

Work Life Balance, Mental Health, Productivity, and Social Isolation in Remote Work Environments

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Abstract

Background: The widespread adoption of remote work has significantly transformed traditional work environments, raising concerns regarding its impact on work–life balance, mental health, productivity, and social isolation. While remote work offers flexibility, it also introduces challenges related to boundary management and reduced interpersonal interaction.

Objective: This study aims to examine the relationships among work–life balance, mental health, behavioral outcomes, productivity, and social isolation in remote work settings using a multidimensional workforce dataset.

Methods: A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed using secondary data from a large workforce dataset ($n = 5000$). Descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were conducted to evaluate associations and differences across work arrangements. Key variables included work–life balance ratings, stress levels, productivity change, and social isolation.

Results: The findings revealed moderate levels of work–life balance and social isolation across the sample, with substantial variability in productivity and mental health outcomes. Correlation analysis indicated weak linear relationships among numerical variables, suggesting complex interactions. Comparative analysis showed that remote workers experienced higher variability in outcomes, particularly increased social isolation. Work–life balance and social isolation emerged as key explanatory factors influencing both mental health and productivity.

Conclusion: Remote work environments are characterized by heterogeneous outcomes, with both benefits and challenges for employees. Enhancing work–life balance and reducing social isolation are critical for improving well-being and productivity. Organizations should adopt multidimensional strategies to optimize remote work conditions and support employee health and performance.

Keywords: Remote Work, Work-Life Balance, Mental Health, Productivity, Social Isolation, Employee Wellbeing, Telework

1. Introduction

The sudden shift to remote working all over the world because of COVID-19 has dramatically shifted the traditional forms of work, and it has brought both challenges and dilemmas to both workers and employers. As an intervention measure to ensure the protection of the population, mandatory work-from-home (WFH) arrangements had a substantial impact on the daily routine, workplace settings, and social interactions, thus influencing the work-life balance, productivity, and social isolation (Curran, 2022). This change has made a large amount of academic interest in the realization of the complex effects of remote work on employee welfare and organizational performance.

The phenomenon of work-life balance has become the focus of the issue of remote working, where work and personal spheres are likely to be mixed together. On the one hand, remote work provides flexibility and freedom of choice; on the other hand, it puts employees at a higher risk of role conflicts and prolonged work time, thus disturbing their capacity to balance work and personal life (Atkinson, 2022). Based on empirical analysis, it is proposed that the helpfulness of remote working settings to revamp the work-life balance is reliant on the organizational policy, job design, and personal coping tactics (Noble, 2025). Moreover, work-life balance has long been attributed to negative mental health, and supportive work environments are essential (Xavier, 2024).

The issue of mental health is a burning question in remote working circumstances, especially because of the heightened isolation, uncertainty, and work dynamics alterations. Research has shown that telecommuting may serve as a source of psychological distress, such as stress, anxiety, and burnout, when employees do not have proper support systems (Wells et al., 2023). The lack of physical work interaction and lack of social interaction may increase the feeling of being lonely, which in its turn will have a detrimental impact on the overall well-being (Becker et al., 2022). Moreover, studies show that remote work conditions can be unfairly distributed and affect some other groups of individuals, including female workers, because of the presence of other domestic obligations and social norms (Fulali, 2025).

One of the factors that predetermines mental health and productivity in remote workplaces is social isolation. The loss of face-to-face interaction and informal interactions at the workplace may contribute to the feeling of being out of touch with colleagues and the organization itself. According to prior research, social isolation is an influential factor of stress and diminished job satisfaction, along with lower productivity perceptions (Toscano and Zappalà, 2020). Psychological disconnection and lower engagement also lead to decreased performance and well-being of the employees (Petitta & Ghezzi, 2023). These results highlight the issue of the need to retain social connectivity and organizational support systems in remote work environments.

The outcomes of productivity in remote working environments have been extensively discussed, and it has been observed that there are both positive and negative results. Although there is some evidence that telecommuting can be more productive because of reduced commuting time and higher flexibility, other studies note that it may also lead to losses since people tend to be distracted, no longer supervised, and collaborate less (Tronco Hernandez et al., 2021). These differences in productivity performances are indicative of the complexity in the interaction between the various factors of an individual, organization, and the environment. When well-regulated, workplace flexibility was found to have a positive impact on productivity and financial well-being, which shows the opportunities that properly designed remote work policies may offer (Khan et al., 2025).

