

**THE MEDIATOR ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL IN THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN REMOTE WORKING AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING THE  
PANDEMIC: A STUDY ON WHITE COLLAR WORKERS<sup>1</sup>**

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*Sending Date:* 23.06.2023

*Acceptance Date:* 20.08.2023

*Araştırma Makalesi/ Research Article*

*Doi:* <https://doi.org/10.38009/ekimad.1319097>

**Abstract**

*In recent years, the work-life balance concept gained more importance among businesses to have efficient and high-performance employees. These businesses developed various policies to ensure work-life balance. In this sense, the Covid-19 pandemic that emerged in China in 2020 and impacted the whole world in a short time also had an impact on the business world. The majority of the businesses decided to shift to a remote working model for employees that met the requirements since individuals need to stay away from crowded spaces to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Ensuring work-life balance became more important with remote working. The employees struggle to create a work-life balance since there is no distinct border between home and work. At the same time, it can be seen that employees have different perspectives according to their psychological capital level. Therefore, psychological capital is one of the factors that impact the work-life balance. In this study, the relationship between employees' remote working and work-life balance is investigated with the mediator role of psychological capital in this relationship. The analysis conducted within this study investigated whether the work-life balance of employees applying a remote working model changed according to their psychological capital. In the research, a questionnaire was applied as a quantitative data collection method. SPSS 26.0 is used in data analysis for this study. It has been revealed that the relationships between remote work and the work-life balance of employees with high psychological capital are positive and significant.*

**Keywords:** Remote Working, Work-Life Balance, Psychologic Capital, COVID-19 Pandemic

**JEL Classification:** M10, M16

**PANDEMİ DÖNEMİ UZAKTAN ÇALIŞMA VE İŞ YAŞAM DENGESİ İLİŞKİSİNDE PSİKOLOJİK SERMAYENİN  
ARACILIK ROLÜ: BEYAZ YAKALI ÇALIŞANLAR ÜZERİNDE BİR ARAŞTIRMA**

**Öz**

*Son yıllarda iş yaşam dengesi kavramı, verimli ve yüksek performanslı çalışana sahip olmak açısından işletmelerde daha fazla önem kazanmıştır. İşletmeler de iş yaşam dengesi kurmak adına çeşitli politikalar geliştirmiştir. Bu anlamda 2020 yılında Çin'de ortaya çıkan ve çok kısa sürede tüm dünyayı etkisi altına alan Covid-19 salgını da iş dünyasını oldukça etkilemiştir. Salgının yayılmasını önlemek için insanların kalabalık ortamlarda bulunmaması gerektiğinden çoğu işletme gerekli koşulları sağlayan çalışanları için uzaktan çalışma modeline geçiş kararı almıştır. Uzaktan çalışma ile iş yaşam dengesi sağlamak daha da önemli hale gelmiştir. Ev ve iş arasında bariz bir çizgi olmamasından dolayı çalışanların iş yaşam dengesi kurması zorlaşmaktadır. Aynı zamanda psikolojik sermayesi seviyesine göre çalışanların farklı bakış açılarına sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Bu sebeple iş yaşam dengesini etkileyen unsurlarından biri de psikolojik sermayedir. Araştırmada çalışanların uzaktan çalışma ve iş yaşam dengesi arasındaki ilişki, psikolojik sermayenin bu ilişkideki aracılık rolü tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında yapılan analizler ile uzaktan çalışma yapan iş görenlerin psikolojik sermayelerine göre iş yaşam dengesinde değişiklik olup olmadığı araştırılmıştır. Araştırmada nicel veri toplama metodu olarak anket uygulanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında veriler SPSS 26.0 kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Psikolojik sermayesi yüksek çalışanların uzaktan çalışma ve iş yaşam dengesi arasındaki ilişkilerinin pozitif yönlü ve anlamlı olduğu ortaya konmuştur.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uzaktan Çalışma, İş Yaşam Dengesi, Psikolojik Sermaye, Covid-19 Pandemisi

**JEL Sınıflandırması:** M10, M16

<sup>1</sup> This study is derived from the master's thesis titled "The mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between remote work and work-life balance in the Pandemic Period" presented at the Institute of Social Sciences of Istanbul Medipol University.

