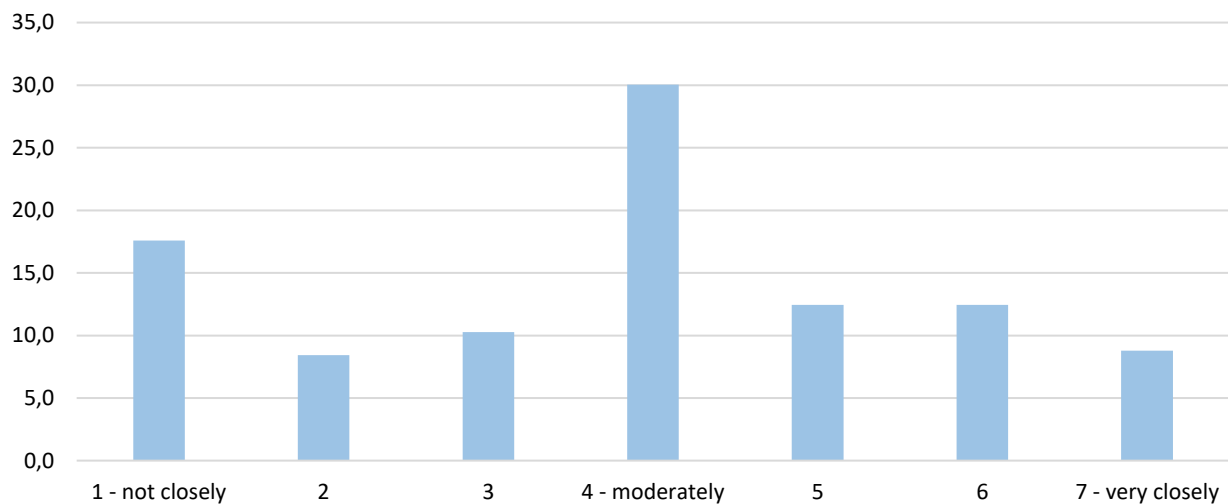


44 % of respondents indicate that 70 % or more of employees at their organization are covered by performance appraisal systems. At the other end of the spectrum, 25,3 % of respondents tell us that 10 % or less of employees are covered by such systems.

Performance-related Pay Raises/Promotions

Respondents were also asked to indicate how closely pay raises, promotions etc. are currently tied to performance appraisal. Answers range from (1) “not closely” to (7) “very closely.” The answer distribution is shown in figure 17.

Figure 16. Ties between pay rises, promotions etc. & performance appraisal. Percent. N = 273.

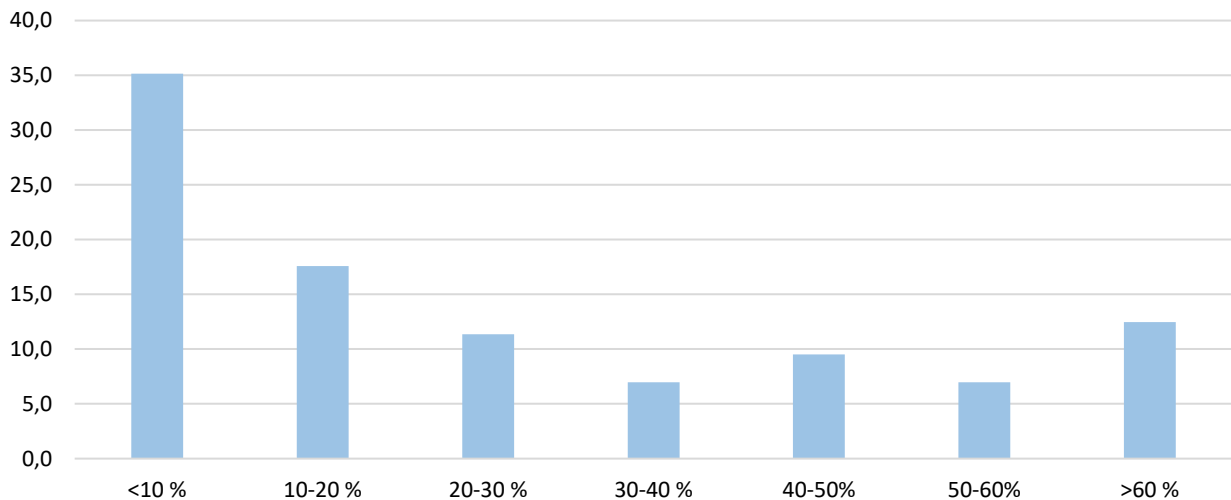


The respondents seem to be almost equally divided into three categories: Almost a third of respondents (30,0 %) answer, that pay raises, promotions etc. are currently moderately tied to performance appraisal systems. 36,6 % of respondents choose answers 3 or lower, indicating that pay raises etc. are only loosely tied to performance appraisal. The remaining 33,7 % of respondents choose answers of 5 or higher and thus view the ties as closer.

Performance-related Pay

Further, we asked respondent “How closely is pay currently tied to individual performance, in terms of percentage of salary?” The answers range from 1 “Less than 10 %” to 7 “More than 60 %”. Distributions are shown below.

Figure 17. Ties between pay & individual performance in terms of percentage of salary. Percent. N = 273.

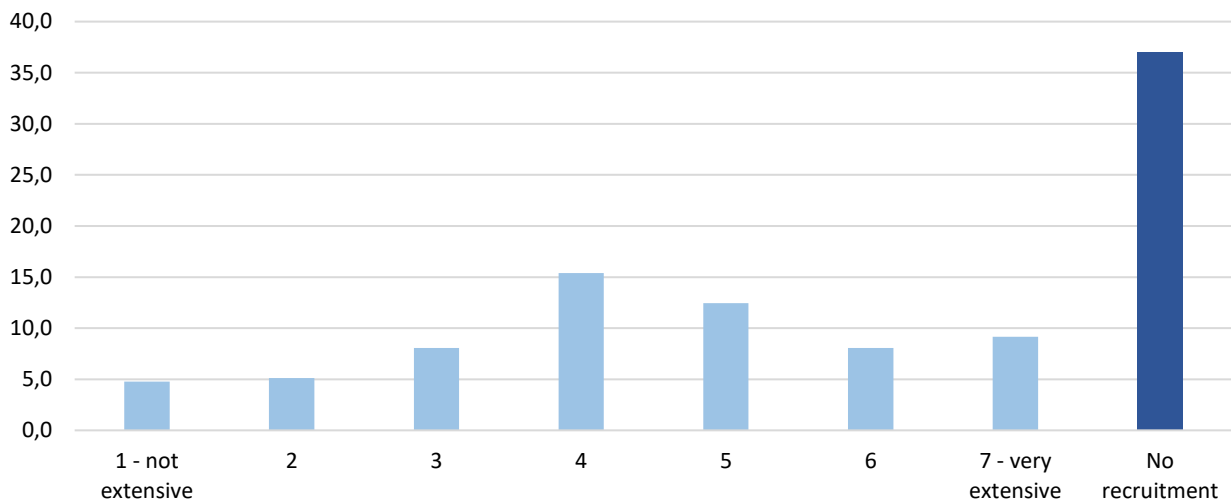


35,2 % of respondents indicate that less than 10 % of employee pay is currently linked to individual performance. 17,6 % choose the answer “10-20 %” and 12,5 % of respondents let us know that their organizations currently tie more than 60 % of the salary to individual performance.

Recruitment Activities

Wanting to learn about recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic, we asked respondents “In times of the COVID-19 pandemic, how extensive is the employee selection process to fill a position?” Answers range from (1) “Not very extensive” to (7) “Very extensive,” but respondents could also answer “No recruitment and selection in times of COVID-19”. The answer distribution is shown in figure 19.

Figure 18. Extensiveness of employee selection process in times of COVID-19 pandemic. Percent. N = 273.