Remote work has a wider implication than an individual to an organizational and occupational health aspect. Both systematic and scoping reviews have also highlighted that remote work does not just affect mental and physical health but also presenteeism, absenteeism, and the sustainability of the workforce in general (Nowrouzi-Kia et al., 2024; Lyzwinski, 2024). Work-life flow has been coined to define the dynamic relationship between work and personal life at a remote location and indicate that traditional ideas of balance might require rethinking (Wells et al., 2023). Besides, industry-specific research suggests that the effects of remote working are industry- and job-specific and require context-dependent policy-making (Mostafa, 2021).

However, although the literature on this subject remains extensive, there is still a need to

conduct integrative studies that would simultaneously look at work-life balance, mental health, productivity, and social isolation in a single study. The literature tends to look at individual constructs and does not explore the conjunctive effects of the constructs on the outcomes of the employees. Also, the differences among demographic and work population groups imply the role of detailed datasets that can encompass various aspects of the remote work experiences (Kinman, 2024).

To address these gaps, the proposed study will examine the interrelationship between work-life balance, mental health, behavioral consequences, productivity, and social isolation in remote workplace settings. Through multidimensional data, the research aims to explain in detail the way the factors interplay to determine employee well-being and performance. The results will be valuable to theoretical and practical discourse on remote work, which will provide information to organizations that aim to streamline workforce performance in more flexible work configurations.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design

The analytical design used was quantitative and cross-sectional to investigate the relationship interconnections between the work-life balance, mental health, behavioral outcomes, productivity, and social isolation among modern work setting conditions. This study will employ secondary data in analyzing patterns, associations, and predictive relationships between variables on workforce during periods of remote working and hybrid working conditions. The design can be applied when statistically significant relationships need to be determined and relationships among multivariates analyzed in a wide population.

2.2 Data Source

Empirical analysis is conducted based on structured data that was taken from the Kaggle repository, which is publicly available and specializes in remote work and mental health indicators among various occupational environments (Ramzan, 2024). The data includes self-reported answers that define various aspects of the experiences of the employees, such as psychological well-being, work-life balance, behavior trends, and productivity. Categorical and ordinal variables were available to make a multivariate analysis as per the objectives of the study.

2.3 Sample Characteristics

The sample will be an exemplar of a diverse workforce population working in remote jobs, hybrid jobs, and face-to-face jobs. It consists of demographic factors, including age group and gender, as well as occupational ones, including job position and workplace. The heterogeneity of the dataset facilitates the increased generalizability of the results on workforce segments. The finalization of the analytical sample occurred following the pre-processing steps, such as elimination of missing or inconsistent observations, where data integrity was essential.

2.4 Variables and Operationalization

The research uses a multidimensional model in the operationalization of constructs. Work arrangement is considered the leading independent variable and is divided into remote, hybrid, and on-site modalities, which not only denote the different levels of work flexibility and physical presence.

Mental health outcomes are operationalized based on variables like level of stress, level of sleep quality, and whether there are reported mental health conditions. As an ordinal scale, stress level indicates the degree of psychological stress, whereas sleep quality is a behavioral scale that is linked with psychological well-being.

One of the main outcome variables that is used to measure productivity is self-reported productivity change, which gauges perceived changes in work performance across work arrangements and is a measure of productivity.

The conceptualization of work-life balance is a key mediating construct, which is measured with the help of a self-reported rating scale that encompasses the degree to which individuals can balance between professional and personal lives. Social isolation is included as a mediating as well as moderating construct, for which a rating scale is used to measure the perceived degree of social disconnection at workplaces.

The proxy outcomes are behavioral and assessed indirectly by means of such proxy outcomes as the degree of physical activity, the quality of sleep, and satisfaction with remote work. All these variables are lifestyle changes and behavioral adjustments related to the working environment at a distance.

