MAPPING THE RESEARCH TRENDS OF TELEWORKING

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Abstract
Teleworking is a form of organising and performing work, by which the employee works in another place than the work place organised by the employer and uses information and communication technology. The purpose of this paper is mapping the research trends of teleworking. For this, we conducted a bibliometric analysis on teleworking literature. Through this research we aimed to answer the following questions: How many scientific papers on teleworking have been published in journals? How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the interest of researchers on teleworking? What are the most productive journals, countries and authors on the subject of teleworking? What are the most cited papers on teleworking? What are the most frequent keywords in published documents on teleworking? The data used for this study were extracted from the Web of Science database, and the results were produced by the bibliometrix R package.

Key words: *bibliometrics; digital technology; information and communication technology; telework; work*

JEL Classification: *J24, J28, I31, O33*

I. INTRODUCTION

Work is a conscious, human-specific activity aimed at a particular purpose. The right to work is considered a fundamental and inalienable human right. The Romanian Constitution, in Article 41, shows that the right to work cannot be restricted, and the choice of profession, trade or occupation, as well as the work place is free. Moreover, The Labour Code, approved by Law no. 53/2003, refers to the concept of freedom of work as a fundamental principle. Through the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Union has enshrined the right to work and freedom of choice of occupation. Thus, everyone has the right to work and the right to pursue a freely chosen or accepted occupation. Every citizen of the Union has the freedom to seek employment, work, establish himself, or provide services in any Member State. At the global level, the International Labour Organization is developing international labour standards.

According to Article 2 of the European Framework Agreement on Telework (2002), telework is "a form of organising and/or performing work, using information technology, in the context of an employment contract/relationship, where work, which could also be performed at the employer's premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis". In a research report published by Eurofound (2020), telework and information and communication technology (ICT) - based mobile work is defined as "any type of work arrangement where workers work remotely, away from an employer's premises or fixed location, using digital technologies such as networks, laptops, mobile phones and the internet". To a national level, telework has been regulated since 2018 by Law no. 81/2018. Article 2 defines teleworking as "the form of work organisation by which the employee, on a regular and voluntary basis, performs the specific duties assigned to his function, occupation or profession in a place other than the work place organised by the employer, at least one day a month, using ICT".

Through teleworking, employees work in a location other than the employer's offices, and the employee has no personal contact with his co-workers but can communicate with them electronically. One dimension that characterises the concepts of conventional and innovative offices is the office's location, for example, teleworking versus conventional office. With the introduction of ICT and more flexible ways of organising work processes, office employees' work environment has changed substantially, with an increasing number of organisations allowing office employees to work at home (De Croon, Sluiter et al., 2005). When computer networks connect people and machines, they become social networks. Such computer-supported social networks are becoming important bases of virtual communities, computer-supported collaborative work, and telework (Wellman, Salaff et al., 1996). An IBM study by Hill, Ferris et al. (2003) compares how three work venues

(traditional office, virtual office, and home office) can influence aspects of work (performance in the workplace, motivation for work, job retention, success in terms of workload, and career opportunity), and personal/family life (work/life balance and personal/family success).

The purpose of this paper is mapping the research trends of teleworking. For this, we conducted a bibliometric analysis on teleworking literature. Through this research we aimed to answer the following questions: How many scientific papers on teleworking have been published in journals? How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the interest of researchers on teleworking? What are the most productive journals, countries and authors on the subject of teleworking? What are the most cited papers on teleworking? What are the most frequent keywords in published documents on teleworking?

II.REVIEW OF THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

The concept of teleworking has prompted debate in the scientific literature on its definition. It has been argued that the lack of a single definition of teleworking hinders academic research. However, the claim that all research should use a single definition in this field is contested (Sullivan, 2003). In 2007, the assessment carried out by Wilks and Billsberry leads to the question of whether the term "teleworking" has lost much of its value in today's world of work, suggesting the new term "home-anchored worker" as a less complex and valuable substitute.

The study of teleworking has gained significant attention in the literature, both for academic relevance and its practical implications. Research into the works published in the academic journals shows concerns for the review of literature on teleworking to identify both positive and negative aspects (Baruch, 2001; Bailey and Kurland, 2002; Gajendran and Harrison, 2007). In addition to the study of developments in teleworking, the authors of these reviews were also concerned about setting the agenda for future research.