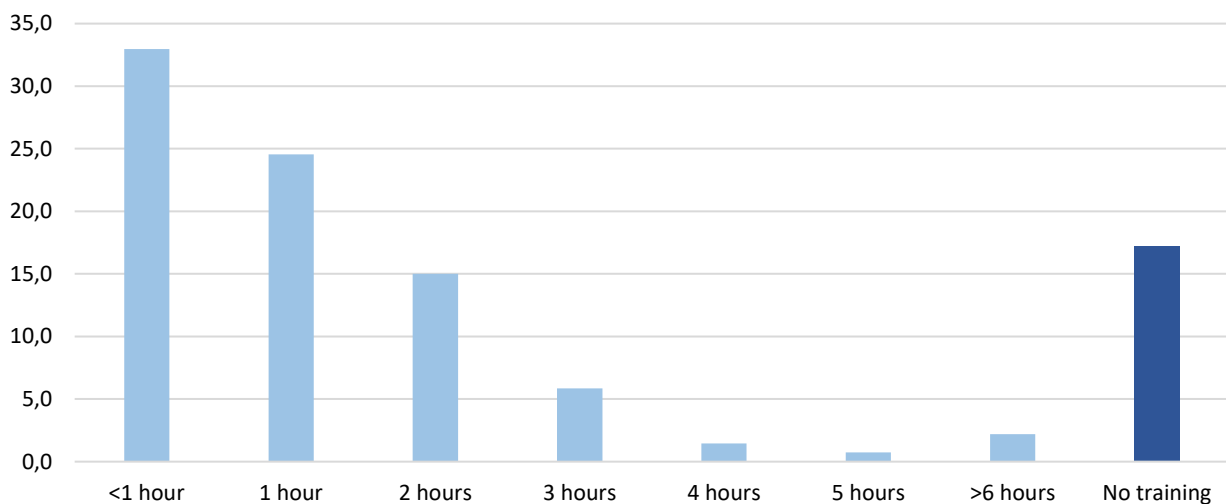


The most notable bar in figure 19 is the 37,0 % of respondents who indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, no recruitment and selection of new employees have taken place in their organizations. Among the remaining respondents – those whose organizations did recruit and select during the pandemic – answers range from extensive to non-extensive recruitment activities.

Training Activities

We also asked respondents *“In times of the COVID-19 pandemic, on average how many hours of formal training does an employee receive per week?”* Respondents were instructed that formal training also includes online training, and answers range from (1) *“Less than 1 hour”* to (7) *“More than 6 hours.”* As above, respondents could also choose the answer *“No training provided in times of COVID-19”*.

Figure 19. Average number of hours of formal training for employees per week. Percent. N = 273.

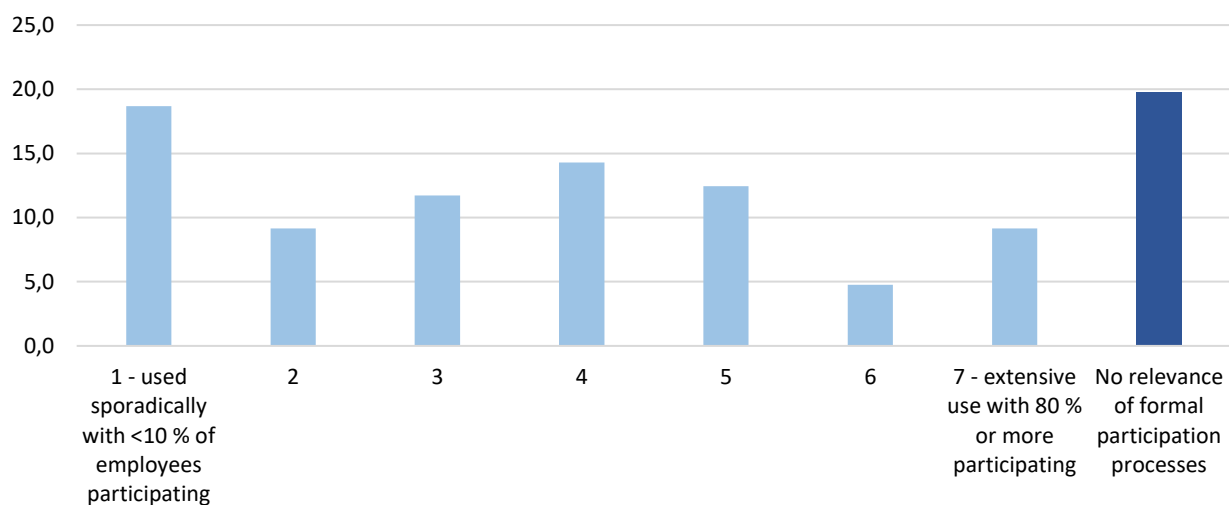


17,2 % of respondents indicate that no formal training of employees has taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic. A third of respondents (33,0 %) answer that on average, employees are given less than 1 hour of formal training per week while another quarter (24,5 %) indicate that employees receive 1 hour of formal training.

Employee Participation

We also wanted to learn more about organizations' use of formal participation processes during the pandemic. Therefore, respondents were asked *"In times of the COVID-19 pandemic, what relevance do formal participation processes such as quality improvement groups, problem-solving groups or suggestion systems have in your organization?"*. Answers range from (1) *"Used sporadically with less than 10 % of employees participating"* to (7) *"Extensive use with 80 % or more of employees participating."* Respondents could also let us know if in times of the pandemic, their organization has no use of formal participation processes at all. Distributions are presented in figure 21.

Figure 20. Relevance of formal participation processes. Percent. N = 273.

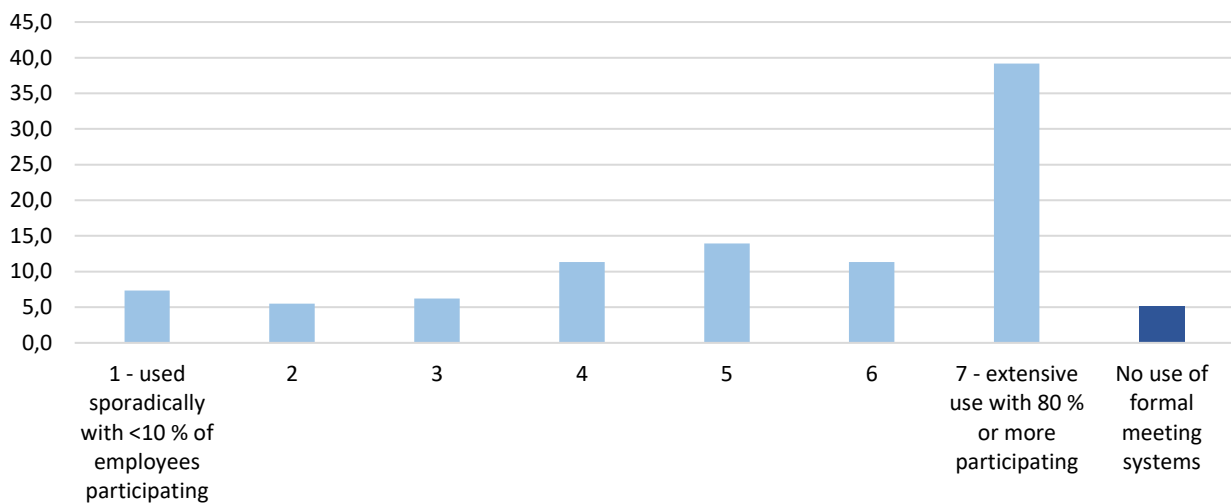


About a fifth of respondents (19,8 %) told us that in times of COVID-19, formal participation processes have no relevance in their organization. Another fifth (18,7 %) indicate that such processes are only used sporadically and involve less than 10 % of employees. 38,5 % of respondents are almost equally distributed in the categories 3-5. 9,2 % indicate that in times of COVID-19, their organization makes extensive use of formal participation processes with more than 80 % of employees involved.

Keeping Employees Informed

We asked respondents “In times of the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent are formal meeting systems used to inform employees about the firm’s situation (e.g. strategy, results, etc.)?” and instructed them that formal meeting systems also include online meetings. Answers were given on a 7-point scale from 1 “Used sporadically with less than 10 % of employees participating” to 7 “Extensive use with 80 % or more of employees participating.” An eighth possible answer was “No use of formal meeting systems in times of COVID-19.”

