

PROFILUL LUCRĂTOAREI MODERNE DE LA DISTANȚĂ. PROBLEME ALE ORGANIZĂRII MUNCII ȘI A MANAGEMENTULUI TIMPULUI

Natalia CUTANINA

Doctorandă, Universitatea de Studii Politice și Economice Europene „Constantin Stere”,

Chișinău, Republica Moldova

e-mail: nkutanina@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6396-5625>

Prezentul studiu examinează caracteristicile inerente a unei femei-freelancer modern, care lucrează de la distanță și, de asemenea, descrie dificultățile cu care se confruntă femeile-freelanceri astăzi, inclusiv problemele de gestionare a timpului. Articolul examinează schimbările, care au avut loc în domeniul relațiilor de muncă a femeilor ce lucrează de la distanță după pandemia de COVID-19. Autorul analizează datele obținute în cadrul unui sondaj sociologic, realizat în 2023, în format online, folosind platforma Google Forms, în rândul femeilor din mai multe țări ale lumii. Analiza include aspecte precum atitudinea față de munca la distanță, statutul de lucru al respondentelor existența și numărul de copii, originea computerului folosit pentru muncă și alte momente cheie, legate de organizarea spațiului de lucru, precum și dificultățile cu care se confruntă participantele la cercetare atunci când lucrează de la distanță.

Cuvinte-cheie: muncă la distanță, freelance, freelancer, femeie-freelancer, pandemie COVID-19, mamă care lucrează, managementul timpului.

PROFILE OF A MODERN FEMALE REMOTE WORKER. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKFLOW AND TIME MANAGEMENT ISSUES

This study examines the characteristics inherent in a modern freelancer working remotely, and also describes the difficulties that freelancers face today, including time management problems. The article examines the changes that have taken place in the workplace with women working remotely after the COVID-19 pandemic. The author analyzes the data obtained during a sociological survey conducted in 2023 remotely (online) using the Google Forms platform among women from around the world. The analysis includes aspects such as attitudes towards remote work, the work status of the participants, the presence and number of children, the origin of the computer used for work, and other key moments related to the organization of the workspace as well as the difficulties that research participants face when working remotely.

Keywords: remote work, freelancing, freelancer, female freelancer, COVID-19 pandemic, working mother, time management.

PROFIL DE LA TRAVAILLEUSE À DISTANCE MODERNE. PROBLÈMES D'ORGANISATION DU TRAVAIL ET DE GESTION DU TEMPS

Cette étude examine les caractéristiques inhérentes à une femme-pigiste moderne qui travaille à distance et décrit également les difficultés rencontrées par les femmes-pigistes aujourd'hui, y compris les problèmes de gestion du temps. L'article examine les changements survenus dans le domaine des Relations de travail des femmes travaillant à distance

après la pandémie de COVID-19. L'auteur analyse les données obtenues dans le cadre d'une enquête sociologique, menée en 2023, en format en ligne, à l'aide de la plateforme Google Forms, auprès de femmes de plusieurs pays du monde. L'analyse inclut des questions telles que l'attitude à l'égard du travail à distance, le statut de travail des répondantsexistence et nombre d'enfants, l'origine de l'ordinateur utilisé pour le travail et d'autres moments clés, liés à l'organisation de l'espace de travail, ainsi que les difficultés auxquelles les participants à la recherche sont confrontés lorsqu'ils travaillent à distance.

***Mots-clés:** travail à distance, freelance, femme-freelance, pandémie COVID-19, mère qui travaille, gestion du temps.*

ПРОФИЛЬ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ УДАЛЕННОЙ РАБОТНИЦЫ. ПРОБЛЕМЫ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ТРУДА И ТАЙМ-МЕНЕДЖМЕНТА

Данное исследование рассматривает характерные черты, присущие современной женщине-фрилансеру, работающей удаленно, а также описывает сложности, с которыми сталкиваются женщины-фрилансеры на сегодняшний день, в том числе проблемы тайм-менеджмента. В статье изучаются изменения, которые произошли в рабочей сфере с удаленно работающими женщинами после пандемии COVID-19. Автор анализирует данные, полученные в ходе социологического опроса, проведенного в 2023 году удалённо (в онлайн-формате) с помощью платформы Google Forms среди женщин разных стран мира. Анализ включают такие аспекты, как отношение к удаленной работе, рабочий статус участниц, наличие и количество детей, происхождение используемого для работы компьютера и другие ключевые проблемы, связанные с организацией рабочего пространства, с которыми участницы исследования сталкиваются при удаленной работе.

