Exploring the Risks and Opportunities of Working from Home: The Experiences of Neurodivergent Workers

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Abstract

This study explores how neurodivergent workers, diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and/or dyslexia, perceive the risks and opportunities regarding working from home (WFH). Using a qualitative approach, twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with neurodivergent workers. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model served as the analytical framework. The findings suggest that WFH reduces physical, social, and emotional demands, but WFH offers more demands regarding intense focus. Furthermore, the resources autonomy and psychological safety seemed to be experienced as higher in the WFH setting, while structure and support seemed to be lacking. This combination of unique demands and resources led to both risks and opportunities for work-life balance, productivity, and isolation. The study introduces a "trickle-up" dynamic in the JD-R model. It also emphasizes future research direction for the impact of early versus late diagnosis on long-term work experiences. Practical implications include fostering strength-based support, encouraging self-knowledge, developing inclusive leadership, and building psychologically safe work climates. This research contributes a post-pandemic perspective to WFH and neurodiversity literature, offering practical insights for inclusive support.

Keywords: neurodivergent, WFH arrangements, job-demands-resource model, strength-based approach

Introduction

Although it is estimated that the global population roughly includes 15-20% neurodivergent individuals (Doyle, 2020), current Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and strategies are often solely focused on neurotypical employees (Boselie et al., 2021). Conversely, minimal attention is devoted to these neurodivergent workers with *"autism-spectrum disorders (ASD), attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and Tourette syndrome."(*Hennekam & Follmer, 2024, p.3). While neurodivergent conditions and symptoms vary, similar difficulties regarding being a vulnerable worker are encountered, such as uncertainty and insecurity of employment and employment conditions (Boselie et al., 2021; Restubog et al., 2021). Furthermore, the vulnerable work context is constantly changing, as the COVID-19 pandemic ignited a rapid increase in the need to work from home (WFH) (Parker et al., 2022). Also, in a post-COVID-19 setting, organizations continue to increase full-time (working fully from home) or hybrid (splitting the time between in-office work and out-of-office work) WFH arrangements (Choudhury et al., 2024; Maxim & Lindred, 2020). This increase calls for new technological developments, managerial practices, and organizational support to enable WFH (Errichiello & Pianese, 2021; Kulik, 2022). Current WFH practices marginalize neurodivergent workers and create accessibility barriers that are rooted in ableist organizational norms. Ableist norms are workplace systems, practices, and expectations that are primarily tailored to individuals without disabilities, such as neurodivergent conditions, and thus do not align with the special needs of these individuals (Friedman et al., 2024). The Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model is used to analyze and explain how neurodivergent workers perceive the experienced WFH arrangements. This model offers a way to analyze the WFH opportunities and challenges by examining the unique set of JD-R of neurodivergent workers, and how the interaction between JD-R influences their well-being and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017;

Demerouti et al., 2001). For neurodivergent workers, WFH challenges include sensory overload, lack of structure, blurring of work-life boundaries, and communication barriers (Das et al., 2021). Furthermore, WFH opportunities include increased flexibility, elimination of commuting, and enhanced control (Brooks et al., 2024). Further, in-depth analysis of opportunities and challenges regarding the WFH neurodiverse workforce remains interesting to study, yet is limited in the current literature. (Doyle & McDowall, 2021; Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Szulc et al., 2022).

This research contributes to the literature on the perceived experience of neurodivergent workers with WFH experiences by conducting a qualitative analysis. First, it contributes to the theoretical understanding as this study adds a post-pandemic perspective, potentially revealing insights into modern challenges and benefits (Das et al., 2021). Most research was conducted during the pandemic, post-COVID-19 literature regarding neurodivergent WFH remains limited (Brooks et al., 2024; Das et al., 2021; Szulc et al., 2021). For instance, Kuhn et al. (2024) emphasize examining the impact of various technologies used in the WFH context, focusing on the perceived experience of neurodivergent workers in terms of both relief and stress. Second, this study is theoretically relevant for understanding the experiences of neurodivergent workers with WFH arrangements, which are typically built on ableist norms. This study, in contrast to the ableist norms, focuses on the person-job (PO) fit approach (Kuhn et al., 2024). This emphasizes the importance, addressed by Szulc et al. (2022), of investigating the unique needs of the individual neurodivergent workers and their strengths, difficulties, and perceived experiences. All research that investigates the direct lived experiences of individual neurodivergent workers will broaden the academic literature in the HRM discipline (Sculz et al., 2021). This leads to the following research question (RQ): "*How do neurodivergent workers perceive the risks and opportunities associated with working-from-home arrangements in the current*

work environment?"

By answering this question, this research gives practical relevance to organizations with neurodivergent workers who make use of WFH arrangements. This study provides practical relevance for HR practitioners to provide support and create fitting WFH policies that account for the varying needs of neurodivergent workers, rather than developing and implementing uniform policies and support for all neurodivergent workers (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Sculz et al., 2022). Lastly, this enables organizations to shape the post-pandemic workforce by considering both neurodivergent and neurotypical perspectives to create an inclusive and accessible WFH environment (Das et al., 2021; Kalmanovich-Cohen & Stanton, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The neurodivergent worker

As defined by Hennekam and Follmer (2024), a neurodivergent individual includes those with *" autism-spectrum disorders (ASD), … dyscalculia and Tourette syndrome"* (p.1). This paper focuses on the most common neurodivergent conditions experienced by workers: ASD, ADHD, and/or dyslexia. In addition to being referred to as neurodivergent, individuals with this range of neuro-cognitive developmental conditions may also be referred to as neurodiverse or neurominority (Doyle, 2024). Neurodivergent are viewed as a deviation from the neurotypical, who reflect the societal norm (Doyle, 2021). The World Economic Forum (2020) highlights unique abilities for neurodivergent individuals, as they are more likely to have specialist skills such as *"analytical thinking and innovation, active learning, complex problem-solving, critical thinking and analysis, and creativity"* (p.20).

Neurodivergence can be understood through two primary models (Fung, 2024). First, the medical model, which emphasizes individual impairments or medical conditions. Second, the social model, which focuses on the role of societal structures and attitudes in creating or

mitigating disability (Fung, 2024). The focus of literature shifted, while the previous literature often highlighted the challenges of impairments and disabilities, recent studies emphasize the strengths through a positive approach (Doyle, 2020; Fung, 2024; Kersten et al., 2024; Szulc, 2022). Kersten et al. (2024) emphasize a strength-based approach, leveraging workers' strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses.

While strength-based approach literature is growing and the World Economic Forum (2020) identifies general abilities, there is still limited research on the specific strengths of neurodivergent workers. A reason for this could be the differences identified between the types of neurodiversity (Szulc, 2022). Research by Szulc (2022) shows that although some characteristics are shared across different types of neurodivergence, each type also has distinct and unique traits and difficulties. For instance, ADHD is associated with creativity, hyper-focus, energy, passion, entrepreneurialism, but also impulsivity (Hennekam, 2024; Szulc, 2022). Autism is associated with concentration, fine detail processing, memory, honesty, and sensory awareness, but also difficulties interpreting non-verbal cues (Hennekam, 2024; Szulc, 2022), and dyslexia is associated with visual thinking, creativity, authenticity, entrepreneurialism, and organizational challenges (Hennekam, 2024; Szulc, 2022). Neurodivergent traits and difficulties can impact work, relationships, and productivity, both in beneficial and challenging ways (Brooks, 2024). A notable benefit highlighted is the increase in productivity (Brooks, 2024). Additionally, the challenges can be understood through the medical and social models (Marks, 1997; Oliver, 2013). From the medical model perspective, neurodivergent individuals show low rates of self-identification, making it difficult for HR practices, typically built on ableist norms and self-identification, to recognize their unique strengths (Jammaers & Fleischmann, 2024; Kersten et al., 2024). Second, neurodivergent workers face an increased risk of being in a vulnerable position than general neurotypical workers (Boselie et al., 2021; Restubog et al., 2021, 2023). Due to

neurodivergent workers' lower self-efficacy and self-advocacy, they more often experience exploitation, discrimination, and assigned tasks beyond their role without proper support or compensation (Bury et al., 2021). Third, heightened sensory sensitivities and executive functioning difficulties influence the interaction of neurodivergent workers, such as affecting the mental skills for focusing, task planning, and adjusting at work (Das et al., 2021).

The social model perspective emphasizes how societal perceptions and structures create barriers, such as that neurodivergent workers are often seen as 'odd', leading to stigma and exclusion at work (Bury et al., 2021). Neurodivergent workers are overrepresented in insecure, temporary roles and face higher rates of underemployment and job turnover (Branicki et al., 2024). They also experience marginalization or other negative attitudes from neurotypical colleagues, impacting their skill development and work experience (Kersten et al., 2024). Negative attitudes toward neurodivergent workers, such as discrimination and inequities at work, are rooted in social stereotypes, biases, and misunderstandings regarding ability and disability (Ali et al. Bury et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022).

Together, these medical and social challenges hinder access to meaningful employment, although neurodivergent individuals bring valuable skills that can enhance organizational performance (Krzeminska et al., 2019). These barriers should be seen not as fixed deficits but as challenges that can be addressed through inclusive practices (Fung, 2024).

Working-From-Home arrangements

The concept of Working-From-Home (WFH) arrangements is defined as *"employees perform all or a substantial part of their work physically separated from the location of their employer, using IT for operation and communication"* (Baruch, 2001, p. 114). WFH can be either on a full- or part-time policy basis; the essential is that the employee is physically distant from colleagues (Toscano et al., 2024). Commonly used terms such as teleworking,

remote work, home working, and hybrid work are interchangeable for WFH arrangements (Choudhury et al., 2024; Hackney et al., 2022; Peretz, 2023).

While WFH arrangements have been investigated for 30 years, the COVID-19 pandemic started a transformation of WFH (McPhail et al., 2023). This transformation is portrayed in the current literature, organizing WHF developments into three phases: pre-, during, and post-COVID-19 (Bick et al., 2023; Denzer & Grunau, 2023; Jogulu et al., 2023). Pre-COVID-19 pandemic, work-from-home (WFH) was rare, with only 14.4% of U.S. workdays conducted remotely as of February 2020 (Bick et al., 2023). As pre-COVID, WFH was mostly used as a voluntary option (Denzer & Grunau, 2023); it was initiated by the employee and negotiated with their employer, primarily benefiting those with specific needs or preferences for remote work (Chow et al., 2022; Franken et al., 2021; Jogulu et al., 2023).