Figure 21. Use of formal meeting systems to inform employees. Percent. N = 273.

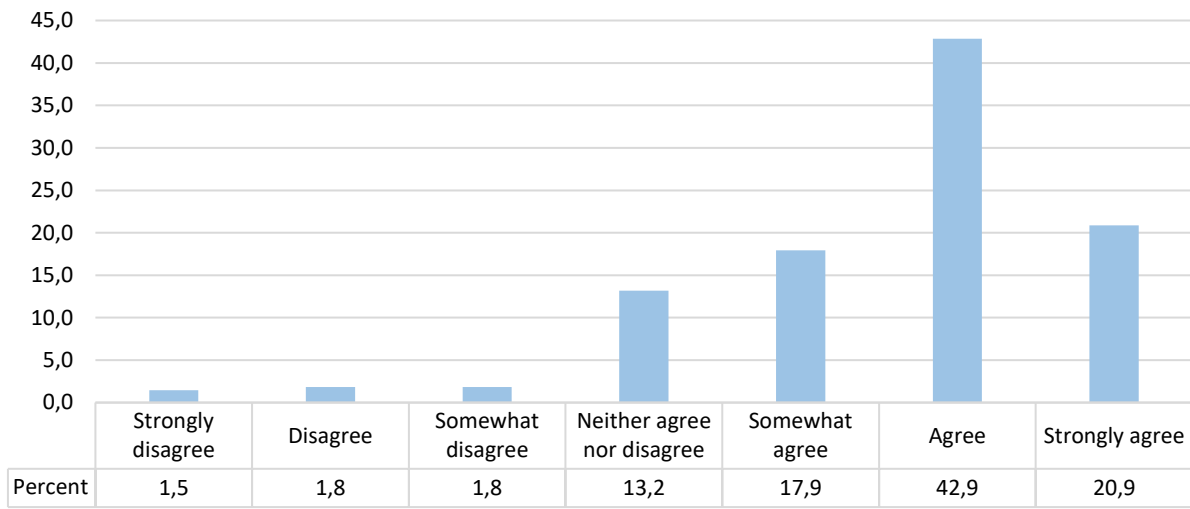


Most respondents made use of formal meeting systems (including online meetings) during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, 39,2 % of all respondents indicate that their organization made extensive use of such systems and involve 80 % or more of employees. Only 5,1 % indicated that their organization did not make use of formal meeting systems at all in times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Communication among Employees

Finally, we wanted to learn more about how well organizations have been able to communicate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on the statement *“In times of the COVID-19 pandemic, employees in my organization communicate with people in other areas to solve problems and meet deadlines.”* Answers were given on a 7-point scale from 1 *“Strongly disagree”* to 7 *“Strongly agree.”*

Figure 22. Communication to solve problems and meet deadlines. Percent. N = 273.



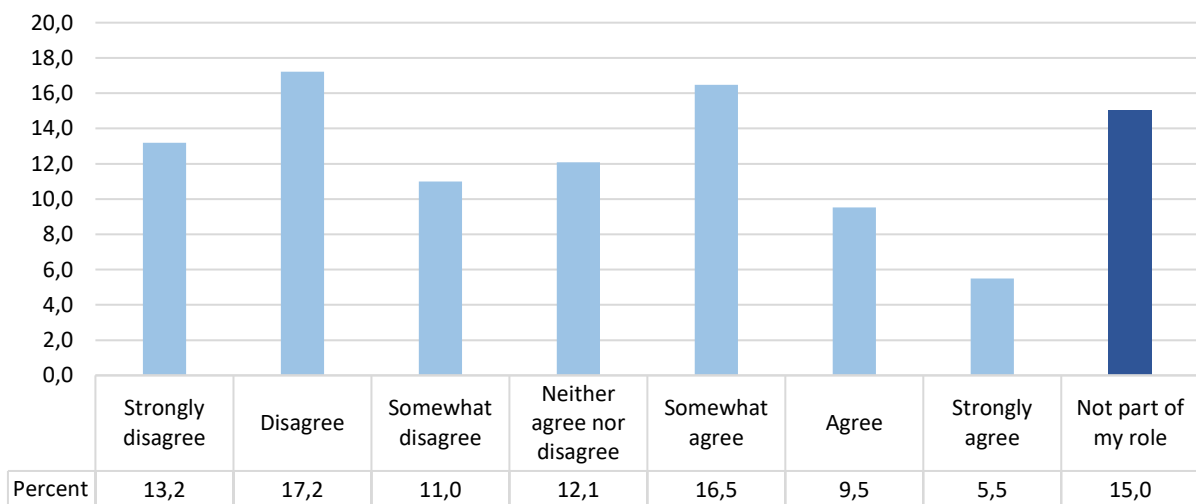
The answer distribution on this question is highly left skewed as 63,7 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statement. Only 5,1 % of respondents choose answers that indicate some level of disagreement.

Employee Experience Management Practices During COVID-19

The questions in this section provide an overview on activities intended to improve the overall employee experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below, we detail descriptive statistics for questions relating to a range of broader activities that impact what is happening during the time at work to employees. Respondents were presented with 10 statements that all began with *"In times of the COVID-19 pandemic..."* They were then asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a scale from 1 *"Strongly disagree"* to 7 *"Strongly agree"*. On each statement it was also possible to choose the answer *"Not part of my role."* The full statements and their answer distributions are presented in figures 24-33.

Organization of Social Events

Figure 23. "I create frequently social company events for our employees." Percent. N = 273.

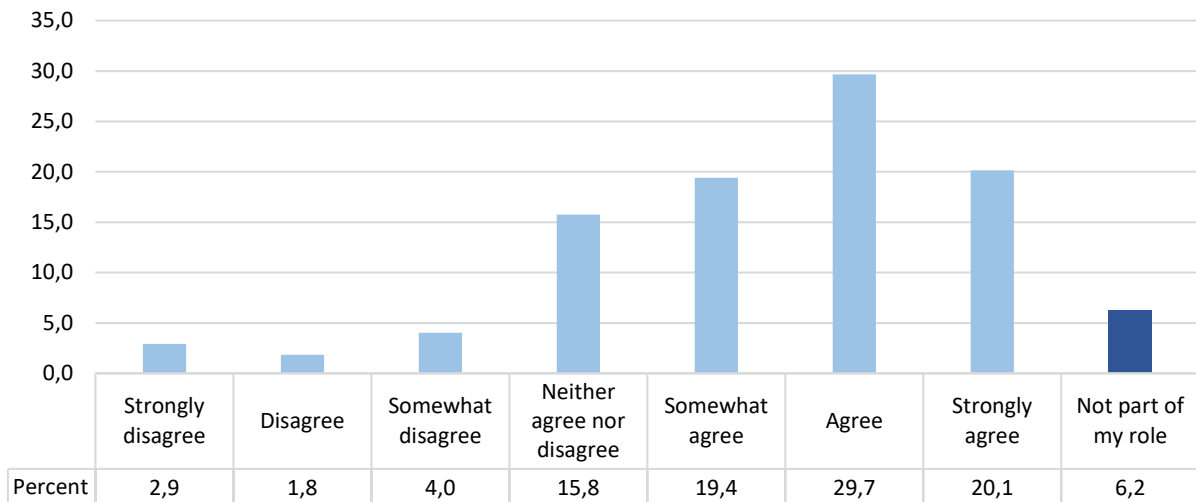


15,0 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that in times of pandemic, they frequently create social company events for employees. 16,5 % somewhat agree with the statement, while another 15 % let us know that creation of such events is not part of their role. A total of 41,1 % of respondents either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree with the statement.