***Ключевые слова:** удаленная работа, фриланс, фрилансер, женщина-фрилансер, пандемия COVID-19, работающая мать, тайм-менеджмент.*

Introduction

In the post-pandemic economy, the role of remote work cannot be overstated. Scientific research within the framework of this topic shows the diversity and even inconsistency of the results and conclusions. At the same time, the changes taking place in the economy in recent years have a massive impact on working women and working mothers. This study aims to analyze the portrait of a modern female freelancer and the attitude of modern women towards remote work, as well as growth points that can be worked on in the future in order to improve the psycho-emotional state of female freelancers and remote workers in order to increase productivity when working remotely.

Research Methodology

The methodology of this study includes a sociological survey and the method of information analy-

sis. The sociological survey was conducted online through the Google Forms platform in January-February 2023. The online survey format was chosen due to the geographic distribution of survey participants. The participants in the sociological study were sent a link, following which they got to a page in Google Forms with a survey. All responses from the form were automatically saved to a table (Google Sheets), which made it possible to avoid errors that could be made when manually entering research results into a table for subsequent analysis. Initially, two forms were created - for English-speaking and Russian-speaking participants. The responses in two languages were combined into a single table before data analysis.

Characteristics of the statistical sample

The statistical sample of this study includes freelancers and remote workers living in different coun-

tries of the world, men and women aged 18 to 45 years with a predominance of women in the sample (78.3%). The study is based on this sample due to the fact that in the logic of the modern economy, it is often more difficult for women to maintain a balance between work, family, personal life and household chores, and when working remotely, the boundaries between these areas of life can be erased even more. The study involved English-speaking and Russian-speaking respondents from the USA, Georgia, the Netherlands, Moldova, Ukraine, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Russia, Thailand, Belarus, Germany, Argentina, Serbia, Japan, Portugal and other countries.

The main provisions of the study

Who are these people - modern freelancers, and what is their place in the rapidly changing post-pandemic economy? When people are talking about modern freelancers, they usually mean a person who works for himself, usually, in a remote format. In the IT field, it often happens that freelancers also work for the company as remote workers, in addition to working for themselves and building their own customer base, so they have to create and maintain clear boundaries between their working time and time for rest and family.

The opportunities offered by remote work and freelancing allow women to be more autonomous. In order to master many of the professions in the field of IT, it is not even necessary to get a higher education. In this regard, a study conducted in Pakistan in 2022 [1] is interesting, which raises the topic of women's vulnerability in the context of finding and retaining a stable job. This is especially pronounced in developing countries with much more developed "informal" economies.

The topic of work-life balance has been sounding more and more often lately. And if, when working in the office, in many cases, the physical absence of an employee in the office helps to comply with it, then

when working from home, it is not uncommon for remote workers and freelancers to have difficulties connected to separating these areas. Various factors can influence the work-life balance of remote workers and freelancers.

Working life seeps into personal life, and if one doesn't set boundaries properly to control the workload, such situations can lead to decreased productivity at work, decreased motivation, burnout and other mental problems.

To a particular extent, this balance can be difficult for women to maintain, and not only in the field of IT and freelancing. A study conducted by scientists in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK in 2021 [2] showed that women in general reported higher levels of psychological stress than men during the pandemic and lockdowns. In addition, working mothers were much more likely than fathers to bear the main responsibility for child care and home schooling, which significantly affected the self-perception and emotional background of the respondents. According to the above-mentioned study, during the pandemic, working women did much more housework, more childcare, and more home schooling than men. The proportion of women doing housework and child care has increased significantly since the outbreak of the pandemic. There's another study conducted at the University of Pennsylvania in the USA in 2023 [3], which showed that the pandemic had a significant negative impact on the work-life balance of women. Researchers talk about the importance of additional support measures for working mothers, such as the availability of various options for child care and opportunities to have a more flexible work schedule.

Next, let's take a closer look at the portrait of a modern freelance woman in a post-pandemic economy, based on the data obtained during the study. 96 women from different countries of the world took part in this sociological study.

Almost half of the sample were women aged 30-35 years (48.9%), 24.5% were women aged 24-29 years, 18.1% were women aged 36-40 years, 4.3%

each were women aged 40-45 years and 18-23 years (see Figure 1).