The during-COVID-19, WFH shifted to a mandated arrangement due to external pressure, for instance, social distancing rules or lockdowns (Denzer & Grunau, 2023). Employees were forced to rapidly adapt to new working conditions and routines, creating a 'yoyo' effect between working at the office and WFH (Jogulu et al., 2023). As Bick et al. (2023) show in their U.S.-based research, the pandemic caused a sharp rise in WFH, with remote workdays increasing to 39.6% by May 2020. Organizations adapted quickly, relying on digital tools to maintain productivity. However, the impact varied by sector and demographic groups, with higher-educated workers more likely to WFH (Bick et al., 2023). Pre-COVID studies focused more on theoretical insights, while during-COVID studies asked for a shift towards research focusing on environmental, health, and well-being challenges, including implementation such as suitable home office setups and personal support (Chen, 2021; Das et al., 2021).

In the post-COVID-19 period, WFH has become a permanent or semi-permanent fixture in many organizations, highlighting the long-term nature of these changes (Denzer &

Grunau, 2023). Twice as many workers are expected to work remotely compared to pre-COVID-19 levels (Bick et al., 2023). Additionally, the focus has shifted to a more hybrid use of WFH, emphasizing the need for resources, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability. Insights from both phases are contributing to the development of post-COVID research and effective strategies for a sustainable future work environment (McPhail et al., 2023). Additionally, factors such as technology advancement, the increasing need for organizations to remain competitive in attracting talent, and a growing emphasis on supporting work-life balance supported the increased popularity of WFH during the post-COVID-19 period (Hackney et al., 2022). To specify, organizations are currently engaged in a competitive "war for talent," driving efforts to recruit from underrepresented talent pools, including neurodivergent individuals who more often have specialized skills. (Branicki et al., 2024; Trost, 2020). With the growing popularity of WFH arrangements, it is essential to consider research by Jogulu et al. (2023), who emphasize that organizations must address the diverse and unique needs of employees to ensure WFH effectiveness. This involves providing access to appropriate digital technology (Virtual reality, AI), ergonomic furniture, and mental health support, which creates new opportunities to include, support, and increase the accessibility of neurodivergent workers (Johnson, 2024).

WFH arrangements and the JD-R model

To develop new post-COVID-19 insights on the perceived WFH experience of neurodivergent workers, the Job Demands-Resource (JD-R) model by Demerouti et al. (2001) is used. This framework illustrates how job demands and job resources collectively shape work-related outcomes regarding health and motivational pathways (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Job demands drain energy; however, they are not inherently negative. LePine et al. (2005) distinguish between ‘good’ challenging demands that, while potentially stressful, can

promote personal growth and goals (e.g. high levels of workload, time pressure, and responsibility) and ‘bad’ hindering demands that obstruct personal growth and goals (e.g. role conflict, role overload, and role ambiguity). Job resources are, for instance, autonomy, social support, feedback, and development opportunities that are functional to foster motivation, achieve goals, and reduce the psychological costs associated with job requests (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Work-related outcomes offer opportunities and challenges regarding health impairment and motivation. The health impairment pathway arises when workers face high job demands and a lack of sufficient resources. This gradually drains energy and could have negative consequences on health, and can lead to burnout or exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). The motivational pathway suggests that when workers have access to high job resources, they experience increased motivation and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Additionally, the JD-R model has been extended with a multi-level JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Emphasizing the importance of differentiating between various levels (organization, leader, team, individual) to highlight the extent to which stakeholders influence each other on different levels (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). The interaction is portrayed as a trickle-down effect, where organizational-level practices influence leaders’ and teams’ demands and resources, which in turn affect individual workers' demands and resources.

For neurodivergent workers, the JD-R model involves the same pathways; however, the experienced demands differ from neurotypical workers. Studies have shown that neurodivergent individuals experience a greater impact of demands, and the energy efforts required often vary (Alexander, 2024; Brooks, 2024). Previous research by Iqbal et al. (2024) and Kersten et al. (2024) addressed a greater focus on the job demands, overwhelming the job resources.

This study addresses the unique experiences of both demands and resources for neurodivergent workers, offering unique work-related opportunities and challenging outcomes. Johnson (2024) identifies several challenges for neurodivergent workers while working from home. First, the cognitive and emotional labor involved in setting up an accessible workspace can be a challenging demand. For example, adapting to new virtual communication tools involves adjusting to unfamiliar social and structural resources, which can initially be energy-draining before becoming resourceful (Ingusci et al., 2021). Second, like neurotypical workers, neurodivergent workers face blurred work-life boundaries, which may lead to burnout, while reduced collaboration opportunities can hinder growth (Ingusci et al., 2021). Third, virtual WFH communication is challenging due to inconsistent accommodations, lack of visual cues and clear communication, and requiring self-advocacy for engagement with colleagues. This often results in isolation, exclusion, and missing out on opportunities for informal learning, mentorship, and networking (Johnson, 2024; Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). Additionally, WFH arrangement can offer opportunities to include neurodivergent workers at work by allowing them to adapt processes, gain control over work environment stimuli and sensory sensitivity, allocate time flexibly, or provide additional equipment to help neurodivergent workers perform their tasks effectively (Das et al., 2021; Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Johnson, 2024). Furthermore, Brooks (2024) identified the reduction of masking as an opportunity.

Recent research emphasizes the importance of proactive, individualized strategies to address each worker's unique JD-R, as well as the related risks and opportunities. Strategies should align with each neurodivergent worker's specific demands and resources, thereby improving person–job fit instead of using a 'one size fits all' approach (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Iqbal et al., 2024; Szulc, 2022; Johnson, 2024). Consistent with Brooks (2024), during COVID-19 research, it is advised that managers should focus attention on

each person's neurodiverse needs to tailor effective WFH support.

Methods

Research design

This study adopts qualitative research grounded in a social constructivist epistemological and ontological stance to recognize neurodivergent workers' differences, needs (Szulc et al., 2022), and to ensure an in-depth understanding of their diverse experiences (Kuhn et al., 2024). The social constructivist stance focuses on how neurodivergent workers' perceptions and actions are influenced by personal factors of their daily living and working environments, such as WFH (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Accordingly, this study entails an ontological stance to recognize the existence of multiple realities and interpretations of WFH for Neurodivergent workers, with varied conditions (ASD, ADHD and/or dyslexia) and possible comorbidity and intersectionality. To focus on the WFH phenomenon, a phenomenological approach was utilized. Offering to delve into these lived experiences and the context of WFH settings, presenting deeper insights than quantitative methods (Braun & Clarke, 2020; Wilhelmy & Köhler, 2021). Therefore, this research entails interviews, which allow a participant to provide an opportunity *"…to share their feelings, prejudices, opinions, desires, and attitudes towards different phenomena they experience in the workplace or other organisational contexts"* (Dunwoodie et al., 2022, p.2).

A cross-sectional approach was employed; given the study's duration of less than a year, data were collected from participants at a single point in time (Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018). Data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews in the participants' native language, allowing neurodivergent participants to share their feelings, opinions, and prejudices toward the WFH phenomenon (Dunwoodie et al., 2022). Recognizing that these harder-to-reach neurodivergent workers are part of marginalized populations, this study incorporates follow-up questions during interviews to

encourage openness and facilitate the disclosure of sensitive information (Kaplowitz & Hoehn, 2001). This type of qualitative research enables the disclosure of sensitive insights from a critical theory perspective, as it entails barriers (ableist norms, marginalization) that may impact neurodivergent workers' inclusion and well-being in WFH environments (Kaplowitz & Hoehn, 2001). The chosen phenomenological method is the best fit for capturing in-depth individual experiences, thus more appropriate than grounded theory or narrative inquiry (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). By combining phenomenological methods with a critical theory perspective, the study aims to illuminate the complex realities of neurodivergent workers in WFH settings (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Sample

This study will explore the perceived experiences of neurodivergent workers. A snowball and purposeful sampling method were used to select participants, as neurodivergent individuals belong to a hard-to-reach group (Valerio et al., 2016). The snowball method was used, asking initial participants to refer potential new participants from their networks (Valerio et al., 2016). Furthermore, a purposeful method was used to ensure a diverse range of participants with the selected neurodivergent conditions (ASD, ADHD, and/or dyslexia) and WFH experience (Busetto et al., 2020). Three inclusion criteria will guide the selection of participants. First, the participant must have a formal diagnosis of the neurodivergent conditions: ASD, ADHD, and/or dyslexia (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024). Deliberately sampling across the three main neurodivergent conditions (Szulc, 2022) is necessary to strike a balance between homogeneity, so that shared experiences can emerge, and sufficient variation to capture a wide range of individual insights (Koehler, 2024; Szulc, 2022). Second, participants must have worked in a post-COVID-19 period, which is defined as the period after May 2023 by the WHO (World Health Organization, 2023). This is essential to get relevant insight for the RQ of this study, as due to COVID-19, employers have started to

develop their WFH arrangements that are different from pre-COVID-19 arrangements (Denzer & Grunau, 2023). Third, participants should have worked or are currently working at an organization that offers WHF arrangements after May 2023 (Baruch, 2001).

Participants who met the inclusion criteria were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The researcher's network was used to identify accessible participants. One participant was identified, and snowball sampling was employed to recruit two other participants. After, a purposive sampling was employed. The researcher shared a LinkedIn post, outlining the inclusion criteria and additional information to help reach a wider audience. To further enhance the diversity of the sample, various neurodivergent-focused groups were contacted on LinkedIn. The 'Neurodiversiteit Netwerk Nederland' responded and shared the post, which contributed to reaching potential participants with the desired characteristics.

In total, twelve employees were interviewed to reach theoretical saturation. Saturation was reached as all neurodivergent conditions included in the inclusion criteria were covered (Busetto et al., 2020). Table 1 presents the demographics and inclusion criteria of the individual participants. A more detailed overview of respondent information is presented in Appendix B.