In a case study, Crossan and Burton (1993) dealt with teleworking stereotypes, and Kurland and Bailey (1999) identified the organisational advantages and challenges of teleworking in four alternative forms of work: home-based teleworking, satellite offices, neighbourhood work centres and mobile work. Fairweather (1999) analysed the different ways in which teleworking could be linked to employment surveillance, making recommendations on how to make it more acceptable. Daniels, Lamond et al. (2001) have developed an explanatory model for the organisational adoption of teleworking and several proposals for adopting different forms of teleworking. Exploring the relationship between the adoption of teleworking, flexibility in the workplace, and the firm's performance, Martínez Sánchez, Pérez Pérez et al. (2007) carry out an empirical study on a representative sample of 479 small and medium-sized firms. The results indicate that firms' performance is positively linked to the use of teleworking, flexible program, contingent work, and spatial decentralisation. The contribution of teleworking to the firm's performance is very significant, which suggests that teleworking can increase organisational flexibility and generate a sustainable competitive advantage.

Studying teleworking in the context of atypical forms of employment, Marica (2018) notes that the literature provides arguments both for and against this type of work, the consequence of which is the absence of a convincing pattern of work organisation, capable of clearly describing the importance and benefits of implementing homework policies within the company and providing an accurate assessment of costs and benefits from both employers and employees' point of view.

Baruch (2000) explores how teleworking is perceived by employees and highlights its potential benefits and pitfalls. Its study explores, in particular, the impact of teleworking on effectiveness, the quality of working life, and family life. Golden, Veiga et al. (2006) have investigated the impact of teleworking on the work-family conflict. Avoiding the work-family conflict and the employees' emotional and physical well-being also came to the attention of Lapierre and Allen (2006), who conducted a study involving 230 employees from multiple organisations and industries. Mann and Holdsworth (2003) examine the psychological impact of teleworking compared to work in the office. The results suggest a negative emotional impact of teleworking, especially in terms of emotions such as loneliness, irritation, concern and guilt, and employees who used teleworking felt much more symptoms of stress than office employees.

Cascio (2000) notes, two decades ago, that virtual jobs, where employees operate remotely from each other and from managers, are a reality and will become even more common in the future. It found that virtual jobs' benefits can be offset by factors such as setup and maintenance costs, loss of cost efficiency, isolation, and lack of confidence. Teleworking and virtual teams are not suitable for all jobs, all employees, or all managers. Looking at the organisational context of teleworking's deployment, Illegems, Verbeke et al. (2001) consider that the adoption of teleworking requires careful analysis of all the elements that may influence the implementation of teleworking in order to identify the relevant drivers and constraints for the implementation of teleworking. Home teleworking is driving a change in the working relationship, and more records and special attention are

needed before implementing home teleworking (Harris, 2003). Besides, it has been found that occupational isolation hurts performance in the workplace, with the impact on labour outcomes increasing concerning the length of teleworking, while more face-to-face interactions and access to communication-enhancing technology tend to diminish its impact (Golden, Veiga et al., 2008).

Nowadays, teleworking has been adopted by an increasing number of private but also public entities. Many public organisations are implementing teleworking to improve the working conditions of civil servants. Looking at the effects of the use of teleworking on public servants in order to identify the benefits, De Vries, Tummers et al. (2019) found that public servants experience quite adverse effects from teleworking, including greater professional isolation and less organisational commitment on the days when they have worked entirely from home.

Studying the mechanisms for improving labour productivity in Japan through teleworking, Kazekami (2000) finds that the correct number of telework hours increases labour productivity, but when the number of teleworking hours is too high, labour productivity is falling. In addition, teleworking increases life satisfaction, and life satisfaction improves labour productivity. However, teleworking increases the stress of balancing work and domestic chores and stress decreases life satisfaction. Although teleworking increases workplace happiness and satisfaction, these factors do not influence labour productivity. Examining the consequences of adopting flexible working practices on labour intensification, Kelliher and Anderson (2010) show that flexible workers have higher job satisfaction levels and organisational commitment. Still, they perceive some form of obligation for flexible working capacity, at which, based on the theory of social exchange, they respond by intensifying work, offering their employers benefits in the form of an additional effort. Based on the theory of self-determination, Brunelle and Fortin (2021) have carried out current research to understand teleworking's dynamics on employee satisfaction in the workplace. The analysis results indicate that teleworking is a better way to meet the psychological needs of workers for autonomy, competence, and relationships. The findings of a study carried by Negruşa and Butoi (2022) reveal that even if the working hours increased a lot in telework system, the respondents displayed their overall satisfaction and willingness to continue working from home.