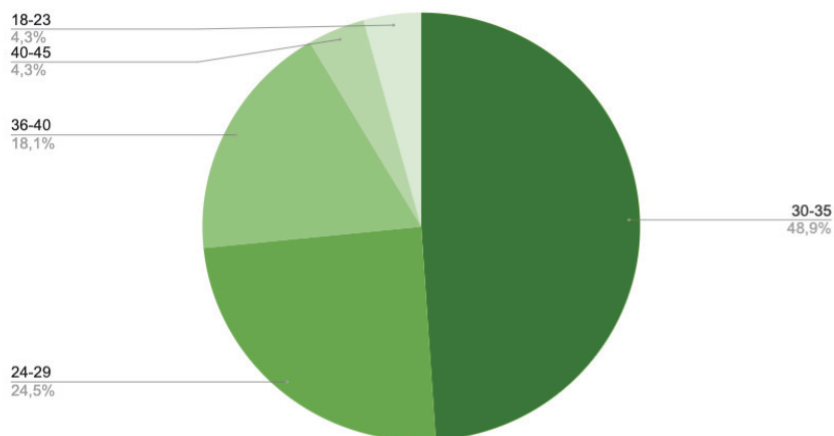


Figure 1. Age of respondents

Source: by author.

The majority of respondents have no children (57.4%), mothers of one child made up 23.4% of the

sample, and mothers of two children made up 19.1% of the sample (see Figure 2).

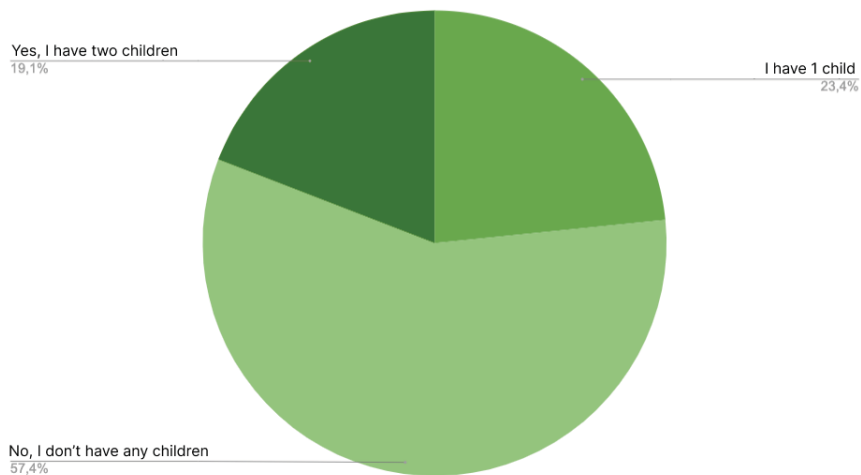


Figure 2. The presence and number of children among the respondents

Source: by author.

30.9% of the survey participants at the time of the study lived in a city with a population of up to 1 million inhabitants, 29.8% - in a city with a population of more than 5 million inhabitants, 28.7% - in a city with a population of 1-5 million inhabitants, 4.3% - in small settlements of up to 5,000 people, which allows us to say that the majority of mo-

dern freelancers live in million-plus cities of different sizes.

At the same time, 6.4% of respondents consider themselves to be so-called digital nomads - digital nomads - these are people who work remotely and at the same time travel, do not live permanently in one place (see Figure 3).

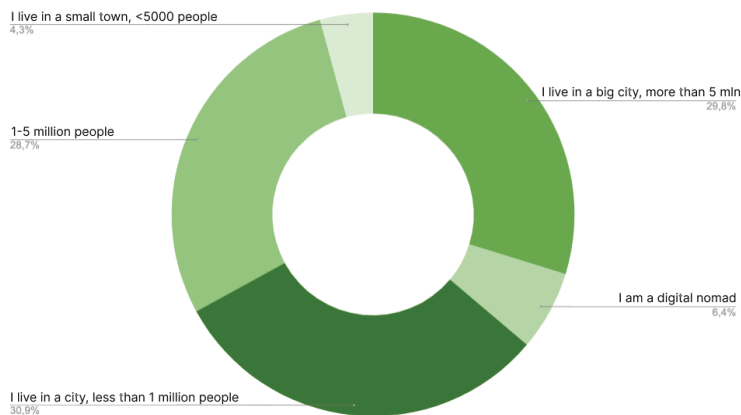


Figure 3. Places of residence of survey participants

Source: by author.

Almost half of the respondents (48.9%) consider themselves to be freelancers, 31.9% at the time of the study work remotely for one company, 12.8% combine remote work in the company and freelance

(also work for themselves), 6.4% at the time of the study did not work, but worked remotely for a year before the study (see Figure 4).