Table 1

Overview Participants

Respondent code	Sex	Condition	Current WFH Policy	Age
R1	F	Dyslexia	Part-time	28
R2	F	ASD	Part-time	27
R3	M	ASD	Full-time	31
R4	M	ADHD	Part-time	32
R5	F	ASD	Part-time	29
R6	F	ADHD/ASD	Part-time	27
R7	M	ASD	Full-time	55
R8	F	ADHD	Part-time	26
R9	F	ASD/ ADHD	Full-time	26
R10	F	ASD	Part-time	45
R11	M	ASD	Part-time	26
R1	F	ADHD	Part-time	53

Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data. Based on participants' preferences, the data was collected online, using Microsoft Teams. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their ability to provide in-depth insights while maintaining flexibility (Ruslin et al., 2022). This method balances structure, through predefined topics with adaptability, allowing researchers to explore emerging themes while staying focused on the research objectives (Ruslin et al., 2022). The interview guide, containing open-ended questions aligned with the RQ, is refined throughout data collection (Busetto et al., 2020). Questions may be adapted or omitted based on relevance, participant responses, or time constraints (Busetto et al., 2020). The interview guide consists of eight sections, from 'the introduction' to 'additional comments & conclusion', each aligning with elements from the theoretical framework. The sections and questions per section are provided in Appendix A.

Procedure

Following ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board (TSB_RP2022), participant sampling proceeded. Once potential participants were identified, the inclusion criteria were re-confirmed through brief follow-up questions via email or LinkedIn messages. After confirmation, twelve selected participants were contacted with an information letter and asked to schedule a meeting (online or offline). After the interview was scheduled, participants received an email containing a consent form and a meeting invitation. The consent form covered confidentiality, permission to record the interview, and the purpose of the data used exclusively for a master's thesis at Tilburg University. During the interviews, the researcher will follow the pre-established interview guide and ask relevant follow-up questions if needed to explore the study's focus on neurodiversity and WFH arrangements. The interviews lasted between 40 and 82 minutes, with an average duration of 61 minutes.

Analysis

All interviews were transcribed clean verbatim in Dutch. Initial drafts were generated using Goodtape and manually corrected in Word to ensure accuracy and include time stamps. The final transcripts were analyzed and coded in Word. A reflexive thematic analysis (TA) approach was followed, using Braun and Clarke's six-step framework (2006, 2020). A reflexive TA allows a flexible coding process and allows codes to develop while gaining a deeper understanding of the data and lived experience of the interviewees (Braun & Clarke, 2020). To identify and categorize themes and subthemes, the following steps were employed: *"Familiarization; coding; generating initial themes; reviewing and developing themes; refining, defining and naming themes; and writing up"* (Braun & Clarke, 2020, p.39). The data were familiarized by reading the transcripts and highlighting relevant paragraphs for the RQ. A hybrid coding strategy was used to combine inductive (in vivo/open) and deductive (theory-driven) approaches (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Which allows to incorporate the JD-R model as well ass unique capturing the unique neurodivergent perspectives. Starting

with in vivo coding, and followed by open coding, derived directly from the participants' language, to stay close to the data. Then, the themes were searched through thematic coding and integrating deductive codes such as demands and resources derived from the literature. Subsequently, the themes were re-viewed to check the coherence, and the final themes were defined by crafting clear subthemes and themes and combining them in a 'Hierarchical Coding Tree' (Figure 1). Lastly, the qualitative research findings were presented in an analytic narrative, presenting the findings in a coherent, structured narrative to offer in-depth insights into the data (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Appendix C includes overviews of themes and subthemes with corresponding quotations.

A TA was particularly suitable for this study as it entails a relatively small sample, time constraints, and researchers with limited qualitative research experience, as it offers practical guidance (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2020). Additionally, reflective TA is compatible with constructivism, as it allows for focus on the interpretation of the participants' WFH experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2020). This fit between the method and the researcher is essential to ensure validity and reliability. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, a peer review was integrated. Feedback was given by two peers out of the thesis circle on the research design, data collection, coding framework, and findings, to identify potential biases and refine interpretations for a comprehensive analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Lastly, check-ins with the thesis supervisor ensured adherence to academic standards, and the feedback strengthens methodological consistency and reliability (Shenton, 2004).

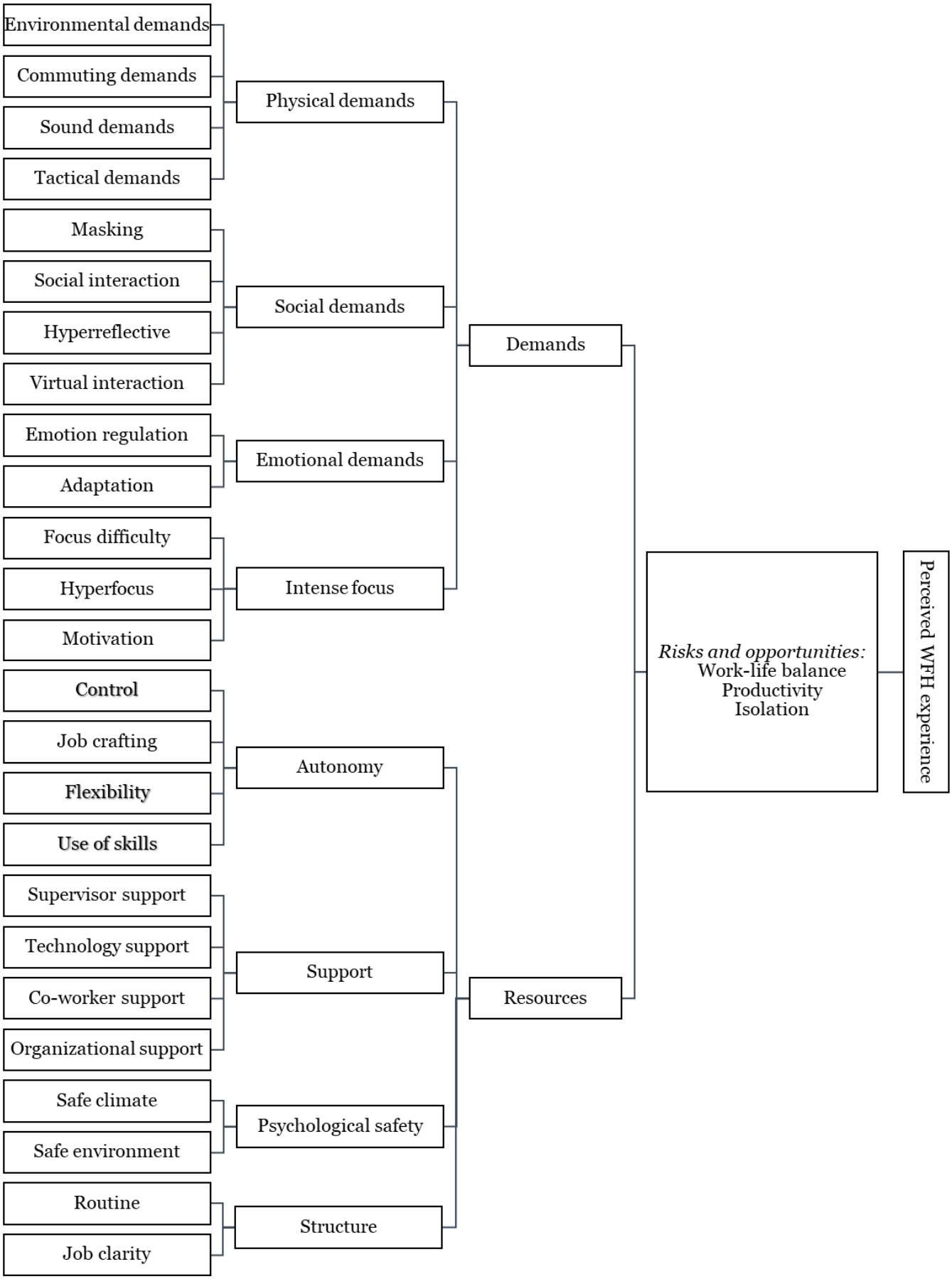
Results

The results section provides an overview of the results regarding the experience of WFH arrangements of neurodivergent workers through the lens of the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model. The analysis revealed themes and sub-themes for both the demands and resources. Additionally, the combination of demands and resources resulted in three

overarching themes related to risks and opportunities for neurodivergent workers who WFH. Figure 1 shows the coding tree including the themes and belonging sub-themes.

Figure 1

Hierarchical Coding Tree


Environmental demands
Commuting demands
Sound demands
Tactical demands
Physical demands
Masking
Social interaction
Hyperreflective
Virtual interaction
Social demands
Emotion regulation
Adaptation
Emotional demands
Focus difficulty
Hyperfocus
Motivation
Intense focus
Demands
Control
Job crafting
Flexibility
Use of skills
Autonomy
Supervisor support
Technology support
Co-worker support
Organizational support
Support
Safe climate
Safe environment
Psychological safety
Routine
Job clarity
Structure
Resources
Risks and opportunities:
Work-life balance
Productivity
Isolation
Perceived WFH experience

Perceived WFH demands

Table C1 in Appendix C shows the themes, subthemes, and frequency regarding the experienced demands. These demands were grouped into four overarching categories: physical demands, social demands, emotional demands, and intense focus. Each category includes several subthemes, which emerged at different levels: personal, job, and organization-related.

Psychical demands

First, the findings show that all twelve respondents reported a type of physical demand as a common job level. These demands manifested in four distinct ways: environmental, commuting, sound, and tactical demands, and all four can be referred to as hindering demands as they drain energy without growth or reward. First, the findings revealed that different environmental demands were experienced when WFH and working at the office. When WFH, more non-job-related stimuli were perceived, such as stimuli from hobbies (R11), pets (R6), and home tasks (R5). Although more non-job-related stimuli were perceived in the WFH environment, the majority perceived it as quieter than the office environment. Second, fewer commuting demands were perceived. R5 reported: "*By the time I arrive at the office, I'm already exhausted from the noise and crowds."*(R5). Demonstrating that long commutes leave less energy for the workday ahead. This commuting aspect, therefore, also shapes the experience of working from home positively, as WFH involves no commuting. Third, fewer sound demands are experienced when WFH. At the office, more sound from telephone calls, closing doors, or conversations with colleagues is experienced. For instance, as R11 mentioned, *"At work I might be a bit more stimulated by doors opening…"*(R11). Last, WFH offers fewer tactical demands compared to working at the office. R4 mentioned: *"I find a lot of clothing really disturbing"* (R4). Illustrating that wearing a certain type of clothes offers stimulation and is experienced as demanding. WFH

offers him to choose clothing that does not feel demanding, while at the office, for instance, loose sweatpants are not allowed..