Celebrating Moments that Matter

Figure 24. “I ensure that we celebrate moments that are important in the life of our employees”

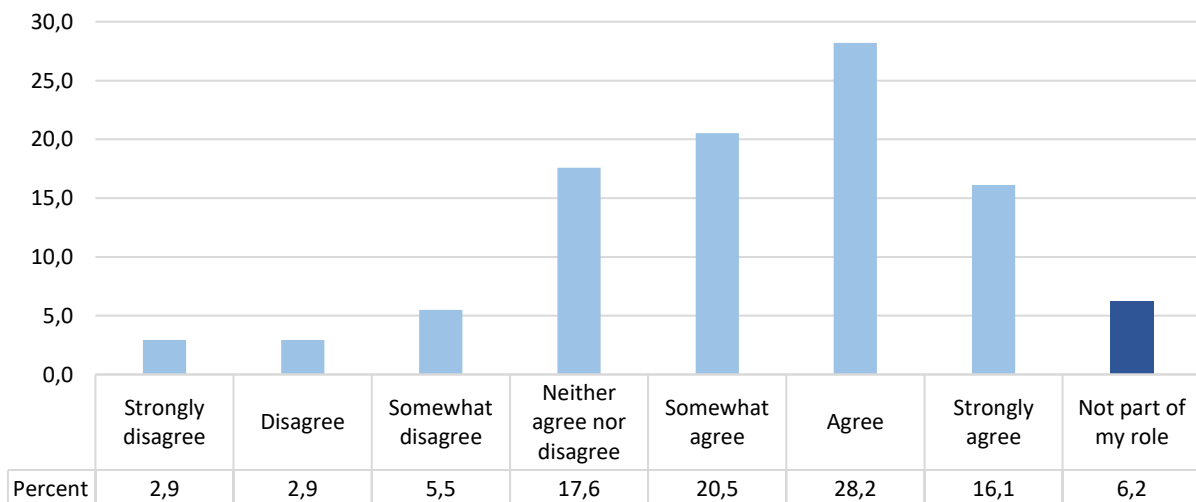
Percent. N = 273.



Half of the respondents (49,8 %) either agree or strongly agree that in times of COVID-19, they make sure to celebrate important moments in employees’ lives. Another 19,4 % somewhat agree while only a total of 8,8 % of respondents choose answers that indicate some level of disagreement.

Improving the Employee Journey

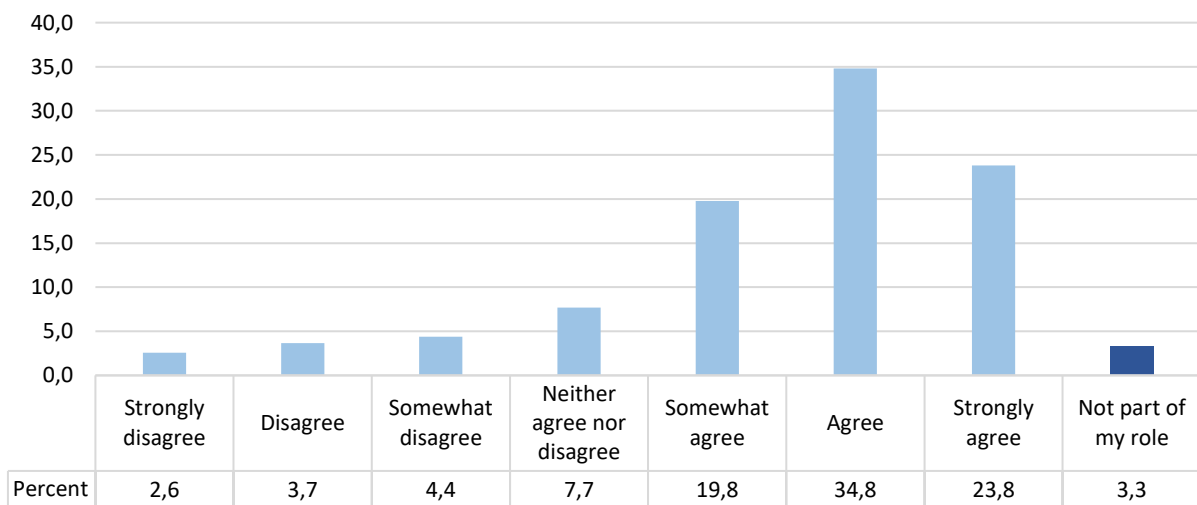
Figure 25. “I initiate projects to improve what is happening to our employees during their time of employment.” Percent. N = 273.



Most respondents agree to some level that during the pandemic, they initiate projects aimed at improving what happens to employees. 44,3 % either agree or strongly agree and another 20,5 % somewhat agree. A total of 11,4 % of respondents either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree and about 6,2 % of respondents do not consider this to be part of their role in the organization.

Understanding Employee Needs

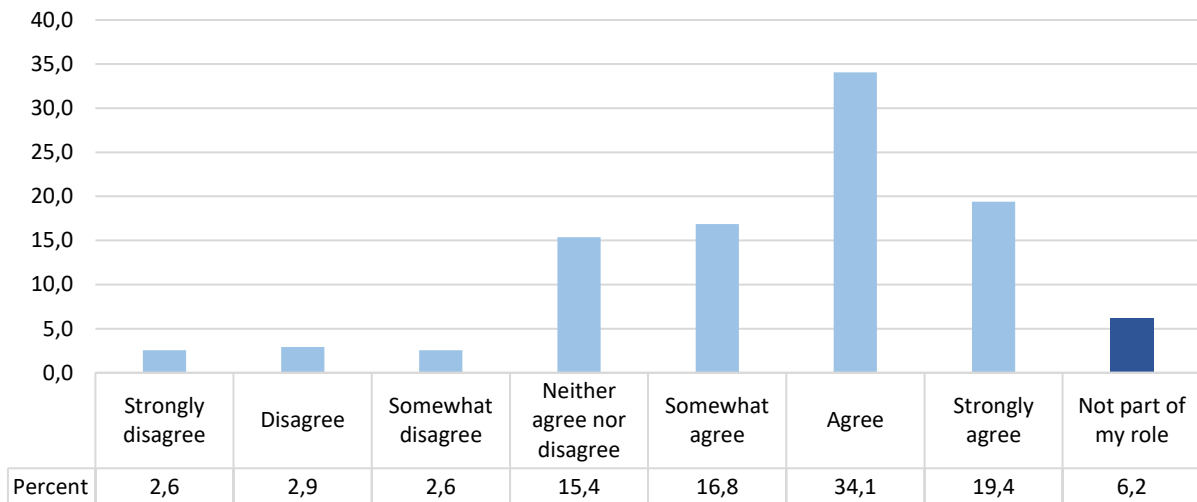
Figure 26. “I collect frequently insights on employees’ feelings and needs.” Percent. N = 273.



The answers to this question are highly left skewed. More than half of the respondents (58,6 %) either agree or strongly agree that in time of the COVID-19 pandemic, they frequently collect insights on employees’ feelings and needs. An additional 19,8 % somewhat agrees and only a total of 10,6 % choose answers that indicate some level of disagreement.

Co-Creating with Employees/Managers

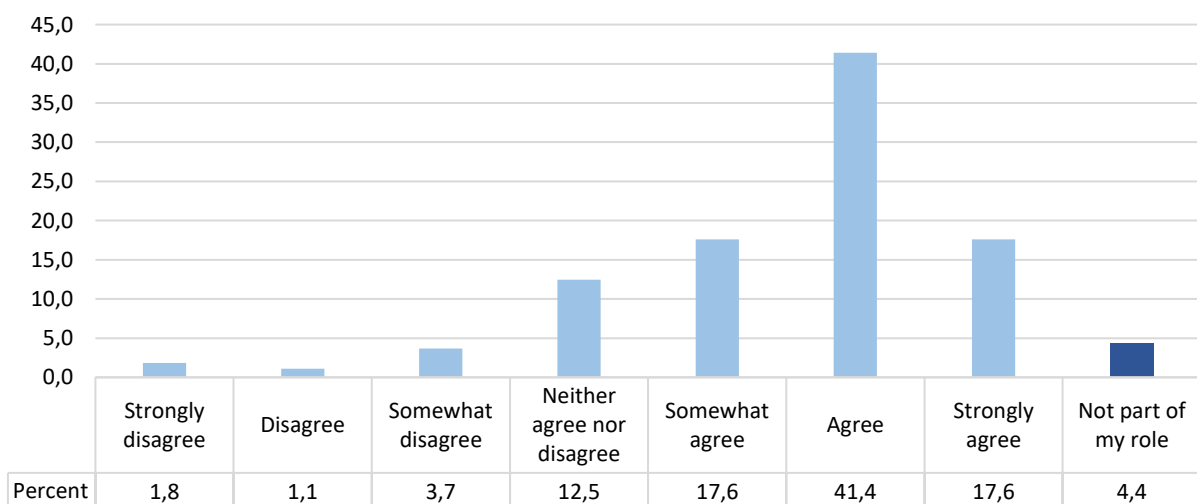
Figure 27. “I co-create projects with employees and/or managers to include their perspectives.” Percent. N = 273.