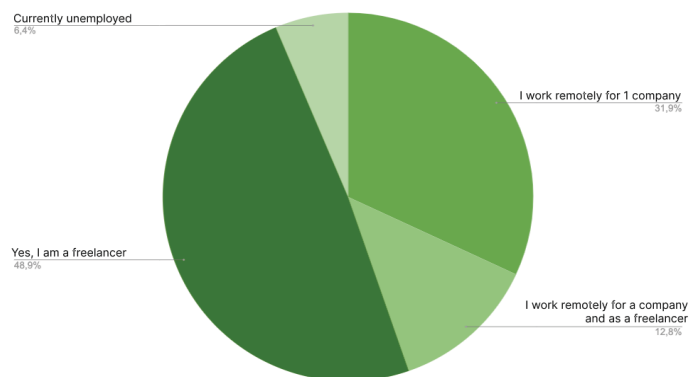


Figure 4. Place of work of the respondents

Source: by author.

The vast majority of women surveyed (90.5%) have at least one higher education. Among them, 74.5% of respondents have one higher education,

13.8% have two higher education, and 2.1% of women surveyed have three higher education (see Figure 5).

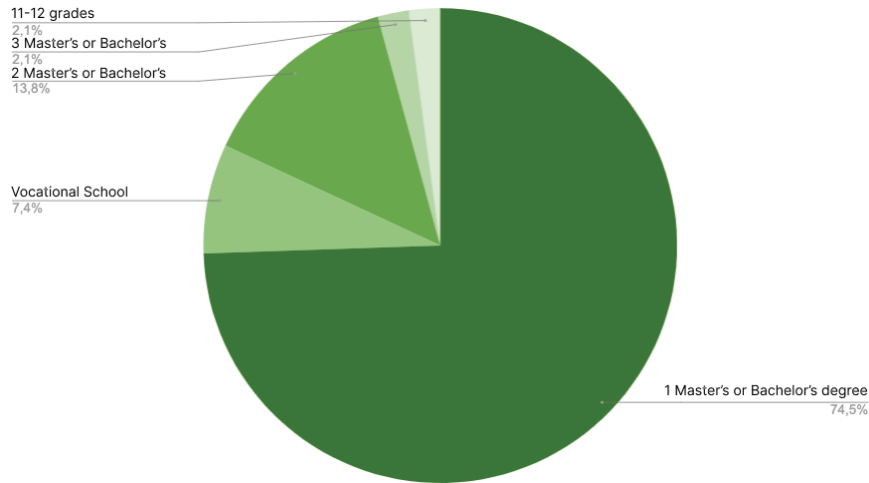


Figure 5. The level of education of the respondents

Source: by author.

In addition, it is important to note that among the study participants, almost half (48.9%) are self-taught, and about a third (35.1%) work directly in their specialty, the rest of the survey participants mostly work in related fields, or not directly in their specialty, one way or another use the skills acquired during getting their degree in their today's work.

If we analyze the responses of respondents who

have children, we will see that the picture does not fundamentally change. Here, in the same way, half of the respondents (52.4%) are self-taught and a little more than a third (40.5%) work directly in their specialty. 7.4% answer that they work partly in their specialty and use in today's work the knowledge and skills acquired during their basic education (see Figure 6).

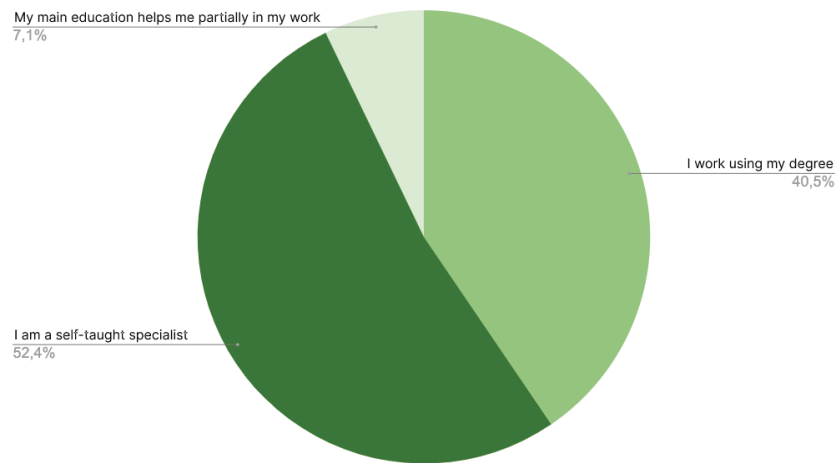


Figure 6. Distribution of workers according to their basic education and self-taught workers

Source: by author.