To conclude, in the WFH setting, the physical hindering demands were perceived as less demanding. Different environmental demands were experienced compared to the office setting. However, due to less perceived commuting, sound, and tactical demands, the overall experience of physical demands was perceived as lower when WFH.

Social demands

Second, respondents experienced fewer social demands while working from home. These social demands manifested in four distinct ways: masking, social interaction, hyper reflexivity, and virtual communication. The majority of respondents reported that masking, social interaction, and hyper reflexivity demanded less energy while working from home compared to working at the office..

Masking was described by nine of the twelve respondents. The findings identified that respondents feel reduced need for social masking when WFH. As Respondent 2 explained, social masking is *"Acting as if you don't have autism … masking is essentially behaving as 'normally' as possible."* (R2). It thus refers to conforming to neurotypical expectations by hiding or suppressing neurodivergent traits. Half of the respondents who participated in the interviews described masking as a hindering demand, which is an energy-draining process and has an impact on health and well-being. For instance, R7 emphasized the long-term strain of masking: *"So you have actually been masking and camouflaging for a very long time, and that takes such an incredible amount of energy that it eventually leads to burnout."*(R7). Other respondents perceived masking more as a challenging demand, draining, yet occasionally beneficial, due to feeling more included. The majority of participants perceived a greater need to mask their neurodivergence more at work than when WFH. Respondents often reported masking in situations where they felt unable to be themselves, because they

were afraid of being judged or stereotyped by colleagues at work. As illustrated in the following quotes:

> *"I am just as autistic at home as I am at work. But at work, I am more inclined to mask and behave differently. At home, you don't feel that need at all. It's your safe environment, so the mask comes off."(R7); "I Have to mask at work" (R9);"But for example, when you are at work or at school, you can't always fully be yourself, or at least that's how it feels to me. I feel like I really have to behave the way others would." (R2)*

Another frequently named aspect is social interaction, which was mentioned by eight of the twelve respondents. This social interaction describes the effort required to monitor, adapt, and engage during social interaction. Social interaction can thus be seen as a challenging demand, as it drains energy. However, social interaction can also help to feel connected. While some participants valued some moments of informal social interaction or deep social connections, many found spontaneous social workplace interactions draining. Many found lunch breaks, short coffee chats, and informal work activities to be energy draining. The following was stated:

> *"I can handle a debate about ideas, but if it turns into a personal attack I don't know how to react," (R7); "I stopped eating lunch with colleagues for now.*
> *It's nice, but it uses up so much energy. After lunch I'd always have an hour-long energy dip, so I lose nearly two and a half hours of work time.". (R6).*

Additionally, hyper reflexivity was mentioned five times and refers to reflecting on past social interaction. This reflection on, for instance, past and future social interactions drains energy and can be seen as a hindering demand. As illustrated*: "When I've been somewhere, I need to reflect and think deeply about how my interactions with people went. It takes me two days to recover from that."* (R3). Additionally, the findings show that a few respondents

reported more demands regarding virtual communication. For instance, R2 explains that online meetings also offer demands: *"What overstimulates me more is seeing myself at the bottom. That doesn't happen in a regular conversation."* (R2). However, in general, the amount of social demands is perceived as lower when WFH.

To conclude, both hindering and challenging social demands were found. Masking, social interaction, and hyper reflexivity were perceived less at the WFH setting, while virtual communication demands were experienced more.

Emotional demands

Third, emotional demands emerged from the findings as a challenging demand. The emotional demands showed two sub-themes related to adaptation and emotion regulation. These demands, primarily experienced at the personal level, highlight the emotional intensity and cognitive effort involved in navigating work and social contexts. A few respondents reported that emotion regulation demands energy. Several respondents described challenges with recognizing, processing, or controlling emotional responses of themselves or others. Furthermore, a few respondents reported adaptation-related demands, which were commonly linked to switching tasks or adjusting to change. Respondents reported needing extra time and energy to transition between activities or deal with unexpected shifts. However, one respondent described that adaptation is a challenging demand, as self-awareness can help mitigate this over time. Illustrated by *"When there's a change, I now know I need more time. I can get grumpy, but I also know it passes after a day. That helps."* (R5).

Intense focus

The theme, intense focus, includes focus difficulties, hyperfocus, and motivation. This theme shows the complexity of defining demands and resources. An intense focus can either be a personal resource or a challenging or hindering demand, depending on how it is experienced and managed. Nevertheless, the findings clearly show that the majority of the

respondents (R3, R5, R6, R7, R9, R10, R12) experience the draining effect of intense focus but also offer beneficial aspects. Solely two respondents (R8, R11) experienced either energy drain due to focus difficulties, or the intense focus with regard to detail was only positive. The following quote by R7 illustrates this well:

> *"I work very intensively, I work with a deep focus and thus concentrated and fast… but it also costs a lot of energy. Meaning that after a while, I will be drained and need recovery before I start working again"* (R7)

To further illustrate this as a challenging demand, several respondents described being highly motivated when working on topics of personal interest or becoming 'hyper-focused' on specific tasks or projects. This intense focus often acted as a personal or job-related resource. However, the intense focus can result in more energy, happy feelings and productivity, as illustrated by: *"I can do the same task for weeks on end, as long as it gives me a dopamine hit."* (R3); *"If I find something interesting, I dive into it completely."* (R10). However, the findings also show that it can be demanding. For some, it resulted in forgetting to take breaks, skipping meals, or neglecting basic self-care. This made it energy-draining and hard to manage over time, as portrayed by: *"It's a serious concern. I find it very difficult to switch off again."* (R9).

This challenging demand also influences the perceived WFH experience. The findings show that several respondents found it easier to achieve hyperfocus when WFH than when working at the office. Due to the experience of fewer physical and social demands, such as colleagues and lunch breaks. For instance, R7 sees intense focus as an opportunity for WFH, as it enables her to enter and stay in a focus longer. In contrast, R5 described that this intense focus is very energy draining and thus prefers the distinction from the office to avoid entering periods of intense focus.

To conclude, the themes and subthemes show both challenging and hindering

demands on different levels. Physical, social, and emotional demands were perceived less in the WFH setting, while virtual interaction demanded more energy. The physical and social demands were experienced by the majority of the respondents. In regard to the experienced demands, several respondents emphasize that personal aspects play a key role in the perceived WFH demands. R11 illustrated that neurodivergent "memory cards" fill up far faster than neurotypical ones. This emphasizes the difference between neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals, illustrating why even a few demands can already feel overwhelming and energy draining. Besides, even among neurodivergent individuals, the rate of input processing and energy levels can differ. Several respondents (R5, R6, R7) described that extremely low energy levels also impact how soon sensory overload is perceived. Furthermore, the WFH setting is often compared to the office setting, and can therefore also influence perceptions.

Perceived WFH resources

Besides WFH demands, the findings also show a diverse set of WFH resources. Table C2 in Appendix C shows an overview of the themes, subthemes, and frequency regarding the experienced resources. The main themes and sub-themes are support, autonomy, psychological safety, and structure.

Support

Support was one of the most frequently discussed themes in the interviews. The majority of respondents described perceived support from co-workers, supervisors, technology tools, and the broader organization. While respondents emphasize the importance of tailored support, this support appears to be lacking when working from home. For all sub-themes, it was found that the respondents often needed to be initiated by the neurodivergent work itself rather than receiving tailored support.

Technology support was mentioned by nine of the twelve respondents. Technology support, such as noise-canceling EarPods, a second display, and IT support, was perceived as an essential support tool to WFH. Although respondents highlighted the importance of technology support, such support was often found to be lacking. Also, special support related to personal needs was perceived as lacking. Besides the basic WFH tools (mouse, second display, office chair) or standard WFH budgets for tools or extra WFH costs, there is no extra support or information shared to help support neurodivergent needs. As emphasized clearly by R6, who states: *"We do have provisions for that at work, but you're limited to selecting items from the company's catalog, which I find a bit restrictive. So I'd rather purchase those things myself*"(R6). Other respondents also emphasized they often buy or need to initiate their own WFH tools to meet their needs. Furthermore, respondents noted a lack of support regarding VPN, IT, and ICT while WFH. Affecting efficient information gathering and task performance. For example:

> *"Well, I think having good ICT support from the organization is super important, especially when you're at home, you can't just easily ask someone, 'Hey, how does this work?' If I constantly have to figure it out myself, it costs a lot of time."* (R3)

Furthermore, respondents indicate that this impacts both their work and their sense of autonomy.

Supervisor support was discussed extensively. Nine of the twelve respondents emphasized the essential role of supervisor support. The findings show that the supervisor plays a key role in the experience of WFH as a neurodivergent. An important aspect lies in the choice of sharing the diagnosis with the supervisor/organization. For instance, as R4 highlights: *"at work I only shared it with my supervisor. Mostly because it just felt right or something. I simply trust her."* (R4). Another important aspect that impacts the WFH experience is the positivity and strength-based approach of leaders and the important role

supervisors have in the experience of a supportive practice. R3 highlights: *"She's very understanding about it, and she likes that I work from home, because she knows I perform better that way."*(R3). The majority of the respondents highlight the importance for a supervisor to focus on the positive aspects, such as the strengths and well. Although currently the situation is often still focused on the negative aspects of neurodivergent as sketched by R10: *"Managers often tend to focus on what's going wrong and zoom in on those issues. Then they come up with all kinds of solutions that don't fit the individual."* (R10).

Furthermore, eight of the twelve respondents emphasized the importance of co-worker support, but perceived little co-worker support while working from home. When working from home, the physical distance causes less unplanned co-worker contact. R11 noted this difference in co-worker support when working at the office and when WFH, following: *"On-site, I could quickly ask someone in the next office for a task if I had nothing to do. That in-person back-and-forth happens much more slowly online."*(R11). Although less co-worker support was experienced, several respondents self-initiated co-workers to stay connected, as illustrated by:

> *"I'd love to work from home most of the time, it's fine for my tasks, but I have to make extra effort to reach out to colleagues, or I lose touch with the team. It can feel lonely when there are no meetings."(*R9).