More than half of respondents (53,5 %) either agree or strongly agree with the statement. An additional 16,8 % somewhat agrees while 15,4 % neither agree nor disagree. Only a total of 8,1 % of respondents either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

Adapting to People’s Needs

Figure 28. “I adapt my projects to the individual needs of employees/groups of employees.” Percent. N = 273.

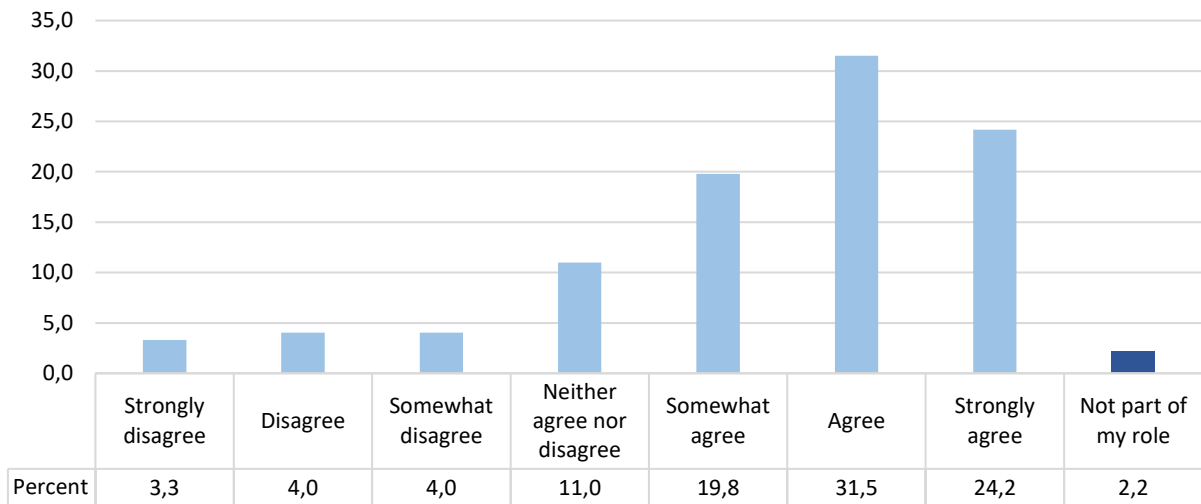


41,4 % of respondents agree that during the COVID-19 pandemic, they adapt projects to employee needs. The “*somewhat agree*” and “*strongly agree*” both house 17,6 % of

respondents, respectively. Only 6,6 % of respondents indicate disagreement of varying strength.

Promoting Values and Culture

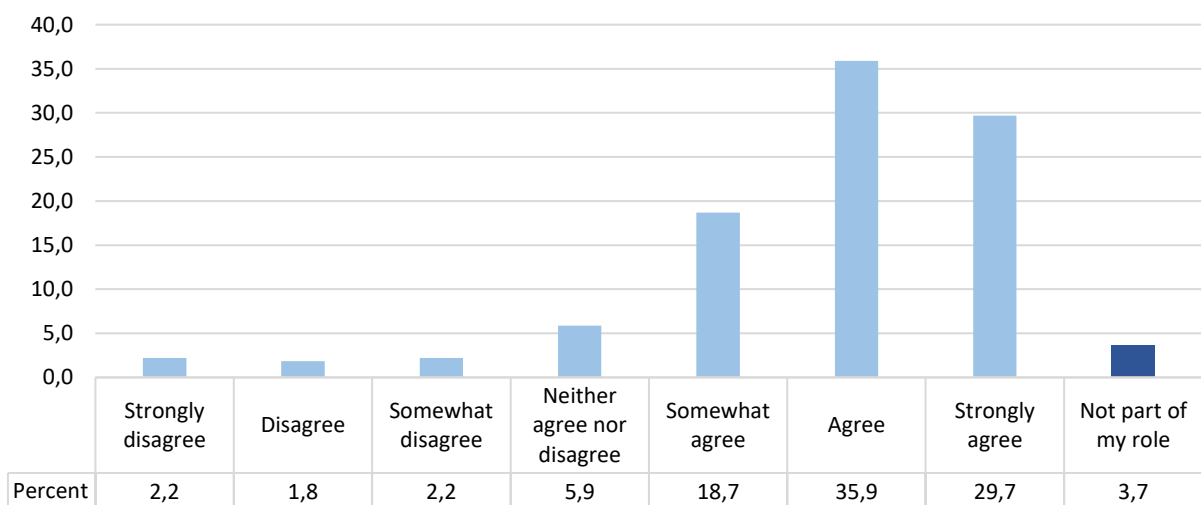
Figure 29. “I actively promote organizational values and culture to promote a good work atmosphere.” Percent. N = 273.



More than half of the respondents (55,7 %) either agree or strongly agree that during the pandemic, they actively promote organizational values and culture in the attempt to promote a good atmosphere. Another fifth of respondents (19,8 %) somewhat agrees while 11,4 % either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

Coaching Managers

Figure 30. “I coach managers to improve how they interact with their employees.” Percent. N = 273.

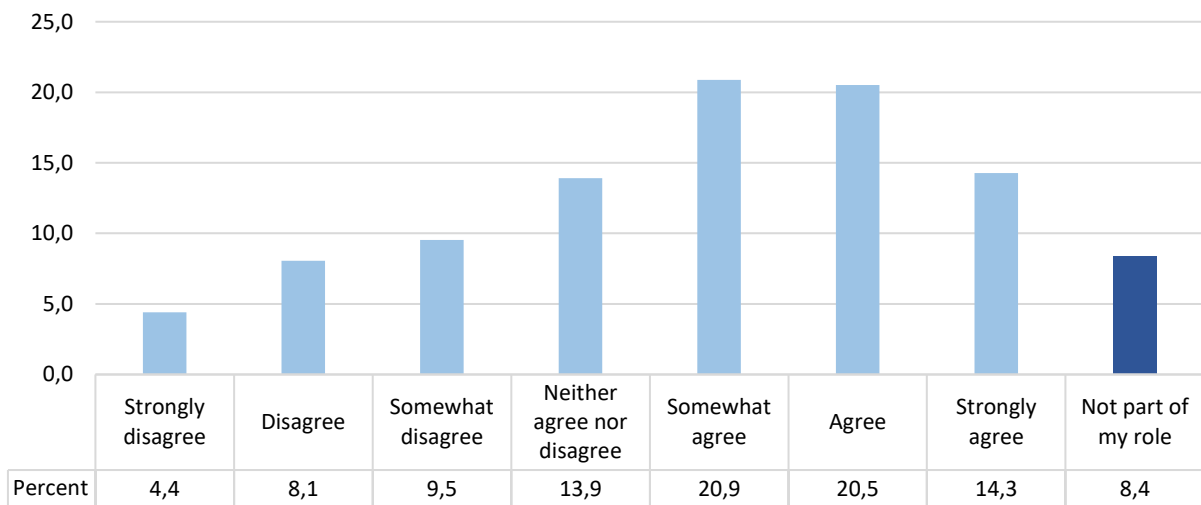


The answer distribution on this question is highly left skewed as 65,6 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, they coach managers to improve their interaction with employees. 18,7 % of respondents somewhat agree and only a total of 6,2 % either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree.

Improving the Physical Work Environment

Figure 31. "I initiate projects to improve the physical office/ home office space for employees. Percent.