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Cite: Albayrak Erdoğan, E. & Baykal, E. (2023). The Mediator Role of Psychological Capital In The Relationship Between Remote Working And Work-Life Balance During The Pandemic: A Study On White Collar Workers. *Ekonomi, İşletme ve Maliye Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(2), 94-111. DOI: 10.38009/ekimad.1319097

## **1. Introduction**

Today, changing conditions bring many innovations. With these changes, businesses realize the importance of human-oriented approaches and employee loyalty and carry out activities in this field. One of the ways to ensure employee loyalty and good performance is undoubtedly to establish the right work-life balance. Employees have roles in both private and business life. To establish a work-life balance, these roles should not be intertwined and one should not be more dominant than the other. In this context, businesses have developed policies for work-life balance such as applications for employee motivation and remote working. The coronavirus, which emerged in China in 2020 and has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization has affected the whole World both individually and organizationally. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, states have taken strict measures and home quarantines have been implemented as much as possible. In this context, the remote working model has been implemented for positions that can continue their activities outside the workplace. Thus, this working model, which is implemented by a small number of people, has become a meaningful solution in terms of business continuity all over the world. The Covid-19 outbreak has also accelerated the digitalization processes of companies. The first change was seen in the meetings. Company meetings started to take place over video calls. This situation creates positive effects by preventing the loss of travel, accommodation, and, most importantly, time for meetings. In this chaotic environment, it is of great importance for individuals to remain psychologically strong and to be able to approach troubles with resilience. In this sense, the importance of individual psychological capital has come to the fore again (Baykal, 2020a).

Psychological capital highlights today's businesses in terms of performance and efficiency. Akkuş, Najimudinova, and Gül (2021) investigated the effect of psychological capital on organizational commitment through work-life balance with 411 staff working in a university's academic and administrative staff. As a result of the research, it was concluded that as the psychological capital levels of the participants increased, their organizational commitment also increased. When this level is examined in terms of organizational commitment dimensions, it is seen that it explains the continuance commitment at the highest rate of 19%. Yavuz (2018) examined work-life balance and work stress from the perspective of flexible working in his study. As a result, it is observed that there is a positive relationship between work-life balance and work stress, and this situation differs in companies with and without flexible working.

In this study, the concepts of work-life balance, psychological capital, remote work, and Covid-19 were examined. Then, in the methodology part, the effect of teleworking on the work-life balance of white-collar employees in Turkey during the pandemic period and the possible mediating effect of the psychological capital of the employees in this effect were investigated.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Work-life balance is one of the important issues of today's working life. When the balance is disturbed, the motivation of the employees may decrease. This hurts their performance. On the other hand, employees with high psychological capital can be more successful in motivating themselves. For example, in their research, Baykal and Zehir (2018) examined the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee performance. Looking at the results, it is seen that the psychological capital of those working under the spiritual leader improves and this contributes to higher success levels. This study discusses the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between work-life balance and remote work.

### **2.1. Covid-19 Pandemic and Remote Work**

Globalization and technological developments also affect business life and organizational structures of organizations. One of the ways of working that has emerged with the changing employment understanding of organizations is remote work. The concept of remote work in foreign academic

literature; has been defined in many different ways such as telework, teleworking, remote work, e-work, and distance work (Meşhur, 2010). Although the concepts of remote working and working from home are similar to each other, they have some differences. For remote working, an information technology product is sufficient in every place where work will be done. The concept, which was used for the first time by Nilles in 1970 regarding the reduction of energy use in the oil crisis, did not have much effect on the current period (Ergün, 2019). The International Labor Organization has defined the concept of remote work as “work that is accepted by the employer, in a place other than the common office center, home or workplace, remote from the employees in the company, but by communicating with them through technological means” (ILO, 2016). According to Akyaz's (2019) study, remote working has become quite common in the USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, and all EU members. Looking at the teleworking rates, one out of seven employees employed in Denmark and the Czech Republic is within the scope of teleworking. In addition, it is seen that the use of remote work is increasing in developing countries such as Brazil, Singapore, Malaysia, and others (Akyaz, 2019).

Remote working has both positive and negative aspects for employers. The most important of the positive aspects is that it reduces the labor cost. Employees, they can get rid of expenses such as travel fees or service and meal fees. At the same time, office rent and office bills are also reduced, and even companies that work remotely do not have these expenses. The negative aspects can be given that employees are not as disciplined as they are in the office while working remotely. At the same time, external factors in the workplace can cause distraction. For those who work remotely, it may cause difficulties in adopting the corporate culture and belonging to the institution (Küçük, 2019). Although remote working positively affects work-life balance, it also reduces work-family conflict and stress by providing administrative, peer, and technological support to employees. The absence of a constantly controlling audit will make the employee feel comfortable in terms of working in a less stressful environment. Remote working facilitates the formation of the employees' working styles and prevents the effect of distractions in the office environment (Contreras, Baykal, and Abid, 2020).

## **2.2. Work-life balance**

A large part of the time individuals is dominated by work. Although private life remaining from working time seems to be independent of working time, there is a close relationship between them (Turna, 2017). Employees have roles and responsibilities in their private lives apart from their business life. Technology causes changes in working life as well as social and economic changes, and the two lifestyles have begun to violate each other (Seferov, 2018). In the concept of work-life balance, "work" refers to a person's career; life, on the other hand, shows situations such as leisure, family, and health (Akin, Ulukök, and Arar, 2017). In general, work-life balance is expressed as the harmony between family and business life (Küçük, 2019).