The female freelancers interviewed have different levels of experience in their profession. Most experience (10-15 years) have 16% of respondents, 1-2 years and 3-4 years of experience have 13.8% of respondents, respectively. It can also be noted

here that, in total, about a quarter of the survey participants (27.6%) have less than 3 years of experience, as well as about a quarter of the respondents (27.7%) have more than 9 years of experience (see Figure 7).

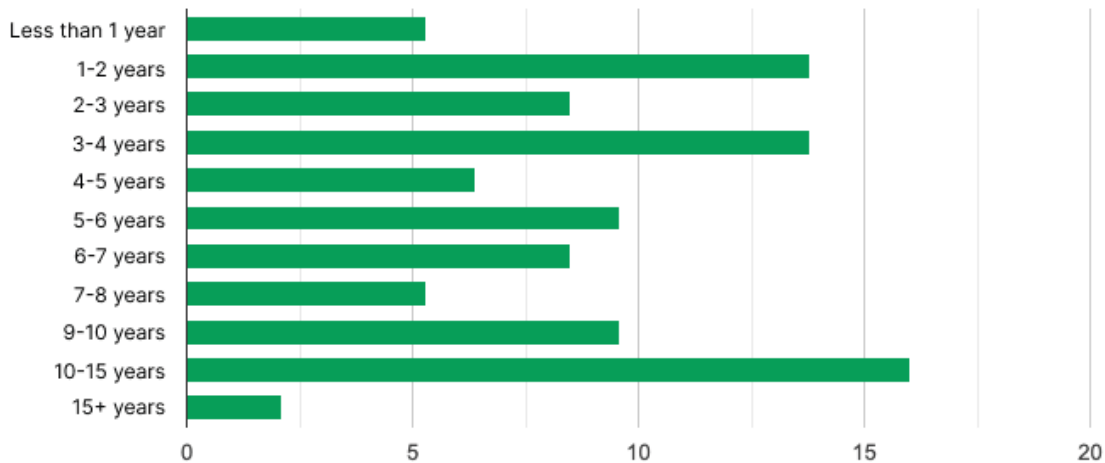


Figure 7. Work experience of respondents

Source: by author.

Let's look at how the participants of the survey characterized the productivity of their work depending on the place of work.

The vast majority of respondents (64.9%) work from home and claim that working from home does not interfere with their productivity. Every fifth participant (19.1%) works from home, and feels that she could be more productive. At the same time, as such, there is no gap in the responses of mothers and

women who do not have children. Among mothers working from home, 61.9% are satisfied with their productivity, among working women who do not have children, this number is 66.7%.

4 out of 5 respondents (81.9%) use their own computer or laptop for work, 18.1% of respondents answer that their computer or laptop is provided by the company or client on which they work (see Figure 8).

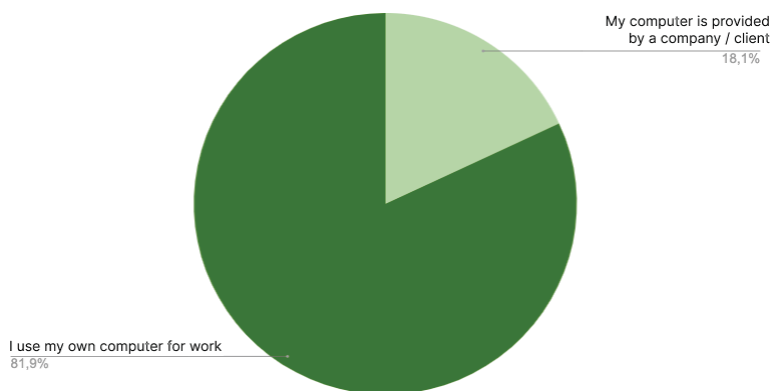


Figure 8. The origin of the computer that the respondents use for work

Source: by author.

Almost half of the respondents did not work remotely before the pandemic (47.9%). Thus, we can say that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected

the change of occupation in half of the respondents (see Figure 9).