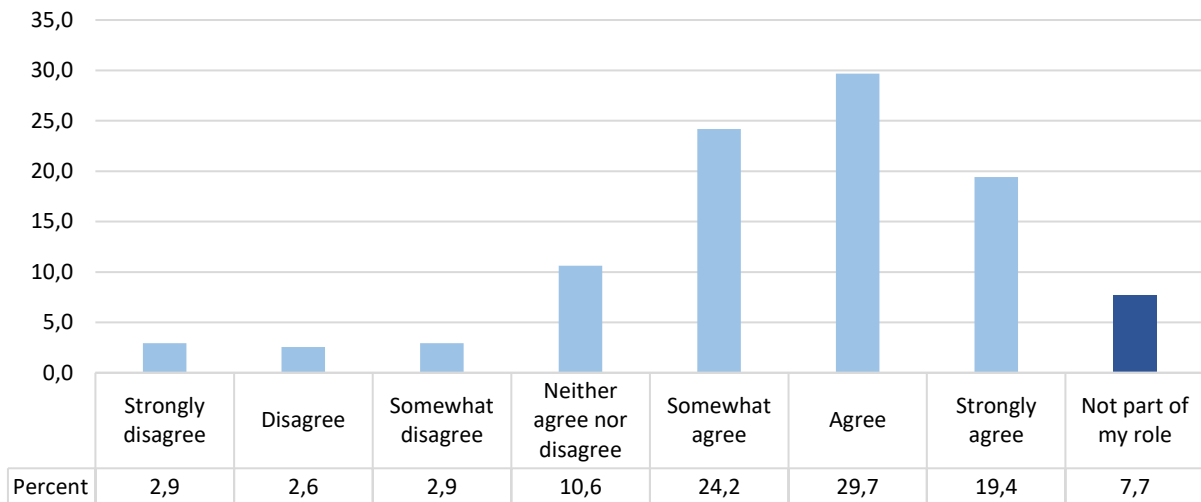
N = 273.



34,8 % of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that during the pandemic, they initiate projects to improve wither the physical office space or the home office space for employees. A fifth of respondents (20,9 %) somewhat agree with the statement and about another fifth (22,0 %) choose answers that indicate some level of disagreement. 13,9 % neither agree nor disagree and 8,4 % of respondents indicate that office space improvements are not part of their role.

Improving People's Way of Working

Figure 32. "I initiate projects that make it easier for employees to work (e.g. IT services, HR services)." Percent. N = 273.



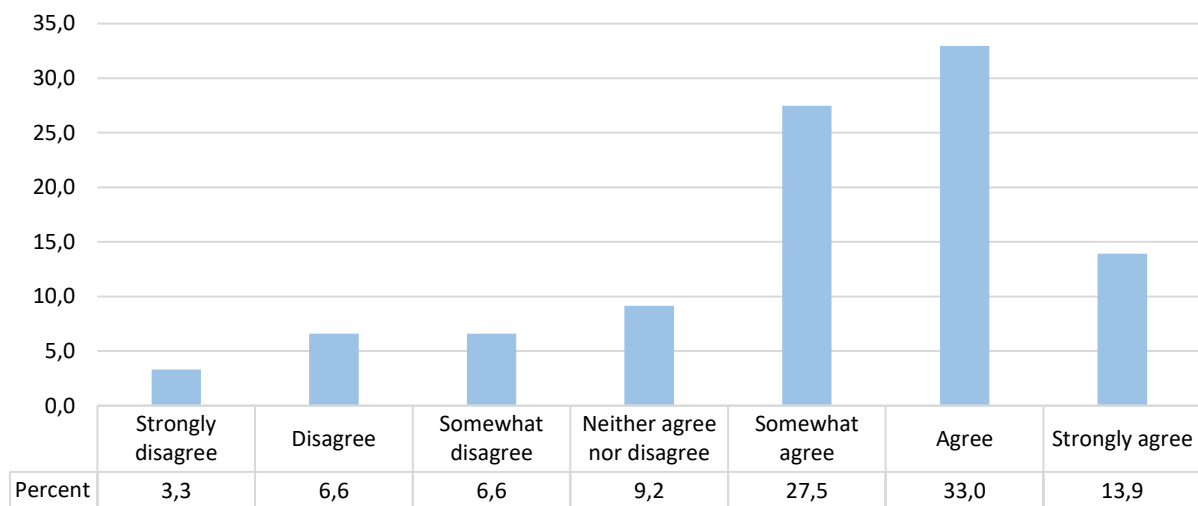
Almost half of the respondents (49,1 %) either agree or strongly agree with this statement. 24,2 % somewhat agree. A combine 8,4 % either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree while another 7,7 % of respondents indicate that it is part of their role to initiate such projects that make it easier for employees to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top Management Support

In this section, we describe questions that allow us to briefly learn more about the top management in the respondents' organizations. Respondents were presented with three statements on top management behavior during the pandemic that all began *"Since the COVID-19 pandemic..."* Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a scale from 1 *"Strongly disagree"* to 7 *"Strongly agree."* The statements and answer distributions are presented in figures 34-36 below.

Top Management Support for HRM Practices

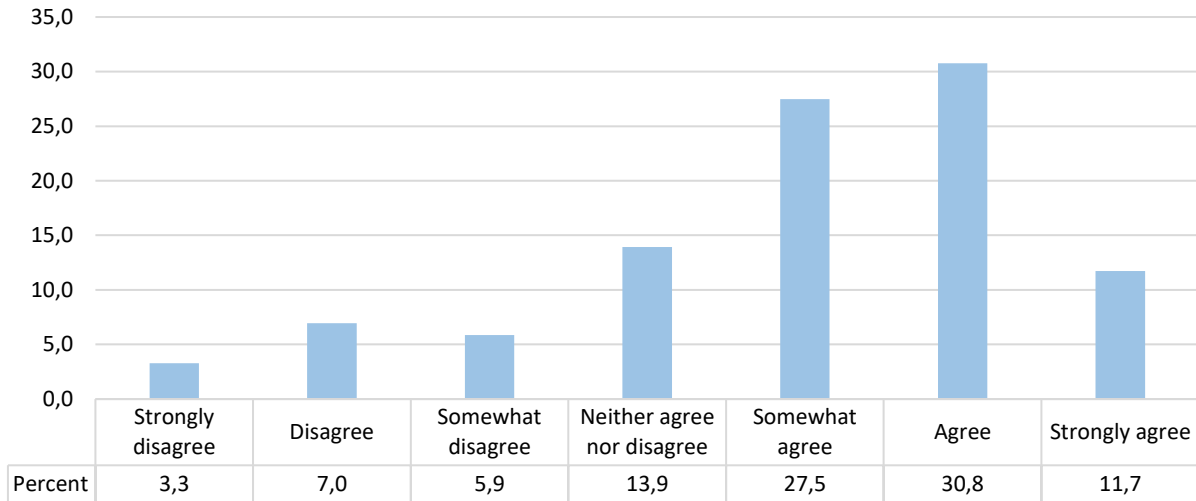
Figure 33. "Top management has put all its support behind employee experience and/or HRM practices." Percent. N = 273.



Most respondents find that since the COVID-19 pandemic, their top management has been supportive of employee experience and/or HRM practices. 46,9 % of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statement while another 27,5 % somewhat agree. A combined total of 16,5 % of respondents either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree while 9,2 % neither agree nor disagree.