Exploring teleworking's effect on experience, calculation and time use, Steward (2020) finds that employees using teleworking rarely work flexibly during conventional working hours and are working more and more in the evening and weekends. Also, isolated from the office and colleagues, they recalculate time in relation to an optimally productive hour. Teleworking is characterised less by time flexibility than increasing periods of work. Wondering the future of work, Santana and Cobo (2020) conduct a bibliometric analysis based on the articles published in the WoS database. They believe that research is needed to understand teleworking in terms of promotions, compensation and employee-supervisor relationship.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On 24 February 2022, we searched in the WoS database, in collections Science Citation Index Expanded (1975-present), Social Sciences Citation Index (1975-present) and Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) (2017-present), of documents on teleworking, and we found 1328 titles, from which we selected only articles, reviews, and proceedings papers. No other restrictions were imposed. We performed a bibliometric analysis of 1236 documents with the R software version 4.1.2 (R Core Team, 2021), RStudio version 2021.09.1, and the Bibliometrix package developed by Aria and Cuccurullo (2017).

During the period between 1 January 1982 and 24 February 2022, 3277 researchers published 1236 documents on teleworking in 653 journals indexed by WoS database. The annual scientific production is presented in figure 1. The year 2019 (n = 61) marks a double documents number compared to 2016 (n = 28). The average citations number per years varies. In 2020 is the highest (5.53), followed by 2006 (5.47), and 2015 (4.48). The pandemic determined an explosion of teleworking articles, marked by 152 studies in 2020 (a variation of 149.2% compared to 2019), and 360 documents in 2021 (a variation of 136.8% compared to 2020). In 2022, there are 26 articles on teleworking published in the WoS database.

The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic has affected the lives of millions of employees worldwide in different ways, varying from unemployment to passing to teleworking. Companies have been using teleworking to ensure the employees' safety and to offer continuity to the economic activity. Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garces (2020) analyse teleworking implementation as security practice to face the COVID-19 crisis. Morilla-Luchena, Muñoz-Moreno et al. (2021) analyse social services teleworking in the alert pandemic period in Spain. As a response to the sanitary crises, many people have started working from home. Dey, Frazis et al. (2020) examines the relation between the employees' capacity to work from home and actual teleworking incidence. The study also estimates the percentage of teleworking employees before the pandemics in activity fields that allow this kind of work. The results show that almost 45% of the USA employees belong to domains that allow teleworking.

In order to ensure a transparent legal and economic relationship between employer and employee, an additional document (for contracts of employment in progress) must be drawn up for a contract of employment specifying: type of work, duration, salary, allowances, the places where the employee will work, the conditions under which certain expenses will be borne by the employer (particular attention should be paid to these types of expenditure in terms of deductibility when calculating profit tax), the confidentiality and veracity of the data transmitted electronically by the employee (the use of an e-signature with a digital certificate ensures security and integrity of documents).