Theories about work-life balance have been shaped by social changes. Changes in family structures have been effective in this regard. With industrialization and the change in family structures, women have been more involved in business life. However, it is thought that it is inevitable for women to experience burnout and they are exposed to stress with the coming of the role of working on top of the role of mother and wife (Kahraman, 2018). The employment status of their spouses increased their responsibilities such as housework and childcare among male employees. Men's spending more time with their children not only has social benefits for their children but also supports women's careers and active participation in the workforce. Working men are willing to change jobs or even change cities for a job to achieve a good work-life balance, and they care more about the flexibility of the job than financial rewards (Özçelik Kaynak and Öztuna, 2019). People have different roles in business and private life. And they try to realize their roles in both lives (Girdap, 2019). Role theory was discussed in the 1970s to explain the situations related to the fulfillment of these roles and the execution of them together (Ödemiş, 2018). The problem arises when individuals are compatible in

one role and cannot fulfill their other roles. He may be in a position to neglect someone, especially when he has a role to play at the same time. Conflict theory considers three types of conflict. These are the conflict between business life and family life, the conflict from family life to business life, and the conflict from business life to family life (Karaoğlu, 2019). There is interaction between roles and the important thing is to prevent conflict (Ergün, 2019). While it is necessary to balance the roles, sometimes there may be a conflict between them (İlerigelen, 2020). For this reason, if one wants to be satisfied in one role, it may be necessary to sacrifice the responsibilities of other roles. Due to the limited time and energy of the individual, it is thought that it will be more beneficial to concentrate on one area (Ödemiş, 2018). In the compensation theory, it is thought that people try to provide more satisfaction in one of their work or private lives to prevent dissatisfaction than in the other area, and therefore they experience conflict (Özarı, 2019). According to Clark (2000), the compensation theory is complementary to the overflow theory. As an example, the desire to do new and interesting activities in the private life of a person who has a monotonous job can be given (Bağcı, 2018). Boundary theory has four basic concepts and these concepts are areas, borders, border temporary and border guards. The work and private domains have different tools and purposes. While success and income are priorities in business life, there are priorities such as happiness and peace in private life. The individual needs to determine his boundaries between work life and family life (Babayiğit, 2016). The overflow theory is handled in two ways. If a positive orientation in one of the fields affects the other in this direction, this is a positive overflow, a negative overflow in one of them, and a negative overflow in the other (Özarı, 2019). The way business and family lives interact also causes them to resemble each other. For example, being unhappy in business life can cause an individual to be unhappy in his private life (Kahraman, 2018). The theory of instrumentality is expressed as the individual making decisions for self-development in business life to achieve satisfaction in his private life. In this theory, if the individual uses the other field to be successful in one field, he or she uses this situation as a tool (Öner, 2019). The division theory argues that work and non-work life are independent of each other and there is no interaction between them (Çınar, 2019). He argues that in developed societies, a clear distinction can be made between business and non-business life (Ödemiş, 2018). Some factors affect people to avoid conflict and balance between business and family life. If these factors are kept in harmony, it will still be easy to achieve a work-life balance. Factors related to business life can be associated with "organizational factors", and the part related to family life can be associated with "personal factors" (Yavuz, 2018). Examples of personal factors such as gender, marital status, career planning, education, and age can be given. As for organizational factors; Examples such as role ambiguity, role conflict, participation in management, and excessive workload can be given.

It is important to strike a balance between business and private life. As a result of the failure to establish the balance, conflict begins. While these conflicts can negatively affect the physical and psychological health of the individual, they can also cause problems in family life. Stress increases with conflict, which reduces both work performance and quality of life (Öner, 2019). As the results of work-life imbalance in terms of the individual; stress, decrease in quality of life, the feeling of not being able to spare enough time for oneself, psychological problems, burnout, and depression can be given as examples. Since these problems experienced by the individual reduce their quality of life and affect their health, sleep problems can also cause work accidents as a result of careless behavior (İlerigelen, 2020). From an organizational point of view, the consequences of work-life imbalance are divided into direct and indirect. While indirect results can be given as job dissatisfaction, low level of commitment, and distrust, direct results can be given as absenteeism, employee turnover, work accidents, and work slowdown. Establishing a work-life balance positively affects both the work and private life of the individual.

### **2.3. Psychological Capital**

The foundations of the concept of psychological capital are based on positive psychology, which was introduced in the 1990s. This point of view focuses not on the weaknesses and deficiencies of individuals, but on their positive strengths (Çetin et al., 2015). With positive psychological capital, purpose creates planned systems that reveal the potential of employees. In achieving this goal, competitive advantage is provided and the psychological phenomenon where positivity is essential is emphasized. Since positive psychological capital can be developed, it also has a feature that motivates individuals to exceed their potential. As psychological capital increases, burnout and intention to leave also increase (Şendoğdu et al., 2021). According to Narcıkara (2017), psychological capital is a synergetic whole of individual psychological resources that can be developed. Psychological capital has created many new alternative ways to manage human resources more efficiently. The benefits of psychological capital provide benefits in terms of sustaining businesses in today's conditions and maintaining their place in the sector. At the same time, it is important to provide flexibility for all conditions. From the perspective of psychological capital, flexibility; means that when the person is in a difficult situation, he can quickly remove the negativity and find a solution quickly.