Importance of HRM practices from Top Management

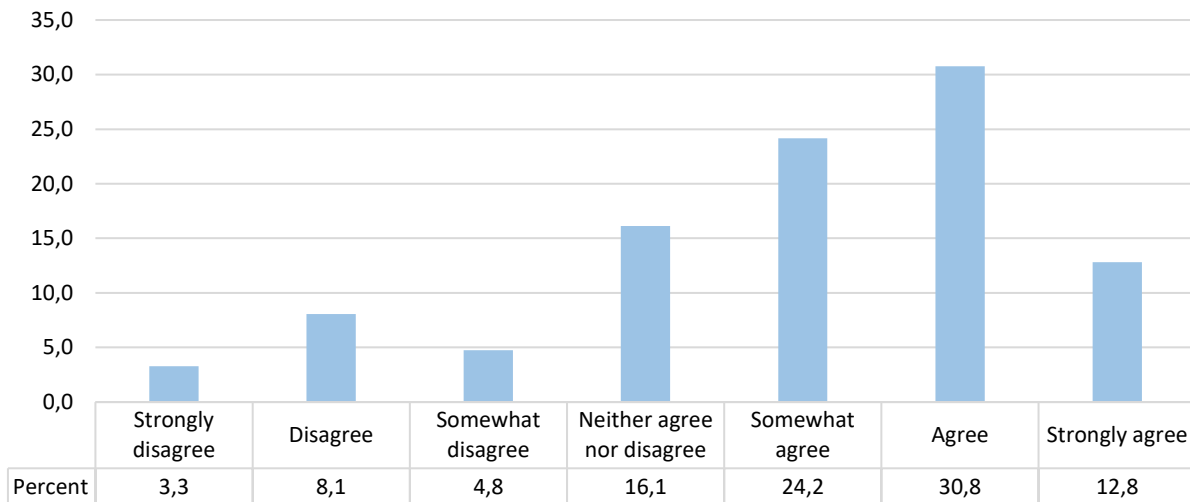
Figure 34. “Top management has stressed the importance of employee experience and/or HRM practices.” Percent. N = 273.



On this question as well, most respondents find that the top management has stressed the importance of employee experience and/or HRM practices during the pandemic. 42,5 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree and another 27,5 % somewhat agree. A combined total of 16,1 % indicate some level of disagreement while 13,9 % neither agree nor disagree.

Embracing Employee Experience and/or HRM practices

Figure 35. “Top management has encouraged us to embrace employee experience and/or HRM practices.” Percent. N = 273.



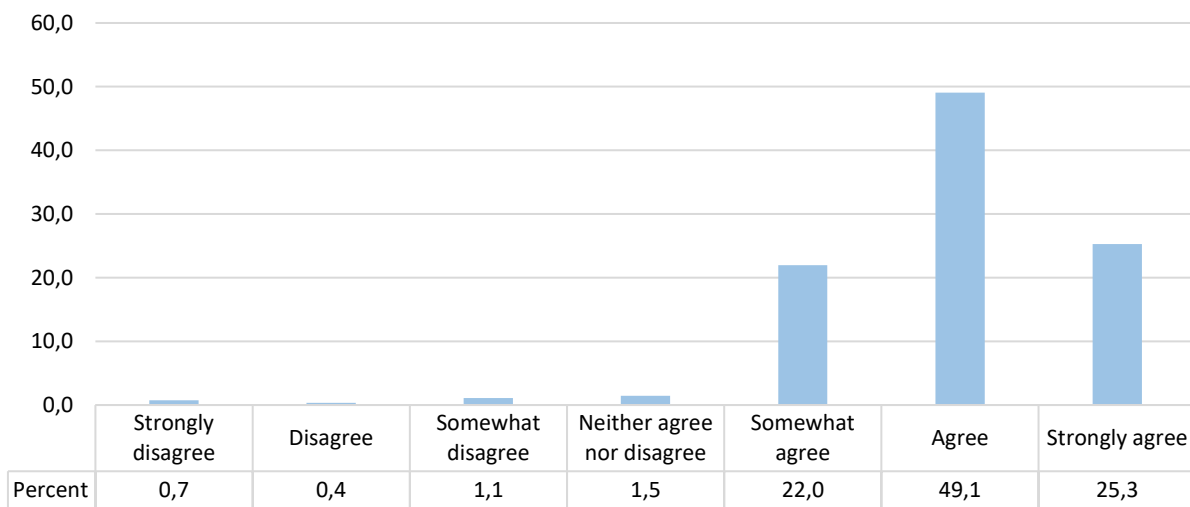
43,6 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that in times of the COVID-19 pandemic their top management has encouraged embracing employee experience and/or HRM practices. Almost a quarter of respondents (24,2 %) somewhat agree with the statement. A combined total of 16,1 % either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree and another 16,1 % neither agree nor disagree.

HR Manager's Proactive Personality

In the last section of the report, we present answers to 6 questions meant to tell us more about the respondents as persons. They were presented with statements about their responses to challenges and opportunities and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Answers range from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 7 "Strongly agree." The full statements and their answer distributions are seen in figures 37-42.

Fixing Things

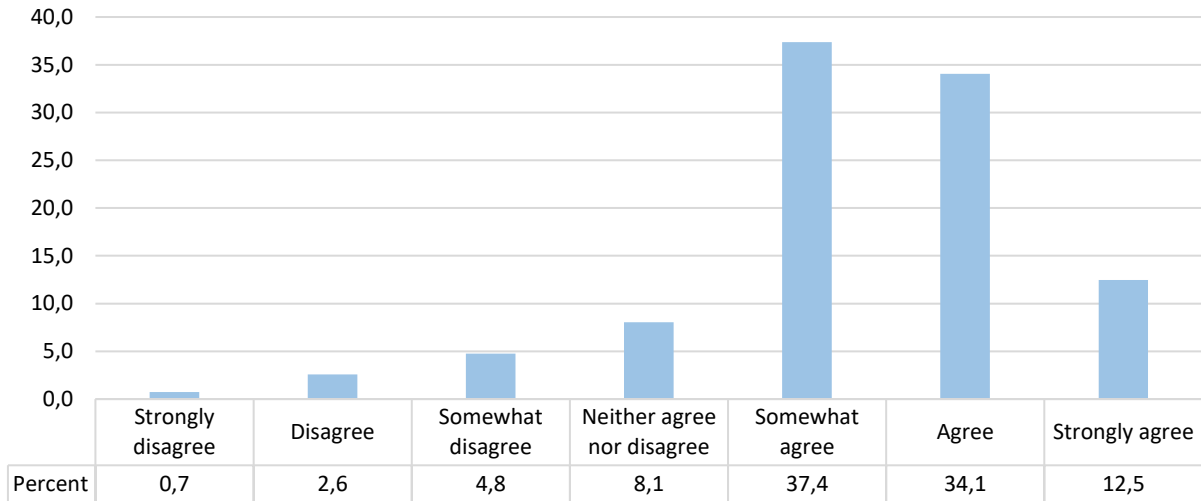
Figure 36. "If I see something I don't like, I fix it." Percent. N = 273.



The answer distribution on this question is highly left skewed. Hardly any respondents disagree with the statement. Almost half (49,1 %) agree that when they see something, they don't like, they fix it and an additional quarter (25,3 %) strongly agree. 22,0 % of respondents somewhat agree with the statement.

Making Things Happen

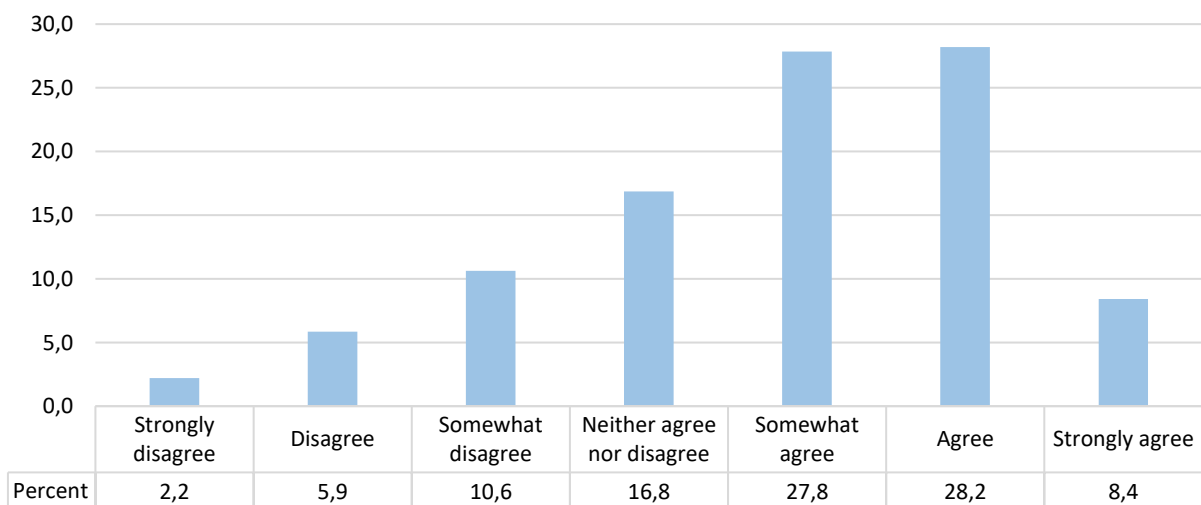
Figure 37. “No matter what the odds are, if I believe in something, I will make it happen.”
Percent. N = 273.