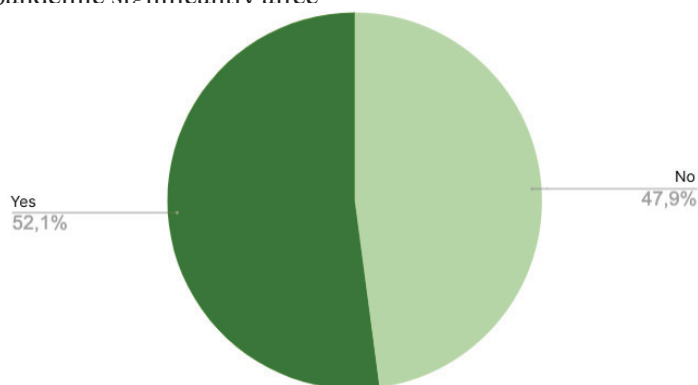


Figure 9. Remote work experience prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: by author.

More than a third of the women surveyed (35.1%) claim that their attitude to work has not changed after the COVID-19 pandemic and that they work in the same place as before the pandemic. 18.1% of respondents prefer a hybrid work schedule. 16% have

completely changed their field of activity, 16% after the pandemic prefer to work only in a remote format. 5.3% of women have started their own business.

Analyzing the data of Figure 10 also leads to interesting conclusions.

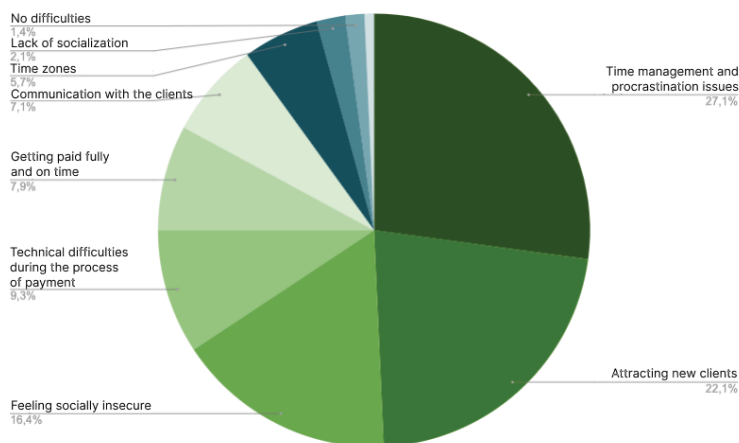


Figure 10. Difficulties experienced by female freelancers at work

Source: by author.

Thus, more than a quarter of the surveyed freelancers (27.1%) noted difficulties with self-organization and procrastination, in second place in the list of difficulties faced by female freelancers, finding new clients - 22.1% of respondents face this difficulty. 16.4% of respondents feel social insecurity, and a total of 17.2% of survey participants experience various kinds of difficulties with receiving payment (9.3% of survey participants experience technical difficulties with payment, and 7.9% of respondents experience difficulties with receiving payment on time). 7.1% of respondents noted that they experience difficulties when communicating with customers. Only 1.4% of the women surveyed do not feel difficulties in their freelance work.

Conclusions

From the presented data, according to the results of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The main core of the sample consisted of women aged 25-40 years, residents of million-plus cities in different countries, with at least one higher education.

2. Every second participant of the study is “self-taught”, that means that they do not have a specialized education in the profession in which they currently work. Among working mothers, the distribution remains the same.

3. Every second participant in the study has no children. Every second participant has one or two children.

4. Among freelance mothers, the presence of one and two children living directly with the survey participants was distributed approximately equally.

5. Every second participant of the study did not work remotely before the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Every fourth participant of the survey is just starting her career in the field in which she works and has less than 3 years of experience in this field.

7. Every fourth participant in the survey has more than 9 years of experience in the field in which she works.

8. The subjective perception of their own productivity when working remotely from home among the participants of the study does not differ much depending on the presence or absence of children.

9. According to our study, 2 out of 3 respondents claim that various kinds of changes have taken place in their working life after the pandemic. Every 6th woman claims that after the pandemic she would like to work only remotely. Every 6th woman claims that during the pandemic she completely changed the area of business. Almost every 5th woman after the pandemic prefers a hybrid work schedule.

10. A third of the female respondents have not changed their workplace during the pandemic.

11. Every fourth female freelancer experiences difficulties with self-organization, every fifth - difficulties with finding new clients and projects to work on, every sixth is experiencing social insecurity.

Thus, the study showed that the subjective perception of one's own productivity and problems with productivity and time management when working remotely from home does not differ between mothers and women who do not have children, and exactly the same distribution of self-taught women does not differ in cases when we analyze the responses of mothers and women who do not have

children. It is also important to add that this topic is certainly of scientific interest and requires further study and in-depth analysis. In modern realities, where women and especially mothers have to combine full-time work, most of the household and child care responsibilities, the issues of “work-life balance”, time management and productivity in remote work play a very important role.

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