Flexible people can easily adapt to volatile, competitive, and uncertain environments. Since psychological capital aims to take a positive attitude towards negativities, when people face any negativity, they tend to have optimistic and hopeful expectations, which will enable them to be more patient, flexible, and competitive. Four dimensions stand out in psychological capital. In choosing these dimensions; their contribution to performance, flexibility, and positive perspectives open to development effect (Demirci, 2019). Four dimensions of psychological capital; self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. Optimism is based on the expectation-value theory of motivation. As the goals differ according to value, individuals are more motivated to realize the goals they find more important. Resilience, which covers the behavioral dimension of psychological capital, provides information on how individuals overcome difficult conditions and their capacity. Even though people with high resilience are exposed to traumatic situations, they stay calm and act solution-oriented. After the situation passes, they return to their normal lives. The traumatic event can be examined under two headings. These are critical events. Important events are situations that affect the individual emotionally and that they encounter in business life. Critical events are more unusual. Crises are situations that develop suddenly, such as a natural disaster, and cause extreme stress (Ünlü, 2020). The self-efficacy dimension, based on the Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura (1982), is the most studied dimension among the psychological capital dimensions. It is used as confidence or self-efficacy in positive organizational behavior studies (Kaplan, 2020).

The concept of self-efficacy is that individuals are aware of their abilities and capacities. It can be expressed as the belief that an individual can do something against a job. It is based on the idea that people must first believe in their capacities to develop and use the abilities they have (Hamuluoğlu, 2019). The concept of hope was first discussed by Rick Sender, who worked on positive psychological capital. According to Snyder (2000), the concept, which is widely used today and means containing expectations, is a source of positive motivation that contributes to the success of individuals. Individuals with a high hope dimension seek solutions by anticipating the problems they may encounter. Jensen and Luthans, on the other hand, expressed the concept of hope as providing determination in reaching the determined goals and determining other options (Bukni, 2019).

Positive variables associated with psychological capital; organizational commitment, job performance, quality of life, positive organizational climate, and positive emotions can be given as examples. Negative variables associated with psychological capital; stress, employee absenteeism, intention to leave, and negative feelings towards the organization. The result of the development and management of psychological capital on performance can be more effective and satisfying than the components that make up psychological capital (Büyükbeşe and Aslan, 2019). Bhat (2017) found that

the dimensions of psychological capital (resilience, self-efficacy, optimism, hope) were positively related to life satisfaction in his study on 50 sports coaches to examine the relationship between psychological capital and life satisfaction. It has been observed that sports instructors with high psychological capital have more life satisfaction than those with low psychological capital. Baykal and Zehir (2018) examined the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee performance. Looking at the results, it is seen that the psychological capital of those working under the spiritual leader improves and this contributes to higher success levels. In their study, Hu et al. (2018) discussed the effects of authentic leadership on the proactive behavior of subordinates, with the role of compassion at work as a moderator and mediator of psychological capital. The data obtained as a result of the surveys conducted with 445 employees working in a company located in China revealed that psychological capital was the full mediator between authentic leadership and the proactive behavior of subordinates.

Bogler and Somech (2019) discussed psychological capital, team resources, and organizational citizenship behavior in their research. In this context, a questionnaire was applied to 395 participants working in educational institutions. As a result, it has been seen that psychological capital provides an increase in organizational citizenship behavior. Le and Leangkhamma (2020) investigated how transformational leadership affects employees' ability to innovate through psychological capital. The mediating effect of psychological capital between transformational leadership and innovation ability has been confirmed. It has been observed that the formation of a suitable climate to develop the positive psychological resources of the employees with transformational leadership, also significantly affects their innovation abilities.

#### **2.4. Covid-19 Pandemic**

Covid-19 named the new type of coronavirus, which emerged towards the end of December 2019, was first seen in Wuhan, China. It has been detected in people found in seafood and animal markets in the region. Because it is easily contagious from person to person, it spread to other cities in Hubei province after Wuhan, and to all of China and all over the world over time. The disease, which presents with symptoms of respiratory tract disease, is in the same family as MERS and SARS diseases. It can be seen in animals and humans (Ministry of Health, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease a pandemic on 11 March 2020. In the text mining studies conducted by Silahtaroglu et al. (2020) in Turkey, in which tweets posted after the pandemic were analyzed week by week, the negative impact of the pandemic on Turkish people was revealed, and it was seen that the pandemic created a deep sense of hopelessness and uneasiness on people. Soyly's (2020) study investigating the effects of Covid-19 on a sectoral basis in Turkey, movement restrictions such as remote working, distance education, travel restrictions, suspension of sports and artistic activities, measures taken to ensure social distance and interruption of production in some places were determined negative effects on the economy. However, financial support and low-interest policies were implemented to prevent uncertainty and social unrest.