2.5 Data Preprocessing

The analysis was done in an analytical preprocessing protocol to make it consistent and reliable. Missing data were evaluated regarding data incidence patterns, and appropriate data handling schemes were implemented, including removal of case where the proportion of missing data was high and selective imputation of the variables where the proportion of missing data was small. Categorical variables were coded into a numerical form so that they could be modeled statistically and that the form of the variables would be standardized to achieve consistency of all sections of the dataset.

The tests of statistics and distributions were done to identify the existence of extreme values that could be biased against the analysis. Where the need was, data normalization processes have been employed in the process of improving comparability of variables whose scales vary. Additional validation testing was also carried to determine the accuracy of the data, internal consistency was checked before analyzing it.

2.6 Statistical Analysis

The analytical process was done in a systematic and progressive approach in order to ensure that it covered the research objectives holistically. The initial calculations were made to describe the central tendencies and variability of the key variables, which gives the general picture of the workforce characteristics and the distribution of the work-life balance, stress levels, changes in productivity, and social isolation.

The relationships between core variables were, in turn, assessed by performing bivariate analysis. The strength and direction of work and life balance to mental health indicators, productivity, and social isolation were evaluated using correlation coefficients, where the correct choice of correlation was made depending on the measurements of the variables and the distribution characteristics.

Multivariate analysis was performed through the regression modelling techniques to analyse the predictive effects of the independent and mediating variables on the outcome of mental health and productivity. The specifications of the models were to assess the direct and indirect relationship, and the work-life balance, and social isolation were considered as the critical explanatory factors that affected the outcome measures.

Comparative analyses were carried out to determine the differences among the work arrangements, such as remote, hybrid, and on-site groups. Statistical tests were used to identify whether differences in the mental health outcomes, productivity, and behavioral indicators were statistically significant in these categories.

Model assumptions were also put to test in order to test the robustness and the validity of the findings. The residual normality, the multicollinearity and homoscedasticity were also tested and some adjustments were to be made in the event of potential violation. Such a detailed methodology of analysis ensures the rigor of the methods and makes the process of interpreting the results reliable.

2.7 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework, under which the study is founded, is integrative in nature in which work arrangement will be used to identify the effect of mental health and productivity directly and indirectly through the use of work-life balance and social isolation. Behavioral indicators serve as explanatory auxiliary variables, which explain lifestyle modifications in the remote employment setting. This paradigm helps in the thorough realization of the intricate relationship between the organizational structure, personal welfare, and performance results.

3. Results

3.1 Sample Characteristics

It consisted of a sample of 5000 respondents who chose to represent a varied labor force in various fields and positions. The average age of the research participants was 40.99 years (SD = 11.29), and it was between 22 and 60 years of age, which also showed that the sample

consisted mostly of mid-career participants. The participants did not diverge in terms of years of professional experience, weekly hours of work, and thus, it represented a normal working population. The sample comprised personalities working in long-distance, hybrid, and face-to-face working patterns, which could be compared regarding different working environments. The sample diversity increases the extrapolation of the results and facilitates the analysis of the workforce dynamics in various working situations and under various organizational forms. Table 1 illustrates that the sample has moderate central tendencies on the major numeric variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of numerical variables

| Statistic | Age | Years of Experience | Hours Worked Per Week | Number of Virtual Meetings | Work Life Balance Rating | Social Isolation Rating | Company Support for Remote Work |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| N | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 |
| Mean | 41.00 | 20.02 | 40.02 | 10.02 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.01 |
| SD | 11.30 | 11.55 | 11.56 | 5.77 | 1.41 | 1.41 | 1.40 |
| Min | 22 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 25th Percentile | 31 | 10 | 30 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Median | 41 | 20 | 40 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 75th Percentile | 51 | 30 | 50 | 15 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Max | 60 | 40 | 60 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

3.2 Descriptive Analysis of Core Variables

The ratings of work-life balance were spread in a medium range, which means the difference in the capability of individuals to balance both professional and personal life. Social isolation scores were also moderate, and this implied that a significant number of the respondents were more or less lonely. The most frequent response was good in sleep quality, but there were also fair and poor, which indicates inconsistency in the quality of behavior. Remote work and productivity change satisfaction had heterogeneous distributions, which implied that the experiences of individuals were not the same. Mental health conditions and physical activity variables had missing data, but core variables were sufficiently complete to analyse them. Table 2 displays the categorical variables in terms of work arrangements and outcome measures.