The journal with the most numerous papers on teleworking is New Technology Work and Employment, with 58 articles, followed by Sustainability, with 40 documents, and International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, with 35 articles. Other journals with an important number of documents are Frontiers in Psychology (n = 19), Work - A Journal of Prevention Assessment & Rehabilitation (n = 16), Revista General del Derecho del Trabajo y de la Seguridad Social (n = 15). Most local cited sources (from reference lists) belong to journals: New Technology Work and Employment (n = 1465), Journal of Applied Psychology (n = 1264), Journal of Organizational Behavior (n = 822), Journal of Vocational Behavior (n = 689), Human relations (n = 557), and Academy of Management Journal (n = 502).
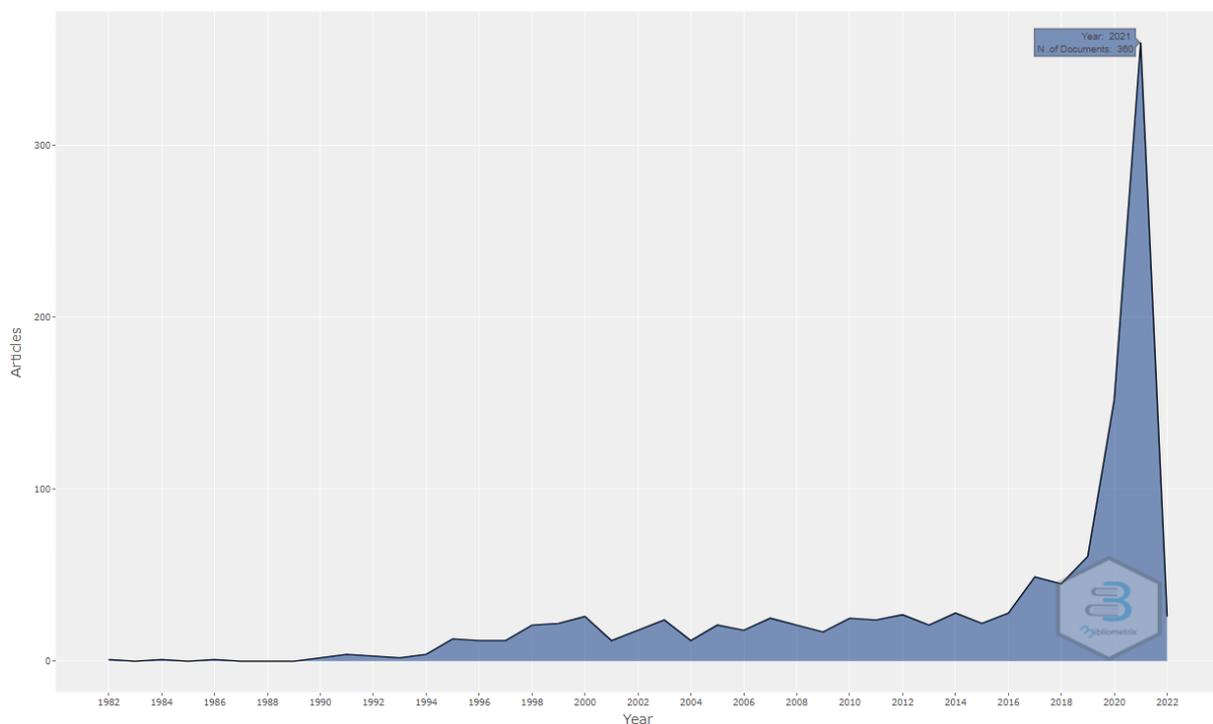

Figure 1 - Annual scientific production

The list of top productive authors on teleworking is opened by Golden, T. D. (h-index 13), with 16 articles, followed by Higa, K., Peters, P., and Tietze, S., with 7 studies each, Caillier, J. G., Hislop, D., and Taskin, L., with 6 publications each.

The United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Spain are the top contributors. Table 1 shows country scientific production, with total citations and average article citations.

Table 1. Country scientific production, with total citations and average article citations

Country	Frequency	Total Citations	Average Article Citations
United States of America	520	8161	35.026
United Kingdom	233	4026	33
Spain	203	651	7.076
Japan	148	195	4.643
France	123	265	6.31
Canada	121	1895	30.565
Netherlands	107	991	24.171
Italy	97	305	7.262
Germany	92	518	11.021
Australia	90	782	19.55

Top 10 most cited documents on teleworking are presented in table 2. On first rank is Gajendran, R.S. and Harrison, D.A. (2007), with the paper The good, the bad, and the unknown about telecommuting: Meta-analysis of psychological mediators and individual consequences, followed by Wellman, B., Salaff, J. et al. (1996), Computer networks as social networks: Collaborative work, telework, and virtual community, and Bailey, D.E. and Kurland, N.B. (2002), A review of telework research: findings, new directions, and lessons for the study of modern work.