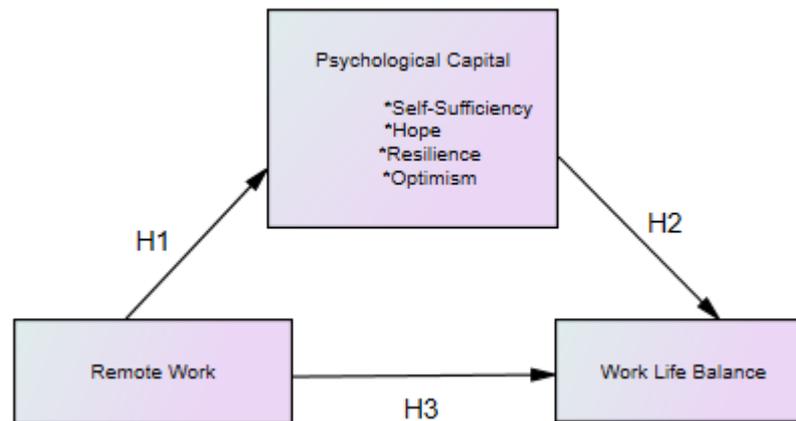
Businesses can organize meetings with video calls so that their employees do not lose their social contacts in the office environment. Even if working from home, it will be beneficial for the employee not to lose his sense of belonging and commitment to the business and to balance the goals of the business with the welfare of the employee (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Deloitte stated in the report "Employee Experience 201" published in May 2020 that the priorities of employees and companies have changed. While the employees expect to make an impact and take ownership of their companies, the priorities of the companies are to monitor the health of their employees within the scope of the pandemic and to closely monitor customer relations, in addition to their usual processes. The companies have determined the positions where remote working can be done and they have switched to this working style. Some companies have been hesitant about working remotely. In particular, they have the opinion that they do not have enough resources or support to balance between the culture of

working away from the institution and working face-to-face, hence switching to remote working completely. When companies that have the opportunity to switch to remote working cannot take advantage of this opportunity during the pandemic period, their employees will inevitably think that they are not valued and trusted (Bilginöglü, 2021).

### 3. Hypotheses and research model

The concept of psychological capital can be expressed as the capacity of individuals to overcome difficulties, resilience, and psychological development (Macit et al., 2020). Especially in a period with the Covid-19 epidemic, the attitudes of individuals with high psychological capital towards difficult situations will be more positive to feel lonely and lack communication from the negative effects of working remotely (Seyran, 2021). Since there is no concrete work output that can be seen by the managers of the individuals working remotely, there may be situations where they see it as compulsory to work outside of working hours. This situation causes the employee to be stressed with the feeling of losing his job and not being able to get rid of the work psychology (Şenel, 2021). However, in individuals with high psychological capital, stress and burnout levels decrease, allowing them to be psychologically well (Bankacı, 2016). The research model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research model



In this study, inspired by the relevant literature, hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d were formed.

*H1a: Remote work has a positive and significant effect on the psychological capital self-efficacy dimension.*

*H1b: Remote work has a positive and significant effect on the psychological capital hope dimension.*

*H1c: Remote work has a positive and significant effect on the psychological capital resilience dimension.*

*H1d: Remote work has a positive and significant effect on the optimism dimension of psychological capital.*

Work-life balance is ensured healthily by establishing a balance between work and private life and fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of both parties. It will be easy for individuals with high psychological capital to establish a work-life balance. Studies in the literature support this. Sen and Hooja (2015) found that police officers with higher psychological capital have a healthier work-life balance than police officers with low psychological capital in their study on police officers. Kaplan (2018) investigated the effect of the psychological capital of female employees on work-life balance and found that as female employees' psychological capital increases, they establish work-life balance more effectively. Christy et al. (2021) revealed that entrepreneurs' psychological capital capacities affect work-life balance. Hence, inspired by the previous literature, the H2 hypothesis is formed.