Autonomy

Second, the findings show that all twelve respondents reported perceiving autonomy as a resource. Autonomy is manifested in four distinct ways on different levels: job crafting, flexibility, control, and use of skills. At the personal level, autonomy enabled participants to control their energy and recovery. R11 described autonomy as control over energy levels, by taking naps if needed, and R9 described it as choosing when to have social interactions. At the job level, autonomy allowed job crafting and use of skills: For instance, as noted, *"The*

*biggest point for me is autonomy. Freedom to organize your work the way you want. In a way that suits your brain, that's the nicest"(*R3). Several respondents explained that while task autonomy exists both in the office and WFH settings, the perceptions differ. Many noted feeling greater freedom when WFH. As R4 illustrates:

> *"Yes, the freedom. That is the most important thing for me. Even on-site, I technically have full control over my tasks, but I constantly feel like I'm being watched. At home, however, I can genuinely do more of what I feel like doing"* (R4).

At the organizational level, autonomy took the form of creating a flexible work environment and flexible work hours. For many respondents, the option to choose when to work from home versus when to be on-site was a critical dimension of this autonomy. R5 emphasized how WFH allowed her to synchronize her start time with her energy level:

> *"Then I can also go to work when I have the most energy. So if I have slept very badly one night, then I turn off the alarm... I make sure I have slept well, and then I only start work. If you are expected at the office, then that is not possible"* (R5).

Psychological safety

Third, the theme of psychological safety emerged from the findings. Although the findings show that the WFH setting is perceived as a safe environment, the respondents also highlight the importance of a safe climate. As illustrated by*: "The workplace can be hectic, my home-working environment is undoubtedly safer."* (R8). The majority of the respondents agree with this perception of WFH as a safer environment. However, they stressed that psychological safety is not limited to the physical environment; it also depends on feeling included by the organization. Respondents noted that a psychologically safe climate is essential for feeling included and for comfortably disclosing a neurodivergent diagnosis or personal needs. Such openness often leads to better understanding and more tailored support. In contrast, when stigma is present, employees tend to withhold information about their

needs, which hinders access to appropriate support.

Structure

The theme of structure, encompassing routines and role clarity, emerged as an important resource for several respondents. Routine and job clarity serve as job resources by reducing unnecessary cognitive demands. However, structure was a resource that was experienced less when WFH For example, respondents R2 and R6 explicitly stated that they felt an absence of structure while WFH. Moreover, a few other respondents experienced less job clarity at home, such as not knowing who to contact while working from home, and a lack of monitoring. Although fewer respondents reported this resource, this resource is equally important and shows that it differs per person. This is well illustrated by R9, who initiated the need for clarity before starting in her new full-time remote position.

To conclude, while the resources, autonomy, and psychological safety seemed to be experienced as higher in the WFH setting, structure and support seemed to be lacking. It was found that in the current WFH setting, neurodivergent workers often needed to initiate fitted support. Lastly, demands and resources were found personal, job, and organizational levels.

Perceived WFH Risks and Opportunities

The demands and resources discussed above shape the experienced WFH risks and opportunities. The findings reveal risks and opportunities regarding three themes: work-life balance, productivity, and isolation, presented in Figure 1. In addition, findings suggest that the timing of neurodivergence diagnoses (ADHD, ASD, and/or dyslexia) may also influence how individuals experience these risks and opportunities. As presented in Appendix B, Table B1, two subgroups emerged. The first group (R1, R2, R3, R9, R11) received their diagnosis early, in childhood or early adolescence. The second group (R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R10, and R12) was diagnosed later, during late adolescence or adulthood. Those diagnosed late more frequently reported health-related issues, such as burnout (R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R12) or

increased sick leave (R10). In contrast, respondents diagnosed early reported fewer or no such negative health experiences. To illustrate, respondent R2 described that her early diagnosis and resulting early support offered acknowledgement and self-knowledge. However, R7, who got diagnosed late.

reported:

> *"I had a job coach through my work, who was also specialized in neurodivergence. And at some point, they said: 'You're very good at putting into words what you need and where things go wrong.' And that's true, but that's also because I went through such a coaching trajectory."* (R7).

This comparison highlights how early diagnosis can positively shape awareness of personal demands and resources, and the ability to seek or recognize adequate support. Being able to initiate fitting support seems to be important, as the support while WFH is lacking.

Work-life balance

A first theme that emerged was work-life balance. This theme shows clearly that each set of personal, job, and organizational demands and resources leads to their set off opportunities and risks.

Work-life balance was first found as an opportunity. The combination of fewer or less demanding demands and more autonomy resources helped some respondents to manage and maintain a better work-life balance. For instance, without long commutes or overstimulating office environments and the need to mask, participants had more energy for both work and personal activities. At the same time, WFH offered more control over energy and fitting tasks to the right working environment or adjusting tasks to personal strengths. The interaction between these demands and resources can offer work-life balance. Not being fully drained at the end of the day, but also to have energy for sports and friends, and sustain well-being and health, as illustrated by R3:

> *"When I used to work or go to school, I'd just lie in bed afterward, maybe game or watch TV, because I needed to recover. Now I actually have time and energy for things outside of work. For the first time in two years, I even have a good friend. I just didn't have the energy before. So yes, it gives me much more balance."* (R3)

In contrast, WFH can also offer work-life balance risks. Several respondents describe that WFH presents risks related to blurred work–life boundaries, particularly for neurodivergent workers who experience intense personal focus. As described above, the experience of an intense focus can offer difficulties in stopping or taking breaks during tasks, as they can be absorbed in a task or a broader topic, as explained by R9 and R12. Without a clear end-of-day boundary or support from supervisors, some respondents found it hard to manage their intense focus and keep a healthy balance between work and personal life. Resulting in remaining absorbed in tasks beyond regular hours. As the findings show a lack of support when WFH, this may increase the risk of overwork and long-term exhaustion. Thus, while autonomy and deep focus can be valuable resources, they must be balanced with support practices to avoid negative consequences.

Productivity

Second, the theme of productivity emerged. Productivity is mostly portrayed as an opportunity for WFH as it offers more autonomy on the personal, job, and organizational levels. This offers respondents to control their energy level, match their tasks and environment with personal strengths. Many respondents emphasized that they were better able to structure their workday around personal energy levels and sensory sensitivities. Furthermore, several respondents also used this autonomy for job crafting, by tailoring tasks or creating routines that aligned with their strengths and needs. R4 noted the following:

> *"Yes, the freedom. That is the most important thing for me. Even on-site, I technically have full control over my tasks, but I constantly feel like I'm being watched. At home,*

*however, I can genuinely do more of what I feel like doing."(*R4)

Additionally, it offers to adjust their work environment to their work tasks. For example, several participants described being able to achieve high levels of concentration, particularly during periods of hyperfocus, while working from home. The quieter environment and reduced social distractions supported more efficient work and task completion. When WFH, they could use their strengths more.

However, this autonomy on the personal, job, and organizational level was not universally beneficial. A few respondents highlighted that WFH lacked the structure they needed to stay productive. For them, the combination of autonomy and demands, without sufficient structure or support, resulted in decreased productivity. This suggests that while autonomy can enhance productivity, it may also present risks when not balanced with adequate structure and support.

Isolation

Another emerging risk is the perceived isolation and disengagement experienced by neurodivergent employees. While the WFH environment reduces social demands, it simultaneously limits access to informal support from colleagues and supervisors. Most interaction takes place through formal online meetings, which reduces opportunities for spontaneous social connection. This creates a tension between the benefits and drawbacks of reduced social demands. On the one hand, fewer social interactions allow neurodivergent workers to conserve energy and maintain focus on work-related tasks. On the other hand, this can result in a loss of connection and involvement, leading to increased feelings of social isolation and organizational disengagement. The combination of reduced social interaction and limited proactive support highlights a key risk in the WFH context: while the environment may lower immediate demands, it may also compromise long-term engagement and well-being if adequate supportive resources are not in place. The findings show that only

a few respondents reported experiencing isolation, mostly due to self-initiated support by workers. This trickle-up approach, to initiate support rather than receive trickle-down support, places responsibility on neurodivergent individuals to manage demands and resources. Respondents perceived a lack of trickle-down support, which focuses on the individual strengths of neurodivergent workers.

To sum up, the interaction between demands and resources shows risks and opportunities. The majority experienced opportunities such as improved work-life balance and productivity. Although several respondents also identified risks such as work-life blurring, reduced productivity, and isolation.

Discussion

This study explored the perceived experience of neurodivergent workers who WFH by aiming to answer the following RQ: "How do neurodivergent workers perceive the risks and opportunities associated with working-from-home arrangement in the current work environment?". Drawing on qualitative data from twelve in-depth interviews with individuals diagnosed with ASD, ADHD, and/or dyslexia. The study aimed to capture a range of neurodivergent perspectives. The JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) provides a foundational lens for interpreting how the unique demands and resources can shape neurodivergent workers' perceived WFH risks and opportunities regarding motivation and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The findings reveal that overall, neurodivergent individuals perceive WFH as having fewer physical, social, and emotional demands compared to working at the office. However, managing an intense focus seems to be a challenge when WFH. In terms of resources, it was found that WFH offers increased autonomy and a psychologically safer environment. However, support and structure appeared to be lacking, and was often initiated by the neurodivergent workers themselves. Three risks and opportunities were found regarding motivation and well-being: work-life balance,

productivity, and isolation.