Table 2. Top 10 most cited documents

Document	Total citations	Total citations per year
Gajendran R.S., Harrison, D.A. (2007) *The good, the bad, and the unknown about telecommuting: Meta-analysis of psychological mediators and individual consequences*, Journal of Applied Psychology	601	37.6
Wellman, B., Salaff, J., Dimitrova, D., Garton, L., Gulia, M., Haythornthwaite, C. (1996) *Computer networks as social networks: Collaborative work, telework, and virtual community*, Annual Review of Sociology	497	18.4
Bailey, D.E., Kurland, N.B. (2002) *A review of telework research: findings, new directions, and lessons for the study of modern work*, Journal of Organizational Behavior	477	22.7
Kossek E.E., Lautsch, B. A., Eaton, S.C. (2006) *Telecommuting, control, and boundary management: Correlates of policy use and practice, job control, and work–family effectiveness*, Journal of Vocational Behavior	405	23.8
Kelliher, C., Anderson, D. (2010) *Doing more with less? Flexible working practices and the intensification of work*, Human Relations	302	23.2
Lapierre, L.M., Allen, T.D. (2006) *Work-supportive family, family-supportive supervision, use of organizational benefits, and problem-focused coping: Implications for work-family conflict and employee well-being*, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology	287	16.9
Cascio, W.F. (2000) *Managing a virtual workplace*, Academy of Management Executive	262	11.4
Allen, T.D., Golden, T.D., Shockley, K.M. (2015) *How Effective Is Telecommuting? Assessing the Status of Our Scientific Findings*, Psychological Science in the Public Interest	239	29.9
De Croon, E.M., Sluiter, J.K., Kuijer, P.P.F.M., Frings-Dresen, M.H.W. (2005) *The effect of office concepts on worker health and performance: a systematic review of the literature*, Ergonomics	228	12.7
Hill, E.J., Ferris, M., Martinson, V. (2003) *Does it matter where you work? A comparison of how three work venues (traditional office, virtual office, and home office) influence aspects of work and personal/family life*, Journal of Vocational Behavior	223	11.1

An examination of the 20 most frequent keywords in teleworking papers (table 3) reveals, in addition to the terms "telework", "teleworking", and "telecommuting", other forms of organising and performing work, such as "remote work", "homeworking", "working from home", but also words that characterize the work, such as "flexibility" and productivity". The number of occurrences of the words "covid-19", "pandemic", "coronavirus" shows concerns of researchers in the current pandemic period on teleworking research, as a safety practice adopted by public and private organizations. Other keywords such as "work-life balance", "job satisfaction", "well-being", "mental health", "stress", and "gender" complete the picture of the first 20 terms in terms of number of occurrences in the analysed collection.

Table 3. Top 20 most frequent author's keywords

Words	Occurrences	Words	Occurrences
telework	328	remote working	23
covid-19	223	gender	22
teleworking	175	mental health	22
telecommuting	112	productivity	21
remote work	51	covid-19 pandemic	20
work-life balance	47	work from home	20
pandemic	43	stress	19
job satisfaction	38	flexibility	18
working from home	30	homeworking	18
well-being	25	coronavirus	16

Teleworking poses quite a lot of problems for employees related to communication, collaboration and ICT use. A study (Raišienė, Rapuano et al., 2020) examined teleworking using a questionnaire on 436 employees in Lithuania who used teleworking during the COVID-19 quarantine period. The results suggest differences in the assessment of factors influencing the efficiency of teleworking and the qualities required of a distance worker, depending on gender, age, education, work experience and teleworking experience. For people with disabilities, the World Health Organization (2020) has recommended that employers allow disabled workers to use teleworking where possible. Schur, Ameri et al. (2020) analysed pre-COVID data on disability and homework, noting that disabled workers are now more likely to work from home, and many can benefit from extensive opportunities to work at home, but the types of jobs they have limit this potential.

The question arises as to whether the employer can monitor the teleworking scheme. Yes, the answer is an entity using a particular electronic platform (e.g. invoicing) allows managing the period and performance of

the employee. Moreover, electronic timings can be carried out (for example, sending an employee's mobile phone message both at the start of work and at the end of work so that the employee can track the tasks performed during that period). In this way, one can accurately track an employee's performance on a telework-like basis, and the employee becomes more responsible and interested in achieving the goals, which will increase satisfaction for both partners (employee and employer).