*H2: Psychological capital has a positive and significant effect on work-life balance.*

On the one hand, remote work provides opportunities as it makes the demands of both work and personal lives of employees more integrated. Moreover, as it saves travel time, it can spare more time for personal work and has opportunities such as working in the comfort of home. In this way, a healthier work-life balance can be ensured (Karaca and Esen, 2019). Work-life balance is the state of fulfilling the responsibilities and wishes of the individual, taking into account the interests of both his work and personal life (Tuna and Türkmendağ, 2020). Thanks to the remote working model preferred by companies with the Covid-19 pandemic, employees have gained advantages that benefit work-life balance, such as eliminating the time spent commuting, spending more time with their families (Yılmaz and Sağlam, 2021), thereby reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission. Martinez-Amador (2016) concluded that remote working affects the work-life balance of employees to reduce commuting time and spend more time on their private lives. In their study, Karaca and Esen (2020) realized the effect of teleworking on work-life balance with 16 people using the interview technique and concluded that the participants were satisfied because they used the remote working method. Particularly in terms of the time factor, it became prominent that the participants who are mothers can spare time for their children, and the participants who are far away from work and home gain from travel time. Pradit and Supakorn (2020) revealed that their companies should have a good work plan so that remote workers can have a better work-life balance. At the same time, they emphasized that employers should support employees' internet and technological equipment. Olanipekun, Sokefun, and Akinlabi (2021), in their research on Nigerian bankers, revealed that remote work contributes positively to work-life balance. Hence, in light of the relevant literature H3 hypothesis is formed.

*H3: Remote work has a positive and significant effect on work-life balance.*

Another relationship discussed in this research is the mediating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between teleworking and work-life balance. With the transition to remote working, employees may encounter problems such as not being motivated to work, social isolation, difficulty in maintaining their self-discipline, and not being able to determine roles and boundaries in work and personal life (Uysal and Çayır Yılmaz, 2020). In this case, negative effects on individual and organizational success can be prevented by establishing a good work-life balance (Araşlar, 2021). People with high psychological capital have a high capacity to overcome difficulties. It is possible to cope with the dimension of endurance against uncertainty and difficulties (Erkuş and Fındıklı, 2013). For this reason, it is predicted that employees with high psychological capital have a positive effect on their work-life balance. To test the relationship in question, the H4 hypothesis was formed.

H4: Psychological capital has a mediating role in the relationship between remote work and work-life balance.

#### **4. Method of the Research**

In the study, the sample group was reached by the convenience sampling method. In the research, a questionnaire was applied as a quantitative data collection method. Due to the pandemic, no survey was deviered by hand, rather an online survey link was sent via Google Forms. Participants were reached through the researcher's school and work environment. In addition, the survey link was shared on LinkedIn. Participants participated voluntarily. A total of 550 questionnaires were sent. Returns were received for 508 of the questionnaires sent and were evaluated within the scope of the research.

##### **4.1 Tools and Sampling**

The main mass of the research consists of white-collar workers over the age of 20, working in different sectors, from all hierarchical levels. We carried out office and remote work during the pandemic period, and research was advanced through white-collar personnel due to their high ability to understand theoretical expressions.

The work-life balance scale was developed by Çiğdem Apaydın (2011). The scale consists of 20 items. The psychological capital scale was developed by Luthans et al. (2007) and the 24-item scale was adapted into Turkish by Vildan Hilal Akçay (2014). Questions about remote working are about whether the way of working before and after the pandemic and the way of working before and after the pandemic increases productivity. In the questionnaire, 48 questions were asked to the participants, and they were asked to specify their remote working status before and after the pandemic by choosing one of the options "Remote Working", "Working in the Office", "Some days in the office and some days remotely". To determine how much they agreed with the remaining items, they were asked to choose one of the "1=Strongly Disagree", "2=Disagree", "3=Undecided", "4=Agree", "5=Strongly Agree". The data obtained after the survey study were analyzed in the SPSS 26.0 statistical package program with a confidence interval of 95%.

59.8% of the participants are between the ages of 20-30, 64% are single and 50.4% are undergraduate graduates. It is seen that 46.1% of the participants are employees between 0-3 years. Although there are employees who work remotely or work remotely from the office some days in the pre-pandemic period, the rate of these people corresponds to 26.4% of the total participants. It is seen that 73.6% of the participants in the research were working from the office before the pandemic. After the pandemic, the rate of working from the office decreased by 38.8%. During the pandemic, the way of working remotely increased by 22.5%. The rate of working remotely on some days at the office increased by 16.3% after the pandemic.

#### **4.2 Validity and Reliability**

The results of the reliability analysis of the work-life balance and psychological capital scales are given below. Cronbach Alpha values were calculated while applying the reliability analysis. In the work-life balance reliability analysis, the Cronbach Alpha value was calculated as 0.632. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation values of the items and how the item was removed from the scale affected the Cronbach Alpha value. All 4 items of the dimension of "life consist of work" and the 3rd item of the dimension of taking time for oneself in the scale were excluded from the analysis because they caused Cronbach's Alpha value to be low. Analyzes were continued with the remaining 15 items. In the Psychological Capital reliability analysis, the Cronbach Alpha value was calculated as 0.905. This value is reliable enough for the study. Resilience 1, Optimism 2, and 5 items were excluded from the analysis because they decreased the Cronbach Alpha value. The analysis continued with 21 items of the 24-item scale.