Furthermore, this study offers several theoretical contributions. First, this study contributes to the JD-R model by applying a post-COVID-19 lens to the WFH experiences of neurodivergent workers. Building on Lepine et al. (2005) distinguished between challenging and hindering demands, the WFH setting also showed both types of demands. Physical demands were perceived as hindering, which can cause overload. Intense focus was found to be a challenging demand, which can be both energy draining, but it also offers potential regarding work goals. Furthermore, social interaction seems to be a challenging demand, as it drains energy, it also provides a connection. Consistent with Bakker and Demerouti (2017), this study identified the resources, autonomy, and support. Despite Jogulu et al. (2023) emphasizing that organizations need to better address neurodivergent needs, organizational support in WFH remains limited; autonomy and psychological safety are higher at home, but tailored support is often self-initiated rather than provided. The increased autonomy and psychological safety from a safe WFH environment does offer a better style of self-regulation (Bakker & De Vries, 2020). Bakker and De Vries's (2020) emphasize that maladaptive self-regulation (coping) increases job strain, while adaptive self-regulation (job-crafting) reduces job strain and is therefore preferred. Likewise, Brooks et al. (2024) noted that WFH allowed workers to freely express themselves without judgment. Similarly, this study showed that WFH decreases the need for maladaptive self-regulation, feelings of less need to mask their neurodivergence, and at the same time perceive more autonomy to craft or adapt their strengths to the job. Unlike this study, Brooks et al. (2024) also reported anxiety about returning to the office setting after WFH, as they needed to resume masking behaviors. A possible reason could be the during-COVID-19 setting of the study in contrast with our post-COVID-19 study.

Second, this study contributes to the literature by extending and validating COVID-19

WFH risks and opportunities within a post-COVID-19 perspective. Previous research found that during COVID-19, WFH also was found to offer work-life balance challenges (Bick et al., 2023), showing both opportunities regarding work-life balance as well as risks of work-life blurring. Previous research has indicated that WFH arrangements can offer opportunities to include neurodivergent workers at work by allowing neurodivergent workers to adapt workflows, control sensory stimuli, and manage time flexibly (Das et al., 2021; Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Johnson, 2024). Additionally, Brooks (2024) notes the benefits of the reduction of masking. This study similarly shows that WFH allows for retaining more energy, for example, due to more autonomy, less commuting, social interactions, or masking. Improving work-life balance by being able to manage energy levels, and for instance, participate in sports or meet friends. Alongside the opportunity to balance work-life, WFH also presents risks (Das et al., 2021; Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). While many respondents reported reduced physical and social demands, challenges remained. Consistent with post-COVID-19 findings, prior research during the pandemic noted that WFH could disrupt routine and structure, leading to blurred work-life boundaries (Brooks et al., 2024). Participants in this study similarly described difficulties disengaging from work, with high autonomy and intense focus often causing work to spill into personal time, increasing the risk of overwork. A prominent theme was the lack of sufficient organizational, leadership, and team-level resources. Supporting Iqbal et al. (2024) and Kersten et al. (2024), our findings show that job demands can outweigh available resources, particularly where leader, co-worker, and technology support are limited. Another WFH risk and opportunity relates to productivity. Previous research by Johnson (2024) identified that setting up the WFH environment demanded high levels of energy from neurodivergent workers. In contrast, our findings show that neurodivergent workers seem to be adapted to the WFH environment as a safe environment, perceiving fewer demands. Brooks et al. (2024) emphasized that this

reduces sensory overload, which is similar to the reduced demands, such as less sound, commuting, and social demands, within this study, can improve productivity. Besides reducing demands in the WFH setting, WFH also allows neurodivergent workers to adapt processes, allocate time flexibly, or provide additional equipment to help neurodivergent workers perform their tasks effectively (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024). Our study partially aligns with Hennekam and Follmer (2024), WFH increases the perception of autonomy and adaptation, which offers neurodivergent workers to adapt or adjust tasks and work environment to their strengths. Finally, isolation emerged as a potential WFH risk for neurodivergent workers. Similarly, research by Johnson (2024) and Rollnik-Sadoswka and Grabińska (2024) emphasized isolation and exclusion a risks of working from home. Brooks et al. (2024) highlighted the mixed effects of diminished social contact and increased reliance on virtual communication. While some thrived, others struggled without adequate interpersonal and technological support (Brooks et al., 2024). This study similarly shows that the challenging demand, social interaction, is lower in the WFH environment. Although spontaneous interactions and feelings of connection could reduce this study found that support was often initiated by the neurodivergent workers to reduce or prevent isolation.

Third, this study extends strength-based theory by highlighting the role of supportive resources in enabling neurodivergent workers to thrive while WFH**.** Previous research has shown that discrimination, marginalization, and stereotyping persist in the WFH setting (Ali et al., 2023; Bury et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022). While earlier research has emphasized person-job fit and strength-based approaches (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Kersten et al., 2024), our findings show that, at a personal level, WFH offers autonomy and job crafting and a safe work environment. Reduces masking and enables neurodivergent workers to work more strength-based. However, a safe organizational climate and received tailored support were lacking. Without their initiative, neurodivergent workers were often still viewed from a

medical model or social model perspective in which neurodivergence is seen as a disability or abnormality by co-workers, supervisors, or the organization (Fung, 2024).

Furthermore, experienced ableist WFH support, such as technology tools, was experienced to be ableist and not tailored to the personal needs and strengths of neurodivergent workers. Similarly, Jammaers and Fleischmann (2024) identified ableist norms in the WFH setting. Thus, this study reveals that strength-based resources at the organizational, leader/team levels (specifically technology, co-worker, and supervisor support) remain insufficient. Although Bakker and De Vries (2020) and Lesener et al. (2019) emphasized the key role of HR practices (organizational level) and leadership resources (job/supervisor level) to focus on health and strengths, reducing job strain and burnout. By integrating these insights, this study extends strength-based theory into the WFH context and addresses the limited literature on the importance of organizational and leadership resources for neurodivergent workers.

Fourth, this study contributes to the literature by extending the multi-level JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018) by highlighting both a trickle-down and trickle-up dynamic in the WFH setting for neurodivergent workers. Consistent with the model, our findings confirm resources and demands on multiple levels: organizational, leader/team, and individual levels (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). This study, for example, shows psychosocial safety at the organizational level, supervisor and co-worker support at the leader/team level, and autonomy personally**.** The multilevel JD-R emphasizes a trickle-down flow of demands and resources from the organization to leaders to individuals. Such as the psychological safety climate can influence personal demands and resources as masking. However, this study also reveals a reverse flow, showing a trickle-up effect. In line with Bakker and De Vries (2020), who emphasize that workers are not just passive recipients of trickle-down effects. This study shows that, during WFH, individuals influence leaders and organizations by actively initiating tailored support requests (e.g., for technology or supervisor support). By

identifying this upward effect, this study extends the multi-level JD-R model, offering a more dynamic understanding of how neurodivergent workers experience WFH.

Similar to Brooks et al. (2024), this study found that WFH offers both positive and negative well-being and productivity outcomes for neurodivergent workers regarding work-life balance, productivity, and isolation.

Future research and limitations

While this research contributes to the existing body of literature, offering three main theoretical contributions, it also presents several limitations. First, neurodivergent respondents were treated as a single, homogeneous group, encompassing the conditions ASD, ADHD, and/or dyslexia and comorbidities. This approach enabled data saturation with twelve respondents. Consistent with Hennink and Kaiser's (2021), who note that saturation can be reached with relatively small homogeneous samples. However, this risks overlooking the distinct risks and opportunities associated with each condition. For example, ADHD is linked to hyper-focus, ASD to attention to detail, and dyslexia to visual thinking (Szulc, 2022). Given this variation, future research should use a stratified design based on mixed diagnoses to better capture the nuanced differences between neurodivergent groups (Hennink and Kaiser, 2021). Additionally, future research could distinguish not only among diagnostic categories but also across WFH arrangements (fully remote, hybrid, and primarily on-site) to examine how varying degrees of WFH interact with the specific needs and resources of each neurodivergent group.

Second, although differences emerged between early and late diagnosis, those diagnosed in childhood versus adulthood (Chellappa, 2024). The sample size limits robust comparison. The timing of diagnosis may play a significant role in shaping access to support systems during critical developmental periods, which in turn can impact long-term mental health and well-being outcomes (Chellappa, 2024; Lupindo et al., 2022). Future research

should explore how the timing of diagnosis influences the lived experiences and specific needs of neurodivergent individuals, particularly concerning adaptive self-regulation approaches and workplace accommodations, and supportive resources. A larger, more diverse sample would allow for more in-depth analysis, contributing to more tailored support strategies.

Third, this study relies solely on single-level data from neurodivergent workers, which limits insight into the broader organizational context that influences their work-from-home (WFH) experience. Although participants referred to multi-level demands and resources (e.g., organizational climate, supervisor support), the absence of co-workers, supervisors, and HR perspectives limits deeper analysis. To deepen the understanding of the dynamics in the multilevel JD–R model, future research should adopt a multi-level design by including interviews with neurodivergent workers, supervisors, and HR representatives. A multilevel approach would better illuminate how "trickle-down" and "trickle-up" interacts with the JD-R model, enhancing its explanatory power in neurodiverse WFH settings (Crawford et al., 2010).

Practical implications

Across this study, three practical implications emerge for organizations and managers aiming to optimize the WFH experience of neurodivergent workers by addressing influences at the personal, leader, and organizational levels. First, organizations should actively support neurodivergent employees in identifying their unique combination of strengths, demands, and resource needs within the WFH. Given the low rates of self-identification among neurodivergent individuals (Kersten et al., 2024) and the personal initiation of support while WFH. Structured interventions such as self-assessment tools, coaching sessions, or reflective practices can help neurodivergent workers understand, recognize, and communicate fitting working conditions that best support personal well-being and performance. Empowering

workers to articulate their preferences more effectively, improving person-job fit, and contributing to a more sustainable WFH experience.

Second, organizations should strengthen neurodiversity-inclusive leadership through targeted, strengths-based supervisor training. Although supervisors play a key role in neurodivergent workers' daily experience, evidence shows a gap in managerial competencies related to neurodiversity-inclusive leadership (Ndindeng, 2024). To address this gap, structured training can improve supervisors equipment of strengths-based leadership techniques (Wang et al., 2023). To give better neurodiverse support, focusing on strengths feedback, and personalized support mechanisms. Enhancing leadership improves more meaningful resources, resulting in reducing strain and fostering sustainable work-from-home arrangements for neurodivergent employees.