Figure 2 shows the thematic map of author's keywords. The keywords are grouped on seven clusters, each having presented three labels and the position according to the four themes.
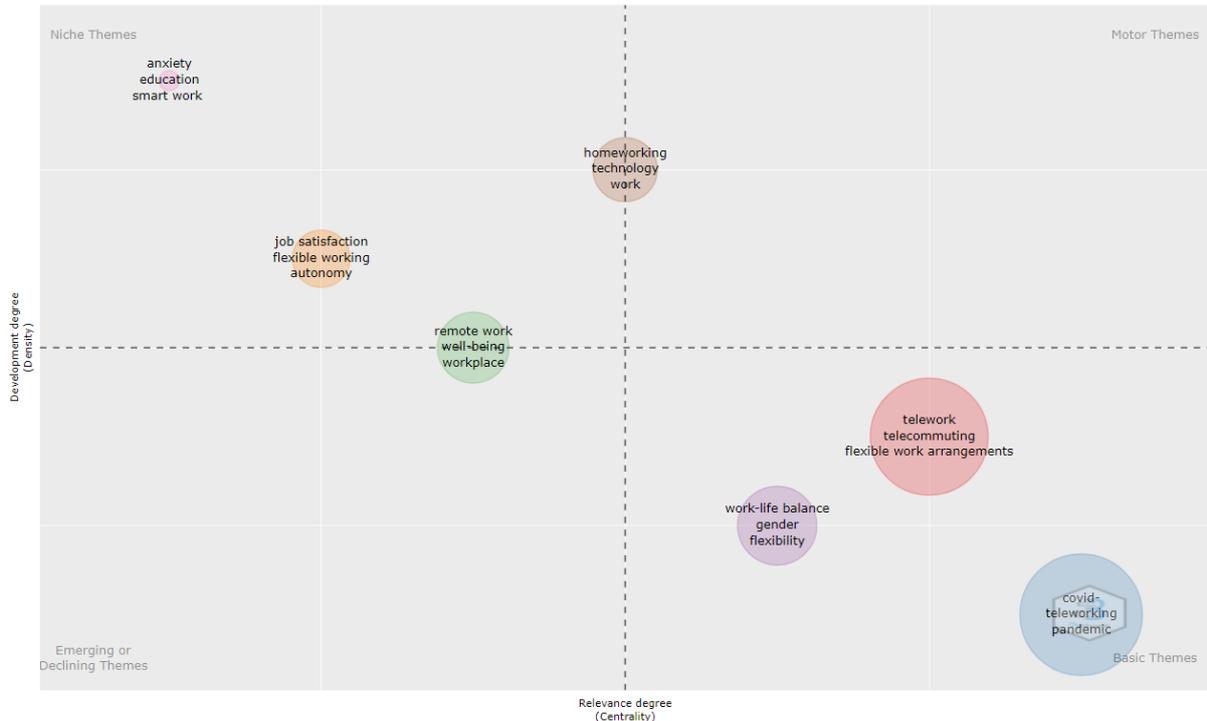
Figure 2 - Thematic map for author's keywords