**Table 2: Reliability and Validity of Scale With Factor Analysis**

Factors	Materials	Factor Loads				Cronbach Alfa
		1	2	3	4	
Work-Life Harmony	1	0,496				0,835
	2	0,644				
	3	0,659				
	4	0,604				
	5	0,433				
	6	0,476				
Violation of Life	2		0,423			0,701
	3		0,410			
	4		0,327			
	5		0,408			
	6		0,502			
Don't Take Your Time	1			0,409		0,603
	2			0,426		
	4			0,415		
Self-sufficiency	1	0,489				0,823
	2	0,463				
	3	0,490				
	4	0,535				
	5	0,539				
	6	0,441				
Hope	1		0,475			0,769
	2		0,416			
	3		0,430			
	4		0,454			
	5		0,438			
	6		0,429			
Resilience	2			0,481		0,690
	3			0,307		
	4			0,439		
	5			0,435		
	6			0,481		
Optimism	1				0,479	0,610
	3				0,624	
	4				0,559	
	6				0,404	

Firstly, whether the data is suitable for factor analysis was analyzed with KMO and Barlett's Test. Analysis results are given in Table 2. Later factor analysis is conducted. As a result of the analysis for work-life balance, factor loads ranged from 0.433 to 0.659 for the dimension of work-life adjustment, between 0.327 and 0.502 for the dimension of violating life, and between 0.409 and 0.426 for the dimension of taking time for oneself. has been obtained. As a result of the analysis, it was also found that the scale explained 47.365% of the total variance. As a result of the factor analysis, the 1st item of the violating life dimension was excluded from the analysis, since the factor loads were low and/or loaded on other factors. As a result of the analysis for the psychological capital scale, factor loads ranged from 0.441 to 0.539 for the self-efficacy dimension, between 0.429 and 0.475 for the hope dimension, between 0.307 and 0.481 for the resilience dimension, and 0 for the optimism dimension. obtained between 404 and 0.624. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the scale explained 46.711% of the total variance.

### 4.3 Research Findings

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between remote work, work-life balance, and psychological capital and to determine its degree. Analysis results are given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation analysis results**

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Remote Work	1	,336**	,340**	,264**	,295**	,201**
2	Work-Life Balance	,336**	1	,384**	,413**	,355**	,456**
3	Psychological Capital-Self-efficacy	,340**	,384**	1	,746**	,565**	,418**
4	Psychological Capital-Hope	,264**	,413**	,746**	1	,647**	,479**
5	Psychological Capital-Resilience	,295**	,355**	,565**	,647**	1	,517**
6	Psychological Capital-Optimism	,201**	,456**	,418**	,479**	,517**	1

\*\*0.01 significance level (2-tailed)

In the research, first of all, the effects of remote working on the sub-dimensions of psychological capital and work-life balance and the effects of sub-dimensions of psychological capital on work-life balance were examined. Then, the effect of remote work on work-life balance and the mediating role of psychological capital are discussed. In the sample of the study, work-life balance decreased to one dimension. Here, remote work is the independent variable, work-life balance is the dependent variable, and psychological capital is the mediating variable.

As a result of the regression analyses shown in Table 4, significant effects of remote work on self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, which are sub-dimensions of psychological capital, were observed and hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d were accepted. Significant effects of self-efficacy, hope, and optimism, which are the sub-dimensions of psychological capital, were observed on work-life balance, but no significant effect was observed in the resilience dimension. Despite this exception, the H2 hypothesis was accepted because there was a significant effect on other sub-dimensions. It was seen that remote work affects work-life balance and the H3 hypothesis was accepted.

Finally, to measure the mediating effect of psychological capital, the effect of remote working alone and together with psychological capital was compared. While the effect of remote working alone on work-life balance is 0.211, its effect on psychological capital dimensions is 0.133. When remote work is considered together with psychological capital, it is seen that its effect decreases statistically. To control the situation of providing full or partial mediation, it was seen that the psychological capital and the effect value of remote working were significant only with the dimensions of hope and optimism. Although self-efficacy and resilience are not significant, it can be mentioned that the hope and optimism dimensions are meaningful as partial mediation. The H4 hypothesis, shown as Model 7, was accepted.

**Table 4: Regression analysis results**

Independent Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7	
	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Constant	2,561	17,817	2,878	21,235	2,778	24,634	2,783	24,088	1,707	14,344	2,543	29,936	1,498	12,236
Remote Work	0,362	8,131**	0,259	6,166**	0,243	6,954**	0,166	4,626**			0,211	8,030**	0,133	5,273**
Self-Sufficiency									0,073	2,125*			0,037	1,09
Hope									0,1	2,437*			0,109	2,736**
Resilience									0,015	0,373			-0,011	-0,275
Optimism									0,244	6,959**			0,239	6,995**
F	66.115		38.021		48.365		21.401		45.195		64.494		43.643	
R2	0.116		0.070		0.087		0.041		0.264		0.113		0.303	
p	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000	
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	Self-Sufficiency		Hope		Resilience		Optimism		Work Life Balance		Work Life Balance		Work Life Balance	