Finally, organizations should foster a general psychological safety climate as a foundation to let neurodivergent workers thrive. Psychological safety, where neurodivergent workers can speak up and disclose their condition without fear or negative consequences, is essential to improve tailored support and a person-job fit (Edmondson, 1999). This includes promoting support on the organizational, leader, and personal levels. Creating safe spaces for dialogue is particularly important in WFH environments where signs of risks may go unnoticed (Kalmanovich-Cohen & Stanton, 2022)

To conclude, this study examined how neurodivergent employees experience working from home. The findings reveal that WFH offers less physical, social, and emotional demands, but WFH offers more demands regarding intense focus. Furthermore, the resources autonomy and psychological safety seemed to be experienced as higher in the WFH setting, while structure and support seemed to be lacking. The specific set of demands and resources shaped either risks or opportunities regarding work-life balance, productivity, or isolation. Applying the JD–R model, the study demonstrates that demands and resources interact in a

multi-directional (both trickle-up and trickle-down) manner. Furthermore, the strength-based support across multiple levels (personal, leader, and organizational) emerged as essential for in practice. When accompanied by tailored resources, flexible WFH arrangements represent a promising HR practice that can enable neurodivergent workers to continue thriving.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Table A1

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Part	Topic	Explanation Topic and Questions
1	Introduction	Explanation of the interview purpose, confidentiality, consent, and duration: 1.1 Thank the participant for their time and explain the research. 1.2 Purpose of the research: *"We are studying how neurodivergent employees experience the risks and benefits of working from home in a post-COVID-19 world."* 1.3 Confidentiality & Consent: *"I've shared the consent form. As agreed, do you give permission for this interview to be recorded and for the information you share to be used only for this master's thesis?"* 1.4 About the interview: *"The interview will last around an hour. We'll begin with some background questions and then go deeper into the topic."* 1.5 Interviewer introduction: *The interviewer introduces themselves briefly.*

2	Participant background information	Demographic information: 2.1 “What is your name and age?” *Can you start by briefly telling a bit about yourself? (Name, age, etc.)* 2.2 “Can you describe your current job and your main responsibilities?” *What kind of work do you do? What are your main tasks?* Neurodiversity information: 2.3 “You mentioned that you are neurodivergent, which is a requirement for this study. Can you explain what makes you neurodivergent and what that means to you?” *(For example: ADHD, autism, dyslexia, or something else.)* Medical model (symptoms): 2.4 “When you think about the symptoms that make you neurodivergent, which ones affect your daily life the most? These can have a positive or negative impact.” Social model (environment): 2.5 “When you think about your environment, like your workplace or social life, do you feel supported and included during your daily activities? How does society respond to your neurodivergence?”
3	WFH arrangement	Your WFH arrangement: 3.1.1 “Can you tell me about your work and your home working situation?”

		3.1.2 “What does your home workspace look like?”
		3.1.3 “How many days do you work from home and how many at the office?”
		3.1.4 “Was working from home your own choice or was it decided by your employer?”
		3.1.5 “How long have you been working from home?”
		3.1.6 “Since COVID-19, has your homework situation changed or stayed the same?”
		Experience with working from home:
		3.2 “How do you feel about working from home?”
		3.2.1 “What do you like and what do you find difficult about working from home?”
4	WFH and Neurodiversity	Opportunities & risks:
		4.1 “Are there things about your neurodiversity that actually help you when working from home? What works well for you?”
		4.2 “Are there also things that make working from home harder because of your neurodiversity? What problems do you face?”
		4.3.1“Thinking about all the pros and cons that relate to your neurodivergence, do you think being neurodivergent makes working from home more difficult or easier?”
		4.3.2 “Can you name challenges or benefits that are directly related to being neurodivergent?”
		4.2.3“Can you give examples of symptoms that cause these specific challenges?”

5	WFH and demands	General: 5.1.1 "What are the biggest challenges you face while working from home?" 5.1.2 “Do these specific challenges only impact you while working from home or are you also challenged by them while working from the office?” 5.1.3 “For example, managing distractions or keeping up with your workload?" 5.2.1 “Do you think being neurodivergent makes working from home more difficult? 5.2.2 “Can you think of challenges which are related to being neurodivergent? Can you give examples of some neurodivergent ‘symptoms’ that result in these specific challenges? Demanding situations: 5.3. “Do you feel these challenges had a personal effect on you? 5.3.1."Do you think these challenges have affected your personal growth or motivation? Some challenges may be difficult but help you grow, while others might be frustrating. Have you experienced this?" Specific example: 5.3.2 "Have you ever felt overwhelmed by sensory issues (like loud noises or bright lights) or had trouble with technology, communication, or feeling left out while working from home?"

6	WFH and resources	Organization and job support: 6.1 “Is your employer aware that you are neurodivergent?” 6.2 “Do you feel that your employer understands your neurodivergent needs and supports you, especially now that you work (partly) from home?” 6.2.1 “Did your employer ever ask about your WFH situation or offer to help?” 6.3 “What kind of support or tools does your employer provide to help you work from home? For example: special equipment or manager support?” 6.3.1 “Does this support help you? Why or why not?” Personal strategies: 6.4 “Are there things you’ve done yourself to improve your work-from-home situation?” 6.4.1 “What do you do to stay focused and productive? Do you use tools, routines, or get help that makes your work easier?”
7	Future of WFH	7.1 “Looking at the future, what could be improved or changed to make working from home easier for neurodivergent employees?” *(Tips)* 7.2 “Are there also things that already work well and should stay the same?” *(Tops)*

8	Additional Comments & Conclusion	Additional questions and comments**:** 8.1.1 “Is there anything else you’d like to share about your experience as a neurodivergent person working from home that we didn’t talk about?” 8.1.2 “Are there any topics we didn’t discuss that you think are important?” Conclusion and follow-up: *“Thank you for joining this interview and for sharing your valuable thoughts. In the next weeks, I’ll write down what we talked about. I’ll send it to you so you can check it and let me know if anything needs to be changed.”*

Appendix B

Demographics Respondents

Table B1

Extended Table with Interviewee Demographics

Respondent	Sex	Condition	WFH policy	Age	Timing	Organization	Tenure	Job	Burn-out
R1	F	Dyslexia	Part-time	28	Early	Non-profit	1	Advisor	No
R2	F	ASD	Part-time	27	Early	Profit	2	Educationalist	No
R3	M	ASD	Full-time	31	Early	Profit	-	Researcher & project assistant	No
R4	M	ADHD	Part-time	32	Late	State	2	Student advisor	Yes
R5	F	ASD	Part-time	29	Late	Profit	3	Content creator & painter	Yes
R6	F	ADHD/ASD	Part-time	27	Late	State	7	Assistant teacher & researcher	Yes
R7	M	ASD	Full-time	55	Late	State	17	Integrated security officer	Yes
R8	F	ADHD	Part-time	26	Late	Profit	1	Recruiter	Yes
R9	F	ADHD/ASD	Full-time	26	Early	Non-profit	1	Online Psychologist	No
R10	F	ASD	Part-time	45	Late	State/Profit	5	Consultant & music manager	No
R11	M	ASD	Part-time	26	Early	Profit	-	Student, youth advisor &app creator	No
R12	F	ADHD	Part-time	53	Late	Profit/State	9	HR/payroll advisor	Yes

Appendix C

Emerged Themes and Subthemes

Table C1

Overview Demands

Theme	Level	Subthemes	Frequency	Respondents
Physical demands	Job	Environmental demand	9	R1,R2,R4,R5, R6, R7,R9, R11, R12
	Job	Commuting demand	8	R1, R3, R5, R6, R7, R8, R11, R12
	Job	Sound demand	5	R2, R5, R8, R10, R11
	Job	Tactical demand	3	R3, R4, R6
Social demands	Personal	Masking	9	R1, R2, R3, R4, R7, R8, R9, R10, R12
	Job	Social interaction	8	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9, R11,
	Job	Virtual interaction	3	R1, R2, R4
	Personal	Hyperreflective	5	R2, R3, R4, R7, R9, R12
Emotional demands	Personal	Emotion regulation	3	R4, R5, R7, R11
	Personal	Adaptation	3	R2, R3, R5
Intense focus	Personal	Focus difficulty	4	R3, R6, R8, R9
	Personal	Hyperfocus	4	R3, R5, R7, R10, R11
	Personal	Motivation	5	R5, R6, R9, R10, R12

Table C2

Overview Resources

Themes	Level	Subthemes	Frequency	Respondents
Autonomy	Personal	Control	8	R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12
	Organizational	Flexibility	7	R3, R4, R5, R6, R8, R9, R12
	Job	Job crafting	6	R1,R2, R5, R7, R10, R12
	Personal	Use of skills	4	R1, R3, R5, R12
Support	Organizational	Technology support	9	R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, R8 R9, R10, R12
	Job	Supervisor support	9	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R10, R11, R12
	Job	Co-worker support	8	R1, R2, R3,R5 R9, R10, R11, R12
	Organizational	Organizational support	8	R1, R2, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R12
Psychological safety	Organizational	Safe climate	11	R1,R2, R3,R4, R5, R7, R8,R9,R10, R11,
	Organizational	Safe environment	9	R1, R2, R3, R6, R7, R8, R9, R11, R12
Structure	Job	Job unclarity	3	R5,R9, R11
	Personal	Routine	2	R2, R6

Appendix E

Coding Matrices

Table C1

WFH Demands Coding Matrix

Themes	Subthemes	Quotes
Physical demands	Commuting demands	Yes well, first of all, just the travel time and incentives. That's already a very big thing. And because it just saves so much energy. (R5) With me, the over-stimulation is in, imagine with, where I notice it, the most is on the railroad tracks with the train station. Then, when it's very crowded and you're kind of an anthill of people. Then it's just those feelings of those people. Then it's just a lot. And then it's not so much to do with noise. (R10)
	Sound demands	I do get distracted by all that sound, though, so I can shut it off, but it does take a lot of energy. (R10) At work, I might be more stimulated by doors opening. (R11)
	Environmental demands	I actually enjoy working from home because it helps me concentrate better on tasks. It's simply a calmer environment." (R1) Well, I think it's definitely a challenge. It's so much easier to get distracted at home, suddenly you see some trash, or you notice something else, and you think, 'Oh, I can quickly do the laundry' or 'I'll just take care of that.' That can really be a downside." (R5)
	Tactical demands	For neurodivergent people, a lot of clothing is just uncomfortable. When I get home, I immediately want to change into something more relaxed. On a work-from-home day, I can do that. It's all those small things that make you feel more comfortable and save energy because you can just be yourself. (R4) Also, some sensory sensitivities, like clothing, for example. (R6)
Social demands	Social interaction demands	But I have fewer superficial connections, and that actually suits me. Those only drain my energy. I like that I don't constantly have to network or maintain small talk with colleagues at work. (R3)