The method correspondence analysis applied on author's keywords from the data collection used in research reveals two clusters, as can be seen in figure 3.
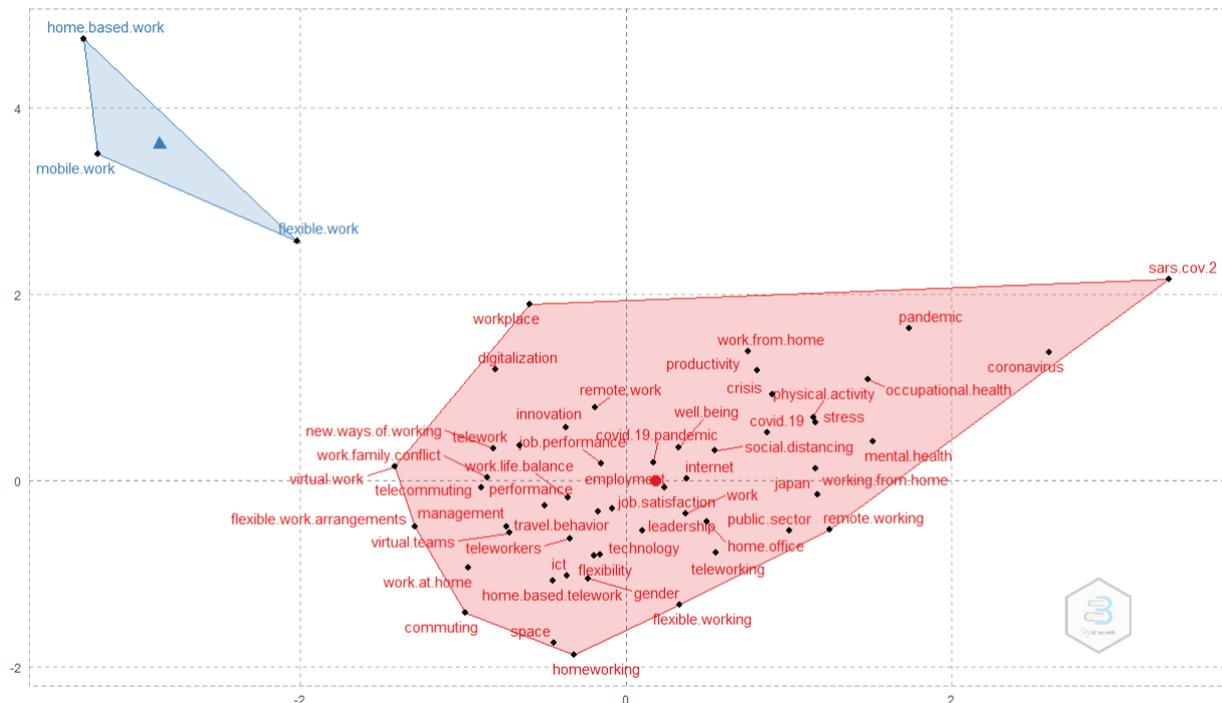
Figure 3 - Conceptual structure map (factorial analysis)

In the current pandemic conditions, teleworking is both an advantage and a necessity. The advantage we look at is from the point of view of the employee who will provide services to the company and under conditions that limit free movement rights. In this respect, the employee will be paid and free the state budget from technological unemployment payment, for example. The need for teleworking is "imposed" by the requirements of the private company or publicly owned establishment, in the sense of ensuring business continuity (this principle is essential in the current context of the pandemic, and more attention will be paid to it both by the management of the company and by the auditors of the annual financial statements). This is also required by the digital era, which increasingly governs the entire economic spectrum. Zamfir and Aldea (2020) explored the potential transformations of labour markets in post-pandemic times, supporting the growing importance of digital skills for the labour market's resilience.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Work is a human activity creating goods and services. Everyone has the right to work and to support himself, to support others and to develop a business, to develop economic and social policies, etc. The work currently takes various forms and can be studied in various ways.

In this paper we conducted a bibliometric analysis to map the research trends of teleworking. The results of the quantitative research undertaken allowed to ascertain an ascending trend regarding the number of papers published on teleworking. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant increase in the number of articles published on telework. Teleworking has been used by companies to ensure the safety of employees and to provide continuity to economic activity. Under these circumstances, the researchers have studied the implementation of teleworking in occupations where it has been possible.

The United States and the United Kingdom are countries with the largest contribution to the literature on teleworking. The journal New Technology Work and Employment (impact factor 4.231) has published the highest number of studies investigating teleworking, and Timothy D. Golden from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Lally School of Management (New York, United States) is the most productive author on the subject.

Regardless the future research agenda on teleworking, we consider that studies should aim to identify the impact of teleworking on the efficiency, productivity and job satisfaction of employees, but also the effects on the performance of the employer. What is the effect of adopting teleworking on the quality of professional life, individual motivation, behavior? Is the impact of telework on well-being and work-life conflict beneficial? Does teleworking cause professional isolation, decreased socialization, additional stress, with negative consequences on physical and mental health? The influence of ICT dynamics and digital skills on telework, as well as gender studies related to teleworking can also be included in the area of research concerns. Research is also needed to study how teleworking evolves as the economy recovers from the pandemic over the next few years.

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