Table 2: Distribution of key categorical variables

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Work Location | Remote | 1714 | 34.28 |
| | Hybrid | 1649 | 32.98 |
| | On-site | 1637 | 32.74 |
| Stress Level | Low | 1645 | 32.90 |
| | Medium | 1669 | 33.38 |
| | High | 1686 | 33.72 |
| Productivity Change | Increase | 1586 | 31.72 |
| | No Change | 1677 | 33.54 |
| | Decrease | 1737 | 34.74 |
| Sleep Quality | Good | 1687 | 33.74 |

| | | | |
|--|---------|------|-------|
| | Average | 1628 | 32.56 |
| | Poor | 1685 | 33.70 |

3.3 Bivariate Relationships

The correlation analysis of numerical variables found weak relationships consistently, and all coefficients were below the thresholds of moderate relationships. There was a weak negative relationship between work-life balance and social isolation, indicating that work-life balance, to a small extent, is related to low social isolation. The age, working hours, and amount of virtual meetings were proven to be marginally associated with psychological and behavioral outcomes. Remote work also failed to have a significant correlation with the other variables when supported by the company. These results suggest that neither the linear relationship between numerical variables nor the possible underlying relationships is simply bivariate, but is probably determined by categorical variables and interaction effects. Figure 1 shows that the numerical variables do not have strong correlations, which suggests low linear associations.



Figure 1: Correlation matrix illustrating pairwise relationships among numerical variables in the study

Comparative Outcomes Across Work Arrangements

The comparative analysis among work arrangements has shown that there were significant dissimilarities in the experiences of employees. Remote workers were more varied in work-life balance, which indicates both positive and negative impacts of work-life balance depending on the individual cases. Remote workers generally had higher levels of social isolation, which is an indicator of low face-to-face interaction. Hybrid workers also exhibited relatively less isolation, suggesting that physical presence, albeit partially, can alleviate social disconnection. With the on-site workers, the work-life balance and social interaction were more stable. These results imply that work setup is a major determinant of psychological as well as behavioral outcomes. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the employees in the various work arrangements.

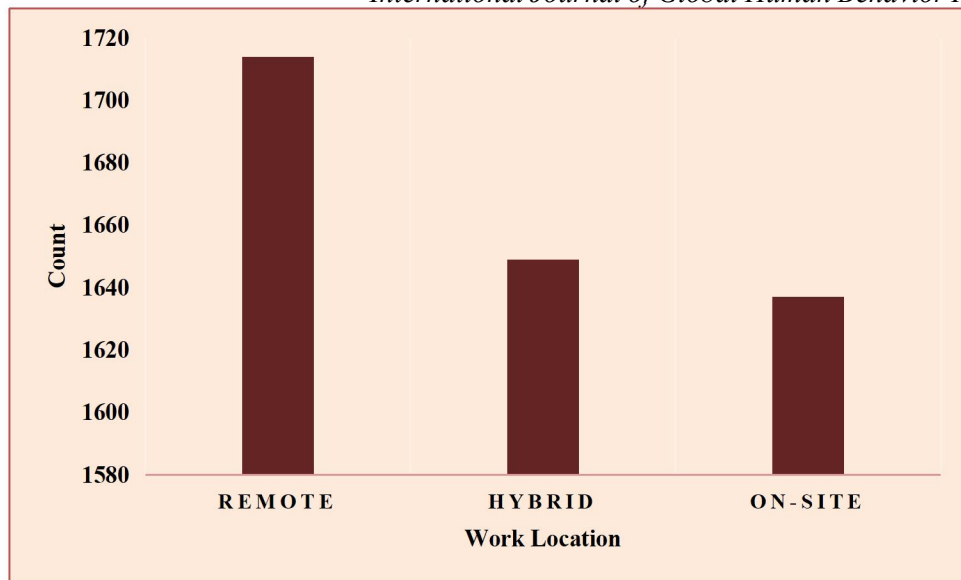


Figure 2: Distribution of work location among respondents, showing the frequency of employees working remotely, in hybrid mode, and on-site