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

## **5. Conclusion and Discussion**

Effective changes have occurred in business life with the Covid-19 pandemic, which was first seen in China and affected the whole world in a short time. The concept of work-life balance, which has become increasingly important as living conditions change, has started to come to the fore with the pandemic period. Work-life balance refers to the harmony and balance between the private and work lives of individuals. Thanks to the remote working model preferred by companies during the Covid-19 pandemic, employees have gained advantages that benefit the work-life balance, such as eliminating the time spent commuting, spending more time with their families, and reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

Psychological capital is a concept that can be developed and affects performance, enabling the individual to focus on the positive aspects. It enables individuals to adapt to challenging conditions and to be flexible. Especially during the pandemic period, working remotely can be beneficial for people to be resistant to miscommunication, conflict, and problems that may arise from being away from their workplace and colleagues. It can be said that the work-life balance of employees with high psychological capital can be better established. For example, Sen and Hooja (2015) found in their research on police officers that individuals with high psychological capital have a better work-life balance than individuals with low psychological capital. Similarly, Kaplan (2018) hypothesized that the psychological capital levels of female employees have a positive effect on the establishment of work-life balance, and the hypothesis was accepted. In the study, psychological capital was considered as a single dimension. Apart from Kaplan's (2018) study, in our research, the concept of psychological capital was taken with the sub-dimensions of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, and it was seen that the resilience dimension did not affect the work-life balance.

Karaca and Esen (2019), in their study to reveal the effect of remote working mothers on work-life balance, found that the time factors gained from travel time and allocated to the child came to the fore. Küçük (2019) hypothesized that there is a difference between the work-life balance of people who work from home or in the office and that the work-life balance levels of people who work from home are higher than those who work in the office. As a result, the hypothesis was confirmed. Bayraktar (2021) tested whether there is a relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in teleworking to contribute to the remote working process during the pandemic period. In this context, as a result of the study carried out with 264 people working in the public and private sectors in Kocaeli and Istanbul Anatolian side, it was observed that the contribution of the companies to organizational commitment and job satisfaction increased by eliminating the deficiencies of the remote working system and making it the most useful. In our research, our hypothesis that remote work has a significant effect on work-life balance has been confirmed. Baykal (2022) also investigated the effect of teleworking on Turkish white-collar employees and showed the positive effect of teleworking on lower levels of anxiety.

In this study, the work-life balance of remote workers during the pandemic period was examined with the mediating role of psychological capital. Looking at previous studies, organizational commitment related to work-life balance (Allen et al., 2000; Babayiğit, 2016; Çınar, 2019; Akkuş, 2020), job stress (Özdemir, 2017; Yavuz, 2018; Sandoval-Reyes, Idrovo-Carlier, and Duque) -Oliva, 2021), organization and job performance (Beauregard and Henry, 2009; Şahin, 2016; Wong et al., 2020), organizational support (Glynn et al., 2002; Ulukapı, 2013), Generation Y (Kuru, 2014; Turna, 2017), psychological capital (Kaplan, 2018; Akkuş, 2020) and perceived organizational support (Baykal, 2020). In studies on psychological capital, performance (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, and Peterson, 2010; Polatçı, 2011; Topaloğlu, 2013; Bukni, 2019; Darvishmotevali and Ali, 2020), leadership types (Savur, 2013; Baykal and Zehir, 2018); Hu et al., 2018; Le and Leaungkhamma, 2020; Öztürk and Çankaya, 2021), organizational commitment (Bozdağ Ateş, 2018; Temirhan, 2019; Akkuş, Najimudinova, and Gül, 2021), job satisfaction (Açan, 2015; Çetinkaya et al. Ünsever, 2020).

Among the studies conducted in Turkey, no study has been found that examines the relationship between remote work and work-life balance with the psychological capital tool variable in the pandemic period, and it is aimed to contribute to the literature and the business world. In this study, white-collar employees working remotely were reached, regardless of sector, position, and demographic information. It has been seen that the remote working model, which has increased with the pandemic, has been adopted by most companies. In this context, research can be conducted on the work-life balance of the psychological capital of remote workers based on sectors such as software, health, and education. Especially due to the pandemic period, the practices that can be done to increase the work-life balance of health workers can be examined. Considering that female employees have different roles and responsibilities compared to male employees, such as childcare and housework, the work-life balance of female and male employees can be discussed during the pandemic period by making a gender-based comparison. Age criteria and work-life balance can be considered in terms of adaptation and technology aptitude for remote working. It would be beneficial to support teleworking, work-life balance, and psychological capital relations in terms of demographic data such as sector, gender, age, and position.

#### **AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION**

In this study, the introduction, conceptual framework and literature review were made by Eda Albayrak Erdoğan, and the method, application, conclusion and discussion were made by two authors.

#### **STATEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no financial conflict of interest with any institution, organization, or person and there is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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