Most respondents find that if they believe in something, they will make it happen, no matter the odds. 46,5 % either agree or strongly agree with the statement and another 37,4 % somewhat agree. A combined total of 8,1 % either strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree and another 8,1 % neither agree nor disagree.

Championing Ideas

Figure 38. “I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others’ opposition.”
Percent. N = 273.

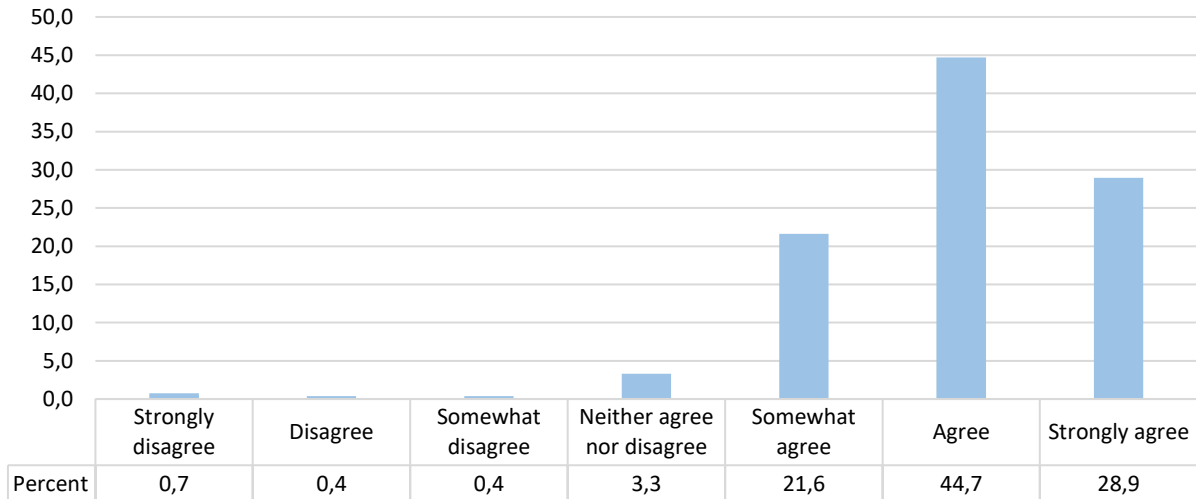


Many respondents enjoy championing their ideas. 36,6 % either agree or strongly agree with the statement and another 27,8 % somewhat agree. 16,8 % neither agree nor

disagree. 10,6 % of respondents somewhat disagree and a total of 8,1 % either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Constant Improvement

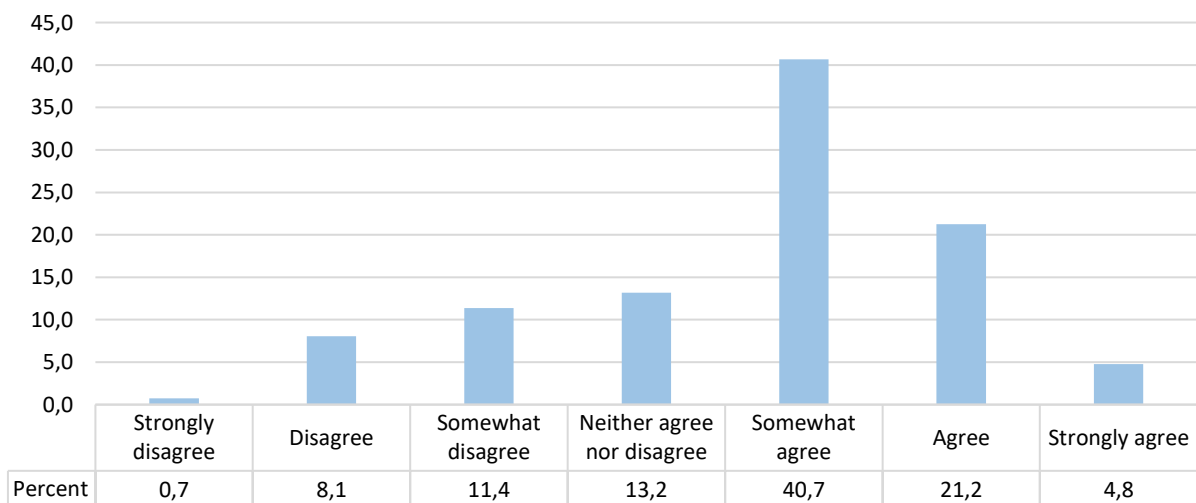
Figure 39. "I am always looking for a better way to do things." Percent. N = 273.



Almost none of the respondents disagree with the statement *"I am always looking for a better way to do things."* 73,6 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree while 21,6 % somewhat agree.

Making this happen, no matter the obstacles

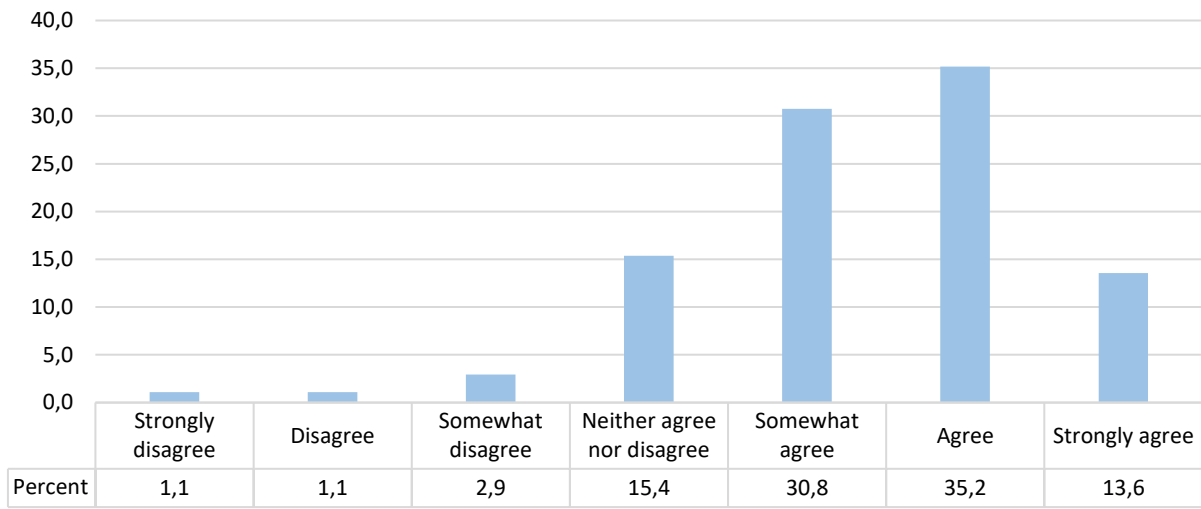
Figure 40. "If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen." Percent. N = 273.



A little more than a quarter of respondents (26,0 %) either agree or strongly agree that if they believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent them for making it happen. 40,7 % somewhat agree with this statement. 11,4 % of respondents somewhat disagree and 8,8 % either agree or strongly disagree.

Identifying Opportunities

Figure 41. "I excel at identifying opportunities." Percent. N = 273.



Most respondents have high beliefs in their ability to identify opportunities. Almost half (48,7 %) either agree or strongly agree with the statement and an additional 30,8 % somewhat agree. 15,5 % of respondents neither agree nor disagree, but only 5,1 % choose answers that indicate disagreement.