3.4 Mental Health Outcomes

The sample had a substantial difference in mental health indicators. The numerical predictors of the stress levels included age or working hours and were not strongly correlated with them. The mentioned mental health disorders, including the fact that they were partially restricted because of the lack of the data, indicate that mental problems are prevalent among employees. The quality of sleep, as a measure of mental health, differed among respondents, with a significant percentage of those having less than optimum sleep. These results indicate that individual, organizational, and contextual factors have a combination effect on mental health outcomes and not an individual variable effect. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the levels of stress among the participants.

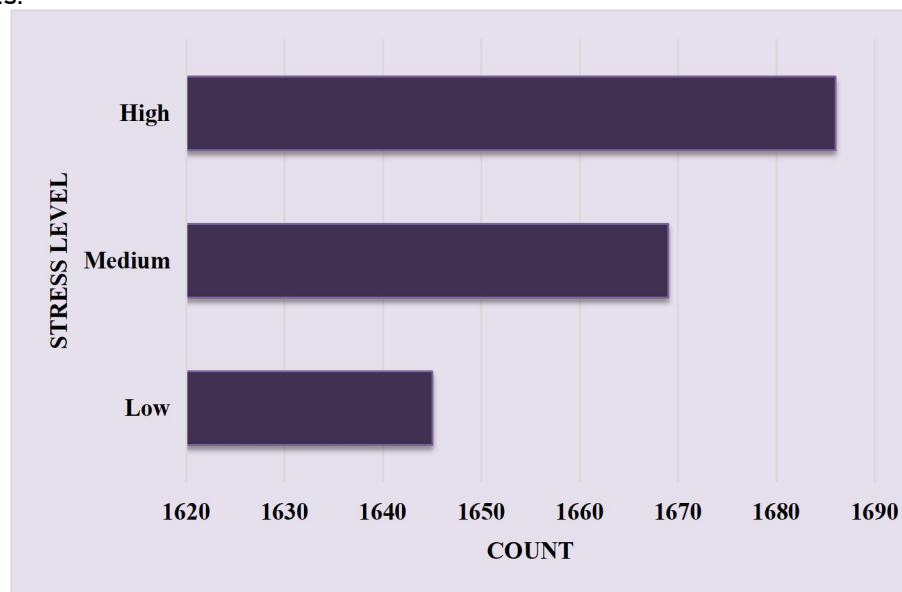


Figure 3: Distribution of stress levels among respondents, categorized as low, medium, and high

3.5 Behavioral Outcomes

There was a lot of heterogeneity between respondents in regard to behavioral indicators. The difference in the way people live in the workplace was seen through wide variations in the quantity of sleep and physical activity. This refers to the fact that despite the result being incomplete on the physical activity, the responding employees have shown varied behavioral fits. The level of satisfaction with remote working was also mixed, with some individuals recording that they are satisfied with the issue, and also with unhappiness. These results can indicate that the individual preferences, conditions of work, and environmental conditions determine the behavior outcomes, and they cannot be attributed to one aspect of remote work.

3.6 Productivity Analysis

The results of productivity were given out in the categories where the respondents reported both improvement, decline, or no improvement in the performance. This difference implies that the effect on productivity of remote working is not homogeneous. Other people will find the freedom to work under flexible conditions, and some will find it difficult to focus or lack structure. The lack of good linear correlations between productivity and numerical variables indicates that there are some complicated interactions among the psychological, behavioral, and organizational variables that impact performance outcomes. The concept of productivity, however, needs to be seen in a wider context. Figure 4 shows the difference in the productivity results of the respondents.