	It really comes down to my own needs. When I’m on location, I constantly feel like I’m being pulled in all directions students drop by, colleagues need something from me. But at home, I don’t have that. I can just focus. (R4)
	Before I started this job, I didn’t really know what office life was like, how hard everyone works, or what the rules are. And of course, there are so many unwritten rules at the office. As an autistic person, I absolutely hate that. When you’re at the office, you notice things… like how some colleagues have unproductive days and spend more time at the coffee machine than actually working. (R5)
Masking demands	When I’m at the office, I’m very aware of how I come across. But at home, I’m not at all. I can sit there in comfy clothes, and it doesn’t bother me—I’m totally fine with it. At the office, though, I do feel it. I’m trying to focus on my tasks, but at the same time I’m thinking about how I look, whether colleagues might come up to me with questions… you’re just much more alert. (R2)
	That of course, it can express itself in many different ways, and people always have such a stereotypical image anyway. And I've also been able to compensate a lot, actually with intelligence, social skills. (R4)
Virtual interaction demands	"What I just notice in the everyday to day situation, what inhibits me a lot, is that I can't app as easily and quickly and smoothly.... And an app takes a lot of energy out of me. And that starts with me having to translate it at all, my speech into words." (R1)
	But so what gives me more incentive is that I see myself at the bottom. You don't have that in a conversation. I find that very unpleasant, because then I also notice that I'm in a conversation with you. (R2)
Hyperreflective	Well, it's mostly just a super restless brain. So it's just, it's very hard for me to just stick to one thing. So, especially things that I don't find interesting. (R4)

		I sometimes make social faux pas. In the sense that I can sometimes say something and only think afterwards. Yeah, that wasn't particularly helpful, or how does that come across? That's very typical of people with autism, the pre- and post-analysis of conversations. And if someone I trust was there, I also always ask for.... Gosh, I said this, how did that come across to you? And nine out of ten other people don't think it's a problem.... And I'm in my head way too much about that (R9).
Intense Focus	Focus difficulty	Yes, because I do really have a lot of days and weeks where I just am sitting there staring out the window and dreaming. I can feel, I know what to do, I know how to do it, and I can't stop staring out the window. (R6)
		And yes, indeed, a piece of concentration I do have. But I can't for long periods. I really have to do it with breaks, for example, between tasks. (R8)
	Hyperfocus	When I am painting, especially painting, I get so into a hyperfocus indeed. And I don't get out of that easily either and then I'm finished (R5).
		I can do the same thing for weeks at a time, as long as I get dopamine from it. And it can also make me happy. (R3)
	Motivation	I don't remember it very well, but one of those things that sticks with me a lot is perfectionism (R6)
		That's also kind of like, if I find something interesting, then I dive into it completely. (R10)
Emotional demands	Emotion regulation	Yes, at work too, but especially on emotion regulation. That you just work, but I can just get very angry, for example. At work, that's not too bad, but that's also part of it, for example. (R4)
		And I feel emotions very well and very strongly. And that can also be very exhausting, but I think that's also a very strong thing. (R5)

	Adaptation demands	So I think, dealing with change and what I think is the biggest issue with me, is a bit of switching. Also, between tasks, between actions. (R2) At the same time, the flexibility and having to be able to switch between topics and thinking out of the box, say, I find that very difficult (R3).

Table C2

WFH Resources Coding Matrix

Themes	Subthemes	Quotes
Autonomy	Job crafting	You can do so many things in my position. That not everybody does the same thing all the time. So it would be kind of weird. If you put me in the most administrative policy picture of my job. So it does run that way. That I just do that the least. And someone on our team, for example, is very strong at that. (R2)
		I also call it a very much job carving. Is actually the best thing... That's the best thing for everybody, job carving. When a function is built around you. And that happened with me. (R5)
	Flexibility	Very good. I do think you want the reason why. For example, you may yes it's a piece of your own plans then easiest to follow. (R8)
		I have a lot of freedom right now. That means. I have diverse work through the projects. So it's always a head in a tail. Which means I don't get bored easily. That's nice. Because something that's boring or repetitive. An ADHD person doesn't like that. So I have that. That's very nice. When I look at the freedom I have where I work, I'm very grateful (R12)
	Use of skills	Well that I so, if you tell me something, I probably remember it. I listen to a lot of audiobooks. There I can retell whole sections of the book just now (R1)
		And the positive thing is that I'm very detail-oriented. And that comes out very well, literally, in my painting profession. (R5)
	Control	Yes, well energetic level is limited for example. So I really suffer from that. So I can only do limited things in a row and then I really have to rest and have quite a bit of recovery time. (R7)

		And besides that, I have a lot of other little things I do. To make sure that I can recover in silence and alone. So recharging that battery. (R12)
Support	Technology support	Yes, well I just think good ICT from the organization is super important especially if you're sitting at home you can't just easily ask someone how does that work and if I have to constantly figure it out myself it takes a lot of time. And unfortunately I sometimes notice that observers are down. Or that Q&A sections on websites are just very poor.(R3) Then again, at home you have to turn on one of those VPNs for that. To get into university documents. Yes, sometimes that's just something. Even though that's such an inimini step, but of course that's what we know again, of things like that can be very big for an ADHD person. That sometimes I do think, okay, never mind. You know, because then you have to log in, my internet is going to be annoying again, never mind you know, I'll do it another time. (R4) I have two screens of my own and my keyboard and mouse are also just my own and so are the headphones. (R8)
	Supervisor support	Many people with autism. Sometimes need a little more structure. And clarity. For that, sometimes it can be nice. If there is definitely someone around initially. I do think that could usually be more online as well. (R3) But if at some point something bothers me. Then I would really have to go to him, too. (R5) Managers then tend quite often to focus on what is not going well, so to speak. And then to zoom in on that. But to find all kinds of solutions that are not at all appropriate for that person. And that it really comes from the question, what do you need? What do you need? And how can we facilitate that? Within certain frameworks, of course (R10).
	Co-worker support	I have one colleague I was just talking about. So, who works one day a week? She does call with some regularity. And she also indicates from time to time that she is very happy with me. And that we make a good team. And that motivates me to hear that from time to time. And then to think. Okay, yes, but that's what I do it for. (R5) That you do have to make more effort to approach colleagues. (R9) I work a lot with Teams. We also still have mail. There are tasks in the workflow. Yes, and if necessary, we physically find each other. Then we make an appointment, and then we go to the

		office, for example. I don't have a problem with that. What does bother me is that some other colleagues don't take that trouble. (R12)
	Organizational support	So that could fall under it. And then really offered by the employer itself. So, without having to ask for it very much. And I think yes, also that there is something in the contract or communicated at all that you have that possibility. (R2) There are a lot of things you can do structurally to make it more inclusive that will benefit everyone diversely. And also. One autistic person has different needs. Then the other autistic person. So there it is also very much. Just that flexibility. Actually, very important. And also I think that's a piece of it as well. Culture change. (R6)
Psychological safety	Safe climate	Yes, that you are appreciated for who you are. (R3) So I actually only shared with my supervisor. More because that also just felt right or something. I just trust her. (R4)
	Safe environment	And I do notice that after a day I've been somewhere or a day I've been working at home. That switch goes off very easily with me. And I feel good in my safe environment. (R3) And then I actually sit with my legs up. But then no one sees that. But then (during work at home/online meetings) I also feel a little freer to do things like that. Without knowing that people have any idea of why I'm doing that. (R9)
Structure	Routine	Maar het nadeel is de stabiliteit slash structuur. Want als je naar kantoor gaat, dan heb je echt... Je gaat een bepaalde tijd weg. Je komt een bepaalde tijd thuis. (R2) But also just that I am indeed very much in need of predictability, rhythm and planning. (R6)
	Job clarity	The wanting to know where you stand. And the control. I think that's also very much an autism thingy with me. (R5) Then I was just sent from pillar to post all the time. I was sent to email address A if I wanted help. Well, I did that. Do I get in response, send to email address B. Then I do that, do I get in response, send to email address C. Then I do that, do I get in response, send to email address A. (R11)

Table C.3

Opportunities and Risks Coding Matrix

Themes	Subthemes	Quotes
Work-life balance	Blurring work-life boundaries	Then you're not productive every minute either. So I do always have to be mindful of yes, okay, I may take a breather, stand up straight, stretch a little bit, go get something to drink (R10) So it's a challenge for me to stand up every hour. And take a moment to stretch my legs or take a walk. Because the social aspect is not there. So there is absolutely no incentive as far as that is concerned. And I have to make sure that I look for the walking stimulus. To get away from my screen. I think that's a disadvantage. (R12)
	Work-life balance	For me, it's the difference between functioning and failing. I have figured that out by now. I will never be able to work four, five days a week somewhere where I have to be constantly on my guard of oh my, am I allowed to be myself, and don't I have to adapt, and aren't people going to get mad at me for who I am. So yeah, it's really the difference between night and day for me. (R3) Yes. With that, I get some space now to, yes, I call that to live. But so you have to imagine that, for example, I can do the laundry and hang it up. I can just vacuum the house. Things like that. Because so there is so even there is no space for that when you work here. (R7) Yes, for me, it's kind of having my life back. And also life. And with that, I have to say for a moment. Because I could barely keep up my studies already. In addition, I never had a student life. Never really had a very social life. So I now have a balance for the first time. Where I work and have a life next to it. But in addition to that. By working from home. I can make it as ideal as possible for me. (R5)
Productivity	More productive	I like working from home in itself, so that I can concentrate on tasks for a while. (R1) So yes, also in terms of efficiencies. It makes a very big difference that at home, you just get a lot more done in a lot less time. (R4) Yes, what I find a big advantage of working from home is that there is peace and quiet. That I'm not disturbed in my work, and I can meet the schedule that I have on that day, nine times out of ten. (R12)
	Less Productive	And then I would rather look at what I can get done at home if I don't have focus? And what do I really need a productive good day? So I'd plan that for an office day or something. (R6)

Isolation	Disadvantages, yes, less contact with colleagues. You do get a little bored in your work room at some point, I notice. (R5) But then I feel so seen. Then I get warm from that. That's very nice. And the same thing would work like that at work, but there is a lack of good managers. (R12)