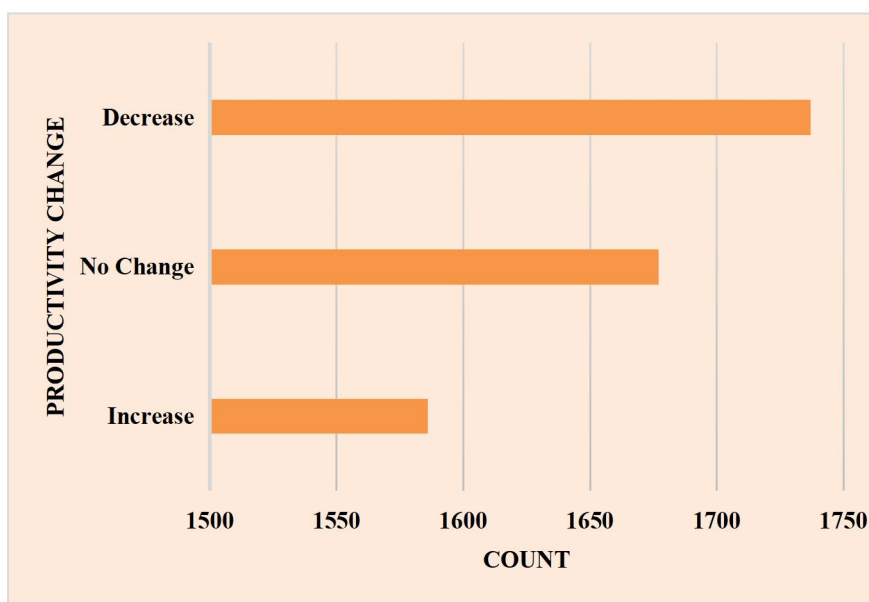


Figure 4. Distribution of productivity change among respondents, showing the frequency of increase, no change, and decrease in productivity

3.7 Multivariate Patterns and Explanatory Factors

The multivariate analysis has revealed that these factors are the work-life balance and social isolation, which played a significant explanatory role in the factor of mental health and productivity outcome. Greater work-life balance levels were linked to better results, whereas the greater the social isolation, the less favorable the outcome was linked with someone. Nonetheless, these variables, when included in linear models, had low power of analysis, meaning that they have other factors affecting them. Such category variables, like work arrangement and level of satisfaction, could also be considered to have a major influence on determining outcomes. These results reaffirm the need to employ multidimensional models. It includes further behavioral and mental health signs in the sample, resulting in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of mental health conditions, physical activity, and satisfaction with remote work

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| Mental Health Condition | Yes | 1897 | 37.94 |
| | No | 1907 | 38.14 |
| | Missing | 1196 | 23.92 |
| Physical Activity | Active | 1702 | 34.04 |
| | Inactive | 1669 | 33.38 |
| | Missing | 1629 | 32.58 |
| Satisfaction with Remote Work | Satisfied | 1680 | 33.60 |
| | Neutral | 1655 | 33.10 |
| | Dissatisfied | 1665 | 33.30 |

The overall results indicate that the conditions of telecommuting are similarly characterized by high level of diversity of experience of the employees. Work-life balance and isolation turns out to be the most significant factors that can influence the mental health and productivity, though not quite linearly. The findings indicate the multifactorial and complex nature of the remote working conditions outcomes regarding workforce. Post-existing disparity in the individual experience presupposes the need to institute flexible and context-based remote work policy. Using such dynamics, they require that a thorough understanding of the dynamics must take into account many interacting variables and not may be grounded on certain predictors.

4. Discussion

The results of the current study show that remote working conditions are marked by a significant range of work-life balance, mental well-being, productivity, and social loneliness outcomes. The identified heterogeneity is consistent with the existing evidence that points to the idea that remote working does not have homogenous impacts on employees and depends on the contextual and individual factors. A key construct became work-life balance, which has a great impact on the psychological and performance outcomes, which agrees with the research showing that it is mediated to affect the well-being of employees and job performance (Setiawan et al., 2025).

The median values of work-life balance in the data set represent the two-sidedness of remote work, which can improve personal autonomy, and at the same time, lack a clear separation of work and personal life. In past literature, organizational support and resilience have been identified to strongly influence the effectiveness of employees who have tried to manage these boundaries efficiently (Ferreira and Gomes, 2023). In the same manner, the results of the working populations during the COVID-19 pandemic suggest that the work-life balance issues are especially acute in the remote work environments, particularly in the groups that have other domestic duties (Akanji et al., 2023). The current results support the idea that remote work does not necessarily advance the work-life balance, but conditional on the structural and organizational factors.

Another risk factor that was found to impact the outcomes, especially mental health and productivity, was social isolation. The findings with moderate to high rates of isolation among remote workers are congruent with the previous studies that demonstrate that a decrease in physical interaction may have a detrimental effect on the well-being and engagement of workers (Petcu et al., 2023). Social isolation in the process of creative behavior and innovation has also been recorded, and the higher the isolation is, the more the work-home conflict and the lower the effectiveness of collaboration (Garlatti Costa et al., 2023). These results indicate that workplace at-home settings should also include the provision of mechanisms that facilitate social connectivity to alleviate undesirable psychological impacts.

The mental health results of the current study were rather heterogeneous, with no significant linear correlations with numerical predictors, which shows that psychological reactions in the remote working environment are quite a complicated subject. The given observation is substantiated by available literature that highlights the fact that mental health in teleworking conditions is informed by a complex of managerial practices, organizational culture, and the coping mechanisms of a person (Shipman et al., 2023). The absence of close direct relationships implies that outcomes in mental health are a result of multifactorial interactions, but not individual factors, which underscores the relevance of integrative methods of analysis.

The effectiveness of the productivity served as another indication of the uneven effect of remote work, as people noted both negative and positive changes in their productivity. This is supported by the previous studies, which suggest that remote work may increase the productivity of certain employees and decrease the productivity of others based on the work structure, support systems, and the adaptability of individual employees (Kifor et al., 2022). Moreover, the flexibility at the workplace has also been found to contribute to the financial well-being and productivity, and it has been proposed that the advantages of remote work can be closely related to the wider organizational policies and how employees see the support (Saseendran et al., 2025). The inconsistency in the level of productivity results underlines the necessity to cease generalizing about the effectiveness of remote work.

The weak correlations observed in the analysis show that the relationships between variables are not necessarily linear, which supports the significance of taking into account the interaction effects and categorical differences. This finding coincides with the existing knowledge in the domain of millennial workforce relations as support in a perceived form of the supervisor and the context factor are known to influence the work-life balance and well-being (Nabawanuka and Ekmekcioglu, 2022). The combination of the organizational support and the personal resources of the organization, and the state of the environment appears to be the key to the explanation of the remote work outcomes.

By and large, the findings can be applied to the accruing body on the multidimensionality of remote working settings. The explanatory constructs are work-life balance and social isolation whose combination creates a mediating effect as a result of both larger organizational and personal factors. These results explain the reason why we should have multidimensional strategies where businesses are not only thinking of the productivity but also the welfare of employees and their social interconnectivity within the virtual workplace setting.

5. Conclusion

The research under consideration offers a profound insight into the relationship and interdependence of mental health, productivity, and social isolation in a remote working setting, as well as the interdependencies of the three factors via the work-life balance factors. The findings of the research indicate that the phenomenon of remote working is associated with a high level of differences in the experience of employees, and its impact on the entire population has yet to be uniform. The factor of work-life balance and social isolation was seen to have a substantial impact on the results, hence the need to add the fact that it was a major concern in the setting of remote working. The results indicate that the phenomenon of remote working offers some flexibility and can be beneficial, but it is also associated with a boundary management problem and a lack of social life. In-between incongruent and competing demands suggests that employees are oscillating between work-life concerns and social alienation that yielded moderate outcomes. The absence of significant linear associations between variables further reinforces the significance of the multifaceted nature of outcomes of remote work in which personal, organizational, and situational factors combine to influence well-being and productivity. The outcomes of productivity were also found to be differentiated as employees experienced better as well as worse productivity, which is related to adaptability factors, support systems, and work environments. Similarly, there was variability in mental health outcomes that further reinforces the significance of the mental as well as behavioral aspects of remote work. Interventions at an organizational level seek to target factors such as increasing work-life balance, reducing social alienation, and providing sufficient support systems to facilitate employees' welfare as well as productivity. Future studies to understand the ever-changing effects of remote work need to incorporate longitudinal as well as causal relationships.

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